

BOOK REVIEWS

People, Power and Identity in the Late Middle Ages: Essays in Memory of W. Mark Ormrod. Edited by Gwilym Dodd, Helen Lacey and Anthony Musson. xv + 360 pp., figures, bibliographies, index. Abingdon: Routledge, 2021. ISBN 978 0 367 85997 8. Price £96 hb, £29.59 ebk.

The late Mark Ormrod, a professor at the University of York, was one of England's most admired and best loved late medieval historians. He wrote the very first review of my first book on late medieval Ipswich and his characteristically kind comments made me an instant fan. His eclectic academic interests are reflected in the wide range of essays contributed to this Festschrift by so many of his friends and colleagues, who include some of our country's most eminent historians. After the Introduction and the editors' fulsome Tribute, the volume is divided into six main sections — Resistance, Residence, Religion, Rule, Record and Reputations — an alliterative touch that Ormrod would have enjoyed.

David Crook kicks off the section on Resistance with a paper on the serfs of Barton upon Humber, who agreed among themselves that none of them would take less than 16s a year wages with their food, and that none of them would work in summer time unless they were allowed to sleep and take their supper. This is probably the earliest recorded instance of agricultural workers combining to better their economic circumstances through collective bargaining. Paul Dryburgh recounts the sad story of Richera, six-year-old daughter of William of Cadeby of Lincolnshire, who, together with her mother, petitioned for the return of her father's lands after he had been brutally murdered in the chaos of the civil war of 1321/22. Sylvia Federico focuses on the importance of roads and markets in the Peasants' Revolt, and explores how this influenced Geoffrey Chaucer in his writing of *The Canterbury Tales*.

Under the heading of Residence, Michael Bennett follows Richard II as the king travels through England showing an interest in sites relating to the nation's royal and religious past, including the shrine of St Edmund in Bury. Bart Lambert traces the successful career in Colchester of the Brabantine immigrant Edmund Hermanson, who became churchwarden of St Leonard's, prepared accounts that show his mastery of the English language, and, as a brewer, organised 'church beers' to raise funds for the church and perhaps turn a small profit for himself. Our members may recall that, during the early months of the pandemic, Maryanne Kowaleski of Fordham University in New York kindly gave us a Zoom lecture on late medieval immigrants. In this volume she examines Breton immigration. The Bretons were attracted, in particular, to Cornwall where many of the natives still spoke the same language as them, and where they could find well-paid work in tin mining.

Turning to Religion, Chris Given-Wilson tells the tale of a dispute over the chapel of ease at Hook in Hampshire between the residents of that small port town and the neighbouring abbey of Titchfield. The quarrel grew out of all proportion to involve, over a period of thirty plus years, the bishop of Winchester, several lords of the king's council, the archbishop of Canterbury, and even the pope. Alison McHardy sets out to understand why only a fraction of monks were routinely present at divine service, and why so many of them were frequently on the move. Among many reasons was the collection of taxes which, for instance, took the brethren of Butley Priory on tours of our county.

In the Rule section Richard Barber reminds us that the lives of medieval princesses were rarely fairy tales. Personal correspondence between King James II of Aragon and his daughter Isabella provides intimate details of the negotiation of, and preparation for, her marriage to Frederick of Austria, of her journey into exile, of her husband's unsuccessful bid to become

Holy Roman Emperor, and of Isabella's lonely death at age thirty. Jeffrey Hamilton returns us to England to follow the career of Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln, who faithfully served Edward I and, when the old king died, tried to tutor his successor Edward II in the practical lessons of kingship. Although Edward II proved to be a poor pupil, de Lacy remained a moderating influence on the growing opposition to his rule. Mark Arvanigian takes a fresh look at the Good Parliament of 1376, viewed by many as the medieval apogee of the parliamentary commons, and at its pursuit of the 'common profit of the realm' — a new phrase that marked the false dawn of a new constitutional settlement. Douglas Biggs introduces us to Edmund of Langley, duke of York and uncle to Richard II. In 1394/95, during Richard's absence in Ireland, Edmund had custodianship of England, exercising unprecedented powers and proving to be a competent and efficient administrator.

The section on Record examines two very different medieval sources. The first is a beautiful manuscript book, known as the *Vie des pères*, belonging to Edward III's granddaughter Philippa de Vere, countess of Oxford. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne explains how it engages with crusading and pilgrimage territories and 'opens out into large, if Eurocentric, vistas of the world and the advance of Christian empire in it'. The second is the voluminous series of Norman rolls of Henry V, studied by Anne Curry, which record English rule in Normandy during his reign.¹ These rolls address a remarkable range of issues, from the king's military campaigns to economic trends and interactions with the church.

Finally, in *Reputations*, Seymour Phillips examines the last days of Edward II and the continuing debate over whether he suffered a horrible death in Berkeley Castle, or survived to become a lonely wanderer through Europe. David Green tells us about Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent, who married the Black Prince and bore his son, the future King Richard II. Known to history as a 'woman more beautiful and amorous than any in the realm', Joan proved to be a steadying influence during the early years of her son's reign, helping to resolve conflicts between her brother-in-law John of Gaunt, the king, and the city of London. Craig Taylor investigates the fractious relationship between John Lord Talbot and Sir John Fastolf, our best known military captains of the fifteenth century. They fell out badly after the English defeat at the battle of Patay, in which Talbot was captured and from which Fastolf escaped. Their place in chivalric tradition in England and France is ambiguous, but Shakespeare had the last word by treating (perhaps unfairly) Talbot as a hero and Fastolf as a coward.

The volume closes with a bibliography of Mark Ormrod's major writings over thirty-six years, demonstrating his invaluable contribution to diverse fields of medieval study.

By its very nature, the *Festschrift*, compared to the monograph, has both strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, relatively short papers rarely allow a topic to be analysed in its fullest detail or context and often leave the reader wanting to know more. On the other, the variety of subject matter and the erudition of the authors makes this volume a very enjoyable read which steers the reader away from his or her own specialised field of research and provides fresh insights into the late medieval world.

NICHOLAS R. AMOR

The Material Fall of Roman Britain, 300–525 CE. By Robin Fleming. 303pp., figures, maps, index. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021. ISBN 978 0 8122 5244 6. Price £36 hb.

As she says at the start of this book, Robin Fleming is an historian not an archaeologist, but for some years she has recognised the need to use the archaeological evidence, rather than just

the textual evidence, in studying the immediate post-Roman centuries in Britain. This is a study of the big changes in material culture between the final century of Roman Britain and the subsequent century in which the character of early medieval England began to emerge. The introduction highlights the gaps in approaches; the tendency to specialise in either Roman or post-Roman, and the limited use of archaeological evidence by historians.

The first chapter looks at the broad situation in late Roman Britain, stressing the importance of the tax system, much of it in kind, for creating substantial inequalities between the 85 per cent working in the countryside and the 15 per cent who worked for the state or in manufacture or trade. Subsequent chapters examine the key changes in the transition period in agriculture and market gardening, pottery and glass vessels, building materials, metalworking and burial practices. Most of these topics necessitate an emphasis on England east of the Pennines, the West Midlands and Devon; this southern and eastern region is identified as the key area in which Roman material culture was most common, and also the region where the agricultural emphasis by the fourth century was on intensive grain production. Fleming draws on a wide range of sources to examine the relative complexity of Roman systems — such as the large late Roman potting industries and the range of specialists needed to build or extend a fourth-century villa — and how these systems broke down more comprehensively in Britain than elsewhere. She then illustrates the fifth-century evidence for retention, reuse and scavenging of various types of ‘Roman’ material in different ways in different places, and stresses the point that the maker and user of, for example, a handmade pot could as easily be a member of the native population as an immigrant ‘Anglo-Saxon’. Chapter 7 looks at Roman infant burials, treated separately from but not less particularly than adults, and the contrast with the subsequent apparent absence of infants in the burial record. In Chapter 8 the new scientific (isotopic and DNA) evidence for individual origins is contrasted with traditional views, particularly about female burials, based on artefact types such as brooches. The limited available evidence, mainly from isotope studies of inhumation burials, shows that women were certainly moving around, as indeed occurred in the Roman period, but that this included movement from western Britain as well as occasionally from the Continent to sites such as West Heslerton in Yorkshire, and that their individual grave goods often did not reflect their origins. The final chapter pulls together her arguments into a more historical framework, starting with the breakdown of the cross-Channel networks within the Roman empire (i.e. Britain to Northern Gaul and the Rhineland), as evidenced by the cessation of imported coins in the early fifth century and, with this, the failure of the taxation system that supplied grain to the army in the Rhineland and returned precious metal to the emperor. This was followed by the final collapse of settlements, such as villas and towns dependent on the imperial system, and all the associated economic and manufacturing systems that produced the numerous Roman objects, although in practice many of these settlements and systems were already showing signs of stress during the later fourth century. A new set of networks then linked eastern Britain across the North Sea to areas of northern Europe outside the Roman empire, and this is described as a ‘fusion corridor’. For the historians, she points out how the role of the ‘*adventus Saxonum*’, described by Bede and others as occurring in the middle of the fifth century, is diminished by the evidence of the objects — though without referring to the important conclusions in the final Spong Hill volume that these North Sea contacts start in the early part of the fifth century.² Fleming views the internal disruption to ways of life in post-Roman Britain as impacting throughout society and says that the new ways of doing things were largely a domestic process of adaptation by a mixture of immigrants and local populations, rather than the martial takeover implied by the later histories.

Most of the ideas in *Material Fall* are familiar to archaeologists specialising in the later

Roman and early medieval periods, and indeed some chapters relate to previous articles by Fleming herself.³ Recent syntheses of the period by archaeological authors, such as Simon Esmonde-Cleary and James Gerrard, are thoroughly referenced in the copious notes (101 pages in total), along with many specific site and artefact studies (the bibliography is held online at the University of Pennsylvania, but the link would not open). For the general reader, the text discussion flows well without needing to follow the notes. The illustrations are minimal, just twenty-two monochrome figures of objects and maps.

From an East Anglian perspective, the local content is not large and there are some errors. For example, a reference to 'Icklingham in Essex' on p.127, which then describes the hoard of ironwork from Icklingham as evidence for collecting Roman iron for reuse, but fails to mention that it was buried in a large lead tank; Bloodmoor Hill near Lowestoft is consistently misspelt as 'Bloodmore' (pp.129 and 135); an index reference to 'Elmswell, Suffolk' is actually, as the text makes clear, Elmswell in East Yorkshire (p.124); and the description of an infant burial as 'in the Waveney Valley' (p.142) is strictly correct, but the site is generally known as Scole. All of these are minor slips, perhaps due to lack of familiarity with English geography. There are other inaccuracies in details; for example, in Chapter 3 'Why Pots Matter', Roman kilns are described as 'stone structures' rather than, as is the more usual, 'fired clay structures' (p.54), and on the same page she refers to mica-dusted pottery, which is an uncommon, mostly early, style of decoration, rather than part of the late Roman assemblages she is detailing. An attempt to relate pottery tempers such as organic inclusions directly to cooking methods does not correlate well with the actual range of post-Roman pot fabrics before 525, and there is a rather dismissive approach to the skills needed to produce handmade pots compared to the mass-produced late Roman wares.

In Chapter 8 'Who Was Buried in Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries', Fleming does concede that some areas, particularly East Anglia, did see substantial immigration in the fifth century. So East Anglia perhaps doesn't fit as well with her story compared to other areas of lowland Britain, but this is not explored further and individual aspects of sites are often cited in isolation. The early medieval (Fleming argues, as do others, for avoiding the term 'Anglo-Saxon') settlement at West Stow is mentioned in Chapter 6 as having numerous Roman metal objects and coins, perhaps retained as interesting pieces amongst metal scavenged for reuse, and in a footnote to Chapter 3 as a key example of fifth-century people similarly collecting Roman pot sherds from deserted Roman sites; then in Chapter 7, again in a footnote, as somewhere that the practice of infant burial in settlements seems to have continued into the early post-Roman phase.

In my view, study of this difficult period now needs comparisons between different regions on a finer scale than simply distinguishing the more Roman from the less Roman areas of Britain. This approach would tie in with the variability Fleming identifies in the ways people made use of surviving Roman objects, and her general thesis that between the late fourth century and the late fifth century, the population of Britain had to work out a range of ways to survive and to make the best of radical changes in their daily lives.

Material Fall is certainly an interesting read, and is a thoroughly researched counterbalance to any historical account that does still rely on reinterpreting the various written sources. It provides an introduction to the material evidence available for a key period of transition in English history, a period in which archaeological evidence from East Anglia still has a great deal to contribute.

The Crown Pleas of the Suffolk Eyre of 1240. (Suffolk Records Society vol. 64). Edited by Eric Gallagher, revised and with an introduction by Henry Summerson. lxx + 162pp., map, presentments under individual articles of the eyre, editorial method, glossary, bibliography, analysis of contents. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press for the Suffolk Records Society, 2021. ISBN 978 1 78327 600 4. Price £35 hb.

The publication of the crown pleas of the Suffolk Eyre of 1240 by the Suffolk Records Society as volume 64 brings to completion the edition of that eyre which began with the publication of the civil pleas in 2009 (vol. 52). Eyres were a form of itinerant justice that brought the power of the king's central courts into the shires periodically from the twelfth century until the early fourteenth century, when such periodic visitations were discontinued. Although they allowed local people who had little opportunity to access the courts held at Westminster to bring cases before royal justices, and to complain against royal officials, they gained a negative reputation as primarily being a means of raising money through fines and amercements for the use of the Crown. This edition, produced only in translation, but with references to digital images of the original roll provided on the website of the Anglo-American Legal Tradition project (AALT) permitting comparison with the original Latin text, provides a valuable addition to the growing body of eyre records that have been published for many of the English counties over the last sixty or so years, and is an edition of the earliest surviving eyre for the county. The edition of both the civil and crown pleas themselves is essentially the work of Eric Gallagher, who also wrote the informative and thorough introduction to the civil pleas. However, he was unable to write that for the crown pleas, and the responsibility for that, and the revision of the edited text, fell into the capable hands of Henry Summerson. Summerson has made a career out of work on aspects of medieval English law, and is ably equipped for the task having produced the introduction for the crown pleas of the Lancashire Eyre of 1292 published in 2011.

The edition picks up where the civil pleas left off, even numbering individual entries from where the civil pleas finished, so establishing an immediate continuity between the two volumes. However, anyone who is interested in the background to this particular eyre might find it useful to read Gallagher's introduction to the civil pleas, since Summerson has understandably devoted far less time to this. Whereas the civil pleas very much focused on suits between parties, often about rights to land, the crown pleas focused on presentments by juries in response to 'Articles of the Eyre' (*Capitula Itineris* — lists of matters to be considered by the juries). The most serious matters were felonies and other matters relevant to crime and law enforcement, but the crown pleas also concerned the protection of royal rights and revenues, and the conduct of officials, amongst other things. As Summerson himself acknowledges, the English translation is written in a rather freer form than might have once been the case, a form facilitated by the AALT images, and this makes the edition more accessible for all users. Whilst it might be regretted that the use of 'de' and 'of' in the context of the names of people produces an unnecessary and slightly annoying complexity to the rendering of names, this is far outweighed by the general excellence of the text. Textual notes and notes of reference and information helpfully follow relevant entries, rather than entered as footnotes and endnotes, and demonstrate the extensive research that Gallagher and Summerson undertook in the production of this volume. The edition also has invaluable additional tools, including a short, but vital glossary, an analysis of contents which provides a key to the crown pleas, and a detail of presentments under individual articles of the eyre, as well as a comprehensive index of people and places. A subject index is not included, which would have been a very useful aid, but now seems to be regularly dispensed with.

In the introduction, Summerson has produced not only a detailed and very readable analysis of the Suffolk crown pleas, but an invaluable discussion of the procedure of eyres in general.

He draws a detailed picture of the county with its undulating landscape of mixed agriculture (though pastoral farming was in decline), with the pressures of population and agriculture leading to diminishing woodland, and with settlement consisting of predominantly dispersed hamlets and isolated, often moated, residences. It was a county populated by people where success brought wealth to many, but many more clearly found it very hard to make ends meet, and where status as a freeman did not automatically mean that you were wealthy, since many of unfree status evidently had great wealth both in land and chattels. Indeed, the poverty of many inevitably exacerbated the levels of crime with many who absconded or who were outlawed having few if any goods and chattels to be seized. The many killings and robberies where the culprits were unidentified (quite often small gangs of men) must have been linked to those whose poverty left them with few alternatives. Summerson amply illustrates his discussion with examples from the edition, some of which produce very sad cases, such as the two men and a woman kept in stocks on suspicion by William le Sauvage, the bailiff of the half hundred of Lothingland, which resulted in the death of one of the men, in the other losing one foot, and in the woman losing both of her feet. The justices fined Sauvage heavily, but the poor victims do not appear to have been ultimately prosecuted for any offence, or compensated for their terrible ordeal. He also picks out cases that might sound amusing to us, though they were very real to those involved, including a man who was able to clear himself of killing his wife by coming to court with his allegedly dead spouse, and to occasional clerical errors that recorded the death of a clerk amongst sheep (*bidentibus*) rather than among drinking men (*bibentibus*). Summerson's view of the clerk responsible for the majority of the crown pleas is that he did not do 'a very good job', though some of his observances, such as the issues in distinguishing between 'c's and 't's, and 'n's and 'u's seem a little odd, as such difficulties are common in most medieval hands from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.

The real strength of the introduction is the detailed discussion of the procedure of the crown pleas for the Suffolk eyre. Though much of the discussion has inevitably been addressed elsewhere in other publications for eyres in other counties, the discussion here with the context of cases found in the Suffolk material is a useful reminder for the researcher familiar with eyre records, also setting out peculiarities or differences from other eyres, and provides an invaluable discussion for those less familiar or totally unfamiliar with such records, so that the mysteries of presentments, appeals and plaints should no longer trouble us. Indeed, the introduction should be read by all those who have an interest in medieval legal procedure, as well as those interested in the glimpse of medieval Suffolk society afforded by this record.

SIMON J. HARRIS

Wingfield: Suffolk's Forgotten Castle. By Elaine Murphy. 396pp., plates, figures, maps, index. Lowestoft: Poppyland Publishing, 2021. ISBN 978 1 909796 88 1. Price £19.95 pb.

Wingfield Castle may not be exactly forgotten, but it is perhaps one of the county's less known medieval monuments. It can be glimpsed from Wingfield Green, but is not open for visiting by the public. With its imposing front, but decidedly domestic sides, it does rather resemble a Hollywood film set; it does have an attractive, but decidedly enigmatic air. In this book, Elaine Murphy, an independent life peer with an NHS background, but with a retirement PhD in social history, has set out to provide a detailed history of the castle and its inhabitants, from its building in the fourteenth century down to this century. The first half of the book covers the castle's glory days in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when it was a seat of the de la

Pole family, earls and later dukes of Suffolk. Murphy provides an informative account of the careers of the de la Poles, a family that rose from a mercantile background in Hull to being claimants to the throne of England. Their closeness to the royal family was, however, their undoing and Wingfield was lost to them in 1504 (but imagine how unforgettable Wingfield would have been if the crown had come to them!).

The second half of the book covers the period from 1510, when Wingfield was granted to Thomas Howard, duke of Norfolk, down to the present day. Howard seems to have been granted the property largely because his wife, Anne, was the sister-in-law of John de la Pole, duke of Suffolk (as well as being a daughter of King Edward IV). Although Anne died in 1511, Howard retained a life interest in the property, but from 1516 it was leased to Charles Brandon, the new duke of Suffolk, who had the expectation that he would own it after Howard's death. It is uncertain how much use Brandon made of Wingfield, but his wife, Queen Mary, dated letters from there in 1525 and 1528. In 1537–8 Brandon relinquished Wingfield when he moved to Lincolnshire, and in 1553 another Queen Mary granted Wingfield to Sir Henry Jerningham as a reward for his help in securing the crown for her. It is probable that Jerningham found the castle in poor condition, leading him to reorganise it, removing some of the side walls and building the existing house that borders the western arm of the moat. Although the Jerninghams retained Wingfield until 1624, their primary interest transferred very quickly, in 1555, to Costessey, near Norwich. Murphy very usefully gives, in full, an inventory of the castle in 1591, plus a shorter one of 'stuff' taken in 1595 from Wingfield to another Jerningham house at Herringfleet. Both are great aids to understanding the layout and furnishing of the castle at the end of the Tudor period. Subsequent owners — the Catelyns of Kirby Cane in Norfolk (1624–1704), the Lemans of Wenhaston (1704–79), the Wilsons (later Lords Berners) of Didlington in Norfolk (1779–1856), and the Adairs of Flixton Hall (1856 to the 1980s) — all had their main interests elsewhere so, sadly, for much of the post de la Pole period, Wingfield slipped from being a ducal castle to being little more than a farmhouse. It was, however, rescued from impending dereliction by the restoration efforts of Graham Baron Ash, who restored some glamour to the castle during his tenancy from 1943 till his death in 1980.

The book is at its strongest for the post-medieval period when the records are fuller, but in reading the medieval section this reviewer sometimes had an uneasy feeling that the narrative might be exceeding the documentation. There could also have been a bit more of an analysis of the meaning of castles like Wingfield, and their role as status indicators. And, as a previous writer on the landscape history of Wingfield, it is perhaps best for me to paraphrase the queen and say that interpretations on that subject may vary. The book is amply illustrated, but the pictures tend to be small and a bit on the grainy side. Overall, it is, however, a very useful compendium of information about one of Suffolk's more fascinating Grade I monuments.

EDWARD MARTIN

In Search of a Roof: Bury St Edmunds Buttermarket in the 1850s and the Building of a Covered Market Hall. By John Orbell. 28pp., plates, appendices, index. Ixworth: Taylor's End Press, 2021. ISBN 978 0 9566111 3 0. Price £3.99 pb.

This latest work by John Orbell, published in a booklet format, developed out of research undertaken for his recent, more comprehensive work on the history of the Corn Exchange buildings in Bury St Edmunds, '*A Handsome and Substantial Building ...*'. *A History of Bury St Edmunds Corn Exchange*.

The nineteenth century had brought considerable prosperity to the markets of Bury St Edmunds, which then comprised the Cattle Market and the Corn Exchange, as well as the Buttermarket and the Shambles. The success of the Buttermarket, for example, was such that it had spread out across the town, so that the corporation of Bury St Edmunds considered accommodating it within a purpose-built market building. This followed a trend which had been established elsewhere, with almost four hundred halls built across Britain in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the market building in Bury St Edmunds never ultimately materialised, and the booklet documents both the background to the various schemes for a proposed provision market, and the opposition to the project by Bury ratepayers who refused to pay for it (despite the fact that the project would have brought significant benefits to the wider community), and which ultimately led to the demise of the project.

The narrative makes use of evidence which has been gathered from the relevant minute books of the corporation of Bury St Edmunds, and from reports and letters published in the *Bury and Norwich Post*. The main theme and focus is, obviously, the possible construction of a covered market area within Bury St Edmunds, however, it would have been useful for the booklet to have included more comparison between this scheme and similar projects taking place elsewhere across the country, so that the proposed improvements could be seen within the national context of market hall development. The wider picture is touched upon on a number of occasions, but not really expanded.

Nevertheless, this is a minor issue as the booklet is likely to be enjoyed by a wide range of readers, most especially those with a particular interest in the history of Bury St Edmunds. It is very well written and illustrated with an excellent choice of contemporary photographs, maps, drawings (and even a painting) of the town, including the reproduction of a number of old postcards. The main text and images are also supplemented with a number of pertinent quotes, both from the *Bury and Norwich Post*, and from individuals who lived in the town during the period, which help the author to paint a vibrant picture of marketing in Victorian Bury St Edmunds, whilst adding a scintillating whiff of political intrigue and bad-tempered public meetings!

JOANNE SEAR

NOTES

- 1 The National Archives, C 64/8–17.
- 2 Hills and Lucy 2013.
- 3 See, for example, Fleming 2012.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Fleming, R., 2012. 'Recycling in Britain after the fall of Rome's metal economy, *Past and Present*, 217(1), 3–45.
- Hills, C. and Lucy, S., 2013. *Spong Hill. Part IX: chronology and synthesis*. Cambridge.

