

Book Reviews

DEATH AND DISSENT. TWO FIFTEENTH-CENTURY CHRONICLES. *The Dethe of the Kyng of Scotis*, translated by John Shirley, and "Warkworth's" *Chronicle*: the *Chronicle* attributed to John Warkworth, Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge. Edited by Lister M. Matheson. 1999. Medieval Chronicles 2. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge. £40. ISBN 0 85115 725 4

Some medieval texts are more in need of publication than others. The first text in this volume, the horror story of *The Dethe of the Kyng of Scotis*, describing the murder of James I of Scotland in February 1437, its preliminaries and its aftermath, including the bloody executions of the killers, was edited by Margaret Connolly for the *Scottish Historical Review* in 1992 from BL MS Add. 38690, and would not have been at the top of my list. The present edition has a longer introduction, corrects some minor errors of transcription and prints final yogh as z, rather than s (while leaving in thorn and ampersand). There is some discussion of the source of the English version, but hardly any analysis of it as a text and a story – this may be found in Margaret Connolly's *John Shirley*, published in 1998. Neither Connolly nor Matheson expresses any doubt about Shirley's authorship of the translation. The main claim to usefulness of Matheson's edition is the identification of possible owners of the two surviving manuscripts.

The present edition omits any discussion of the French and Flemish versions of the story, to be found in the work of Enguerran de Monstrelet and Jean de Wavrin (who appear to have shared the same source), Jean Chartier and Jan van Dixmude (who are very brief). These continental versions may seem irrelevant to a discussion of a middle English text, but they are of importance when trying to establish its purpose and identify the owners of the extant copies. For BL Add. 38690 Matheson puts forward no less than 'a member of the king's Council or someone very closely associated with it who had access to sensitive documents intended for Council eyes only', and Sir John Stourton and Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, are named. No such magnates are mentioned as the owners of BL Add. 5467, partly because this (very miscellaneous) manuscript does bear names and

they are far from well known. Even without further study of textual details I would suggest that there is no foundation for attribution of the text's ownership to such highly placed men. Some of the other texts in Add. 38690 occur elsewhere, most notably in 'John Vale's Book', a transcript of the archives of Thomas Cook, mayor of London in 1463 (BL Add. 48031A, ed. M.L. Kekewich *et al.*, Richard III and Yorkist Trust 1995). Folios 16-18v of Add. 38690, documents concerning Richard of York's claim to the throne in 1460, appear in 'John Vale's Book', ff. 130-132v (not 135v), while folios 1-4, the complaints of Humphrey of Gloucester against Cardinal Beaufort, were transcribed in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth-century – presumably from yet another copy of the documents – and inserted into 'John Vale's Book', ff. 64-67.

The number of surviving copies of such documents, both contemporary and later, including French versions, in many different manuscripts and contexts suggests the general popularity of such reports and newsletters. It is clear from collections like 'John Vale's Book', from London chronicles and, for example, from the historical work of Jean de Wavrin, that people were avid for 'accurate', written news, and many documents – particularly when they concerned battles, state politics or the life and death of kings – came to lead a separate life, which eventually took some of them to unexpected places. To put too much meaning into the individual physical context that one happens to be studying may lead to wishful thinking.

The other text edited in the present volume is of more interest to Ricardians: the chronicle covering the years 1461 to 1474 and usually ascribed to the pen or the library of John Warkworth, Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, 1473-1500. Matheson uses Peterhouse MS 190, the recently discovered Glasgow Hunterian 83, as well as the closely related BL Harley 3730; the latter does not have the chronicle itself. Taken together these manuscripts enabled Matheson to develop a new theory of authorship: 'a Yorkshireman whose sympathies lay with Richard III'. The Yorkshire origins are deduced from the assumed northern bias of the account and the northern links of Peterhouse, the sympathy for Richard III is concluded from the fact that the author did *not* say explicitly that Richard killed Henry VI – this in contrast to the conclusions drawn by the earlier editor of the chronicle, J.O. Halliwell

All three manuscripts are described in detail and the mistakes of earlier scholars pointed out. A list of the relevant members of Peterhouse is provided (one appears to have been omitted by the printer) and a densely constructed argument puts forward two candidates for authorship: Roger Lancaster, 'LL.D. (*in utroque jure baccalaureus*)' [*sic*] and 'a member of the Merchants' Company' [*sic*] of York, and Thomas Metcalf. John Warkworth still has a part in the genesis of the manuscripts.

Both editions are provided with textual variants in the footnotes, separate glossaries and indexes. There is no index to the introductions. The price of forty pounds seems to be on the high side.

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

THE LONG FIFTEENTH CENTURY: ESSAYS FOR DOUGLAS GRAY
Edited by Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone. 1997. Clarendon Press, Oxford, £45.00

ISBN 0-19-818365-8

The fourteen essays in this Festschrift honour Douglas Gray on his retirement as J.R.R. Tolkien Professor of English Literature and Language at the University of Oxford. Their informative range and uniformly high standards of scholarship and intellectual enquiry are not only fitting testimony to the interests of their dedicatee, but also demonstrate convincingly that the literary and wider cultural energies of later medieval England were anything but waning. The practical usefulness of the volume is enhanced by an editorial decision to elicit essays which together form some kind of companion to the contents of Douglas Gray's own invaluable *Oxford Book of Late Medieval Verse and Prose* (first published by Oxford University Press in 1985), an anthology of works written in English from about 1400 to about 1520, and conceived with an eye to what the editors of this Festschrift (in an introduction which has many perceptive things to say about the writings of the period) term 'the historical dimension of literature, its active and often fully conscious participation in the moment of its own production' (p.4).

According to the scheme of its companion anthology, the essays follow an order which is simultaneously chronological and thematic, with those at the start, closest to Chaucer's death in 1400, addressing some dimensions of post-Chaucerian verse writing, and the final ones reviewing notions of the poet's role and of literary history in the works of Skelton and John Bale. For the purposes of this review, though, I shall group the essays rather differently in terms of some of the critical tendencies which they share, in the hope that this may serve to isolate some strands of the distinctiveness both of late medieval writing and of the scholarly investigation which it currently attracts.

A number of the essays are interested precisely in the 'historical dimension' of the texts they treat. James Simpson considers the ways in which Lydgate's *Siege or Destruction of Thebes*, here firmly dated to a point after Henry V's death in 1422, uses Chaucer's Knight's Tale to shape a prudential warning about taking lessons

from history. Lydgate's appending to the sequence of *Canterbury Tales* an account of Thebes which chronologically precedes that sketched at the start of the Knight's Tale is here plausibly interpreted as a means of stressing the treacherousness of history, and of retrospectively frustrating the efforts made by Theseus in the Knight's Tale to read it optimistically. Sally Mapstone reviews 'Kingship and *The Kingis Quair*', in the context of a Scottish tradition of advice to princes, taking as her point of departure an anecdote from an anonymous account of the life and death of James I, in which his dual roles as King of Scots and 'King of Love' (in its cultivated, courtly sense) are encapsulated. From this Mapstone develops a reading of *The Kingis Quair* in which Boethian advice on matters like secular love and self-government generates a more optimistic foundation for conduct, and hence for the rule of others, than Chaucer had found it possible to suggest in either *The Knight's Tale* or *Troilus and Criseyde*. In an illuminating selection of texts from across the period, Helen Barr and Kate Ward-Perkins address the giving and receiving of advice in a curial context, asking specifically whether it is possible to speak with integrity while at the same time being retained or securing advancement at court. Instances of plain speaking are isolated first in *Mum and the Sothsegger*, here, significantly, from outside the court; in Elyot's *Pasquil the Playne*, which focuses the difficulty of speaking the truth while keeping political favour; and in Skelton's *Bowge of Court*, which constitutes 'a deconstruction of the linguistic premises on which other texts on counsel depend' (p. 272).

Other of the essays seek to illustrate certain general tendencies in the period, and their embodiment in new or modified literary forms. In one of the few contributions to deal with prose, Helen Cooper investigates impulses which disrupt civic and familial harmony in a number of prose romances, and speculates on the reasons which might explain a move away from the conciliatory ideologies of metrical romance to a realm in which motifs such as father-killing are given prominence. Robert Easting's informative survey of visionaries of the Other World, while stressing (following Gray) the 'cumulative' and 'traditional' aspects of the literature of medieval spirituality, highlights the growing lay interest in visions of purgatory and paradise, and compares four of these in some detail: the visions experienced by William of Stranton and by Edmund Leversedge, and revelations offered to an unknown woman (a Benedectine nun), and to the Monk of Eynsham. Lastly in this group, Felicity Riddy takes productive issue with certain aspects of Douglas Gray's 'getting-of-wisdom' reading of Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, and reads it instead as a 'harlot's progress', in which Cresseid's various states of exclusion (as prostitute and then as leper), are characteristic of the tendencies of late medieval gender construction. Drawing on the writings of Kristeva and making use of an arresting cadaverous image (here reproduced), Riddy's account illuminates the means by which Henryson constructs a masculine

identity for Troilus through the 'abjection' or casting out of what Cresseid's femininity represents.

Specific texts and authors generate a number of the essays. Peter Dronke writes on 'Poetic Originality in *The Wars of Alexander*', with attention to techniques of *ecphrasis*. Eric Stanley reviews the works attributed to John Audelay in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 302, and through minute attention to the complexities of rhyme, metre, and stanzaic patterns to be found there, is able to reach what seems a juster assessment of Audelay's range and desire for experimentation than has hitherto been allowed. Audelay's certain blindness and possible deafness raise interesting questions about the compilation of MS Douce 302, and about the poet's relationship with his scribes and wider audience. A later poet's sense of his vocation and responsibility to his readers is at the heart of Vincent Gillespie's study of Skelton's *Replycacion*, which advances the claim that this poem's criticism of the poor training and ignorance of Thomas Arthur and Thomas Bilney is part of Skelton's construction of himself as a Christian *vates*. Cumulatively, these essays on specific poets contribute revealingly to a broader consideration of literary practice, and of contemporary reflections on this, across the period. John Burrow's contribution, which addresses itself specifically to Hoccleve's debt to French poets such as Machaut, Froissart, Granson, Deschamps, Chartier, and Christine de Pizan, raises in passing a number of other issues concerning Hoccleve's sense of his own practice, and what is revealed of this in the organization and production of his holograph manuscripts.

Like a number of these essays, Burrow's effectively combines detailed study with contextualizing literary history, and is able at the same time to indicate areas where further research might bear fruit. The remaining contributions to the volume all share something a generalizing literary – historical tendency, and contribute significantly to the sense that it is much more than a collection of disparate effusions of respect. Helen Phillips's full and fascinating account of 'Frames and Narrators in Chaucerian Poetry', illustrates from a number of texts a marked fifteenth-century taste for multiple narrators and for combinations of narrative strategy which work variation on and serve to problematize the established themes of the *dit amoureux*. Richard Firth Green takes a new look at 'The Ballad and the Middle Ages', amassing fresh evidence for the medieval origins of certain ballads, and offering *inter alia* a plausible suggestion about the possible ballad connections of the fragment 'Westron wynde'. Prompted by the difficulty of assessing the role of the women dancers in the play *Wisdom*, Malcolm Godden explores what can be reconstructed about performing women in the Middle Ages, in England and elsewhere, and directs his (often diverting) findings to a consideration of immorality in morality drama. Last of all in the volume comes Anne Hudson's brief but pointed review of John Bale's efforts to construct a literary history of

England, appropriate here both as a retrospective summary of the period which the essays cover, and as a prompt to consideration of the different methodologies of literary history which they employ. That both period and methodologies should prove of such interest is some measure of the example set by the work of Douglas Gray.

JULIA BOFFEY

THE ENGLISH CHURCH & THE PAPACY IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

Edited by C. H. Lawrence. Revised edition 1999. Sutton Publishing Stroud, £12.99 p/b

ISBN 0-7509-1947-7.

This volume of essays first appeared in 1965. To call this a revised edition, although literally correct, is perhaps to raise unfulfilled expectations. A new chapter has been added on the Anglo-Saxon church and the papacy – an elegant and tactful treatment by Veronica Ortenberg, which blends well into the rest of the book. Otherwise the 1965 chapters have been printed unchanged, although with the addition of up to date bibliographies. It is unclear who produced these, or on what basis they have been arranged – certainly neither alphabetical nor chronological. They are also rather patchy. The bibliography for the chapter on the fifteenth century, for instance, does not include Cliff Davies' 1987 article on John Morton and the Holy See, although it is highly relevant to issues raised in the chapter. But it is a comment on the extent to which recent research has tended to focus on 'popular' religion rather than on ecclesiastical institutions or the papacy that the reissued volume has not in fact dated very badly in over thirty years – any comparable survey of parochial religion, had one existed, would have fared much worse. There have been shifts of emphasis on detail, but this remains a valuable general survey – and one which, as Christopher Holdsworth points out on the cover, is still unrivalled.

Readers of *The Ricardian* are likely, however, to be disappointed. The final chapter, by F.R.H. du Boulay, is on the long fifteenth century. What that has meant in practice is an extensive discussion of the papal schism from 1378 to its resolution at Constance in 1415 and then fast forward to the end of the century. The intervening years are characterised, albeit slightly tentatively, as a period in which England 'appeared to withdraw into her own disorderly affairs' (p. 213) The author hastily adds that this is not an entirely fair picture, but then does nothing much to dispel it. The papal nuncio's involvement in the political crisis of 1459 is dismissed in half a sentence. Edward IV appears once, conniving in a notably

shrewd and pragmatic response to the vexed question of whether the English clergy should be taxed by the pope to support a crusade against the Turk. Richard III does not feature at all. Only with Henry VII, we are told, did England again count for something in European diplomacy, and hence seem worth papal interest. This, to put it mildly, begs some questions. But any late-twentieth-century reader will smile in rueful recognition at the author's account of European irritation with an England that refused to recognise its own insignificance, 'but considers itself better than all other Christian nations' (p. 235).

ROSEMARY HORROX

Notices of Books and Articles

The following list consists of recent books and articles, mainly published in the last twelve months, although earlier publications may be included. The appearance of an item does not preclude its subsequent review.

BOOKS

Anne Clark Bartlett and Thomas H. Bestul, editors, *Cultures of Piety. Medieval English Devotional Literature in Translation*. 1999. 256 pages. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, and London, £30.95 (cloth), £10.95 (paper).

ISBN 0-8014-3443-2 (cloth), 0-8014-8455-3 (paper)

This is an anthology with overall introduction, and brief introductions to each of the seven texts, followed by the translations, not all given in their entirety. There is an appendix of the texts in their original spellings. All were written, in English or Anglo-Norman, 1350-1450. The texts include *The Book of Holy Medicines*, *The Fifteen Oes*, and *The Privy of the Passion*.

Lister M. Matheson, *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle*, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 180. 1998. 388 pages. Tempe, Arizona. £30.

ISBN 0-86698-222-1

A reference book, the first survey of all manuscripts and versions of the middle English *Brut*. Includes an Introduction; a Classification of the Texts (the Common, Extended, Abbreviated and Peculiar Versions, each with sub-groups); sections on Unclassified Texts and Early Printed Editions, and indices of manuscripts and editions as well as persons and places.

Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, Book One. Translated by D. Wardle. 1999. 301 pages. Oxford, Clarendon Press, £40. ISBN 0-19-815016-4

A collection of stories which was ubiquitous in the middle ages; Edward IV certainly had a copy. Written in the Rome of Tiberius, it was a compendium of exempla taken from Greek and Roman history. There are nine books; this is a translation of only the first book which relates mainly to religious practices.

ARTICLES

Christopher Allmand, 'Entre honneur et bien commun: le témoignage du *Jouvencel* au xv^e siècle', *Revue historique*, volume 301, part 3, 1999, pages 463-81.

Looks at the text of this military / chivalric manual as a compendary on the changing values of knights and soldiers in fifteenth-century France, but also at the more general moral problems faced by the *Jouvencel*, such as the use of treachery to gain a bloodless victory for the common good.

David Brearley, 'The social, economic and intellectual life of Richard Depyng, Vicar of Fillongley (1487-1529)', in *The Salt of Common Life. Individuality and Choice in the Medieval Town, Countryside and Church. Essays Presented to J. Ambrose Raftis*, edited Edwin Brezette DeWindt, Kalamazoo, MI, 1995, (ISBN 1-879288-46-x) pages 485-512.

A reconstruction of Depyng's life and contacts at Fillongley, Buckinghamshire, with full transcript and illustration of his will. The will contains an interesting range of books.

Andrew Brown, 'Bruges and the Burgundian "theatre-state": Charles the Bold and Our Lady of the Snow', *History*, volume 84, number 276, October 1999, pages 573-89.

Contests the fashionable view about the dukes of Burgundy imposing ceremony on their subjects in the towns for their own ends, by describing Duke Charles' genuine involvement with this fraternity which included 'a good cross section of urban society'.

James R. Carlson and Peter W. Hammond, 'The English sweating sickness (1485 - c. 1551): a new perspective on disease etiology', *Journal of the History of Medicine*, volume 54, 1999, pages 23-54.

The English sweating sickness is a mysterious illness which struck England in 1485 and apparently returned at intervals until 1551, when it disappeared. The symptoms were well described in the sixteenth century and it is known not to have been one of the epidemic diseases, such as plague or typhus, prevalent at the time. This paper discusses the historical record, the clinical course of the disease and suggests a virus which may have caused it.

David Grummitt, 'Henry VII, chamber finance and the 'new monarchy': some new evidence', *Historical Research*, volume 72, number 179, October 1999, pages 229-43.

Re-examines Henry VII's use of the king's chamber as the main means of managing royal revenue, using newly discovered account books of two clerks of John Heron. Stories of Henry's wealth were not exaggerated. Henry's methods were not merely developments of Yorkist methods but went much further in attempting to solve the financial problems of late medieval English kings.

Maureen Jurkowski, 'Parliamentary and prerogative taxation in the reign of Edward IV', *Parliamentary History*, volume 18, part 3, 1999, pages 271-90.

While examining the theory and practice of Edward's innovations and his 'barrage of taxes' on the laity, especially in 1472-75, this provides a useful survey of the kind of taxes that he levied, such as benevolences and the alien subsidy.

S.J. Payling, 'County parliamentary elections in fifteenth-century England', *Parliamentary History*, volume 18, part 3, (1999), pages 237-59.

Analyses the figures behind the elections and in the process gives a useful survey of electionary rules and practices in the period. Suggests that 'the politics of intimidation ... were insufficiently subtle to carry an election' and concludes that local loyalties dominated.

Colin Richmond, 'The nobility and the Wars of the Roses: the parliamentary session of January 1461', *Parliamentary History*, volume 18, part 3, 1999, pages 261-269.

Complex discussion and explanation of a slip of parchment, supposed to be of January 1461 and containing two lists of names, the one of 'Yorkists, the other of 'neutrals'.

Joel T. Rosenthal, 'Some late medieval and mid-Tudor Norfolk MPs: compare and contrast', *Parliamentary History*, volume 18, part 3, (1999), pages 291-302.

Compares the backgrounds, careers and 'networks' of two groups of Norfolk MPs (1386-1421 and 1529-58) and finds indications, for example, of 'the greater importance or centrality' of Norfolk in the sixteenth century, and reminds one of the role of non-parliamentarians such as Sir Thomas Erpingham.

Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'Richard III and the knave of cards: an illuminator's model in manuscript and print, 1440s to 1990s', *The Antiquaries Journal*, volume 79, 1999, pages 257-99. Off-prints available for £3.50 including p&p from the Sales Office, PO Box 247, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5FF.

This article traces the development of the myth created in the 1780s, and popular ever since with (art) historians, that the figures in the presentation scene of Edward IV's copy of

Wavrin's 'Chronicles of England' are portraits. It shows that the scene, the figures and the faces are all based on standard models used by fifteenth-century illuminators, and that the supposed figure of 'Richard of Gloucester' in particular was very common. This figure occurs as the knave on playing cards as well as the Third King or Magi, and frequently in German, Italian and Flemish illustrations. 26 black and white plates.

Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'Jean de Wavrin and the English newsletters: the *Chronicle of the Rebellion in Lincolnshire*', *Current Research in Dutch and Belgian Universities and Polytechnics on Old English, Middle English and Historical Linguistics, Papers read at the Twentieth Research Symposium held in Utrecht on 11 December 1998*, edited by Henk Lemmen, Utrecht 1999, pages 47-69.

An attempt to find out more about the making of the so called *Chronicle of the Rebellion in Lincolnshire* (1470), its purpose and use on the continent.

Margaret Yates, 'Change and continuities in rural society from the later middle ages to the sixteenth century: the contribution of west Berkshire', *Economic History Review*, vol. 52, part 4, 1999, pages 617-37.

Suggests when and why sustained economic and population growth began to take over from the fluctuations of the fifteenth century, using the particular example of west Berkshire, which includes Newbury. The problems of regional variation (ecology, local government and the relationship between the towns and countryside) and the underlying causes of the growth are addressed. Change was variable even in the small area under study.

Notes on Contributors

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Emma J Bolden read History at the College of St Hild & St Bede, University of Durham. In 1998 she completed an MA in Medieval History under the supervision of Professor Richard Britnell.

Rosemary Horrox. Fellow of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. Author of *Richard III: a study of service*, Cambridge 1989.

Livia Visser-Fuchs is finishing a thesis on Jean de Wavrin's historical work and the reputation of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, in the Low Countries.

Peter J. Watson. A society member since 1993 with a long-standing interest in late medieval and renaissance warfare. At present researching the portrayal of warfare in contemporary sources.

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Daniel Williams, 'The hastily drawn up will of William Catesby Esquire, 25 August 1485', *Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*, vol. 51 (1975-6), p. 48.

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