

# *Reviews*

Article

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## REVIEWS

**David Walker, *The Normans in Britain*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1995, viii + 178 pp; £6.99**

Following in the footsteps of Robin Frame and Rees Davies, David Walker's book aims to offer students of the Norman Conquest a broader view of their activities and impact on Britain. This book devotes individual chapters to the subject of Norman penetration in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The final chapter of this book examines developments in military and ecclesiastical architecture in the British Isles in this period.

The use of the secular and regular church in infiltrating and colonizing Britain is a recurrent theme in this book. The prominence which Walker gives the church is something to be commended. All too often general accounts of Anglo-Norman Britain fail to recognize just how integral the church was to structures of society, power and government. Walker shows how the secular church and monasteries played important functions in the infiltration, colonization and consolidation of Norman power in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that well before the 'invasion' of the 1170s, the Irish church was influenced by England and the Continent in terms of reform, 'new' monastic foundations and styles or architecture.

David Walker's account of Norman intrusion into Wales, Ireland and Scotland focuses on the actions of individual baronial families, such as the Clares in Wales and Ireland, and the Geraldines in Ireland. Walker rightly emphasizes the importance of the networks of loyalties, feudal bonds and family ties between the Kingdom of Scotland and the Anglo-Normans in Scotland and the tenants of the earldom of Huntingdon.

David Walker writes in a clear and easy to read style which will appeal to undergraduate students. However, the irregularity of reference to modern historiography is disquieting. The important names are all mentioned here; Le Patourel, Musset, R.R. Davies, Frame, Barlett, Douglas, Chibnall and W.L. Warren. However, in some places events have been simplified for the sake of clarity at the expense of acknowledging important scholarly debates. For example, his description of the distribution of land after 1066 overlooks the

question of 'tenurial revolution', as debated by the likes of P.H. Sawyer, David Roffe and Robin Fleming.

He has to be commended for producing a comprehensible account of architecture which is refreshingly free from the daunting, jargon-ridden language of experts. This account will hopefully encourage students to pursue this subject further. My main criticism of this chapter is the absence of illustrations or maps which would have helped the reader considerably. The outline chronologies of events in Britain provided at the end of the book will also be useful for students, and will help them get a sense of developments happening in parallel in Britain.

The attention given by Walker to the church, individual baronial families, and architecture sets it apart from the work of Frame and Davies, but otherwise this book offers little else that they have not already said. Walker's well structured chapters and clarity of expression will make this book popular with undergraduates and hopefully foster a better, broader understanding of the Normans in Britain.

Emma Cownie

College of Cardiff, University of Wales

**The Military Orders: Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick**, edited by Malcolm Barber, Aldershot, Variorum, 1994, xxvii + 399 pp.

This collection of forty-one papers, which were read at a conference at St John's Clerkenwell in September 1992, is striking evidence of the abundant research currently being conducted into the history of the military religious orders. In common with its sister discipline, crusading studies, research into the military orders has for some time now ventured forth beyond the two centuries of Christian occupation of the Holy Land. Indeed, there are abundant indications here both of how far the concept reached and of how long it endured. With papers on all the international orders, as well as some of the indigenous Spanish ones, the range of foundations is well reflected. Recruitment, patronage, property and its use, relations with the secular powers, architecture, and of course the twin vocations referred to in the collection's title, all receive attention.

Anybody considering research into the military orders could therefore do worse than start with this collection, which is admirably organized and indexed by its editor and contains a wealth of bibliographical information. But it is questionable whether individual papers will be as useful as they might have been. A handful of the papers started life as hour-long presentations, and these certainly include some gems. Michael Gervers's paper on the use which the Hospitallers made of their Essex property is a model of its kind. Anthony Luttrell conducts a magisterial survey of the Hospitallers' medical tradition during their Cypriot and Rhodian periods. Udo Arnold's 'Eight Hundred Years of the Teutonic Order' is unlikely to be surpassed as an introduction to the military order which had the most varied and exciting history of them all. In his final pages he makes basic points about the Order's development after 1525 which have, I think, never been stated in English before. But most of the papers stop short of ten pages, and one constantly has the impression that their authors just have not had the space fully to develop their arguments. One has to hope that many of them are, in effect, 'trailers' for 'feature length' presentations yet to come.

Rather than end on a critical note, let me add that papers originally read in Spanish have all received excellent English translations, while the publishers have given the collection an attractive and accessible format, and a sturdy binding which should stand up to a great deal of use.

Norman Housley  
University of Leicester

**Chrétien de Troyes: *Cligés***, edited by Stewart Gregory and Claude Luttrell, *Arthurian Studies XXVIII*, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 1993. xxxviii+389 pp.

This new edition of *Cligés* takes manuscript A (the manuscript of Guiot) as its base because it is 'le moins corrompu' (p.xxxi). The editors have, however, compared it with all the other surviving manuscripts to produce a text which will correct the imperfections of the Guiot text and be closer to the original of Chrétien. There is a

detailed introduction describing each of the manuscripts and establishing a new stemma. There are also some remarks on the language and a brief discussion of the principles of editing texts which survive in several manuscripts. The text itself is beautifully presented with a full list of variants and rejected readings at the bottom of each page. The notes are exclusively textual and repeatedly show where Guiot altered or misunderstood the text on which he was working. The edition is completed by a Table of Proper Names, a Glossary and a brief Bibliography which lists only books and articles concerned with the text. The introduction, notes and glossary are all in French, presumably to appeal to the widest possible audience. This new edition will be a useful addition to the libraries of Chrétien scholars and Luttrell and Gregory are to be congratulated on providing a text which sets out to remedy the inadequacies of the *CFMA* edition. No doubt this new edition will prove to be a happy hunting ground for scholars as they examine the emendations proposed, in which case the editors will have performed another useful service in stimulating interest in this underrated romance.

Peter Noble  
University of Reading.

**Bruce Mitchell, *An Invitation to Old English and Anglo-Saxon England*, Blackwell, 1995.**

The title of this book neatly sums it up. In part it is a primer, with sections on pronunciation and grammar, passages for translation and a glossary, all presented in terms highly suitable for someone who wishes to acquire a familiarity with the language of Old England. In part it is an account of aspects of life in Anglo-Saxon England, with a valuable bibliography. In totality, however, it is both these and far more than these. The Introduction includes excellent summaries of the origins of modern English vocabulary and the position of Old English amongst other Indo-European languages, which could profitably be read by all students of the history of the English language - written with authority but also without jargon. Subsequent chapters introduce readers bit by bit to those features of Old English grammar that are essential for understanding. Anyone unfamiliar also with modern

English grammar will find that they have at the same time been helped to acquire some knowledge of present day structures and the terminology used to describe them.

What is particularly attractive - and original - about the book is the use the author has made of primary sources. Instead of the dozen or so texts for translation which are normally to be found in Old English Readers, Dr Mitchell has chosen thirty six passages for inclusion in his Part IV: *The Garden of Old English Literature*. (Fifteen others have already been inserted at appropriate points earlier in the book). Liberal use of extracts enables him to give a valuable insight into the range and variety of writings in Old English that is both entertaining and informative.

But long before this section is reached, the reader's appetite has been whetted by the skilful interweaving of many other short passages of Old English, both prose and poetry, along with their modern English Translation, in Part III (a survey of, amongst other things Anglo-Saxon history, archaeology, arts and crafts, amusements and entertainments with numerous black and white illustrations). The reader is invited to browse or to study - and browsers will soon find that they are being introduced to major texts such as *Beowulf* in the course of learning about Anglo-Saxon textiles and weaponry, to more minor texts such as *Maxims* and *the Fortunes of Men*, in a section on Anglo-Saxon family life, to the *Leechdoms* in accounts of the surgery of the time, and to *Solomon and Saturn* in a reflection on a favourite theme for the Anglo-Saxons, a reminder that 'sad mortality o'ersways their power'. (Not the least enjoyable feature of this book is its apposite, illuminating and witty use of quotations from other times.)

The book ends with a section entitled 'Some Paradigms - For Those who would Like Them' - a reminder that we have here a genuine invitation to pick and choose amongst the blooms in the garden, to work through the book or to browse. Dr Mitchell clearly enjoyed writing it. I certainly derived both pleasure and profit from reading it.

Janet Bately  
King's College, London

**Josep Fontana. *The Distorted Past. A Reinterpretation of Europe*, translated by Colin Smith, Oxford, Blackwell, 1995, 220 + vii pp.**

This challenging book is the latest addition to a new series 'The Making of Europe', edited by Jacques Le Goff, contributions to which are published in five languages by five different publishers. The author has an ambitious agenda: to dismantle what he sees as a triumphalist history of Europe by contending that, whatever its pretensions to chart a linear development from Antiquity to Modernity, such history is in fact composed of a patchwork of self-deluding images. These have arisen from the practice of bolstering a sense of European identity through contrast with its mirror opposites: 'All people define themselves by looking in the mirror of "the others", thus differentiating themselves from them' (p.113). For Classical Greek civilization the other was a barbarian, for the European enlightenment a savage or primitive (noble or not, depending on whether you intended to enslave him). All such constructions of identity through alterity, Fontana argues, are ideological tools in the hands of the controlling classes, and ultimately the European poor - whether medieval peasants or nineteenth-century workers - are as 'other' to this myth-making hegemony, and as oppressed and deprived of a historical identity by it, as are the witch, the Oriental, or the black African slave.

The chapters of chief interest to medievalists are those on the 'Feudal Mirror' (Chapter 3) the 'Devil's Mirror' (Chapter 4), and the 'Rural Mirror' (Chapter 5). Europe, it is argued in Chapter 3, developed its characteristic social instructions not through preserving the past, or rediscovering it (as implied by the importance attached to terms such as 'empire', 'renaissance'), but by reacting vigorously against it. The feudal past needs to be understood more through archaeology and historical anthropology than through archival history. In particular, the feudal age was characterized by agricultural innovation and the particular trade relations between rural and urban communities. Catholic Europe combatted 'others' in the guise of infidels (Chapter 4) whilst effectively cutting itself off from the rest of the Christian world. The persecution of heretics often involved condemning the church's own beliefs when they were held by persons who were seen, for political rather than theological reasons, as

threatening the church's control. The plague, it is suggested in Chapter 5, is invoked as an explanation of social unrest in the later Middle Ages because historians, now as then, prefer to regard egalitarian movements as aberrations with exceptional causes than as provoked by inequities inherent in European institutions.

As a non-historian I am not well qualified to assess these contentions. The 'conspiracy theory' approach will appeal to some readers more than others; I admit I found the overall contention that the European ruling class have systematically sacrificed the rest of the world to their egotistical interests depressingly plausible. The key notion of the mirror-image is not theorized, nor even much elaborated. A lot of intellectual work remains undone on how a group becomes established as hegemonic, and how concomitantly the 'other' is constructed as both its mirror and its opposite. The book works by pace, range, and fervour. It is vigorous and well-documented, stimulating and pithily expressed; on which last point, congratulations to the translator are also in order.

Sarah Kay  
University of Cambridge

**Emmanuèle Baumgartner, Chrétien de Troyes:  
Yvain, Lancelot, la charrette et le lion, Etudes  
littéraires, 38, Paris, PUF, 1992, 126pp. Pb 45 F.**

This brief study of two of Chrétien's romances opens with two chapters surveying the birth of romance and the Arthurian world prior to Chrétien. Madame Baumgartner displays a masterly control of her material and succeeds admirably in condensing into a very few pages a mass of complicated material. She then summarizes the plots of the romances, which is surely unnecessary, given that her analysis is unlikely to appeal to any who are not already very familiar with the texts, and has a long chapter comparing different aspects of the two romances (Pentecost, fountains, *amour courtois* in various aspects, customs, challenges etc.). This is followed by a chapter on the post-Chrétien literary references to Yvain and Lancelot which surprisingly ignores *La Mort le roi Artu*, but brings out the very different literary



fates of the two knights. Finally there is a *texte commenté* 'Lancelot au gué interdit' and a selective bibliography set out in a most unhelpful format. The erudition displayed is formidable and sometimes may well surpass the needs or interests of the intended audience (students?), but the book is immensely stimulating and suggests many interesting reinterpretations of the texts. At times the author goes perhaps too far. Are there really so many contrasts in the description of the *Fontaine au pin* (p.51), which mirror the conflict between love and valour? Nevertheless this is a book which really adds some new ideas to Chrétien scholarship and will be essential reading for all who are teaching or studying Chrétien.

Peter Noble  
University of Reading

**Ian Arthurson, The Perkin Warbeck Conspiracy 1491-1499**, Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1994, xii +244 pp.  
ISBN 0-86299-742-9

The threat which Warbeck posed to Henry VII during the years 1491-1497 was sufficiently serious to shape the king's policy and influence the character of his rule. Warbeck was dangerous because so many people, most notably Margaret of Burgundy, the emperor Maximilian, Philip the Fair, James IV of Scotland and numerous former adherents of Edward IV truly believed him to be Richard Duke of York, King Edward's younger son. These are the main arguments of Dr Arthurson's important study. Warbeck appealed to those very Yorkists upon whose help or acquiescence Henry Tudor had relied when he challenged Richard III. Treasonable sympathies were rife in southern England and at the very heart of Henry's household, 'essentially the construct of Edward IV' (p.75). Yet, Arthurson contends, it was Henry's own initiatives, some of them mistaken, which turned Warbeck into a serious challenger for the English throne. It was Henry's intervention in Brittany which led Charles VIII to try to stir up trouble for him in Ireland. By alienating Kildare without securing the allegiance of Desmond, Henry made Ireland a political quagmire. His hamfisted diplomacy in Flanders in 1493 only strengthened

Margaret of Burgundy's support for Warbeck, while his trade embargo caused unrest at home. Despite two bloody setbacks at Deal and Waterford in July and August 1495, Warbeck's reception by James IV of Scotland made him a greater menace than he had ever been before. The serious and large scale preparations which Henry undertook for retaliatory military action against James entailed the raising of the largest amount of taxation levied in any single year since Agincourt (p.163). The south-western revolt which ensued was not however simply a tax rebellion. The Cornishmen invited Warbeck to join them, and the assumption of the rising's leadership by Lord Audley, son of a Yorkist loyalist, threatened the renewal of civil war. Blackheath, not Stoke, was the last battle of the Wars of the Roses. Insecurity, not cold blooded political calculation, caused Henry to have Warbeck and Warwick executed in 1499. But their deaths could not make Henry's weak claim strong; they ushered in 'the awful final decade of Henry VII's reign; a decade of distrust, repression, imprisonment and execution' (p.3). Arthurson skilfully recreates an atmosphere of fear and intrigue. His canvas is full of colourful characters. Chief amongst them is John Taylor, Exeter clothier and yeoman of the Yorkist kings' chamber, manipulator of a web of international contacts, who worked for the Earl of Warwick's seizure of the throne and made Warbeck his tool.

Dr Arthurson's argument is not consistently convincing. But the mass of evidence he marshals, much of it illuminated by fresh insights, leaves the image of Henry Tudor as a *rex pacificus* and coolly calculating master of events looking irredeemably threadbare. The case for seeing continuing insecurity as the principal motor of his policy is greatly strengthened. This book deserves a wide audience. Unfortunately it bears numerous marks of hasty composition and poor editing. There is an astonishing mistake on p.ix, where Henry VI's son Edward (d. 1471) appears as a son of Richard of York. But these blemishes must not be allowed to obscure a considerable achievement.

R.A. Houlbrooke  
University of Reading

**Philip A. Haigh, *The Military Campaigns of the Wars of the Roses*, Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1995, 206 pp; £18.99. ISBN 0-7509-0904-8**

This book is the result of lifelong research into the Wars of the Roses. The author concentrates on military events and only uses the political history of the period to provide a framework for his account. The book begins with the chapter 'The Road to War', discussing the origins of the Wars of the Roses, and ends with the chapter 'The Battle of Stoke - 16 June 1478', which took place two years after the Battle of Bosworth. 'The Battle of Shrewsbury - 21 July 1403' is also included as an appendix and the author invites the reader to decide whether this earlier campaign should be included in this text.

The book takes each battle systematically and discusses the campaign, the battle and the epilogue in order. Each chapter is accompanied by extremely useful plans of the battles and the book is beautifully illustrated throughout. The author is not a professional historian and has written the book for anyone interested in the subject. His devotion to the subject is obvious and for a self-confessed Lancastrian provides a remarkably unbiased account. The battle descriptions are excellent and he includes detailed portrayals of the strategies used. He manages to convey the sophistication of the battle tactics and importantly describes the power of the individual to change the outcome of significant campaigns.

The main criticism of this work concerns the lack of full references. The author makes use of local and hearsay evidence in drawing his conclusions and he states that he has had to decide 'what is fact and what is not'. It would have been of great benefit to the reader, however, to learn from where his evidence is drawn. For example in Chapter 19 the author states that Sir Thomas Broughton was killed at the Battle of Shrewsbury. Other local sources dispute this fact and suggest that Sir Thomas lived on after the battle and survived as an outlaw living on the charity of his former tenants. For a serious text this lack of references is disappointing because it does not allow the reader to fully consider the evidence used. Also the author's terminology is occasionally confusing to the historian, especially his use of the term man-at-arms to cover all combatants, including knights, pikemen, billmen and archers.

This work could perhaps be described as a coffee table book, although this would do some disservice to this text. The author successfully describes the ever changing political and military landscape of fifteenth-century England making the book informative and interesting to the specialist as well as the general reader.

Adrian Bell  
University of Reading

**R.W. Dunning, *Arthur: the King in the West*,**  
Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1995, 164 pp; £9.99. ISBN 0-7509-  
0994-3

This is a reprint of a book originally published in 1988 and in a paperback version in 1990. It is still worth welcoming, however, as it is a masterly introduction to the whole Arthurian legend. Dunning outlines very clearly the possible sources and the way in which the legend probably grew. He links it very closely to the struggle of Glastonbury Abbey to defend its lands against the predatory Bishops of Wells and shows how the monks used the legend ruthlessly for their own purposes. Other Arthurian sites in the south-west are also discussed, sometimes all too briefly as in the case of Kelliwic, to show the spread of the legend and its increasing popularity. Dunning concludes with a brief look at the persistence of the legend after the medieval period and indeed after the dissolution of the monasteries. The use of Arthurian names by some local families and their descendants is touched upon. There are a few suggestions for further reading and an index. The book is absolutely faithful to its title. It is concerned exclusively with Arthur in the south-west and is not concerned with any of the clues suggesting his presence further north, let alone across the Channel. Easy to read and lavishly illustrated in both black and white and colour it is a concise and accurate guide to the early stages of the development of a legend that was to spread across Europe.

Peter Noble  
University of Reading

**Compton Reeves, Pleasures and Pastimes in later medieval England**, Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1995, 228 pp; £19.99. ISBN 0-7509-0089-X.

The title of this book is actually misleading as its contents cover far more than the pleasures and pastimes of the middle ages and range from Art, Architecture, Music and Dancing to Religion and Mysticism. Inevitably in a book of this length which is also lavishly and beautifully illustrated the approach has to be concise and not very detailed. In the discussion of Sorcery, for example, the cases of Joan of Kent and Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester are discussed quite fully. In neither case, however, are the political implications of the prosecution of two powerful noblewomen really considered, and the bibliographies do not mention the writings of Richard Kieckhefer on magic or Jeffery Burton Russell and Edward Peters on witchcraft which would certainly interest anyone who wished to pursue the subject. In the chapter on Sport it is suggested that wrestling was primarily a lower class sport but in literature there are examples of the highest born, Tristan and Gawain for example, participating in matches. The importance of hunting is fully recognized, as is the role of religion. The section on Mysticism treats Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe with a refreshing detachment. The fact that they had little influence in their own time and were, indeed, almost unknown is contrasted with the respect in which they are now held. Richard Rolle and other male mystics are given some well deserved attention. The book is to be welcomed despite some minor reservations. It provides a lot of information on a wide variety of topics and gives the general reader a good idea of the ways in which the medieval Englishman could pass his time and of some of the risks he ran. The illustrations are helpful in supplementing the text, the style is pleasant to read and the material is interesting. There is a list of sources for each chapter and a short general bibliography to help those interested in further reading. It is beautifully produced and provides a pleasant introduction to the medieval way of life without being or claiming to be exhaustive.

Peter Noble  
University of Reading

**H.T. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses***, originally published 1915. New edition, with introduction by R.A. Griffiths, Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1995, xiv + 178 pp. ISBN 0-7509-0922-6.

**Fifteenth Century England 1399-1509. *Studies in Politics and Society***, edited by S.B. Chrimes, C.D. Ross and R.A. Griffiths. Originally published 1972. Second edition, Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1995. xiii + 192 pp. ISBN 0-7509-0923 (paperback), 0-7509-1198-0 (hardback).

These important works, each a classic in its own right, have recently been reissued and thus made accessible to a wider audience. In both cases the original text is preserved and Professor Ralph Griffiths has contributed an introduction which explains clearly the historiographical significance of each work. As Griffiths points out, Evans' study of the significant role of Wales in the conflicts of the fifteenth century remains the only comprehensive study of its subject, retaining its value partly due to its exploitation of a distinctive source - the mass of Welsh poetry of the period. It also provides a readable narrative (here embellished by black and white illustrations) which would give anyone interested in the subject a sound foundation, but to gain a deeper appreciation of the role of the Welsh and of Wales in the Wars of the Roses one would need to turn to the more detailed studies of families and lordships which have emerged in the last thirty years. Even so, as Griffiths notes, there is still need for further investigation into sources, events and social context in this subject area.

The collection of essays published in 1972 has a strong claim to establishing the fifteenth century as a major area of historical interest and research, and, more particularly, to initiating the tradition (splendidly upheld by Alan Sutton Publishing since 1978) of printing the papers presented at the regular colloquia on the period. These essays began life as papers given at the first colloquium at Cardiff in 1970. All stand as 'keynote' contributions, many being expanded by their authors into subsequent full length studies elsewhere, as in the

case of Wolffe's study of Henry VI, which ascribed a less passive role to the king, Ross's balanced appraisal of Edward IV, and Chrimes's equally circumspect analysis of Henry VII. Pugh's article on the magnates, knights and gentry, with its quantitative analysis based upon the income tax of 1436, remains a succinct overview of a subject which has since received much detailed attention through countless PhDs on individual noble families. The regional interests emerging in 1970, as reflected by Griffiths' article on Wales and the Marches and Storey's on the North, have also been built upon by numerous scholars in the succeeding 25 years. I am sure that I am not alone in claiming this volume as an important early stimulus to a personal fascination with the period. Re-reading it now makes it clear why it was both an inspiring and an instructive *vade mecum*. Its contributors were all scholars of the first calibre (as the footnotes reveal) who managed to spread their infectious enthusiasm for this period through their written word. The reissue of this book is thus particularly to be applauded.

Anne Curry  
University of Reading

**Population et démographie au moyen âge.** Actes du 188<sup>e</sup> congrès national des sociétés historiques et scientifiques, Pau 25-29 octobre 1993, section histoire médiévale et philologie. Sous la direction d'Olivier Guyotjeannin, Editions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, Paris, 1995. 348 pp. ISBN 2-7355-0304-6.

Save for Fossier's opening overview on the subject, this volume is made up of narrowly focused contributions, the majority concerning France in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with a handful on the Hispanic kingdoms. They are arranged in four sections - 'Dynamiques', 'Sources', 'Migrants', 'Exclus et marginaux' - which helps to give some cohesion to a volume which comprises fairly disparate and largely local studies, many of which are based upon single documents.

It would be easy to dismiss these articles as very small pieces of a much larger, and incomplete, jigsaw, but they all have the merit of being the result of painstaking, original research. Many have a strong quantitative element to them, testimony to the high level of development which computer-assisted research has reached in France. This does not, at times, make for easy reading, and many articles would have benefited from longer concluding sections: there is sometimes a tendency to state information without analysing it fully, particularly in the more statistically-based pieces. In a book full of figures and tables it is perhaps inevitable that the papers drawing upon artistic material prove more immediately accessible, although in some ways they fit oddly into the volume as a whole. Mérindol considers the development of the profile portrait in the later middle ages in an exceptionally well-documented study. Laharie adopts a less comprehensive but promising iconographic approach to 'les infirmes au moyen âge, xi<sup>e</sup>-xv<sup>e</sup> siècles'. Morlet's study of the names of the inhabitants of Blois in 1389, with extensive listings, is also a fascinating voyage into an area which English historians have tended to neglect. This is a volume with much to offer the specialist. The CTHS deserves praise for the speed with which it publishes the proceedings of the annual *Congrès des sociétés historiques et scientifiques* and for the high quality of production. How many UK publishers would be prepared to include so many plates, including nine in colour, in a volume of conference papers?

Anne Curry  
University of Reading

**Recueil de textes relatifs à l'histoire de l'architecture et à la condition des architectes en France au Moyen Âge**, edited by Victor Mortet and Paul Deschamps. Paris, Editions du Comité des Travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1995, 1100 pp; 150 F.

This is a paperback reprint of Mortet and Deschamps' famous collections of annotated texts on medieval architecture, architects, and building workers, gathered together in a single volume. It has been



augmented with a new preface by Léon Pressouyre, which sets both the authors and their work in their historiographical context, with a bibliography of new editions of texts used in the *Recueil* by Olivier Guyotjeannin, and with short biographies of the life and work of the two editors. Nothing else needed to be added: the original volumes were always 'user-friendly', replete with introductions, copious notes and cross-references, person, place and subject indexes, and glossaries. Moreover, in his introduction, Mortet carefully classified the types of documents he had used, a pattern followed and expanded by Deschamps, so that, although the documents are arranged chronologically, these aids enable important themes to be identified and followed through.

The collection has a distinguished provenance. In 1842 the *Comité des arts et monuments auprès du Ministère de l'Instruction publique* began an initiative to encourage research into the history of medieval architecture. Much piecemeal investigation and publication followed, but it was not until the appearance of the first volume of the *Recueil* by Victor Mortet in 1911 that a coherent collection of materials was established. Mortet assembled over 150 texts covering the period between c.1000 and c.1130, but he died before he was able to extend this into the Gothic era. Paul Deschamps completed this work with the publication of the second volume in 1929, containing another 160 texts, which took the collection up to c.1300. He made use of the notes and documents left by Mortet, as well as his own extensive research. The geographical area covers 'France' as it existed at its widest extent in the middle ages, although the material impinges on the wider world at many points. Mortet included, for example, documents on Salisbury, Canterbury, and Compostella, while Deschamps, later the historian of the fortifications of the Latin East, added material from the Holy Land.

Mortet was innovatory in his interest not only in the great cathedrals and abbeys and their famous patrons, but also in lesser-known buildings, including domestic architecture. Moreover, his collection has a strong attraction for the social historian, since there are many documents on the building workers themselves. Four examples can be taken to show the richness of this material. Sometime in the second half of the eleventh century, Vital, a carpenter from Isigny in Normandy, who had been making wooden frames for the glass at Coutances, was alleged to have given himself up voluntarily to be serf to the chapter in thanksgiving for a miracle cure

granted him while working there (Mortet, XLI). At about the same time, in contrast, a serf of the Abbey of Saint-Aubin at Angers named Fulk, was moving in the opposite direction, having obtained his freedom, together with a house and a vineyard, in return for an engagement to paint the entire abbey and to make its glass. If he had a son, he would succeed him in this post (Mortet, LXXXVII). Fulk's social rise seems to be more typical of the overall trends, which reflect the growth in demand for skilled men in the building boom which was beginning to grip western Europe in the twelfth century. Thus, in 1120, Fulk V, Count of Anjou, conceded to the artisans, masons and carpenters, who were the dependents of the Abbey of Saint-Jouin-de-Marnes (Bas-Poitou) immunity from all service, rents and *corvées* owed to the seigneurie of Moncontour (Mortet, CXXXVIII). By the end of the twelfth century, individual craftsmen were developing their own reputations: Master G., from Tournai, is described as pre-eminent 'not only among us, but in many places and churches for his magnificent works and remarkable skills' (Deschamps, LXXX).

While the republication of literary classics in paperback is commonplace, the reappearance of a collection of medieval documents first published over eighty years ago is relatively unusual. It is, however, fully justified, for it remains a working tool, invaluable for historians, art historians, and archaeologists. Inevitably, as Pressouyre points out, there are subjects to which a contemporary Mortet and Deschamps would need to give renewed attention, especially in the social and economic history of building and in the techniques of construction. Moreover, the concentration on France retains a flavour of the nineteenth-century 'nationalist' approach to history, now seen as inappropriate for medievalists. Nevertheless, the collection as it stands remains a unique resource, which has not been superseded.

Malcolm Barber  
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**T.H. White, *The Book of Beasts*, Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1992, 296 pp**

This is a re-edition of the 1984 version of a book first produced in 1954, based on work started in the 1930s. Unfortunately its age shows. It presents a very eccentric English gentleman scholar's view of the medieval world that has fed advertising copy-writers ever since. White had hoped that his translation of a medieval bestiary and his tracings of the pictures would give him a 'D.Litt. or Ph.D. or whatever it is' and a position in the University of Cambridge. It does seem a pity that the publisher has chosen to reproduce this rather than attempt something more up-to-date as it will help to perpetuate outmoded views on the bestiary. No-one today believes that this was 'a serious work of natural history' (p.231) by its authors/compilers. With over two hundred manuscripts of Pliny's *Natural History*, plus the various encyclopaedias based on Pliny, Aristotle, the Arabs and others, the Middle Ages had enough evidence of scientific knowledge not to think the bestiary was to be seen in that light. It was essentially a work for sermons and personal reading. The recent publications of X. Muratova will give the reader a clearer and more accurate picture of the genre.

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**Richard Mortimer, *Angevin England 1154-1258*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1994, xi +266pp**

The publication of this book in effect launches a new twelve-volume history of medieval Britain, of which Marjorie Chibnall's *Anglo-Norman England 1066-1166*, published as a singleton in 1986, is now considered part. Mrs Chibnall is named as the General Editor and the success of her earlier volume presumably prompted the idea of the series. Although this volume also deals with roughly a hundred years, the period chosen hardly has a chronological significance comparable to that of Mrs Chibnall's own volume (the 'first century of English Feudalism'). Given the general character of his account, it is hard to

see why 1258 is considered an appropriate closing date unless it points to the formal demise by the Treaty of Paris of Henry II's Angevin empire. The book is divided into two parts. The first, politics and government, has five chapters and the second, society and culture, four. In the bibliography there are three pages listing the sources referred to, one page on general works and nine books relevant to the chapters. Most of the chapters deal with clearly defined issues - the king's government, the king and the aristocracy, the king and the church, rural society, towns, industry and trade, learning, literature and the arts - and they will usefully serve as introductions to these topics. The author claims to have preferred such a thematic approach, though he was anyway not apparently allotted space enough for greater detail. This work makes no attempt to challenge or replace the several fuller narratives available to those who need them; even so, in the first part there are passages of succinct narration for select episodes. The prose is generally spare, with flickers of laconic humour; opportunities are also taken to introduce apposite quotation from contemporary evidence. Mortimer's ability to cover so much ground without strain arouses some admiration. Though its modest ambition may give a misleading impression of the real difficulty of the assignment, the book must be assessed for what it does attempt to do. The first chapter in particular tries to provide a context for the discussion of political life by sketching the social norms of the kings and aristocracy. In general, however, both in plan and in execution, the book seems content to summarize the present state of knowledge rather than venture a more individual point of view. The fact that there are eight plates, all of buildings, must, however, reflect the author's idea of what gives the appropriate visual impression of the period and he gives ten pages to architecture; only two, to illuminated manuscripts. Since much is accomplished in a short space, there is no time to go into any topic at any length, but the virtue of the book lies precisely in its ability to guide the reader so deftly over a broad terrain.

D.J.A. Matthew  
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## **Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society in Later Medieval England*, Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1995**

This copiously illustrated and excellently annotated publication fills a timely gap in the literature on medieval medicine. Whereas up to now scholars have looked at manuscripts of medieval medical practice, handbooks of surgical techniques, the training of medieval practitioners or the history of the English hospital system, the social context of the development and practice of medieval medicine has generally been overlooked. Carole Rawcliffe integrates medical theories of the body and of medicine with contemporary religious and philosophical ideas of the body and the soul. Furthermore she discusses both medical treatment stemming from the learned tomes of the university-trained physicians and the use of astrology and the occult by such magisters. That medieval medicine was practised by different groups of people, not just the equivalent to our modern 'doctors', becomes obvious in the chapters on physicians, surgeons and apothecaries, all of whom practised diagnostic and curative medicine to varying degrees. Finally, in devoting two chapters to women and medicine, Carole Rawcliffe does justice to the ambiguous and complex roles of women in medieval society: accepted as carers but often challenged or excluded as practitioners of medicine. In concentrating on the social context and the practical ramifications of contemporary medical theory throughout, the subject of medieval medicine becomes accessible to the medically untrained historian, without ever ignoring the history of medical ideas, so that the development of medieval theories and practices from Hebrew, Greek and Arabic origins is illustrated. Illness and spiritual matters are interconnected, as the introductory chapter on diseases of the soul points out: sin can cause illness according to the medieval view, and death ensuing from sickness is a punishment by God. In this context the Church's teachings almost form a 'spiritual anaesthesia', as the author puts it, when medical treatment fails. Most learned medical practice was based on humoral theories of balance and imbalance, and a pragmatic approach was more often to be found among the empirics and military surgeons than the university-trained physician. Outside of urban areas and elite social groups most people in late medieval England did not have recourse to such physicians, but had to make do with the services of itinerant empirics and healers or local wise-women

- not necessarily to the patients' disadvantage, as even if it did not cure them, treatment administered by such healers was often far less dangerous than that prescribed by the 'proper' physician. The influence of astrology over the fate of the patient could provide the medieval physician with a 'fully comprehensive insurance policy' in such cases where there were 'complications'. It is worth mentioning the existence of some awareness of the benefits of ritual or magical practices in aiding the patient's recovery: the early fifteenth-century physician Antonius Guainerius remarked that 'we perform so many ceremonies in medicine' because they increase the patient's belief in the medicament and consequently its efficacy.

Irina Metzler  
University of Reading

**The Illustrated Chronicles of Matthew Paris.  
Observations of Thirteenth-Century Life,**

translated, edited and with an introduction by Richard  
Vaughan. Illustrations selected by Nigel Wilkins.

Photography by Ian Cannell (Alan Sutton, Corpus Christi  
College, Cambridge, 1993) i-xiv +210 pp.

This is a new edition of *Chronicles of Matthew Paris*, first published in 1984. It substantially repeats the introduction and translation of the 1984 edition of the chronicles for 1247 to 1250, and now includes a considerable number of reproductions of Paris's own illustrations in colour. The book is attractively produced, in a large format, on glossy paper, and with bold section headings.

The aims, as stated in the introduction, are to act as a companion volume to Vaughan's 1958 work on Matthew Paris which will introduce 'this most colourful and informative of European Medieval chroniclers to the interested student and general reader' and 'hopefully ... will provide the beginner with a meaningful introduction to the Middle Ages' and both the beginner and 'the more knowledgeable reader' with a first-hand acquaintance with Matthew Paris. This it does, with enough in the introduction to get an idea of Paris's writing and

importance, and useful background material on Matthew Paris himself and on the manuscripts.

The introduction is in a style which will not put off the general reader, including for example sketches of the nature of monastic life, the medieval world context and the way in which the thirteenth century viewed the writing of histories or chronicles. Chroniclers are likened to reporters or journalists, essentially noting the happenings of their own day, having in the main taken their information on previous periods direct from other writers. Little details spark interest - such as the abbey of St Albans having stabling for 300 visitors' horses, a point which also shows that the information available to a man like Paris was much wider than might be assumed from the stereotypical view of the medieval monk.

The limitations of the brief introduction are noted, with the comment that 'it must be admitted, and deplored, that space has made it impossible here to show how he treated his earlier sources, in particular how he revised and tried to improve on the text of his predecessor Roger Wendover'. A set of references does however offer the opportunity to follow up points further.

The illustrations are evidently carefully chosen to complement aspects of the text which they accompany, though at times they do this rather obliquely - a description of an eclipse of the moon for example being accompanied by an illustration entitled 'An eclipse - in this case of the Sun'. Overall, although there is a list of folio references for the illustrations, it is not immediately clear whether they were drawn by Paris in the particular context of the text with which they are now associated or not, except where captions including the words 'in this case' indicate that an illustration is depicting a similar event rather than the event actually described. From a perusal of Suzanne Lewis's *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora* it would appear that in many cases the illustrations were drawn by Paris to accompany a different text from that in conjunction with which they appear here, presumably because there are in fact not many illustrations for the entries for 1247 to 1250 which make up this book.

The effect of putting together text and pictures which the author did not intend is at times rather unsettling. While many captions are helpful, some are very brief and some actually confusing. It is more or less true for example that St Louis is shown 'ill in bed, taking the cross', as the caption says, but what is actually being depicted is his

mother extending the Holy Cross over him and effecting his recovery from the point of death, following which he did indeed take the cross. 'A Monk, in this case a Franciscan Friar' is a confusing caption and turns out to be a drawing of Brother William, labelled as such in Paris's original drawing and a close associate of Paris.

The cutting out of very small illustrative details so as to have a tiny 'relevant' picture beside parts of the text can make them so out of context that they become just decorative, and in general it would be helpful to have fuller information on the illustrations, especially since they often have more in them than at first meets the eye. There has to be a story behind 'The devil - untypically here rescuing a girl from her tormentor', a tantalizing caption if ever there was one!

This edition tends rather to fall between stools - or perhaps between coffee-tables. It is a very attractive volume; rather fuller information on text and pictures would just have given it something extra. It nevertheless offers a very accessible opportunity to encounter Matthew Paris at first hand, both in his own words and in his view of his world, and it thus meets its own aims and opens the doors to a world which both the beginner and the more knowledgeable reader can enter and explore further if they wish. 'Hopefully' as the friendly introduction says, this book will encourage them to do so.

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**Fred C. Robinson, *The Editing of Old English*,  
Oxford, Blackwell, 1994. xi + 212 pp.**

A brief review can only hint at the sensible and objective precision of this rich and profitable collection (not to be confused with *The Editing of Old English*, Papers from the 1990 Manchester Conference, ed. D.G. Scragg and Paul E. Szarmach, Cambridge 1994) which in Professor Robinson's words deals 'with shedding light on passages which previous readers have found puzzling or incomprehensible. ... Only rarely ... [with] ... the subtle art of emendation or textual reconstruction' (94). Organized into four sections: text and manuscript, textual criticism, linguistic studies of Old English, and three editions



of Old English texts, only one essay, 'Eve's "Weaker" Mind in *Genesis B*, Line 590', appears for the first time.

*Old English Literature in Its Immediate Context* is important for what it says about 'new historicism' in Old English studies. '[A] text may lose something of its original meaning' (vii), if it is 'detached from its codicological environment'; when this happens, 'we risk losing that part of its meaning' (3). Of greater interest, perhaps, are a group of thoughtful re-readings of problematic *Beowulf* passages, such as 'Why Is Grendel's Not Greeting the *Gifstol* a *Wræc Micel*', which characteristically hinges upon the precise sense of the key verb *motan*. 'Eve's "Weaker" Mind' also hinges upon the meaning of the word *wac*, as 'pliant, yielding', rather than 'weak', and indirectly suggests that the Old English Eve is, like Criseyde, 'slydyng of corage' (*T&C*, V, 825).

'Metathesis in the Dictionaries: A Problem for Lexicographers' is important, because it is a problem for literary critics as well. Applied to *Beowulf* 10a, *hronrade* may emerge, via *hornrade*, as a kenning, not only for the 'ocean', but also for a 'bench', the 'road' up and down which the drinking horn passes, among *yumbsittendra*, 9b, 'those sitting about'.

Every essay in this collection is similarly suggestive. The early 'Two Non-Cruces in *Beowulf*' (1966), in arguing for the MS *micel* and *one* 69a-70a, reminds us of another possible first, in this case of the 'eternalizing' conceit: Heorot is not 'bigger than', but 'still remembered' (as Raymond P. Tripp, Jr. suggests in 'The Exemplary Role of Hrothgar and Heorot', *Philological Quarterly* 56, 1977, 123-29).

Showing that Professor Robinson practises what he preaches, the collection concludes with exemplary editions of "'Bede's" Envoi' (in the context of the colophon tradition), 'The Rewards of Piety' (two poems as one), and 'The Devil's Account of the Next World' (minus ghost words), all of which are full of very useful suggestions and solutions. The devil's *swefle[n] fyr*, *swært and unadwæscedlic* hints that Grendel too may smell of sulphur (cf. *Beowulf*, *swa-fela fyrena* (166a).

This collection is a wholesome antidote to the linguistic nihilism which has recently eroded the sense of text in Old English studies. Although Professor Robinson's erudition and precision sometimes allow the possible to encroach upon the probable, careful reading will show that the productive heterogeneity of objective common sense and

linguistic subtlety is alive and well — in spite of 'desire'. Not everyone will always agree, but he will return to the text better informed, and with need to rethink his own readings.

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