

Book Reviews

PEASANTS AND HISTORIANS: Debating the Medieval English Peasantry. Phillipp R. Schofield. 2016. Manchester Medieval Studies, Manchester University Press, Manchester, £19.99 (pbk). ISBN 978-0-7190-5378-8

Historians, beginning with medieval chroniclers, have long discussed, debated and dissected the lives and activities of members of the upper ranks of medieval English society – kings, their queens, and the aristocracy – but the medieval English peasantry has only relatively recently come under the microscope of history. Here, in a comprehensive synthesis of the historical themes and debates relating to the medieval peasantry, Phillipp Schofield provides an overview and an assessment of the development of work on medieval peasants since the late nineteenth century. Aside from the fact that chroniclers and earlier historians were not interested in the lives of medieval lesser mortals, most of the available documentary records relate to, or were generated by, or for, those higher up the social scale and so it is only as historians have become more resourceful – and as more documents have come to light – that it has even been possible to reconstruct the milieu of medieval peasants.

First, who comprised the medieval English peasantry? Schofield notes that until the late 1970s historians did not examine closely the term ‘peasants’: few defined exactly they were discussing, but broadly they used the term to describe ‘a cohort of rural dwellers which included both the wealthier villein and free tenants of lords as well as those who were their economic and social inferiors, including cottagers, smallholders and even labourers with small plots of land’ (p. 21).

Early pioneering studies explored the institutions to which peasants owed service and discussed tenurial distinctions, the significance of serfdom and villeinage – not least because the most accessible documents were manorial records of various kinds, such as court rolls, rentals, and accounts. The next subject to be considered was the medieval economy, and how (or whether) peasants contributed to it. Schofield identifies three ‘supermodels’ that different historians have conceived as driving the medieval economy: 1) population movement and its determining factors; 2) the demands and constraints of the seigneurial economy and of resistance to it; 3) the development of commerce and the market (p. 57). These themes are dealt with in three very detailed chapters that bring together, in chronological order, the theses of the particular historians involved, beginning with Postan in relation to population movement; Kosminsky regarding lords and peasants; and Marxists, such as Hilton, on the peasant economy. As demonstrated by his copious endnotes, the depth and breadth of Schofield’s reading and analysis is breathtaking. The net result is that

he has summarised for the reader all of the discussions on, and arguments over, on these themes during the last century or more.

Part II examines the ways in which debates or particular avenues of research have emerged from the three themes discussed in Part I. Broadly speaking, these later chapters relate to the social history of the medieval peasantry: firstly, household size, life expectancy, fertility and other demographic themes; secondly, the evolution of the peasant household, and ‘gender and the study of peasant women’; thirdly, the ‘village community’ and the nature of peasant society; and fourthly, ‘peasant culture’. For this reviewer, this latter chapter is the most fascinating for it explains how to uncover a vast array of forms of peasant culture from a wide variety of sources. Many of these sources have been hidden in plain sight – contemporary literature, wills, inventories, archaeological finds, to name but a few – the main issue being how to interpret such sources, in particular, taking into account by whom they were generated and with what agenda. Nevertheless, the endnotes identify numerous studies that open windows onto the cultural world of the medieval peasant.

In his acknowledgements the author notes that the idea for this book was first mooted in 1996. That it took twenty years to come to fruition is scarcely surprising for the comprehensive nature of his research is truly heroic. Although not always an easy read, Schofield makes accessible virtually the whole canon of previous scholarship on medieval peasants. And he has brought to my attention a number of fascinating but relatively obscure studies that I now wish to track down and read. This book is a must for anyone with a serious interest in the ordinary folk of medieval England and the development of their history.

HEATHER FALVEY

CONTESTING THE CITY. The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns, 1250-1530. Christian D. Liddy. 2017. Oxford Studies in Medieval European History, Oxford University Press, £75. ISBN 978-0-19-870520-8

In this thought-provoking book Christian Liddy draws on and expands elements from his earlier work to re-examine the nature and limitations of medieval urban oligarchy. He takes issue with an approach that sees urban unrest as the result of warring factions among the elite and instead examines the variety of matters that concerned the freemen as a whole, believing that the consensus often indicated by the official archive hid the existence of popular opposition and debate.

The sub-title of the volume is *The Politics of Citizenship* and the body with which Liddy is almost entirely concerned, as contesting the power of the elite, consisted not of the population of a town at large, but of those adult males who had taken up the freedom. The relationship of this (in itself) elite body to the entire urban population varied not only from town to town, but also over time, from possibly a quarter of all adult males in York in the late fourteenth century

to as many as three quarters in London by the mid sixteenth (p. 22). The contest he describes, therefore, is not between the ruling elite and the urban community as a whole but between the elite and non-elite elements of the freemen. In recognition of this, Liddy devotes his first chapter after the introduction to the whole subject of citizens and citizenship. Subsequent chapters build up his argument through discussion of attitudes to encroachment and enclosure (Space: Boundaries), disputes over mayoral and other elections (Civic Time: Elections), the expression of public opinion (Communication: Sound and Sight) and the nature of written urban constitutions (Written Constitutions: Text and Object). This brief summary does not do justice to the content of these chapters. 'Space' includes sections on the mayoral riding of the bounds and ecclesiastical precincts; 'Civic Time' begins with a discussion of the importance of time in an urban context; 'Communication' looks at the appearance of the written bill in the fifteenth century and considers official as well as seditious communications. In studying these issues Liddy has chosen to concentrate on London and the major provincial centres of Bristol, Coventry, Norwich and York. These were the largest and wealthiest towns in England, all with substantial archives, and Liddy stresses their similarities rather than treating any of them (London included) as exceptional. Another recurrent theme is the need for a wider comparison. In size these five were 'on a par with some of the greater towns of continental Europe' (p. 18) and there are constant references throughout to continental practice. It is no criticism of the volume that some arguments are inevitably skewed towards the second half of its date-range. Although discussion goes back to the thirteenth century much of the detail comes from the late fourteenth to early sixteenth centuries. This is the natural result of the expansion of civic records well described in Sarah Rees Jones' recent article, 'Emotions, speech and the art of politics in fifteenth-century York: *House Books*, mystery plays and Richard Duke of Gloucester' (*Urban History*, vol. 44, 2017, pp. 586-603).

As may be gathered from what has been said, Liddy's argument throughout is complex and many-layered. However, the content is well signposted by subheadings within the chapters and there are occasional unexpected sidelights on urban life, such as the reference to the Norwich journeyman who had won money from his fellows in a game of tennis in 1504 (p. 141).

ELIZABETH RUTLEDGE

BEDS AND CHAMBERS IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND. Readings, Representations and Realities. Hollie L.S. Morgan. 2017. York Medieval Press, Boydell and Brewer, Woodbridge, £60.00. ISBN 978-1-903153-71-0

A number of recent publications have discussed the furnishings of the late medieval house as well as the concept of domesticity among wealthy townspeople. Hollie Morgan takes this work further by analysing the cultural ideas underlying the bed and the chamber in late medieval England. She has produced a clearly written, thoroughly researched interdisciplinary study, drawing her illustrations from both historical and literary sources dating from the period c.1300-c.1540. Her discussion is based on the male-authored but anonymous late medieval text, 'Rise Early', which was widely known and which laid down the behaviour a man should adopt throughout the day from rising early in the morning to going to bed at night. His wife is only mentioned once, and Morgan fills the gap by discussing the woman's role in the chamber in her final chapter.

The book concentrates on the ideas that lay behind the bed and the chamber, and the discussion is inevitably focused on the nobility, gentry and wealthy townspeople; poorer people would not have been able to afford elaborate beds and certainly would not have had a separate chamber in their houses. The beds for the wealthy had cultural meaning, reminding them of their ancestors and their own status; this is brought out in late medieval wills recording bequests of beds, coverlets and curtains to family members.

The bed was intimately involved with the man's duty to serve God which is the second precept in the text. It was a place for dreams and visions, as well as for meditation and prayer, partly asking for God's protection that the sleeper would not suffer physical or spiritual harm during the night. Margery Kempe encountered God when she was in bed, and Cecily Neville's daily life included reading and praying in her chamber. The chamber as well as the bed had religious connotations as seen in the religious objects kept there, such as the crucifix mentioned in the will of John Baret, the religious images, wall paintings and hangings. Private prayer in the chamber supplemented public attendance at mass in the parish church.

After rising early and serving God, a number of precepts were given as to behaviour during the day. The man was advised to do his work wisely, answer people courteously and enjoy his dinner and supper but not over-eat or get drunk. This was a time when he was very much in the public eye but the bed and the chamber still had a part to play. The chamber, associated with integrity and good judgement, might be the place where administrative decisions were taken; at the king's court, his chamber was responsible for finance and policy, and council meetings might well be held there. The chamber was not a public space like the hall; it was rather a meeting-place for trusted friends and colleagues.

At the end of the day, the man was recommended to go to bed happily. The chamber was the place for enjoyment as well as for sleeping and meetings. As

lords withdrew from eating in the hall in the late Middle Ages, they took their meals in the chamber. The chamber was also the setting for music, chess and games of dice, and for reading aloud. It was also the place where emotions were expressed, as at a time of mourning.

The bed and the chamber were also the place for sexual activity. The precepts in 'Rise Early' mention sexual activity between husband and wife; the man is urged to love his wife and the sexual relationship should be happy. The author was concerned with sexual relations which were sanctioned by the church, and the marriage bed was blessed by the priest as part of the wedding ceremony. The chamber was also the place where husband and wife had private conversations, symbolic of the trust between them. Adultery might take place in the chamber but was regarded as the violation of someone else's bed. Rape was portrayed as taking place outside the chamber, often outdoors or during a journey; the woman was regarded as vulnerable when she was out of the chamber.

With attention in 'Rise Early' centred on the man, Morgan discusses the woman in her final chapter, and uses Biblical and medieval examples to show that women's work lay within the household while men's role lay outside. The chamber was in fact the wife's special place which she furnished with her own purchases, where her children were born, where the family was nursed and nurtured, and which she shared with her husband. Most women had this private role, while their husbands were responsible for public duties. Certainly some women exercised power in the public sphere, but they only did this if no man was available to do so. Such women were often widows or wives whose husbands were absent; once the husband returned he took power back into his own hands.

In this book Hollie Morgan has provided new approaches to the cultural history of England in the late Middle Ages. The book's importance lies in its discussion of the concepts underlying everyday objects, such as the bed. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach she has been able to illustrate the concepts in detail, and this work can be taken further in the future.

JENNIFER WARD

HELMSLEY CASTLE. John R. Kenyon. 2017. English Heritage Guidebooks, London, £3.50.

ISBN 978-1-910907-15-3

John Kenyon's second publication for English Heritage is a worthy addition to the now iconic 'red guide' series. At forty-eight pages it is longer and larger than its forty page predecessor being the guidebook by Jonathan Clark of 2004, revised 2014. It is, in fact, the fourth guidebook on Helmsley since it was taken into state care in 1923. As one would expect, Kenyon takes interpretation and presentation to an even higher level than before – no mean feat given the quality of Clark's booklet, itself an impressive and handsome achievement. The

fine reconstruction images of the castle in circa 1400 and circa 1600 are illuminating, appearing here for the first time but it is a pity that English Heritage elected to omit the images of how the castle, especially the outer face of the south barbican, appeared c.1300, which were included in Clark's booklet. Those showed the impressive hoardings on the parapet walls and placed the whole castle in its landscape setting.

Whenever visiting Helmsley castle, its most striking feature remains its tremendous earthworks. A formidable system of double ditches and ramparts encircle the inner platform in an approximately sub-rectangular plan. They are, as Kenyon observes, among the most impressive of any castle in the country. It is difficult to know quite when they reached their fullest development in the medieval period and this question seems to be, understandably, avoided. What is clear though is that they were cleared of vegetation and debris and somewhat sculpted by otherwise unemployed labourers in the Depression of the early 1930s. As Kenyon (and Clark before him) notes, an original gap (Kenyon) or gaps (Clark) in the southern rampart between the two ditches were then filled in making that part of the circuit even more striking than before. The inclusion of l'Anson's plan of 1913 would have made the point clear but there is only so much one can do even in such a lengthened guide as this. A further point worth making is that Kenyon's guide omits the plan in the 2004 guide which suggested how visitors would be led right around the castle before being permitted access via the south barbican and inner gate complex. That interpretation conformed with similar thoughts on contrived approaches to castles elsewhere in order to impress visitors; valid or not for those other sites, it is by no means certain that it operated at Helmsley so the omission is sensible.

The masonry castle occupying the central platform is fascinatingly convoluted and plainly the result of several different building periods. One striking feature is the seemingly awkward right-angle kink along the line of the south wall which may be explained as the terminus of the early wall dividing the platform in two, as created by the castle's likely founder, Walter Espec in the first half of the twelfth century. That point on the south wall was subsequently elaborated into the West Tower, 'one of the finest examples of a solar tower in the country'. (p. 13). Its five floor plans are cleverly depicted showing how sophisticated this twelfth-fourteenth centuries structure functioned – a really useful advance on the previous guidebook which offered no plan. Kenyon has studied this tower in depth: his fuller analysis is the subject of a piece in a forthcoming *festschrift* to be published by the Castles Study Group. On the other hand, the cross-section of the East Tower (p. 7) incorrectly depicts the vaults at basement level with a single span, a detail that was in fact correct in Clark's booklet. This infelicity will have been an element of the editorial team's contribution rather than Kenyon's.

An especially interesting attribute of Helmsley's defences are its two barbicans. The more elaborate is that at the southern end, implying, as Kenyon mentions, that it was considered to be the main entrance. It began as an outer screen of a twin-towered gatehouse and curtain terminating in further towers

and was only subsequently linked to the main *enceinte* by flanking walls. At the north end, (which the 2004 guide rather enigmatically called ‘the former principal public entrance’) the barbican arrangement was quite different, its outer masonry twin-towered gateway never acquiring stone walls on either side or linking with the main circuit. Might this ever have been contemplated but simply never implemented? Either way, by the mid-fourteenth century, the castle had reached its zenith as a fortification, all subsequent works concentrating on domestic facilities.

After Espec’s death in c.1154, Helmsley passed to the de Ros family by marriage with Espec’s sister. This family held the castle throughout the centuries up to the Wars of the Roses when their adherence of the Lancastrian cause cost them their lands and the head of the then Lord Ros. Kenyon’s history makes many references to the various Ros lords who developed the castle; it would have been an extra to have had a family tree as he provided with the Nevills in his earlier guidebook to Middleham. Ricardians will know that during the Yorkist period, the castle was held by Clarence and on his death by Richard when Duke of Gloucester, one of numerous northern castles he acquired. The castle’s post-medieval history is also well covered. After reverting to the Ros family after Bosworth, it shortly passed into the possession of the Manners family who held it until well into the seventeenth century. Kenyon’s guidebook illustrates attractively how the northern half of the main *enceinte* became a Tudor mansion, complete with new chapel, long gallery, heightened latrine block and garden among other adaptations. He goes on to describe the Civil War siege of 1644 in considerable detail before final sections on the town and the castle when in the possession of the Duncombes (Lords Feversham from 1826). In the eighteenth century, they landscaped the surrounding lands and had Duncombe Park House built leaving the then partly quarried away old castle to slumber as a romantic, ivy-covered ruin until rescued by the state almost a hundred years ago.

JAMES PETRE

‘A VERRAY PARFIT PRAKTISOUR’: Essays Presented to Carole Rawcliffe. Edited by Linda Clark and Elizabeth Danbury. 2017, Boydell and Brewer, Woodbridge, £60. ISBN 978-1-78327-180-1

The nine essays in this book, journeying from pre-Conquest Norwich to twenty-first-century Turkey *via* medieval London, range more widely than in most *Festschriften*, although three do focus on aspects of the history of medieval medicine, a field in which Carole Rawcliffe’s contribution over the last two decades has been transformational. The editors have also sought to reflect Professor Rawcliffe’s considerable influence as a teacher, supervisor and mentor, and also as editor and collaborator on projects which have often extended well outside her own period of study. It would be unreasonable to

expect a volume of manageable size to mirror the full range of her achievements, but to these the warm opening tributes and an appended bibliography of Carole Rawcliffe's published works, 1976-2016, together bear witness. The prefatory 'Tributes' also illuminate her part in making the University of East Anglia at Norwich the vibrant centre for the study of medieval history that it is today, and five of the nine essayists are current or former UEA staff, students or associates.

The opening essay, by Brian Ayers, '*Coslania*, Norwich: an Archaeological Contribution to Early Medieval Urban History', is one of two which focus entirely on Norwich: in this case, a part of the city once described as 'an archaeological wasteland'. Given the debt which Norwich owes to Carole's Rawcliffe's work as co-editor of the two-volume history of Norwich which appeared in 2004 (Ayers was also the opening contributor to its first volume, *Medieval Norwich*), this reappraisal of archaeological and documentary evidence for the early development of Coslany, and its implications for the city as a whole, is an appropriate start.

Nicholas Vincent's provocatively titled 'A Queen in Rebel London, 1215-17' – the eponymous 'queen', Isabella of Gloucester, was never crowned, nor described as queen – is a spin-off from the Magna Carta Project, of which Professor Vincent was the prime mover and lead researcher. Some spin-offs, however, are also class acts, and this is one: although Isabella herself remains a shadowy figure, Vincent weaves a compelling narrative of events in London between May 1215, when the city was seized and held by rebel barons (among them Isabella's second husband, Geoffrey de Mandeville), and its surrender in 1217, while also showcasing the potential of title deeds to illuminate much more than the development of the estates to which they relate. An appendix presents the text of five such deeds, or charters, executed by Geoffrey de Mandeville and by Isabella herself, as Geoffrey's widow, four of them published here for the first time, followed by a list of around 130 people (including one woman) named in witness lists to deeds executed in London during the civil war.

The subject of the third, and longest, essay, 'Defensive Officials and Defensive Levies in Fourteenth-Century Muster Rolls: an East Anglian Perspective', by John Alban, may appear surprising in the context of this *Festschrift*. However, the extent of individual liability – applying to all able-bodied men from sixteen to sixty – to contribute to the defence of the realm was so wide-ranging that an understanding of the processes which translated military obligation into the mustering of defensive forces is essential to anyone with an interest in political organisation, social networking and status at all levels of late medieval society. A lucid exposition of the mechanics of the system is complemented by evidence from the relatively small number of surviving muster rolls, the majority of which relate to East Anglia. Two tables provide an at-a-glance guide to the arms requirements of the statute of Winchester and the hierarchy of defensive officials in the 1330s; a third sets out

the numbers of men and their arms in the five *vintaines* of Conesford, one of the sub-leets of Norwich, in 1355. This forcefully illustrates one of Dr Alban's most striking findings: the markedly superior levels of arming in urban areas.

At the heart of the book are two contributions to the history of medieval medicine. The protagonist of Hannes Kleineke's 'Lettice Oo? Queen Isabella's Accidental Apothecary' is Lettice Oo, formerly Waddesworth, née Berewyk, c.1368-c.1428; her (indirect) royal client, Isabella of Valois, Richard II's child-queen. Through marriages to two successive apothecaries, Lettice, as both wife and widow, followed an 'accidental' career as an apothecary herself. This is a stylish account of the career patterns of apothecaries, including women, in London, and their relationship with physicians, while also, through the footnotes, gracefully highlighting the indebtedness of scholars in this field to Carole Rawcliffe. An appendix provides the text of two entries in the plea roll, 1407, relating to Lettice's efforts to recover debts still due to her late husband, William Waddesworth.

Christopher Bonfield, in 'The First Instrument of Medicine: Diet and Regimens of Health in Late Medieval England', surveys the scanty evidence for the transmission of medical ideas and trends among the middle and lower classes. Dietary understanding and advice was increasingly widely disseminated from the fourteenth century onwards, through translation into the vernacular, reading and passing on advice orally, while the regulation of food trades and industries demonstrates widespread awareness of links between diet and health. As today, the ready availability of medical knowledge, did not, of itself, necessarily result in such advice – which at this period, of course, had a strong and inseparable religious aspect – being followed.

In 'Politics and Piety: Norwich City Churches, Commemoration and Networking for the Afterlife', another of Professor Rawcliffe's former students, Carole Hill, opens with a reminder of how completely a religious perspective pervaded everyday life. Centred on two couples commemorated by brasses in St Giles's parish church, Norwich, her essay highlights a trend in funerary provision away from ostentatious memorials towards simpler, albeit still durable, monuments. Biographies of the two fifteenth-century Norwich aldermen and mayors, Robert Baxter and Richard Purdans, and their wives, then widows, Christina and Margaret, neatly exemplify the blend of mercantile success, political activity and piety which was common to most leading citizens, but also reveal particular and personal religious interests. Robert Baxter, for example, supported in his will a group of women described as 'sisters living together', while Margaret Purdans herself chose to live as a vowess after being widowed.

Returning from England's second city to its first, and from ecclesiastical to secular organising principles, Caroline Barron's 'Telling the Time in Chaucer's London' is a short and entertaining bid to find out why medieval London, unlike its continental parallels, had no grand civic belfry, despite evidence for the use of clock time from the fourteenth century. She concludes that a clock on the church tower of St Pancras may have served the purpose, and, in passing,

throws out a challenge to other urban centres with ‘copious records’: might they contain hitherto unnoticed evidence of the spread of public clocks in other English towns?

Jean Agnew’s ‘The Bankrupt Bibliophile, William Paston, second Earl of Yarmouth (1654-1732)’ could be seen as a postscript to her edition, for Norfolk Record Society, of letters of the first earl (*The Whirlpool of Misadventures*). In fact, it is much more: an admirably clear and absorbing account of the family’s descent from its seventeenth-century high point, as the recently ennobled, richest gentry family in Norfolk, to financial disaster. William Paston himself left no personal correspondence, but the nature of his extensive library gives a feel for his interests, and an appendix lists some of his books.

The final, and shortest, essay, described by the author as an ‘exotic footnote’, is Peregrine Horden’s ‘Ottomans, Neo-Ottomans and Invented Tradition in Hospital Music Therapy’. This scrutinises possible, but ultimately unconvincing, precedents for a 21st-century therapeutic practice which its exponents believe to be a revival of an ancient tradition. Horden notes that ‘... specialists have cited and cited again a tiny clutch of later medieval, but pre-Ottoman, instances without quite enough source criticism or contextualising’.

Most readers of this book are likely to be homing in on a specific topic or period, but may well find themselves profitably diverted. The index will help them, but is slightly let down by a lack of local knowledge: Thetford has been wrongly placed in Cambridgeshire, while Lynn has been indexed under ‘Bishop’s Lynn’, without a cross-reference under ‘Lynn’, let alone the modern form, King’s Lynn. No concessions are made to readers who do not have Latin or French.

The title (*‘A Verray Parfit Praktisour’*), taken from Geoffrey Chaucer’s ‘General Prologue’ to *The Canterbury Tales*, is inspired by the dedicatee’s chapter on ‘The Doctor of Physic’ in *Historians on Chaucer* (Oxford 2014), in which she noted previous failures ‘to examine medieval medical practice in its proper context’. If there is a common theme underpinning this collection, it is one of approach: of examining topics, and the evidence for them, in their ‘true and perfect’ contexts.

SUSAN MADDOCK

RELIGION, TIME AND MEMORIAL IN LATE MEDIEVAL RIPON.

Stephen Werronen. 2017. Royal Historical Society Studies in History, and The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, £50.

ISBN 978-0-86193-345-7

Late Medieval Ripon was distinctive. Just as the county palatine of Durham was St Cuthbert’s patrimony, so the liberty and parish of Ripon was St Wilfrid’s domain. It was much smaller, its privileges were less extensive and its structure more complex. Nevertheless, while the people of Durham were the saint’s special folk, the parishioners of Ripon were under St Wilfrid’s special care. This

thorough exploration of the cult of St Wilfrid in 'the long fifteenth century' reveals the means by which in life and death he was the spiritual patron of his people.

The liberty of Ripon, in fact of two two liberties, was a large parish of eighty square miles lying between Knaresborough and Masham. The liberty that is the subject of this work was held by the chapter of Ripon Minster; the archbishop of York held the other. The chapter's liberty included not only most of the significant market town of Ripon, but also five manors in the extended parish, held of the chapter by 'Marmion's tenure', which required an oath of fealty to St Wilfrid. Sanctuary existed within a mile of the Minster, the bounds being marked by eight roadside crosses around the town. In addition the parish was a peculiar within the archdeaconry of Richmond, in which the chapter exercised archidiaconal authority. Dr Werronen makes full use of the chapter records and the early fifteenth century Ripon Psalter to establish the structure and administration of the chapter's liberty and to examine the liturgical cycle and the provision of prayers for the dead.

In theory, seven canons served the Minster. There was no dean: the senior canon presided over chapter meetings. The principal officers were the treasurer, chamberlain and fabric wardens. In fact there were very few residential canons. From 1303 their spiritual duties were performed by vicars, each assigned an altar in the Minster. There were eleven altars, apart from the high altar, not all identifiable by their dedications. The vicars were incorporated in the fifteenth century and had their own collegiate accommodation. They were assisted by a considerable number of chaplains, serving chapels in two hospitals in the town, guilds, chantries in the Minster and a number of chapels in the surrounding villages (and one or two in manor houses), which operated in many respects as parish churches, conducting marriages and baptisms. Parishioners were only required to attend the Minster at Easter and on the principal feasts of St Wilfrid. By the middle of the fifteenth century even the vicars were largely absent; prominent chaplains administered the liberty as commissaries for the senior canon, sub-treasurers and chamberlains and fabric wardens.

The Ripon Psalter provides full details of the liturgical cycle in the Minster, with its emphasis on the half year from Christmas. The Rogation Procession leading up to Ascension Day was particularly significant. It took three days to circumnavigate the parish bounds; The relics of St Wilfrid were taken from his shrine and supposedly carried by the Marmion tenants, accompanied by senior clerics and paraded around with banners flying. In 1481, for which a detailed description survives, none of the Marmion tenants – the gentry – canons or vicars attended. The procession was made up of husbandmen and chaplains. Nevertheless the ritual was the principal occasion on which the identity of the whole community was celebrated. Of the other feasts of St Wilfrid, the Nativity and Deposition were the more important, on which occasions parishioners were expected to attend the Minster.

St Wilfrid acted in death as well as life for his people. There were some six guilds offering prayers for dead members. The most prominent, and the one to which leading town people belonged, was the Guild of the Holy Ghost, with its altar before the screen at the east end of the Minster nave. The nave in effect acted as the parish church of the town. The gentry had their own chantries and burial places, not all in the Minster. The best recorded was that of the Markenfield family before the altar of St Andrew in the north transept, where the family sponsored a perpetual chantry. Two tombs survive.

The town of Ripon was not self-governing. It was in effect run by the chapter, and in particular the commissary of the senior canon. It exercised considerable authority on the behaviour of townspeople and villagers alike in preserving the peace, protecting the sanctuary and the guarding morals. Penance, required to be undertaken in ritual procession and distinct clothing, was, as elsewhere, an unpleasant but perhaps effective means of naming and shaming.

The character of Ripon's religious life and special relationship with St Wilfrid comes vividly to life in these pages. Its vigour is apparent, but reliance by the end of the fifteenth century on chaplains to sustain administration and rituals reveals that the chapter was moribund. The chaplain, Christopher Kendale from a local lesser gentry family, is picked out as representative of his kind in Yorkist England. He was the commissary of the senior canon, subtreasurer and on occasion fabric warden. He led the rogation procession in 1481. It was men like him who in fact were the keepers of St Wilfrid's flame.

The work as a study of the chapter's liberty, does not extend, understandably, to the archbishop of York's (which included Fountains Abbey). Archbishop Kempe appears fleetingly because of his attempt in the 1440s to impose tolls on the tenants of Knaresborough at the Ripon fairs, which he controlled. Many of his tenants were drawn into the ensuing conflict: but we do not know what impact this had on the chapter tenants. This work does have within its scope the politics of the Minster Chapter and its half a dozen or so 'Marmion tenants'. One was John Kendale, elder brother of the chaplain Christopher,, possibly kinsmen of Richard III's secretary. The political affiliations of the other gentry of the parish, Wards and Malorys with Percy, Markenfields and Pigots with Neville (and subsequently Richard III), similarly fall outside its scope.

The reader must not expect to find here a full history of late-medieval Ripon or a discussion of the wider political engagement of its leading parishioners. As its title makes clear it is a work on the practice of religion as manifested in the cult of St Wilfrid. As such it provides valuable additional light on the vitality of English religious life at the ground level at the same time as revealing the institutional shortcomings of the church on the eve of the Reformation.

A.J. POLLARD

MEDIEVAL ST ANDREWS: Church, Cult, City. Edited by Michael Brown and Katie Stevenson. 2017. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge: Boydell Press, £60. ISBN 978-1-78327-168-9

The name of Britain's most famous golf course derives from a kneecap, upper arm bone, three fingers and a tooth. While the modern international renown of St Andrew's may be founded on the pastime of late-medieval burgesses messing about on the common links, its medieval attraction lay in a few relics of St Peter's brother which somehow or other supposedly found their way to the coast of Fife.

Brown and Stevenson have brought together a team of scholars to provide a full and comprehensive account of medieval St Andrews until 1559, when Roman Catholicism was swept away. The aim, in the editors' words, 'to consider St Andrews as a centre with multiple roles and communities, and to examine the nature of these in different periods and with an eye to overlap and interaction', is convincingly achieved. Brown and Stevenson provide an introduction that neatly sums up the content and argument that emerges from the succeeding fourteen interlinked essays. Set chronologically, the first deal with the origins of the church and settlement, the cult of St Andrews and its attraction to pilgrims (Simon Taylor, Ian Campbell, Tom Turpie). These lead into four that consider the burgh and its interrelationship with the church, its ritual year and its property (David Ditchburn, Elizabeth Ewan, Matthew Hammond, Michael Brown and Bess Rhodes). Finally a group concentrates on the early history of the university (Norman H. Reid, Roger A. Mason and Katie Stevenson). The broad narrative they provide is interspersed with and illuminated by chapters on ecclesiastical architecture (Richard Fawcett), the archaeology of the town (Derek W. Hall with Catherine Smith), and the history and design of the surviving fifteenth-century university maces (Julian Luxford). Finally, the text is supported by deep textual analysis of the earliest accounts of the foundation of St Andrews and discussion of the origins of the name 'The Boar's Raik' given to the land first granted to the church (Simon Taylor) and the texts of two medieval charters (Matthew Hammond). It is also supported by a detailed analysis of the earliest foundation myths.

Conventionally a reviewer of a collection of essays such as this says a few words about each. But this volume is so carefully commissioned and constructed that it is much more like a monograph. So, one who is painfully ignorant of the finer points of Scottish history, will endeavour to sum up what the whole volume reveals to a Sassenach and hope that the individual authors will not be upset that their contributions are not discussed in greater detail. For once the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The turning point in the history of the cathedral church and burgh lay in the mid-twelfth century. There is a murky history of a settlement, known by a different name, and of an early church stretching back to the eighth century at least, upon which the greatest light humanly possible is shone. The relics were

there by then; the name was changed in the eleventh. Two foundations transformed and created the future St Andrews : the establishment of an Augustinian prior to serve the cathedral in 1140 and the creation of a burgh shortly afterwards. The monastery displaced an earlier community of secular priests who had served the cathedral, rather like the Benedictine house at Durham replaced a secular community at Durham fifty years earlier. However, while the Durham canons were suppressed, the seven priest of the ascetic Celtic order of culdees (from *céli dé*, servants of God) carried on next door for another two centuries, still disputing the right of the Augustinians to elect their bishop.

There was an urban settlement outside the ecclesiastic precinct before the mid-twelfth century. This was given a formal independent status as a burgh, with a market, a monopoly and rights over the adjacent area, and a guild merchant. Initially ecclesiastical and urban settlements were conceived as two interdependent quarters. The one thriving as a centre of pilgrimage, which was at its most popular in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; the other serving the ecclesiastical institutions, the needs of pilgrims and developing its own commercial economy. The town's physical growth is carefully reconstructed. The initial plan, with two streets radiating out from the ecclesiastical site, it is suggested, was deliberately modelled on the relationship between the Vatican Palace and its adjacent *borgo*. Thus, St Andrew's, home of some of the relics of St Peter's brother, may have seen itself as the Rome of the north.

The attractiveness of St Andrew's as a destination for pilgrims declined after 1400. The burgh, which developed its own domestic service industries, a complex relationship with its region, and its own commercial networks overseas, never became one of the front-rank urban centres of Scotland. Whether cause or effect, during the fifteenth century it became more ecclesiastically dominated, in terms of religious foundations (churches, friaries, chapels and hospitals), the scale of the urban property owned by these institutions, and the influence exercised by bishops and priors alike on its affairs directly and through their favoured servants. But above all it became a university town.

The history of higher learning in St Andrew's is traced back to before the foundation of the Augustinian priory, but the priory, which built up a splendid library, took this learning to a new level. Whereas monastic houses in England restricted their educational provision to schools and set up colleges and residential houses in Oxford or Cambridge for the higher education of their brethren, in Scotland the first university, founded by Bishop Henry Wardlaw in 1412, grew out of the Augustinian Priory. By 1525 the university had four colleges, but small, underfunded and, dogged by infighting, it struggled to survive. The first rector and dean of arts, Laurence of Lindores, was also, as papal inquisitor, the principal persecutor of heretics.

The collection builds on and enhances a long tradition of research and writing on St Andrews. It offers both a new overview as well as additional

evidence and fresh insights. For years to come, it will surely be a source for scholars and others who are pursuing not only the history of St Andrews but also the wider subject of Scottish medieval history.

Perhaps one may end, however, with two observations of current relevance. One is the European influence on the development of medieval St Andrews. Many of the early burgesses were attracted from Flanders. Laurence of Lindores was educated at the university of Paris. The model for the curriculum and structure of the new university at St Andrews was that institution. Heresy in the fifteenth century appears to have been influenced as much by Hus as by Wycliffe. The history of medieval St Andrews confirms that Scotland has always been culturally close to the continent of Europe. The other observation is that medieval St Andrews, long before the foundation of its university or the first recorded 'playing at golf', was a distinguished centre of historical writing. This volume, put together by a group of scholars working at, or closely associated with, the university, confirms, if confirmation were needed, that in the twenty-first century it still is.

A. J. POLLARD

CECILY DUCHESS OF YORK. J. L. Laynesmith. 2017. Bloomsbury Academic, £85 (£76.50 online; e-book £84 or £76.49; Ricardians are promised 35% off at the publisher's and a cheaper paperback version is to follow soon)

ISBN 978-1-4742-7225-4

It is impossible not to be surprised, not to say shocked, by the price of this book, a study of 262 pages, with very small print (how many bright-eyed eight-year olds did the publisher expect to be interested?), no colour illustrations (for a period that produced such magnificent works of art!), a slightly mean looking cover (why not have the image all over the book in its full splendour?) and endnotes of the most irritating variety (helpfully marked with the running title *Notes!*).

Let the prospective reader take comfort from the fact that though the packaging may not be perfect and the price off-putting (at least for the time being) the contents are beyond reproach, and details for which the author herself was presumably responsible, such as the seven family trees and the *choice* of illustrations (paid for by the Richard III and Yorkist History Trust), are just as they should be. It is also very much the author's achievement that this biography has not turned into a rehearsal of the lives of her husband and royal sons, repeating the same events from a slightly different perspective, but manages to be a genuinely separate study of an individual woman's life. This is partly done by describing such 'feminine' occasions as Cecily's own baptism by using what is known about contemporary christenings in general and lingering for a while with the subject of a girl's education or matchmaking in the fifteenth century.

The story is divided into quite short periods of Cecily's life, following the events around her, which consisted mainly, of course, of what happened to the men in her life: for example her husband's changing status and death, her eldest son's accession, marriage, exile and return and the disappearance of her last son. These periods and this dependency on her men are dramatically encapsulated in the titles that Cecily was able to use in the course of her life: Duchess of York, the King's Mother, Wife of the Rightful Inheritor, Queen of Right, and finally, the Queen's Grandmother. Each chapter is again divided helpfully into several sections, which no doubt enabled the author to focus her mind and her research and certainly helps the reader to find the facts he or she is looking for.

As in most biographies of medieval women today there is a wish to establish that the subject of the book was a 'strong' woman, exercising her own kind of authority and finding her own power base, witness the studies of Margaret of York by Harry Schnitker and that of Isabel of Portugal, Duchess of Burgundy, by Monique Sommé. The fact that at times these women may indeed not have done much more than bear children and wave their men good-bye has become totally unacceptable, and it is true, of course, that these particular aristocratic wives and mothers had great opportunities for acquiring land and riches and, through those, influence over an extended network of men and women lower down the social scale and dependent on their 'good ladyship'. In the present book much of Cecily's possible exercise of power is deduced from the role played by the people in her service, sometimes their fate, especially those administering her varying collection of lands. As a consequence there is much valuable discussion of the lands she owned and who granted them to her and why.

Cecily's emotional involvement in the 'adventures' of her husband and sons is, to me, one of the most fascinating and mystifying aspects of her life. What did she really think about Richard's taking of the throne? How, above all, did she cope with the accession of Henry VII? Did she really live contentedly throughout those last ten years of her life, deriving comfort from the fact that her granddaughter, Elizabeth of York, was now queen and that she was comfortably established? In the present book there is an emphasis on her being 'fiercely loyal' to Edward IV, but her relationship with Richard is painted in very muted colours, without any doubt because the sources reveal so little and the documents that should bear witness to the nature of their contact are so conventional and formal. Even here, when trying to gauge the relations between mother and son, it is the careers of Cecily's servants – their being employed by Richard or not, knighted by him or not – that have to be used as evidence. In this same context a curious piece of 'proof' is put forward by the author: she assumes it is unlikely that Cecily was actively 'driving' Richard's policy, because if she had done so Henry VII would not have treated her so benevolently. It is more likely that Henry, like everybody else, then and now, had no idea what Cecily's real views had been, because a woman's and a mother's influence was inherently exercised 'behind the scenes' and out of sight.

For many years this new and so far unique biography of Cecily of York will remain definitive. Its scholarship is impeccable and its style very readable. Inevitably the less well-informed reader will get a bit lost among all the people and events that had to be included, but that is to be blamed on the period covered, not the author. What could perhaps have been added is a new edition of Cecily's interesting will, and I would like to point out that the mysterious gallica reference among the websites listed at the end of the bibliography, if correctly typed in, takes the reader to the magnificent, complete and full-colour digitised manuscript of the Neville Hours at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms Latin 1158 (figs 2.1 and 2.2 in the book), which is a joy to scroll through and may make up for the sad lack of colour in Laynesmith's otherwise excellent study.

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

LATE MEDIEVAL CASTLES. Edited by Robert Liddiard. 2016. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, £60. ISBN 978-1-78327-033-0

In 2003, Professor Liddiard edited a volume called *Anglo-Norman Castles* – a selection of nineteen important articles which had earlier appeared in various journals. The papers dealt with castles until c.1225 which as Liddiard says in his introduction to the present volume, was something of an arbitrary cut-off date. *Late Medieval Castles* is the companion volume, bringing together seventeen previously published articles and which also can be said to be among the most prominent of those written on the subject. The object of both books is to provide a convenient means of accessing these various papers without the need to hunt around for the originals, some of which first appeared in rather obscure periodicals.

The refreshing theme of this later collection, both stated and implied, is that most of the period in question, that is from about 1300 onwards, was not a period of decline as was once held out. That view was based on looking at castles from the narrow perspective of military architecture only, ignoring their other, several *raisons d'être*. We know better now, through a greater attention to the roles they played in aristocratic culture and more generally in society and its economy. This modern approach, seeing the post 1300 period as a continuation of development is spearheaded in the first article, called 'Fourteenth-Century Castles in Context: Apotheosis or Decline?' This is one of four articles written by the late Charles Coulson included in this volume, and though it focuses on the fourteenth century, it is a fine critique of the old 'rise to 1300, decline from 1300' thesis. Coulson's other pieces in the volume, dealing with licences to crenellate, structural symbolism, and finally on the particular castle of Bodiam in East Sussex, continue this theme. There is no doubt, as Coulson brings out, that an overriding concern of those at the top of the social hierarchy was to display and flaunt their status. The lesser of them were perhaps more

preoccupied with this than their betters if one makes a judgement based on the licences. Coulson showed how these were sought and proudly possessed by minor aristocrats who could afford only insignificant structures, the greater castles sometimes being created with no licence at all. He reflects how certain architectural features were designed to impress – to proclaim the grandeur and importance of the lordly owner. If in so doing, castles were endowed with a martial substance and not merely a martial façade, then so much the better. The classic expression of this in this later medieval period is the wall-head machicolation, an elaboration and continuation of the timber hoarding and of course, without the latter's vulnerability to fire. Coulson's examination of Bodiam, its fabric and circumstances, was selected for inclusion because it remains the fullest discussion of this building which once was pivotal in castle-study debate. How serious a fortification was it? He remarks that it has gun-ports, so looks well-armed, but closer scrutiny shows how ill-located these are and compromised by the internal domestic apartments. Who was it meant to deter and overawe? His study of the politics of late fourteenth-century Sussex, explaining matters are a classic case study which set a model for the analysis of other sites.

Two articles, by Faulkner and Fairclough, focus on the sophistication of increasingly complex domestic arrangements. These use case studies of Bolton-in-Wensleydale, Bodiam and the small but complicated castle of Edlingham in Northumberland, among others. Other articles are centred on reigns, areas or individual sites. Nicola Coldstream's article on the North Wales castles of Edward I seeks to redress A.J. Taylor's emphasis that Master James of St. George was the exclusive mastermind behind those great fortresses of Caernarvon, Conway, Beaumaris and Harlech by asserting that their design and construction were collaborations with his unsung, under-masons. Articles by Michael Prestwich and Philip Dixon look at castles in the reign of Edward II, especially the remarkable Knaresborough. Another article by Dixon is on the numerous lesser fortifications bestriding the Anglo-Scottish Border, beyond and after which, Charles McKean strays into the late seventeenth century in his appraisal of how we should now interpret the then fashionable Scottish 'baronial' castles. Tom McNeill provides the contribution on Ireland in his 'Castles of Ward and the changing pattern of Border conflict in Ireland'. John Goodall provides an offering on Lulworth Castle in Dorset.

'Medieval Ornamental Landscapes' are covered by Christopher Taylor. The zeal to impress was not confined to elaborating the masonry building that constituted the core of the castle but was extended around to include parks, gardens, convoluted approaches and most striking, water features. He uses an aerial photograph to point out the now lost lake south of Richard's Middleham, an item not easily envisaged from the ground. The remaining two papers both have as their theme the appeal of the Arthurian legends. The late Richard Morris ties their influence in to Coulson's great narrative on structural

symbolism while Muriel Whitaker contemplates ‘Otherworld castles’ from those Arthurian tales so popular in late medieval society.

The articles have been reproduced as first published so no doubt certain points of detail might now be raised as a result of latter-day research and review. Dixon and Lott’s article, ‘The Courtyard and the Tower: ...’ briefly discusses Richard’s Bear Tower at Warwick, seeing it, as others had before, as an unfinished great tower and converted into the rather odd looking gateway visible today, but they are somewhat confused as to whether all this happened when Richard was duke or king. That there is, apparently, no royal documentary evidence for it does not necessarily exclude it being royal work but it would have been better to have pointed out the uncertainties. The captions for figures 3 and 4, dealing with Maxstoke, are the wrong way round – might this original defect have been remedied for this book?

The whole volume is ably brought together in Liddiard’s summarising introduction. His insights give clear messages as to what to expect from the collection and facilitate the reader in picking and choosing. The book itself is adequately produced on good, acid-free paper. By modern standards, the photographs are poor. That is the fate of merely reprinting without troubling to improve the images possible today.

JAMES PETRE

THE BIRGITTTINES OF SYON ABBEY: Preaching and Print. Susan Powell. Texts & Transitions 11. 2017. Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium, 90 euros.

ISBN 978-2-503-53235-6

Syon Abbey was the only English house of Birgittines, the order of nuns founded by St Birgitta of Sweden (1303-73). A small group of highly educated brothers provided spiritual direction for the sisters and patrons, who were drawn from England’s political and mercantile elite. Henry V is well known as the founder of Syon Abbey in 1415. It is less well known that the community named Edward IV as their second founder. Syon Abbey was a house of prayer for the Lancastrian, Yorkist and Tudor dynasties and a mausoleum for minor family members.

St Birgitta founded her order to spread church reform and the Syon brothers used the growth of literacy, manuscript circulation and printing technology to evangelise. Association with the royal court meant that Syon was at the forefront of religious controversy in the Reformation era. The community’s unwavering support for reformed Roman Catholicism brought them martyrdom, dissolution and centuries of exile.

Scholars of English Literature have mined the treasure-trove of English vernacular manuscripts and printed books owned or written by members of the community since around 1898 when Mary Bateson first published *The Catalogue of the Library of Syon Monastery*. In 2001 Vincent Gillespie published his

magisterial revised edition in the *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues*, the digest of a century of collective work. The 700th anniversary of St Birgitta's birth in 2003, and Syon Abbey's 600th anniversary in 2015 swelled the flow of publications. Exchanges with Scandinavian scholars have resulted in the general adoption of the term *Birgittine*, in preference to *Bridgettine*.

Professor Susan Powell's book will illuminate anyone interested in Syon Abbey and is of particular value to scholars of late medieval English Literature. It is the fruit of more than twenty years of research on manuscripts and early printed books from Syon. It is a significant contribution to the literature on aristocratic women during the Wars of the Roses. It explores patronage of manuscript production and printing by women of all three royal dynasties, centred on Lady Margaret Beaufort (d. 1509), mother of the first Tudor king, Henry VII. The volume anticipates the author's forthcoming edition of Margaret Beaufort's household papers.

The author helpfully bookends her essays with two new chapters, placing them in the context of her recent research and publications by other scholars. 'Headwords' and 'Afterwords' to each chapter provide additional information. A note on the bibliography of Syon Abbey, the bibliography itself, appendices of manuscript and printed works from Syon, and pictures of Syon Abbey's 'bookplate', which authenticated early sixteenth-century printed works are also useful. The author's work has benefited from research presented at the *Medieval Mystics* conference held at Exeter, the interdisciplinary *Harlaxton Conference*, where medieval literature and music specialists mingle with historians and art historians, and regular international gatherings of Birgittine scholars.

In Chapters Two and Three the author is at the start of her research. She is feeling her way in these contributions to the field of 'Sermon Studies', exploring why so many vernacular sermons survive from Vadstena, the Swedish mother house, compared with so few from Syon. The author points out that Syon's English sermons to the sisters and pilgrims, most of whom did not know Latin, should be assessed in the context of the Syon brothers' Latin learning, to which she returns in Chapter Five. Chapter Four concentrates on three sermons, and a tract of Birgittine origin *Hamus Caritatis* (*The Hook of Love*), possibly by Syon deacon, Thomas Betson. These were added to Caxton's 1491 edition of John Myrk's *Festial*, a compilation of sample sermons for clergy. The sermons were for three new late medieval feasts and illustrate the circulation of devotional material to both clerical and lay audiences. Edward IV's Queen Elizabeth Woodville (d. 1492), promoted the Feast of the *Visitation* (2 July), and Margaret Beaufort the Feast of the *Holy Name of Jesus* (7 August). Caxton, printer to the Yorkist regime was anxious to serve the new Tudor regime, one of many continuities in service found in the careers of Syon's benefactors. Margaret Beaufort is here introduced as an intermediary between Syon and Caxton. Chapter Five discusses the output of manuscripts and printed books by Syon brothers, also the role of two long-serving abbesses Elizabeth Gibbs (1497-1518), and Agnes Jordan (1520-1544), in commissioning devotional works from

Carthusian scribes and translators, which Margaret Beaufort had printed for the sisters and their friends. Chapter Six develops discussion of Margaret Beaufort as a patron of books, printers and Syon Abbey. Patronage of learning was a duty for royal and aristocratic ladies and this tradition linked her with her grandmother Margaret, Duchess of Clarence (d. 1439), Cecily, Duchess of York, Queens Elizabeth Woodville, Elizabeth of York, Catherine of Aragon and Queen Mary, all patrons of Syon. Her confessor, Bishop John Fisher, likened Margaret Beaufort to 'Martha', focused on good works, and described her as suffering from anxiety. Perhaps she was prescribed use of the *Holy Name* as a mantra to combat anxiety, explained by Syon brother, William Bonde, in *A profitable treatise for suche that be Tymorous or ferfull in consyence* (1527). Surviving books and manuscripts reveal their transmission between kinswomen from different branches of the royal family and household members. Margaret Beaufort may have intended her prodigious patronage of learning to transcend and perhaps heal political divisions. In Chapters Six and Seven, manuscript studies and history blend successfully together reflecting the present state of Syon studies. Chapter Seven traces manuscripts and books with Syon provenance, which passed mainly through recusant hands after the Reformation.

The study of Syon Abbey is a complex and well-documented subject and interdisciplinary research is now enabling its significance to emerge. As Professor Powell notes in this careful consideration of Syon's books, there is still much more to say and there will always be tantalising gaps in our knowledge.

VIRGINIA BAINBRIDGE

SAINTS AND THEIR CULTS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND. Edited by Susan Powell. 2017. Harlaxton Medieval Studies, Volume XXVII. Shaun Tyas, Donington, £49.50. ISBN 978-1-907730-59-7

The twenty-one papers in this collection are grouped under seven headings: saints and the church, saints and the monarch, saints and the people; saints in shrines, saints in sculpture, saints in glass, saints in texts. The Harlaxton symposium has always been interdisciplinary, and this conference and resulting volume are no exception, with contributions from manuscript specialists (Nigel Morgan, Julian Luxford), literary, that is, middle English, scholars (for example Vincent Gillespie, John Scattergood, Simon Horobin, Elisabeth Dutton), art historians (Christopher Wilson, Jenny Alexander, Helen Lunn, Nicholas Rogers), and even church historians (Robert Swanson, David Levine, Nicholas Orme). Several observations may be made at the outset: there is evidence of much very diligent scholarly work here – many manuscripts have been perused (Robert Swanson, writing on the link between saints and indulgences gets top marks here), and an astonishing range of secondary sources in a variety of

languages consulted. Indeed, one of the enduring impressions is of the massive footnotes which characterise this volume. Many are not so much references as reading lists, and your reviewer regards this corpus of information as a useful resource. The subject of saints is very liberally interpreted because not all the subjects of these papers were technically sanctified: King Henry VI (David Starkey), the alleged boy martyr Harold of Gloucester, less well-known than William of Norwich or Lincoln's Little St Hugh (Roger Dahood), the writer Richard Rolle of Hampole (Vincent Gillespie), and the rebellious Archbishop Richard Scrope (Sarah Brown), are examples of men who attracted veneration without canonisation. The natures of the subjects have sometimes resulted in contributions which are essentially descriptive, or are collections of examples, and these do not make for easy reading. This is not necessarily the writers' fault, but means that the usefulness and enjoyment of their papers is rather confined to readers in their specialisms. In fairness, several writers explain that theirs is a research work in progress, and in a sense, crave our indulgence. Julian Luxford goes further; his paper on 'The nature and purpose of Medieval Relic-Lists', is an appeal for a national effort to find and publish them all.

Some essays, however, call for special commendation. Christian Steer's examination of the relations between Londoners and the Franciscan house in London demonstrates regard for a saint at long distance through respect for his followers, and shows enthusiasm for the house and the order of Grey Friars shifting between social groups over more than two centuries. He has uncovered some impressive visual evidence of this vanished church. Nicholas Orme's account of William Worcester 'Saint-Collecting', in the fifteenth century, largely in the West Country, vividly portrays an energetic enquirer who was more antiquary than pilgrim. This is only one of several papers to suggest that saints were thicker on the ground in Cornwall than anywhere else. Sarah Brown's reconstruction of Richard Scrope's lost window in York Minster is a lively piece of detective work which includes a swipe at a twentieth-century dean who swept away the final evidence of an admittedly damaged window; cultural vandalism was not confined to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. John Scattergood ('*Saint Erkenwald* and its Literary Relations') presents erudition in a most engaging way, and he, like Gillespie on Rolle, emphasises the enduring influence of Bede on late-medieval writers.

Two papers address the question of Henry VII's piety, especially as expressed in veneration of saints. Linda Ehrsam Voigts, a historian of medicine, concentrates on Henry Tudor's Breton exile years, when he became a devotee of Saint Armel, a Welsh saint who ministered in Brittany and who was invoked against the plague. In Pleurmel, which Henry would have known well (we can assume, though she does not say as much) there is a church dedicated to the saint. Saint Armel's cult was brought to England by the returning Henry, and like Saints Christopher, Giles and Roche, became topical in the plague-infested years of that king's reign. David Starkey, 'A Royal Saint at Work: Henry VI, Henry VII and the Tudor Transformation of Cambridge', is exceptionally

readable and enjoyable, and actually gives centre stage to Henry's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort and her confessor, John Fisher, a Cambridge don. It is in this paper that readers will find the mentions of Richard III, who, on acceding to the throne, at once took steps to resume the building of King's College Chapel, and to endow, in the name of his wife Queen Anne, Queens' College.

This volume is extremely well produced and presented. There is an index, an essential tool which is all too often lacking in composite volumes, and then there are the illustrations. Reproductions of images in manuscripts we expect, and get here, but, in addition a number of contributors have cause to bless the work of artists of the post-medieval period, like Wenceslas Hollar in the seventeenth century, and the antiquaries of that and subsequent centuries who described, and sometimes drew, objects which no longer exist. The authors, and we, are particularly grateful for their work.

ALISON McHARDY

HENRY VI: A Good, Simple and Innocent Man. James Ross. 2016. Penguin Monarchs Series, Allen Lane. £12.99. ISBN 9780141979342

Biographies of King Henry VI are like London buses. In 1981, two major accounts of the King's life and reign by Ralph Griffiths and Bertram Wolffe appeared in quick succession, and now, a generation on, we have been presented with two somewhat slighter volumes, published within about eighteen months of each other, Dr Ross's short book in the 'Penguin Monarchs' series following hard on the heels of David Grummitt's concise account in the Routledge Historical Biographies series. (If a companion to John Watts's *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* of 1991 was ever envisaged, it presumably broke down in the depot.) Ross's text is at just ninety-nine small pages the shortest account in book form of the king to date, and the publisher's requirement for brevity clearly presented the author with the unenviable challenge of producing an intelligible account of the ruler who presided over one of the longest and most complex of reigns of any medieval English king without being able to explain these complexities in detail. Dr Ross, among the most capable of the scholars currently working in the field, has risen to the challenge admirably, and has surely done as good a job as anyone could hope to do within these parameters. His portrait of Henry of Windsor sensibly focuses on the one generally accepted trait of his subject's character, his evidently deep religious devotion. Other facets of the king's personality, as Ross demonstrates, are harder to perceive through the veil of the official documentation, and often harder still to verify. The author thus treads cautiously, keeping his options open over the thorny question of the monarch's active agency as a ruler, and his personal responsibility for the calamities of his reign. Ross's command and deployment of his sources is masterly, albeit at times somewhat seditious: it is hard not to feel that his lengthy quotations from John Blacman's eloquent

hagiography of the King will make more of an impression on the reader, than the author's repeated caveats about this material, and the book's subtitle is one with which King Henry's early eulogist would probably not have disagreed.

It is a mark of the author's expertise in the period that refreshingly few inaccuracies have slipped through the net, and those that have are in their majority minor (the clerk of the signet was the poet George Ashby, not his son John; the King's College foundation charter depicted in plate 4, while dated 1441, shows Henry VI praying accompanied by the lords and commons in the parliament of 1445-6, which ratified the document), although just occasionally there is the occasional irritating contradiction, particularly in the latter (and most complex) part of the text: to cite just one especially annoying example, the already problematic issue of the king's personal agency in authorising administrative documents is obscured further by some haziness in the evaluation of the available evidence – are there 'only a dozen or so examples [of the King's sign manual after 1453]' or 'at least a dozen examples after 1455' (pp. 81-82)?

Hidden away in these latter sections of the book are some interesting ideas, underpinned by original archival research, and it would be a shame were they to be lost in a series of texts evidently aimed by its publisher at a more casual readership unconcerned with an understanding of the mind-boggling array of characters and events that populate almost every page. The presentation of the text is not encouraging: with its twee half-dustjacket (why exactly is only half the cover worth protecting?), its tiny illustrations and minuscule footnotes the volume comes across as less of a book and more of an artist's impression of one, which may also account for its somewhat princely price-tag of more than 10 pence per page. The general reader seeking a concise, reliable and readable introduction to the king and his reign will beyond doubt find it easier to consult Ralph Griffiths' substantial article in the *ODNB*. Anyone concerned with the on-going debate over Henry VI's contribution (or otherwise) to his own reign and its premature end may, however, find it worth their while engaging with Dr. Ross's findings.

HANNES KLEINEKE

MEDIEVAL ANCHORITES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. Edited by Cate Gunn and Liz Herbert McAvoy. 2017. Studies in the History of Medieval Religion, D.S. Brewer, Cambridge with Boydell and Brewer, Woodbridge, £60.00. ISBN 978-1-84384-462-4

What did anchorites do? Their religious vocation apart, did they serve a function in medieval society? To what extent did anchorites, walled up in their cells, live in isolation from their neighbours, whether it be within a monastic community, a parish community or an urban community? This collection of twelve short chapters each written by a different scholar seeks to address these

questions thereby dispelling some myths about the lifestyle and influence of anchorites. The book is organised thematically and is divided into three parts dealing with the anchorite's interaction with and within religious communities, the relationship of anchorites to members of lay communities and finally 'textual communities'.

The editors claim that recent research distilled in the book provides evidence to indicate that medieval anchorites 'operated at the heart of a variety of communities' and, far from being totally withdrawn from the rest of society, were frequently involved in 'local, national and, sometimes, even international matters of great importance'. In order to substantiate their arguments, the authors adopt a cross-disciplinary approach and methodology making use of a wide range of evidence: archaeological, documentary and literary. However, it has to be said that detailed evidence for the activities of anchorites is limited and, perhaps unsurprisingly, provides us with much more information on individuals from the upper ranks of society than those lower down the social scale. This problem is demonstrated in the chapter by Clarck Drieshen on 'English Nuns as Anchoritic Intercessors for Souls in Purgatory' in which he discusses the ownership and employment of a fifteenth-century visionary text known as *A Revelation of Purgatory* possibly written by a nun or an anchoress. Using testamentary evidence, Drieshen demonstrates the importance of religious women, whether they be nuns or recluses, in the organisation of intercessions for the souls of the departed. He refers specifically to a bequest in the will of Richard Pickering to his sister Lady Joan Pickering, a nun of the Benedictine priory of St Mary at Nun Monkton, whom he identifies as the likely scribe of a copy of the text of *A Revelation* owned by a local landowner, Robert Thornton of East Newton, Yorkshire. Drieshen argues that a woman recluse such as Joan Pickering was in a good position to organise the recitation of thirteen masses for the dead by the priest who served the convent, as prescribed in *A Revelation*. However it is difficult to know whether she was assigned this role because of her connection with a particular devotional text or because of her general status as a literate woman in her religious community.

Exceptionally, we can learn a considerable amount about the relationship between one well-to-do solitary and his local community through references in the churchwardens' accounts for the parish of All Hallows London Wall for the period 1455 to 1536, discussed by Clare M. Dowding. These accounts document gifts to the parish church by successive anchorites attached to the church and incidentally correct any misconception about religious vocation going hand-in-hand with poverty. The last anchorite was Symon Appulby, author of a popular devotional text *The Fruyte of Redempcyon* printed by Wynkyn de Worde four times between 1514 and 1532. Far from being cut off from the outside world, Appulby appears to have contributed significantly to his local community both spiritually and materially. Dowding states that 'there was a tradition, not to say an expectation, that the anchorite would contribute generously to building and repair work undertaken at All Hallows'. Appulby

was the largest single donor for the construction of a new aisle in 1528-29, contributing a total of 32s. Due to the popularity of *The Fryte of Redempcyon*, Appulby received visitors from beyond the parish who sought spiritual advice, and left gifts to the parish church. In his will of 6 June 1537, Appulby requests that he 'be buried within the tombe alreedy set and made within the ankerage' and makes provision for payment of members of a local fraternity and fourteen children bearing tapers to attend his funeral, as well as generous amounts of bread and ale for the mourners!

One of the strengths of the book is the focus by a number of contributors on the role of women as authors and transmitters of vernacular texts both within religious communities and beyond, to lay readers. We are reminded that, although physically cut off from the rest of the world, anchorites were not isolated from the rest of society. Michelle M. Sauer discusses the role of anchorites as 'purgatorial patrons' or 'faithful friends' who provided for the spiritual needs of their local community through the power of prayers for the dead. She sees this role increasing in value from the late thirteenth century alongside the growth of chantries. Donations of money to anchorites are commonplace in late medieval wills from a broad cross-section of society, such as that of the widow Margaret Paston who left gifts to two anchoresses and one anchorite attached to religious houses in Norwich. Anchorites might access texts whether it be books, scrolls or loose sheets in a variety of ways. Catherine Innes-Parker considers ways in which the text of the early thirteenth-century Wooing Group Prayers circulated amongst women readers. She talks about 'textual communities' by which she means close-knit groups of laypeople and members of enclosed religious orders who shared reading material, often relying on maidservants as intermediaries. The Foyle manuscript, containing copies of devotional texts including Richard Rolle's *Form of Living* and Nicholas Love's *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus* provides evidence of female ownership as it passed from Sybilla de Felton, Abbess of Barking, to Margaret Scrope a nun in her community and then to Mistress Agnes Goldwell, a gentlewoman in the household of her sister Elizabeth Scrope Peché. As authors, copiers and recipients of books, Innes-Parker places anchoresses at the centre of what she calls medieval women's reading communities.

Although the editors might be claiming too much for anchorites as contributors to international matters of great importance, collectively the research presented here by the twelve authors succeeds in re-evaluating the role of anchorites in their communities and indicating the many ways in which they responded to the needs of medieval society from their enclosed spaces. The book will certainly widen the horizons of any reader beyond the well-known anchorite Julian of Norwich and her writings. One small quibble might be made about the methodology adopted for personal names in the index where most (but not all) members of the nobility are inexplicably indexed under their Christian names, rather than their family names or titles.

DIANA DUNN

THE FRIARIES OF MEDIEVAL LONDON, From Foundation to Dissolution. Nick Holder, with contributions by Ian Betts, Jens Röhrkasten, Mark Samuel and Christian Steer. 2017. *Studies in the History of Medieval Religion* 46. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk, £50.00.

ISBN 978-1-78327-224-2

This richly-illustrated survey of the friaries of medieval London benefits considerably from the dual specialisms of its primary author, Dr Nick Holder, as an archaeologist and historian. Its main emphasis is on the archaeology and architecture of these important centres of popular religious devotion and academic learning, but Holder also makes profitable use of the unexpectedly plentiful archival sources available for these religious institutions of little property and a negligible record-keeping tradition, although many were compiled by post-dissolution owners of the sites.

The mapping of the precincts of the individual friaries is Holder's chief focus. In his introduction he lays bare, in forensic detail, his map-making methodology, known as 'map regression'. It combines the evidence of historic maps, archival sources and archaeology with the new technology of digital tracing. Part I of the book presents the results of his close examination of the 'urban landscape' of each friary site, mapping and narrating the history of the foundation and construction of their churches, cloisters and precinct buildings, and the acquisition of tenements purchased outside their perimeters to provide the friars with rental income. Uniquely, in the case of the earliest and richest friary – the Black Friars of the Dominican order – there were three sites for Holder to analyse. The first, founded in the 1220s in Holborn, was sold in 1286 to Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, after the friars had acquired enough land for a larger site inside the city walls. It was remarkable for its large garden, with an orchard and vineyard, well evidenced in the de Lacy accounts. At the second site the Black Friars built their sumptuous church, the nave of which was designed by the celebrated master mason Michael of Canterbury in the early fourteenth century. For a description of its lavish fabric and decoration, that included forty-four windows, Holder has to rely, ironically, on the satirical Wycliffite poem 'Pierce the Plowman's Crede'. In 1556 the Black Friars moved into a third site, the precinct of the dissolved Augustinian priory of St Bartholomew's. Theirs was the only London friary to be re-instated during the brief reign of Queen Mary and they shared the space with the notoriously venal crown minister Richard Rich. The gatehouse that stands today at the entrance of the precinct was initially built during their residency. Holder is the first to map the reconfigured precinct.

The Grey Friars of the Franciscan order uniquely left a chronicle and register. Early modern drawings of their large church and precinct buildings also survive. They were popular with ordinary Londoners: a list made in the register about 1525 – perhaps to identify available grave space – records 682 burials there. Their library was rebuilt in the early fifteenth century, with funds from the

London mayor Richard Whittington. Also possessed of a large library, and with a great reputation for learning, were the White Friars of the Carmelite order. Less well documented, there are happily more archaeological remains of their precinct, notably the undercroft of the prior's house that was excavated and lifted during construction work there in 1991. The White Friars performed their own impressive engineering feat by reclaiming about 150 feet of land from the Thames for their precinct in the late fourteenth century; the Black Friars had earlier reclaimed 1¾ acres. The Austin Friars of the Augustinian order – the fourth of the great fraternal orders to establish themselves in London – left significant archival remains as well as the nave of their church, which survived until 1940 as the Dutch church. Highly populated with European friars, they could offer confession in their own tongue to members of the city's alien population, and were especially popular with Italian and German merchants. Remarkably, in the 1520s and 1530s leading figures of the Dissolution and Reformation, notably Thomas Cromwell, lived within their precinct in mansion houses mapped and described by Holder. Of the three minor fraternal orders (the Crossed Friars, Sack Friars and Pied Friars), whose sites are all mapped here, only the first survived the suppression of minor orders mandated at the Council of Lyons in 1274. As the Crossed Friars were a Belgian order in origin, their London house predictably had links with the Flemish and Dutch communities, and was still thriving and, even expanding, in the 1520s.

In Part II Holder offers a comparative study of the friary churches and precincts, and short chapters on the water supply of the four main friaries (piped in from outside the city), their economy, interaction with Londoners and the Dissolution. Well-illustrated specialist contributions from other scholars discuss surviving architectural fragments, floor tiles, spiritual life and education, and burial and commemoration. While these chapters bring a welcome widening of the book's coverage, there is also a certain amount of duplication of information from Part I. Christian Steer's chapter is one of the best, providing a wealth of detail about individual burials that will appeal to readers of *The Ricardian* in particular. Hampered by the paucity of sources, Holder's chapter on the fraternal economy is a bit thin. While he observes that friars charged fees for confessions and burials and entered into contracts for the performance of chantry masses and anniversary services, he does not mention the sale of confraternity letters or other known forms of fraternal income. Nevertheless, his work in establishing the importance of rental income to all the London friaries – which extended to letting out tenements and gardens inside their precincts in the sixteenth century – is highly significant. Another striking conclusion drawn from this fine study is that the friaries occupied five per cent of the space within London's walls (exclusive of the White Friars' precinct, outside the walls), much of it a pleasant, semi-public green space that the city's residents could enter and enjoy.

MAUREEN JURKOWSKI

LORDSHIP AND FAITH: The English Gentry and the Parish Church in the Middle Ages. Nigel Saul. 2017. Oxford University Press, Oxford, £75.00. ISBN 978-0-19-870619-9

Who can fail but be impressed by the artistic achievements of our parish churches? The 8,000 or so to survive from the Middle Ages are not only places of worship and prayer but memorials to generations of patrons and parishioners. It is pleasing that several new studies are re-examining different aspects of the medieval English parish church with the fruits of these enterprises providing new insights on the construction, benefaction and management of these architectural wonders. Nigel Saul's contribution to these discussions provides a valuable assessment of the role of the gentry and their parish church.

This volume is divided into fourteen chapters, with fifty-two black and white illustrations, bibliography and index. One of the pleasures of reading such a book is the meticulous research which has gone into it, the synthesis of the material – surviving documents and historiography – and the expertise with which the author has delved into the evidence to provide an erudite narrative. At the heart of this discussion is the village church, the nexus of lordship and often the mausoleum for their bones. The question of definition is dealt with early on, a definition which includes not only the knightly class but also those to emerge in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as esquires, gentlemen and a group whom Saul has defined as 'a white-collar gentry' (p. 10), largely consisting of administrators and lawyers. The introductory chapter neatly summarises the debate on the extent of gentry engagement with religion in the parish thus providing welcome context to the discussion which follows.

There are several important themes to emerge from this excellent study. One is the response of the gentry to the changes brought about by, and the evolution of, the Church more generally. The Minster system of churches in the tenth-century set the foundation for what followed especially in response to the impact of the Conquest, the spiritual renewal of the monastic orders in the long twelfth-century and the arrival of the friars. These poor men of Christ were popular amongst the laity and the gentry were no exception. The opportunity for private and public church space is seen by the construction and furnishing of private chapels and in the popularity of the perpetual chantry, a development which took off on a spectacular scale in the first half of the fourteenth-century. Such foundations enabled personalised intercessory foundation in the parish church and more often than not within a purpose-built chapel paid for, and furnished by, the patron. It was the wealthiest of patrons who took the endowment of a private chantry one step further through the foundation of a secular college of a warden and chaplains for the exclusive use of the founder and his/her family. This discussion on the gentry and the Church emphasises their central role in church patronage.

The gentry inside the parish church is considered in a variety of illuminating ways. It was, of course, at the very centre of the life cycle serving as the place of baptism, of marriage (sometimes) and, ultimately, of burial. Attendance at Mass and divine service on Sundays and major feast days brought the gentry into the parish in life and the celebration of anniversaries of the dead maintained their presence in the church long after death. A chapter dealing entirely with patterns of burial enables Saul to draw on the rich evidence afforded by tomb monuments particularly for those 'on the up' seeking to establish new identities. The colonization by the dead of sacred space brought the gentry ever closer to the high altar. This is particularly noticeable after 1300 and by the end of the fifteenth-century the majority of high status burials were in the chancel or in a chapel nearby. It was their right as founder, often holding the advowson and in imitation of royal and aristocratic practice which encouraged a confident gentry in the takeover of such space. And in pride of place were their arms and armour left on show in the church with coats of arms included on monuments and brasses, on corbels and in windows, identifying the lord with their church for all to see. More often than not those of their friends and neighbours were included in these rich displays of heraldic identity.

The richness of such benefaction is a third theme to emerge. This was not confined to memorials and Saul cites example after example of lordly patronage involved in building programmes, church repairs, the commissioning of glazing and wall paintings, the provision of devotional imagery and the furnishing of plate, books and vestments for use in the celebration of the liturgy. All of this was of course dependent on the wealth of the patron and of the parish with instances of occasional collaboration taking place for the good of their souls and to the benefit of their successors. This analysis emphasises the extent of regional variation and the role of patronage networks in the employment of skilled workmen in these programmes and also the extent to which the gentry class were influenced by neighbouring churches. Their building schemes marked them men of status and power and as such their presence in the church loomed much larger.

Nigel Saul has devoted his career to the study of the English gentry and nobody is better qualified to consider their role within the parish as patrons, as parishioners and as leaders. This well-researched and readable study is a most welcome addition to those interested not only in the parish and the gentry but also in attitudes on benefaction and patronage at a time of growing diversity within the medieval Church. For the medieval gentry their parish church provided a monastery in miniature where their tombs, armorials and signs of benefaction and patronage marked them for generations to come.

CHRISTIAN STEER

TOISON D'OR ET SA PLUME. La Chronique de Jean Lefèvre de Saint-Rémy. Alexandre Grosjean. 2017. Burgundica, XXV. Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium, €84. ISBN 978-2-503-56910-9

From supposedly modest beginnings as a native of Abbeville and apparently without the benefit of a university education, Jean Lefèvre rose to become the first herald of the Order of the Golden Fleece and a trusted envoy on diplomatic missions for Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy. He was born in 1395 or 1396, and thus was an elderly man when he resigned his heraldic office in 1468. Thanks no doubt to his position in the ducal service, he made an advantageous marriage, to Marguerite de Pierre-court, heiress of the estate or lordship of Saint-Rémy, Avesnes, la Vacquerie and other lands in Normandy. In June 1468, when Lefèvre was close to death, Duke Charles the Bold formally placed a sword on each of his shoulders and dubbed him a knight – an exceptional honour for a mere herald at this date.

Not a great deal is known about his life, beyond what he chose to tell us in the work for which he is best known, his *Chronique* or history of France (with a distinctly Burgundian emphasis), from 1408 to 1435. This was printed by François Morand, in a two-volume edition (Paris 1876-81), the reliability of which is taken for granted by Alexandre Grosjean in the work under review. Lefèvre did in fact also write at least one armorial (heraldic) treatise, but that is resolutely ignored by Grosjean, save for the fact that its completion date, 4 January 1464, can apparently be taken to mark the date when he began work on the chronicle (pp. 113-14; although see pp. 11-12). Grosjean's concern is exclusively with the latter, and in this book he subjects it to a very extended discussion and analysis.

Grosjean sets out his aims clearly: to explore why and how the chronicle was written, and then to place it in different contemporary contexts. The first topic is dealt with by presenting us with an account of the four manuscripts of the chronicle that have survived, together with as much of a biography of the author as it is possible to piece together. He became a herald in the Burgundian service at an unknown date, perhaps 1422, with the title Charolais, a lesser title of his master, Duke Philip the Good. The Order of the Golden Fleece was founded in 1430, but it was only at its first Chapter, in January 1431, that – in imitation of the Order of the Garter – the Order was accorded a herald of its own. Charolais Herald thereafter was known quite as much by his title Toison d'or (King of Arms) as by his family name. He had the duty of recording the chivalric deeds of the Order's members, and it may be that that is what ultimately led him to prepare a general chronicle.

The contexts in which Grosjean sets the chronicle are naturally enough textual: he carefully considers how far Lefèvre drew on the chronicle of Enguerrand de Monstrelet and how far on his own personal experience, as well as on written or oral sources common to both Monstrelet and himself. More broadly, Grosjean also looks at Lefèvre in relation to the heralds' world. He

touches on the question of whether the celebrated Armorial de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 4790) with its seventy-four pictures of heraldically attired knights on horseback can be attributed to Lefèvre's authorship: here he is cautiously doubtful (pp. 234-5).

Toison d'or's interest in heraldry went back surprisingly early: as a young man of nineteen, and possibly (as Grosjean speculates) in Henry V's service, he witnessed the battle of Agincourt. Interestingly, he tells us that at this event all the heralds, French and English, remained together – a reminder of their quasi-diplomatic status as recorders of the battle and its fatalities. He perhaps had a vantage-point on relatively high ground, for he alone of the battle's chroniclers remarks that the French cavalry suffered as a result of the softness of the ground. Only he and his near-contemporary Jean de Wavrin (about whom Grosjean says a little less than he might; compare with Anne Curry, *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* (2000), pp. 135-71, where different fonts are used to distinguish Monstrelet, Lefèvre and Wavrin) recount, for instance, that Henry displayed banners of the Trinity, Our Lady, St George, St Edward and his own coat of arms.

The book has at times something of the quality of a work that began as a thesis: it is almost excessively focused on its declared themes and yet one wonders at times if further research in archival sources might not have added valuable fresh material, for Lefèvre's English connexions as well as for his service to the Duke of Burgundy. (There is, however, a very useful appendix in which Lefèvre's itinerary is documented, from 1415 to May 1468 (pp. 299-322), and this cites a great many manuscript sources.) The proofreading has been careless and the index is inadequate (with almost no subject headings). The book is nevertheless valuable for its author's extremely thorough sweep through – and presentation of – a very wide range of the modern and not-so-new secondary literature bearing on the subject as well as for his enthusiastic and sympathetic presentation of a herald and chronicler who unquestionably merited his high contemporary standing – 'un moult notable et sachant et discret homme', in the words of Olivier de la Marche.

NIGEL RAMSAY

CITIES AND SOLIDARITIES: Urban Communities in Pre-Modern Europe. Edited by Justin Colson and Arie van Steensel. 2017. Routledge, Abingdon, £75.

ISBN 978-1-138-94361-2

This collection of essays is based on two conference sessions held in Vienna and Lisbon in 2014. The purpose of these sessions, and the proceedings which have followed, is twofold. Firstly, to broaden out questions concerning urban communities from across medieval Europe over a longer than usual chronological period. The second admirable purpose is to present a platform from which scholars (many early career or doctoral students) can comment on

the topic by drawing on new methodologies, and especially those now available through advances in technology. The essays in this volume deliver on these objectives and consider how different groups were formed, how they worked and lived, the institutions which surrounded and moulded them, and how they evolved over time.

The pan-European approach is welcome, but readers of this volume will be most interested in those essays relating to the fifteenth-century such as Carolina Obradors-Suazo on 'Making the citizen, building the citizenry: family and citizenship in fifteenth-century Barcelona'. The author uses the evidence from citizenship charters, which provided highly prized legitimacy and trading privileges, by considering the Sarrovira family of the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-centuries. It was the solidarity of kinship groups which provided economic opportunities for the family and those marrying into it. Closer to home are two further contributions which consider late medieval Norwich, Derek M. Crosby 'Gladman's procession and communal identity in Norwich, 1425-1452' and Dana Durkee 'A *cursus* for craftsmen? Career cycles of the worsted weavers of late-medieval Norwich'. The circumstances of the attack by the craftsmen and traders led by John Gladman on the Guildhall of Norwich in 1443, and its immediate aftermath, is an interesting example of the commons appropriating the symbols of legislative power to further their objectives against the city's opponents. In her article, Durkee delves a little deeper on the guild (incidentally, the editors ought to have been consistent on whether it's 'gild' or 'guild' in the essays in the volume) in her analysis of the city's worsted weavers. She has used her database to probe a little deeper on the men involved in the search prosecutions between 1492 and 1530 and is able to reveal a little more on these lesser craftsmen and their later careers within the city, guild and craft. Elsewhere, technology has been used – with remarkable results – to track over 40,000 people who lived, worked or stayed in medieval Brussels. The contribution by Bram Vannieuwenhuyze 'Who's who in late-medieval Brussels?' not only provides an important overview on database good practice but also presents excellent prosopographical examples and what can be mined from it.

Some readers may find the presentation of this volume somewhat different than other, more traditional conference proceedings with a separate bibliography at the end of each article rather than consolidated at the end of the book. This is useful for those readers interested in particular case-studies, towns or cities but it has the feel of a journal rather than a volume of essays. The majority of contributors make the most of technology in their articles with plenty of maps, charts and figures albeit the Sarrovira family-tree (p. 32) took some time to work out. Nevertheless this collection is a fine contribution to questions on community and the editors are to be congratulated in pushing out the chronological and geographical boundaries.

CHRISTIAN STEER