REVIEWS

Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts: Essays Celebrating the Publication of 'A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English'. Edited by Felicity Riddy. Cambridge, Brewer, 1991, xiii + 214 pp.

Romance in Medieval England. Edited by Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows, and Carol Meale. Cambridge, Brewer, 1991, viii + 228 pp.

Both these volumes are collections of papers given at specialized conferences: the first meeting of the Society for the Study of Medieval Romance, and the fifth York manuscripts conference - a celebration of the publication of LALME. Something of the sense of an historic occasion survives in each set of essays: the rich assortment of different topics and approaches to romances recalls the excitingly novel prospect of a whole series of conferences devoted to medieval romance in England, while the celebratory function of the LALME meeting is preserved in the foreword, Angus McIntosh's opening remarks to the conference (Some thoughts on Medieval Dialectology) ushering in the papers which are to discuss and evaluate the usefulness of LALME and its principles to scholars whose interest in regionalism stems from diverse disciplines - philology, literature, history, codicology, dialectology.

The first five essays in Felicity Riddy's collection are intended to be demonstrative, practical examples of this usefulness - indeed, there is a good case for suggesting that the first two, by two of the authors of LALME, M.L. Samuels on 'Scribes and Manuscript Traditions' and Michael Benskin on 'The Fit-Technique Explained', should be reissued as a booklet to accompany every copy of LALME, since together they constitute an operating manual enabling the reader first of all to use the principles of selection adopted by the LALME team to choose an appropriate text, and secondly to understand and apply the 'fit-technique' by which the linguistic maps in the atlas may be used to localize the language of the chosen text. These technical explanations are clearly presented and offer useful tips - northern scribes may betray their origin by not distinguishing their graphs for 'þ' and 'y' (p.4); when plotting areas on a linguistic

map overlay of tracing paper to exclude forms not used by the scribe, 'if in doubt, cross out less, not more' (p.19).

The two following articles discuss the expansion of the LALME project in the study of Earlier Middle English: Margaret Laing describes the problems and desiderata in this undertaking, and identifies sixty-four manuscripts containing EME and localized either by external evidence, or by linguistic criteria derived from LALME, which can provide a basis for the production of a complementary linguistic atlas for EME ('Anchor Texts and Literary Manuscripts in Early Middle English'). Jeremy J. Smith's discussion, 'designed as a complement to her outline', focuses on 'Tradition and Innovation in South-West-Midland Middle English', examining the evidence for the attitudes of scribes towards their copying in the EME period, with particular reference to the manuscripts of the *Ancrene Riwle*, showing 'a new, dialectically-confident handling of the vernacular' as a part of contemporary intellectual developments (p.65). Ronald Waldron's essay on 'Dialectal Aspects of Manuscripts of Trevisa's Translation of the *Polychronicon* ' conducts a similar examination of another group of related manuscripts, this time dating from the fifteenth century, demonstrating the use of LALME linguistic profiles very clearly.

Three articles focusing on manuscripts from medieval Norfolk follow. Richard Beadle provides a 'Prolegomena to a Literary Geography of Later Medieval Norfolk', a fascinating account of the uniquely rich resources of this well-defined area, accompanied by an important research tool in the list of 147 manuscripts which can be dated and localized to late medieval Norfolk (or at least to the work of Norfolk scribes), compiled by Beadle and McIntosh. The literary-geographical phenomenon of a fifteenth-century 'medieval drama of East Anglia', raised in the prolegomena is represented by seven manuscripts, one of which (BL Cotton Vespasian D viii) is the subject of Peter Meredith's paper, 'Manuscript, Scribe and Performance: Further Looks at the N. Town Manuscript', a scrupulously argued codicological interpretation of the composite nature of the text as an unfinished process of blending pageant with play material whose ultimate purpose is 'not at all clear'. It makes compulsive reading - though its 'regionalism' is entirely implicit. Colin Richmond's article, on the other hand, plunges straight into the minutiae of events in mid-fifteenth-century Norwich as recorded in the Paston letters, with the particular end of recuperating the reputation of a local 'knave':

'What a difference a Manuscript Makes: John Wyndham of Felbrigg, Norfolk (d. 1475)'.

The tastes of London readers in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are assessed by Julia Boffey's and Carol Meale's examination of one interesting manuscript, 'Selecting the Text: Rawlinson C. 86 and Some Other Books for London Readers', and by John Scattergood's account of the circulation of the works of one poet: 'The London Manuscripts of John Skelton's Poems'. MS Rawlinson C. 86 is compared in terms of contents and codicological makeup with contemporary manuscript and printed books of miscellanea to identify it as a collection of small anthology booklets, perhaps speculatively produced, for a middle-class London public. Some ideas are offered as to the 'informing principle behind the choice of contents', if any, in each booklet - it would be interesting to know if the versions of the texts here differ significantly from those in other collections, but the present study does not undertake such an investigation, in the absence of which, speculation remains 'open to question' (p.169). John Scattergood emphasizes the essentially regional and local nature of the late medieval and early Tudor culture within which Skelton wrote, and establishes a context for readership for his poems, embracing courtiers, gentlemen in London on business, and professional and mercantile citizens of London, whose attitude to Skelton's works as shown in their manuscript choices seems to have been a mixture of appreciation and incomprehension.

Finally, Priscilla Bawcutt discusses 'The Earliest Texts of Dunbar' - six manuscripts and a few early sixteenth-century prints whose chronological closeness is the more important because of the difficulty of establishing geographical relations, the 'study of the regional distribution of early Scottish spellings.(being) still in its infancy' (p.185) - an obvious opportunity for another extension of the LALME project.

The collection of essays on *Romance in Medieval England* begins with a group of five studies devoted to the manuscripts in which the romances are preserved. Jennifer Fellows assesses the advantages of alternative methods of 'Editing Middle English Romances', and concludes that the parallel-text solution is preferable, as being the most likely to convey 'an appreciation of the nature of that variation' between manuscript versions 'so necessary to an understanding of what the text meant to its medieval audience/readers' (p.12). John J. Thompson's paper on 'Collecting Middle English Romances',

though not concerned with editing, does emphasize the related point that manuscript contexts can reveal a great deal about the literary tastes of the 'earliest intended readers' of books containing romances, though for obvious reasons the author does not pursue this question much beyond the simple level of recording contents. His main concerns are the transmission of groups of texts (it is surprising that P.R. Robinson's 1972 thesis is not cited), and the analysis of paper stocks used in the manuscripts to form some hypotheses about likely methods of compilation.

The two following essays, Gillian Rogers on 'The Percy Folio Manuscript Revisited' and Lynne S. Blanchfield on 'The Romances in MS Ashmole 61', demonstrate very clearly the importance of studies of ME romances within their manuscript contexts. The Percy Folio offers 'a microcosm of seventeenth-century popular taste' (p.63) in which the seven still clearly recognizable descendants of ME romances have been chosen and 'tinkered with' to form part of a collection of texts exhibiting two chief interests, English and Scottish history, and sensational romantic fiction. In MS Ashmole 61, on the other hand, the five romances (of which one, *Libeaus Desconus*, is also in the Percy Folio while the others share its Arthurian and sentimental bias) occur in the company of much devotional and instructive material. Dr Blanchfield suggests that a consistent pattern of adaptation is evident, forming a 'family preaching' compilation with a typically late-medieval devotion to the Passion (p.78), which she argues convincingly is also demonstrated in the frequent drawings of fish and roses.

Carol Meale's examination of 'The Morgan Library Copy of *Generides* ' is concerned with a romance manuscript at the other end of the quality scale, a de luxe volume for which a programme of illumination and illustration was planned, though never completed. She produces a context for this edited and updated version of the romance in the mid-fifteenth-century preoccupation with crusading motifs following the fall of Constantinople. Historical crusading events are also proffered by S.H.A. Shepherd to account for the origin of another ME romance in ' "This grete journee": *The Sege of Melayne* ', for which he suggests a French 'original' that was 'some sort of allegorical *excitatoire* ... to inspire French readers to go off and fight the heathen or some comparable enemy' (p.117). However, given the range of historical dates invoked (from 733 to 1324) and the lack of any occasion linked to the unique fifteenth-century ME text or to its pre-

sumably earlier date of composition, it is hard to see more than speculation here.

A more extended analysis of romance in terms of historical context is offered in John Simon's 'Northern *Octavian* and the Question of Class', focusing on the 'awkwardness and complexity' of the treatment of Clement as 'signs of the disturbance' in class relations subsequent upon the Black Death (p.110). Further discussions of the relation between history and romance are found in Rosamund Allen's analysis of the presentation of women in Layamon's *Brut*, 'Female Perspectives in Romance and History' (historical writing perhaps influenced by romance reading), in Rosalind Field's pointing to the 'chronicle realism' and 'conscious historicity' (p.173) of AN and ME Matter of England romances ('Romance as History, History as Romance'), and in Judith Weiss's questioning of the historical context for the phenomenon of 'The Wooing Woman in Anglo-Norman Romance'.

Finally, two essays offer detailed discussion of specific motifs in romance and other texts: David Burnley meticulously examines the vocabulary and values involved in "Comforting the Troops: An Epic Moment in Popular Romance', while Elizabeth Williams traces the interrelationship between ME romance and saint's life in terms of motif-complex 'Hunting the Deer' in an extensive and somewhat confusing multiple comparison.

Both collections conclude with a useful 'Index of Manuscripts Cited', and the Romance volume demonstrates the value of the footnote/bibliography system of references for an anthology of essays on a specific topic, in that the bibliography can itself be a research tool.

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Geoffrey Chaucer: 'The Tales of the Clerk and the Wife of Bath'. Edited by Marion Wynne-Davies, (Routledge English Texts Series), London, Routledge, 1992.

In addition to the provision of an annotated text with notes, glossary, and bibliography, Marion Wynne-Davies's edition of the prologues

and tales of the Wife of Bath and the Clerk sets out to do two things, both worthwhile: to provide a text for students based on the manuscript now preferred by textual scholars, and to examine the prologues and tales in their social and cultural context, attending particularly to questions of gender. While there is much here to interest student readers, the enterprise is not entirely successful. The division of material between an introduction, critical commentary, and notes sometimes leads to repetition. At one point an attempt to make her critical observations accessible to her younger readers has already lost some of its topical edge: 'The sexually rapacious and homicidal protagonist in the film *Fatal Attraction* is a polarised feminine opposite to the demure and acquiescent role formulated for Princess Diana by the tabloid press' (pp.119-20). Later, when trying to link the two tales, she focuses on the fact that both Alison and Griselda faint and that in both cases this apparent sign of female weakness gives the women power. Alison gains mastery over Jankyn because he fears that he has killed her and she appears to be lying low until her 'swowgh' has achieved its effect. Marion Wynne-Davies attempts to suggest a similar combination of insensibility and independent desire in Griselda's case. She takes the narrator's comment, 'O which a pitous thyng it was to se/ Her swownyng, and her humble voys to heere!' (1086-87) to indicate that 'she faints and speaks at the same time' (p.141). The narrator is in fact clearly reacting to what has been told us in the previous stanza which describes her genuine faint and recovery and then goes on to recount her words. It is not necessary to read the text so perversely to recognise the powerful effect of swooning. It takes rather too long to make the simple point that when the dominated females 'vacate the narrative' (p.142) because they are suppressed by absolute authority that authority itself is questioned and is 'meaningless without female co-operation'.

The dangers of adopting a fashionable critical orthodoxy and trying, as Bacon put it, 'to wrest all other facts in a strange fashion to conformity therewith' at the expense of any other approach are made very clear.

> We perforce bring our own ideological baggage with us.For example, a feminist critic..must realise that, although feminist roles are central to the tales of the Wife and Clerk, it is only our contemporary literary and historical emphasis on women's experiences that have enabled us to examine the

> poem afresh in this light. Whatever our critical allegiances it is essential to recognise that they are social, cultural, political and personal constructions, rather than immovable and unassailable certainties (p.120).

There is a warning too, amid the historical contextualizing of the tales by outlining the 'experience of women in the medieval period' (p.121), against mistaking art for life: 'Griselda is ... not a realistically portrayed woman, and the experiences of medieval women have little material connection with her exaggerated trials' (p.123). There is a brief but useful introductory account of more recent critical approaches to Chaucer and those interested in feminist readings will do well to go on to Jill Mann's recent book from which Marion Wynne-Davies quotes several times.

The text of the edition is based not on the Ellesmere MS, the copy text for Robinson's edition and still the basis for *The Riverside Chaucer* which has succeeded it as the most popular edition for students, but on the Hengwrt MS which is believed to be nearer the author's 'final version' and has less 'editorial interference'. Nevertheless, this edition does follow Ellesmere for four passages which 'do not occur in Hengwrt (but) are probably authorial revisions' (p.22), and the order of the tales assumed in the introductory discussion is Ellesmere and not Hengwrt: however good the text, Hengwrt's order is frequently thought to be random and confused; Ellesmere, by contrast, satisfies a critical desire for thematic pattern. Kittredge's identification in it of a Marriage Group is still important here as it provides a structure for Chaucer's 'interest in the relationships between men and women' — indeed, the theory seems to prescribe rather than elucidate the order of the tales: 'The theory of the Marriage Group..is..one of the fairly accurate ways of trying to order the tales' (p.4). Manuscript scholarship is eclipsed by critical interpretation. While one welcomes texts based on the best authorities for sixth-formers and undergraduates, as well as for scholars, one wonders if such questions will really engage their attention. Even where textual differences are great and the effects relatively clear, as in, for example, the two texts of *King Lear*, it is hard for students to sustain a high level of interest.

The introduction begins with a brief account of Chaucer's life and works. Brevity sometimes gives the impression that interpretation is fact. For example, Chaucer's 'loss' (p.2) of his controllerships of the

customs and their being 'awarded elsewhere' may well have been the result of a planned and political removal from London in the late 1380s rather than evidence of a declining career. In fact, he became a member of the commission of the peace of Kent in 1385, a knight of the shire for Kent in 1386, and Clerk of the King's Works in 1389 (not 1386 (p.2) - presumably a proofreading slip). Being sued for debt, as Chaucer was several times in the 1390s, does not necessarily imply that Chaucer was short of money. In fact, we know that he was in receipt of a regular and not insubstantial income. The attempt to place the works in a contemporary historical context is not always entirely successful. The impact of contemporary political unrest is descried everywhere. The reference to the fickleness of the people provoked by the behaviour of Walter's subjects: 'O stormy people' (995), cannot really be described as a mention of 'civic rebellion and unrest' (p.11), and it is certainly not a 'direct allusion to the Peasants' Revolt' (p.144). The section on women in the medieval period gives some space to a discussion of attitudes to rape: 'If the rapist offered to marry his victim all charges were dropped' (p.15), and 'marriage was the expected outcome of most rape charges' (p.135). The analogy then drawn that the knight in the Wife's tale escapes the sentence of death 'through a marriage at the end of the narrative' does not fit the evidence properly: there is no question of the knight's marrying his victim.

It is a requirement in an edition of this kind for there to be a section on the language. About half of this is devoted to pronunciation since 'it is essential to remember that Chaucer's poetry was written to be spoken aloud' (p.18). Unfortunately this leaves only two pages for other aspects of language, which is not enough, especially as they have to include paragraphs on the spelling and orthography of the edition and metre, verse form and rhetoric. The pressure is clear from an observation such as 'Adjectives and adverbs occasionally end in 'e' which is left without further explanation (p.22). The edition is furnished with sufficient helpful notes, glosses on the page, and a fuller glossary at the end.

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Gaston Zink, Phonétique historique du français, Paris, PUF, 1991, 3rd ed.

The third edition of a work first published in 1986, the book has its origins in the course given by the author at the Sorbonne to prepare for the CAPES and the Agrégation students who had to acquire quickly a fairly detailed knowledge of the development of the French language. This is the ethos behind the book and explains its concept and lay-out.

It is the lay-out and organisation of the material that seem to me to be its major disadvantages. The book is split into two parts (*niveaux*), the one containing basic material, the other material seen as more marginal or relating chiefly to dialects. Important phenomena, such as nasalisation, are therefore dealt with in two chapters (one in each section), and a reader requiring a comprehensive survey of the subject has to consult the contents page carefully and conflate the material supplied. It would have been better to have presented all the material in one chapter and indicated by subheadings what was basic and what was marginal.

The chapters contain multiple examples, misleadingly described as '*exercices*'. Theoretically these are very helpful as they trace the development of individual words from the (Latin) etymon to the 17th century or later. However the presentation can cause a lack of clarity. The phonetic alphabet used is the '*alphabet phonétique des romanistes*'; all the symbols are explained in chapters II and III, but nowhere is there a list of the symbols which can be referred to quickly when studying the examples. In addition, out of a desire for simplicity, at some stages of each word's development only the sound-changes which took place at that stage are indicated and not the sound of the whole word. I found this unhelpful, and I think that students would find it baffling. Again in the interests of simplicity, there are only two indexes (of French words and of etymons); despite a very full contents, an index giving concepts and also specific references to dialects would have been useful. The bibliography is not of a nature to be particularly helpful to students.

As I see it, one of the most serious defects in the book lies in the printing. The phonetic symbols are not distinguished by the use of bold or italic type. This means that particularly for non-native French speakers, *a, au, y* and *ou* in the body of the text can at times be confused with the normal French words (e.g. p.201: 'a maintenu par..' is

'*a* preserved by..'). For students grappling with a difficult subject this is a serious problem and one which could easily have been avoided.

In those chapters where the author makes more general statements (and how much one wishes there were more of these), he writes clearly and with a certain lightness, and from time to time neatly sums up a salient fact (e.g. the uniqueness of *ü* p.129). However, I felt that without an expert teacher able to transform the book into lively classes tailored to the needs of a particular group of students, it would not fulfil its purpose with anglophone students (nor even perhaps with francophones). One needs a free Professor Zink with every volume!

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Religious Belief and Ecclesiastical Careers in Late Medieval England (Studies in the History of Medieval Religion III), ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1991, xvii + 238pp. £35.

This excellent collection of papers, delivered during a conference at Strawberry Hill in 1989, makes a very welcome addition to the ever-growing corpus of publications on the later medieval English Church. The contributions 'focus on a wide variety of topics', and all have useful and interesting things to say, some very significantly so. There are two detailed 'local' studies: David Lepine subjects the canons of Exeter cathedral between 1300 and 1455 to the most thorough prosopographical analysis undertaken for any English secular chapter in this period, while Clive Burgess examines the forms of chantry foundation in fifteenth-century Bristol, highlighting founders' efforts to circumvent Mortmain legislation and the laity's involvement in chantry supervision. Robert Dunning discusses the Somerset Carthusians at Witham and Hinton, making a fair case for the maintenance of community and spirituality at both houses to the eve of their dissolution. On the international level Margaret Harvey traces the history of Pope Martin V's dealings with the English in

1422-31, identifying certain papal objectives (including repeal of the Statute of Provisors) and elucidating the complex web of relations between England, the Duke of Bedford's France, Burgundy and the Empire which served to frustrate their realisation. Michael Haren examines the social content of fourteenth-century English pastoral and penitential literature, with its emphasis on the social responsibilities of different classes, which he suggests should be seen as a means, not of social control, but of promoting 'social ethics'. Robert Swanson's important essay on the value of parochial benefices to their holders, based on surviving accounts for Yarmouth and Great Wolford (Warwickshire), shows that the net income from a benefice could vary markedly over time as either tithe yields, etc., or unavoidable expenses, or both, fluctuated, a matter of concern to ecclesiastical careerists when deciding whether or not to accept a particular benefice. Colin Richmond's wide-ranging disquisition on the religion of the English gentry in the decades preceding the Reformation is certainly the most searching in the book and, though raising perhaps as many questions as it answers, provides many interesting insights, not least the idea of the increasing feminization of religion at this time.

For the present reviewer the most convincing and intellectually satisfying essay is Benjamin Thomson's '*Habendum et Tenendum*: Lay and ecclesiastical attitudes to the property of the Church', which in a masterly way sustains a complex theme running from the ecclesiastical reforms of the eleventh century to the dissolution of the alien priories in the fifteenth. Drawing a good deal of received knowledge into a new synthesis, he explains how the Church tried to resolve the paradox that it was 'not of this world', but at the same time 'in the world' and possessed of temporal property given by the laity over which the laity expected to retain some control. There is a valuable section on Edward I's ecclesiastical taxation policies in the 1290s and on his legislation, particularly the Statute of Westminster II (1285), which asserted that spiritual activities performed by religious institutions in return for land, even that granted long before, amounted to services enforceable in common law. The author sees the performance of spiritual services as a central question in the fate of the alien priories, arguing that, with the denization of some and the dissolution of most, 'local identity established itself over older and wider affiliations'.

Thomson's paper concludes a book which is well produced, with

very few typographical and other errors, and which deserves a wide readership among professional historians and students.

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Anglo-Norman Studies XIII. Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1990 edited by Marjorie Chibnall. Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1991. ISBN 0 85115 286 4. 286 pp.

The thirteenth volume of *Anglo-Norman Studies* contains fourteen pieces, including the first R. Allen Brown Memorial Lecture given by Eleanor Searle. The annual Battle conference, first devised by Brown in 1976, has become a well-established tradition that now looks likely to outlive him by many years. The forty-odd participants obviously enjoy the meetings as much for social as for historical purposes, but readers of the proceedings have good reasons to be thankful that the pleasures of historians bear such bountiful harvests. Seven of the speakers in 1991 had already lectured at Battle on previous occasions. The most distinguished of the newcomers was Karl Leyser, who contributed another paper on relations between England and the Empire, this time under Henry I. He argued that after Henry's heir William was drowned in December 1120, Henry was already anticipating the succession of Mathilda and the German emperor Henry V to his lands. As usual, Leyser wove the slender evidence together with great skill, but he could not conceal that the argument was very tentative, nor did he venture to assess the likelihood of Mathilda ever successfully bringing the kingdom into the Empire. J.F.A. Mason, who has been working on the Normans almost as long as R.A. Brown himself, gave a paper on the officers of baronial households. This was a characteristic performance: thorough, unassuming, but revealing and useful on this obscure but important topic. The other five newcomers to the conference were younger scholars. Of these, Mark Blackburn gave an outstanding revisionary account of Henry I's coins. After careful consideration of the evidence, he drew some general conclusions which add effectively to our appreciation of the reign and incidentally deal decisively

with some of the more provocative ideas recently canvassed by W.L. Warren. Donald Fleming's account of *milites* in Domesday book is more directly designed as a challenge to Sally Harvey's views of 1966 on the knight. Work done on this topic in the interval has naturally shown that such problems are all more complicated and more obscure than it once seemed and this essay remains rather inconclusive. The other three newcomers deal with narrower topics. Lynn Barker, who is working on Ivo of Chartres, tried to draw conclusions about Anglo-Norman cultural relations from some very speculative material. Dr Keats-Rohan gave a detailed survey of the Breton families who entered England with the Conqueror, while Kathleen Thompson rounded out the picture of Robert of Bellême by stressing his connections with Ponthieu. Her attempt to draw general conclusions from the career of a maverick seems misconceived, but both these papers stress the importance of understanding the French context of Norman post-conquest affairs.

Given her own original work on Battle Abbey, Eleanor Searle is, not surprisingly, the 'old hand' who has already contributed most often to previous volumes. Here her mastery of the archive material has enabled her to construct a vignette of Battle town. She argued, persuasively, that the essence of Anglo-Norman lordship could here be exemplified by the mutually enhancing relationship between the abbey and the town. John Gillingham, in a sprightly piece on the inspiration Geoffrey of Monmouth received from the Welsh rebellion of 1136-37, seems to assume that it would have taken very little time to compose such a detailed work as the British history, but as usual he is challenging. C.P. Lewis contributed a suggestive interpretation of the early Norman earldoms in England as survivals of the pre-Conquest type and Brian Golding a valuable study of Robert count of Mortain, which sensibly did not go beyond the evidence available and thus leaves Robert only slightly less enigmatic than he was before. Simon Keynes went into the evidence for the English aethelings in Normandy (1013-42) and accepts that Edward must have been recognised as king in Normandy before 1042, though this seems to involve a notion of recognition not normally associated with the eleventh century. Maylis Baylé offered another of her interesting, but slight, pieces on early Norman sculpture and Aryeh Grabois discussed William of Malmesbury's story of the Crusade and made some interesting points on his methods as a historian. Overall the volume supplies Norman fare of traditional type. There is

a regular mixture of themes, styles, solid scholarship, speculation and polemic. Each year a few studies appear of lasting value which set scholars thinking. Some contributions serve rather to fill out the programme and keep the conference moving. The papers are admirably edited, as is only to be expected, by Mrs Chibnall. The learned apparatus in the footnotes (which give readers something not available at the conference itself) provide alert historians with evidence for the stimulating conversations that followed the delivery of the papers.

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Loyd and Jenny Laing, The Picts and the Scots. Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1992, x + 172 pp.

The authors, an archaeologist and an art historian from Liverpool, have an enviable record of book publications, both scholarly and popular. The present volume comes hot on the heels of *Art of the Celts* (Thames & Hudson, London 1992). It may, therefore, not be surprising that this latest volume, too, has an art bias, although ostensibly it deals with the archaeology, and to a lesser degree the history, of Scotland between the third and ninth centuries AD. The authors stress, quite rightly, that the archaeological evidence available has increased substantially in the last two or three decades. Before that, our knowledge of the 'Dark Age' inhabitants of Scotland had been based almost entirely on scanty historical, and only slightly more substantial art-historical, evidence, whilst their settlement and economy had been virtually unknown. Thus, by putting the emphasis on art, this book gives prominence to the one aspect on which our knowledge has grown least.

The first two chapters, entitled 'The Picts' and 'The Scots', sketch the historical, linguistic and religious background. A brief comment in the 'Introduction' (p.viii) suggests that the authors may be aware of some of the problems of the 'ethnic' approach implied by book and chapter titles. By contrast, the last two chapters which make up the substance of the book treat the Picts and Scots together. Chapter 3, 'Everyday Life of the Picts and the Scots', includes topics such as society, warfare, ships, trade and economy, costume, crafts, pastimes,

settlements and houses. Whilst the latter are given a satisfactorily detailed treatment, the two pages devoted to trade and economy form a strange contrast to the 62 pages of the final chapter: 'Art of the Picts and the Scots' makes up just under 40% of the entire text (164 pp.). This chapter discusses in considerable detail symbolstones and silverwork of the Picts, and sculpture, manuscripts and metalwork of the Scots. The treatment of these topics shows an overriding concern for the date and evolution of the art and of its individual elements. Manufacturing aspects are dealt with much more briefly, and the social implications of this highly visible, high-quality art production are all but ignored.

It is in these last two chapters that some of the structural and technical shortcomings of the volume become most apparent. Whatever could not be subsumed under 'Everyday Life' or 'Art', had been put into the first two chapters. More irritating is the complete absence in the text of references to illustrations (136 black-and-white text figures of variable quality, and 14 good colour illustrations on eight plates in the middle of the book). Whilst juxtaposition of text and relevant illustrations had obviously been aimed at, it has not always been achieved, and has been impossible, anyway, in the case of the colour plates. The reader searching for the figure illustrating the discussion of the Aberlemno churchyard cross (p.62) has to search the entire book to find the illustration on the frontispiece. The bad integration of text and illustrations is also betrayed by the figure captions which duplicate information given in the text, often on adjacent pages.

But what will perhaps bother many academic readers most is the overall approach to data and evidence. This book has a clearly descriptive tendency, and the description all too often stays at the surface. Where it is followed up by the occasional attempt at explanation, a disturbing lack of theoretical and methodological sophistication becomes apparent. For example, the coincidence of archaeological artefact distributions and documented ethnic groups is described as the 'model' of an ideal situation (p.75) without warning the reader of the pitfalls in this, essentially 19th century, notion; and the long-term continuity of artefact types in Atlantic Scotland is explained with a piece of geographical determinism: Scotland's 'location just outside the very conservative "Circumpolar Zone" ' (p.79).

For these and other reasons, it is unlikely that this book will be widely recommended as a university or adult education textbook.

Title, approach and style (described on the dustjacket as 'highly readable', which is not too much of an exaggeration) suggest that the volume is aimed primarily at the general and popular market, and in spite of its undeniable weaknesses, it may fulfil a useful function there.

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Ivan Boh, Epistemic Logic in the Later Middle Ages, London, Routledge, 1993, xvii + 189 pp.

This clear and accessible study explores the later mediaeval contribution to the discussion of propositions involving knowing and willing. It thus provides a valuable handbook to the history of work complementary to the better-known and very substantial mediaeval contributions to epistemology and the psychological dimensions of the theory of knowledge.

The author begins with early pointers in the work of Anselm, Garlandus, Peter Abelard, Robert Grosseteste, Albert the Great, Aquinas, who tended to come to epistemic themes in the course of other investigations, but who saw that there were non-standard modes not adequately catered for by Aristotle. He goes on, chronologically, to the 'formative period' of epistemic logic, which he places between 1300 and 1380, and whose pioneers he finds in Walter Burley, Ockham, Kilvington and Heytesbury. The breakthrough, pedagogically, was the bringing together of a group of subjects hitherto treated *ad hoc* in a variety of contexts in a syllabus of 'modern logic': topics, their relation to the theory of consequences, the operations of 'if' as a syncategorematic term, relevant themes arising in commentaries of the *Prior Analytics* and the study of fallacies all had a bearing on epistemic logic. Once they were drawn systematically together it became possible to move forward substantially in the logic itself. Boh proceeds by setting up a series of 'test-principles' about the relationship of 'knowing that', 'believing that', 'being justified in believing that', 'doubting that', 'understanding that' and looking at their handling in his key authors. Part III deals with the consolidation of this new branch of logic from 1380 to 1500 in the work of Ralph Strode, Peter of Mantua and Frachantianus

Vicentius. The story here ends abruptly with a cursory reference to the continuance of scholastic logic in Spain when it was in decline in much of the rest of Europe from the sixteenth century. That is not quite true and one suspects that there is more to be gleaned about 'consequences' in later work than has been attempted here.

But this short account lays an excellent foundation. Of particular interest is Boh's analysis of demonstrative knowledge during the period when it became powerfully attractive to mediaevals in search of theological certainties. The shift from a predominant concern with the classic logical distinction between truth and falsehood to a sophisticated concern with weighing the knowing and believing and intending in propositional formulations is a crucial one and partly reflects the ultimate dominance of problems arising in Christian theology over the tasks logicians set themselves. It leads, as Boh points out, to an awareness of the 'pragmatic dimension of language' and eventually to an understanding of the peculiarity of some of the properties of natural languages.

The text keeps mainly to English but the footnotes give the Latin. That is important because the development of Latin as a philosophical vehicle is as striking a feature of the work of this period as is the fresh work in logic itself. *Consideratio,* for example (discussed in connection with Peter of Mantua) is a word with a load-bearing patristic and mediaeval history. There is a full bibliography and a good index of themes, terms and proper names.

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The Rule of the Templars. The French Text of the Rule of the Order of the Knights Templar, translated and introduced by J.M. Upton-Ward. Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1992. vii + 200 pp.£29.50

This translation, based upon a dissertation submitted for the MPhil in the University of Reading, will receive a warm welcome, since it makes widely available something locked in Henri Curzon's edition of the French Rule published first in 1886, and reprinted in 1977. The ordinary reader, whether concerned with military history, or with

the religious orders, can now be made free of the strange world of one of the two most significant military orders of the middle ages.

Something very like the old life of public schools is revealed: hierarchies with their own privileges, curious ways of shaming people who offend into toeing the line, with overall a sense that no better kind of life is possible. The details are astonishing and pull the reader up, again and again. A brother, for example, may wager 'ten pieces of candle without permission, but no more' on his prowess with a crossbow, and 'he must not belt his sword over his *garnache* or his waist at daybreak' (para. 317). Tent pegs, the hanging up of mantles, petty thieving, care of banners, treatment of those who have undergone the typical medieval 'cure' of being bled, when communion should be received, how people are admitted into the Order, these, and much more, find a place in this extraordinary document. Anyone must be delighted to have all this opened to them, together with a reprint of Matthew Bennett's paper of 1989 on the Rule as a Military Manual. But, at the same time, some regrets must be expressed.

In the first place there are problems about the text itself. Neither the manuscripts which Curzon used, nor those found subsequently, are given their full descriptions, though a persistent reader could follow them up in an Oxford thesis mentioned on p.11. The relationship of the first part of the French Rule, which Curzon called the 'Règle Primitive', to the Latin text which precedes it in composition, by between six and probably at most twenty years, is also dealt with rather briefly. As for the translation itself, this seems adequate, but there are some places where unfamiliarity with monastic practice has created problems. For example, in paragraph 28 we find 'On Fridays, let lenten meat be given ... '. This seems a puzzling concept, since meat was not normally allowed to religious in Lent, but it turns out to translate the French *viande de karesme*, which clearly means something nearer to lenten food, for the Latin has the general *cibum quadragesimalem*, and when in paragraph 26 the French text has to talk about meat (*carnem* in the Latin), it uses *char*. Similarly at paragraph 348 Upton-Ward has someone shaking a 'rattle' when it is time for Compline on Maundy Thursday. Here Curzon leads the translator astray; he notes under the words *l'on doit batre une table*, 'Une crécelle, pour remplacer la cloche'. But in fact something quite unlike a rattle was meant, rather what, for example, the Cistercians in their *Ecclesiastica Officia* called *tabula lignea*, a piece of wood, and which they too struck on the same day, and many other occasions

(for this, see the recent edition by Choisselet and Vernet (Reiningue 1989) which has a nice picture of a *tabula* on Mount Athos in 1983).

Secondly, there are problems about making the text accessible. Just as nowadays few people can read medieval French, so most people need help in recognising quotations from the Bible, and yet this translation identifies them very sparingly, even though Curzon has them in his apparatus. Similarly, the reader is recommended to turn to Schnürer's work of 1903 (scarcely to be found in every library) if he or she wants to see where the Primitive Rule depends upon the Rule of St Benedict. So very few will realise how closely, for example, its very opening is based on Benedict's Prologue:

> Omnibus in primis *sermo* nostro *dirigitur quicumque proprias voluntates* sequi contempnunt et summo ac *vero regi militare* animi puritate cupiunt, ut *obedientie amaturam preclaram assumere* intentissima cura implendo preoptent et perseverando impleant (Curzon, pp.11-12; my emphases).

> Ad te ergo nunc sermo dirigitur, quisquis abrenuntians propriis voluntatibus, Domino Christo vero regi militaturus, oboedientiae fortissima atque preclara arma sumis (Prologue, 2; my emphases).

One may also wonder whether the splendid turn of phrase at the end of the first sentence of the Primitive Rule 'implendo preoptent et perseverando impleant', does not betray the influence of St.Bernard. His share in its composition has recently been questioned, although Upton-Ward accepts that 'he played a major part'.

Lastly, one must regret the absence of any discussion of the relationship of the Templar Rule with that of other military orders: in what respects was it typical, or peculiar? Just because this translation is potentially so useful, this reader hopes that a second edition will soon be called for, and that then, revision will occur. It should not need much more space, but only with it will the reader have a really helpful lead into the complexities of this fascinating text.

Christopher Holdsworth
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N.J. Higham, The Kingdom of Northumbria A.D. 350-1100. Stroud, Alan Sutton, 1993. 296 pp.

This is a very beautiful book, large in format and generously illustrated in both colour and black-and-white. Yet it manifests a certain unease as to its identity and audience; and at times its text and illustrations seem almost to pull in two different directions.

This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated at the beginning and end of the book. Facing the opening of Chapter One is a full-page, evocatively-coloured photograph of shining water and blue, distant hills; and at the end of the last chapter is an image of a dramatic sunset over the Farne Islands, with a lonely cross silhouetted against a burning sky. This is the pictorial language of postcards, and suggests an address to what the book-jacket blurb calls 'the visitor to the area'. But this is not the audience addressed by the text. In the opening chapters particularly, dealing as they do with the unavoidably obscure periods preceding and succeeding the Roman colonisation of the region, the writing frequently becomes caught up in condensed and sometimes technical discussions of problems of evidence. Here the reader is assumed to be already equipped with the necessary background to be able to decipher a range of technical terms and sometimes enigmatic references.

There are similar tensions within individual chapters. These are organised chronologically, each dealing with one portion of the book's overall period. But the writing is almost ascetic in its avoidance of narrative excitement. Instead, each chapter is divided into sections dealing with social, cultural and economic, as well as political, developments; and these are further subdivided, on almost every page, by illustrations. In places, particularly where a relatively concrete topic such as Viking-Age York or Northumbrian church architecture is under discussion, the exposition is considerably strengthened by the presence, on the same page, of maps and relevant photographs. But elsewhere the photographs may not be so immediately relevant; or the interruption of the text by sometimes busy page layouts may become distracting.

The book's greatest strength is its inclusiveness. It offers an informed, succinct and up-to-date account of almost every aspect of its subject, and is thus a wide-ranging and attractive introduction to Anglo-Saxon Northumbria. Although there are no footnotes, they are replaced by careful discussions of evidence and sources within the

text, and by lists of suggested further reading. Where text and image complement one another successfully the result is a beautifully illustrated and interesting textbook; it is to be hoped that a paperback version might make it more affordable in this guise.

Anne Lawrence
University of Reading

John Wesley Harris. Medieval Theatre in Context. An Introduction. London, Routledge, 1992, 213 pp.

It is difficult to take entirely seriously a book on medieval drama, however introductory, which begins: 'On Sunday, 1 April, in his thirtieth year, Jesus of Nazareth made a triumphant entry into Jerusalem ...', and there is more where that came from. Secular clergy are referred to at one point as 'vicars', just as the great unchurched do throughout the land, but not normally the authors of books read professionally by subscribers to *Reading Medieval Studies*. The first chapter, laudably and necessarily, given the lack of religious background of most modern students, attempts to be an evocation and explanation of the basic tenets of the Church about the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the subsequent development of belief and practice in relation to the Mass. In the process, some dubious, jokey, sweeping or over-simple statements are made (e.g. 'the fact that [Christ's] death had released all men from their inborn tendency to sin'; 'Athanasius, another very enthusiastic Alexandrian'; 'the standard liturgy was written in classical Latin which was [around 754] rapidly becoming a thing of the past and being replaced by a host of dialects', etc.).

It is important, in all seriousness, to mention these oddities because they might tempt the reader to reject the book without looking further. In fact, though with occasional relapses, it improves very much after this shaky start. As an introduction to the subject, with a mainly English focus which fortunately is not as exclusive as one might expect from the Preface, offering students an overview of the evolution of liturgical and vernacular drama in Europe up to the dawn of the Renaissance, it is worthy of serious consideration. It overlaps, more than the blurb ('the first systematic attempt to relate

the development of medieval drama...to its contemporary society and the Christian church') would suggest, with other manuals, particularly Glyn Wickham's *The Medieval Theatre* in its third edition. It does, however, concentrate more on the practical aspects of staging and acting, with the easy familiarity with technical problems of a practitioner; it is also more constantly concerned with religious and social history, though with a lack of scholarly infrastructure which will irritate the specialist, if not the undergraduate, reader. There are no footnotes or attempts to give evidence in support of many important socio-historical statements; the Notes give only the list of those works from an abundant Bibliography (which, however, omits the book by Wickham cited above) which underly the chapter concerned. It is true that the Notes sometimes offer further justificatory arguments on particular points, such as (Chapter 8 Notes, p.198) Harris's interesting contention that the Black Death was a catalysing agent in the upsurge of guild-supported dramatic activity in the second half of the fourteenth century. There remain, every now and then, assumptions and assertions which make one blink: the *Jeu d'Adam* (pp.47-48) considered as a collection of plays, with no appreciation of its essential unity; the continual use of the word *mansions* which was surely destroyed as a technical staging term in Graham Runnall's important article in *French Studies* 25, 1981, pp.385-93; the claim (p.86) that the Pope induced Philippe-Auguste to '*embark on* a crusade' against the Albigensians in 1209; the evocation, in a fourteenth-century context (pp.82, 158) of 'the *new* sacrament of Penance' (emphases mine); and others. Chronology is often vague and shifting, and one continually feels the need for evidence and references (a point made above, but one which requires emphasis: in which plays, for example, is one to look for most of the interesting production details described on pp.143-45?).

But the book is written with verve and wit, and is exceptionally likely to appeal to beginners in the field; it vividly, if sometimes speculatively, evokes many important plays and their production from the point of view of a man of the theatre. The illustrations have been deliberately redrawn from the standard pictorial sources (the Fouquet Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia, the Valenciennes set, etc.), usually reproduced elsewhere in facsimiles of variable quality: this redrawing allows, indeed forces, Harris to consider the three-dimensional practicalities of the two-dimensional representations available to us, using his experience of stage-sets to interpret persuasively the

tiniest of details. The general thrust of the book is convincing, steering a steady and sensible course between the old and new theories on the origin and nature of medieval drama, and there are many striking insights and suggestions. It is a 'good read' and, if one can take the risk of subjecting students to occasional statements which will give pause to specialists but which do not by and large constitute the foundations of any important arguments deployed by the author, then it should figure on undergraduate reading lists. There is a good chance that it will make new medievalists want to investigate further, and to read for themselves, perhaps even stage, the plays presented so enthusiastically and attractively as living drama which often works extremely well with today's audiences.

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Woman is a Worthy Wight. Women in English Society, c.1200-1500. Edited by P.J.P. Goldberg. Gloucester and Wolfeboro Falls, Alan Sutton, 1992, 229 pp. £28

Sterling work has been carried out in recent years to elucidate, in a rigorous rather than emotional fashion, the position of women in medieval society. The essays in this collection typify the very best of this style of approach. This is not 'women's history' but, as the subtitle emphasises, the history of women in society, and the appreciation of historical context is consistently strong throughout the volume. The editor, P.J.P. Goldberg, is already well known for his excellent work on women in York and the late medieval north, and he maintains his high standards of scholarship as well as his freshness and clarity in two essays which focus on marriage and servanthood and which raise important questions about enhanced economic conditions for women in the late medieval town. The relative lack of economic opportunity in the countryside seems to be confirmed by H. Graham's study of the Alrewas court rolls, where all major butchers, bakers and brewers were male and where women traders operated on

a small scale and were generally of low status. But we are reminded that the family or household should be seen as the most meaningful economic and commercial unit. Likewise, in spite of her elegantly discussed examples of 'fit and menacing' aristocratic ladies who held their own as landholders and administrators, R. Archer sensibly warns against 'distortion that can easily be created by trying to isolate women from their menfolk, in some futile effort to see if they were, or ever could be 'free' or 'independent',' emphasising again the predominance of family interests and the reality of marriage as partnership. Marriage is discussed from different perspectives by R.M. Smith and P.P.A. Biller. Smith's paper provides a historiographical survey of the debate on European marriage patterns before concluding that the growth of domestic service in post Black Death England led to a rise in woman's age at marriage. This is a long paper, with almost a second paper in its notes, but the complexity and importance of its arguments would have benefited from even lengthier treatment. A similar criticism can be made of Biller's essay which uses an intriguing source, pastoral manuals produced for the guidance of parish priests, to explore a myriad of aspects of wedlock. P. Cullum's succinct and well-focused study, based again upon the rich York ecclesiastical archive, explores two fascinating and intertwined topics - female charity and female poverty. The potentially dubious notion of 'gender archaeology' is invoked in R. Gilchrist's discussion of cloister orientation in nunneries which, she claims, reflects Marian ideology. Here as in the other essays the reader longed to know more; it is to be hoped that contributors will write at greater length elsewhere. This book is teeming throughout with ideas, statistics and references and provides a useful as well as a heartening contribution to the subject.

Anne Curry
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Henry V: The Practice of Kingship. Edited by G.L. Harriss. Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1993 (first published by Oxford University Press, 1985), xii + 222 pp. £9.99.

This valuable collection of essays on various aspects of the reign, an

eminently readable and illuminating book for undergraduates and non-specialists alike, has been reprinted with an up-to-date guide to further reading.

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Michel Mollat. Les Explorateurs du XIIIe au XVIe siècle. Paris, Editions du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 1992, 248 pp.

This is a new edition of a book which first appeared in 1984 and has been out of print for some years. The main change is in the bibliography which is now up to date and will be a fruitful source of inspiration for those who wish to take their reading further. The new edition is attractively presented and priced at 60FF which means that it should be easily within the price range of students as well as academics. It remains a stimulating and fascinating book including the voyages of not only such well-known explorers as Columbus and Jacques Cartier but also lesser known men such as the Parmentier brothers in Sumatra or Cadamosto and Usodimare in Guinea. After describing the voyages and the fates of many of the explorers, Mollat attempts to study their reactions to what they had found. He succeeds very well in bringing out the extraordinary mixture of sharp-eyed observation and blindness due to preconceived ideas which is typical of so many of them. Columbus, for example, observed quite carefully the Indians of the Caribbean and was well disposed to them, but he remained convinced that he was close to reaching his goal, the Far East, although there was no evidence to support this. In the third section Mollat looks briefly at the culture clash between the Europeans and the peoples whom they were discovering. Inevitably he has to take his evidence from the accounts left by the Europeans and to guess at the reactions of the others, but he shows clearly how the Europeans tended initially to see the Amerindians as innocent savages, guileless and uncorrupted, whereas the evidence is clear that Cartier, for instance, ran the risk of being used as a weapon in the

feuds of the St Lawrence basin Indians, who were by no means as unsubtle or as naive, as he had supposed. Europeans were not highly regarded by the Orientals with whom they came into contact but the exploration of Asia was less of a voyage into the unknown than the exploration of the Americas. The Arab aversion to the Africans is made clear by Ibn Batoutah, the only non-European traveller studied at any length, and the potential for conflicts between Arabs and others was very real. Mollat is good on the practical problems faced by the explorers and particularly interesting on the role of interpreters. The early discoverers of the Americas faced particularly difficult problems of communication, but Plancarpin and Rubrouck had had great difficulties among the Tatars two and a half centuries earlier. Good interpreters were invaluable, and many explorers were none too scrupulous about obtaining and retaining them. In a relatively short book like this Mollat has to compress some of his material, but there is more than enough here to interest scholars and students alike and spur them to further reading.

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