

responses' (p. 4) and the outlining of a coherent multi-valency but concludes that 'misericords ... negotiate spaces in between ... artist and object, viewer and viewed' (p. 147). The author-carver rejoins the reader-cleric as a source of meaning; the cultural turn turns back. None of this should detract from what is a succinct, pithy and broad survey of the medieval interpretive field and a brilliant application of visual analysis, an important historicisation of and corrective to a somewhat neglected subject. Rather, as Chunko-Dominguez passes through the vast iconographical range of medieval misericords, the challenges and tensions in her subject return. Is there still room for paradox and inconsistency, even irresolvable mystery, both for us and for a medieval audience, in these odd programmes of shitting hunters, hanged foxes and worthy peasants?

CLARE HALL,
CAMBRIDGE

GABRIEL BYNG

Saints and cults in medieval England. Proceedings of the 2015 Harlaxton symposium. By Susan Powell. (Harlaxton Medieval Studies, 27.) Pp. xviii + 493 incl. 3 figs, 2 tables, 1 map and 97 colour plates. Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2017. £49.50. 978 1 907730 59 7

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As one might expect from the contributions to the annual Harlaxton Medieval Studies Symposium, many glow and not a few sparkle. Those for 2015 (on the theme of 'Saints and cults in medieval England') are no exception. Pamela Tudor-Craig sadly died in December 2017, but her elegant foreword here remains to speak of the delights to come. And delights they certainly are, covering many fields – from an examination by Claire Gobbi Daunton of wondrously carved saints, demons and sinners in West Norfolk churches (especially Outwell), to a critique by Elisabeth Dutton and Tamara Haddad of the peculiar and tempestuous *Historie van Jan van Beverley*; from Nigel Morgan's meticulous article on the Sarum Calendar in England in the fourteenth century, to John Crook's observation that, contrary to popular belief, some saints and their shrines were still very much going strong in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, in fact right up to 1536–7. Vincent Gillespie's study of the locally venerated Richard Rolle of Hampole (d. 1349) shows that even Chaucer, in his *House of fame* (recently and persuasively re-dated by Helen Cooper to the 1380s), seems to have appreciated Rolle's literary merits long after his death in 1349, by which time his Psalter, and other works in Middle English had already spread widely – 'not bad for an Oxford dropout' (p. 160). And Nicholas Orme's piece on the engagingly hyper-active William Worcester, who spent his retirement fearlessly travelling alone and far afield 'collecting' obscure saints, is excellent. David Starkey discusses in lively prose the huge effect on Cambridge of the saintly Henry VI and his family, and especially his possibly life-changing influence over the young Henry, earl of Richmond (later Henry VII), after only one brief meeting, while Henry VII's later devotion to, and the cult of, the plague saint Armel of Brittany, is examined by Linda Ehrsam Voigts. Reconstructions and reinterpretations abound, from Nicholas Rogers's deeply scholarly study, using manuscript evidence, of the lost

royal window at the Greenwich Greyfriars, to Christopher Wilson's thoughts on the original shrine of St Erkenwald in St Paul's. Ruined statues of saints, Apostles and benefactors on the West Front of Croyland Abbey are examined by Jennifer S. Alexander, and Archbishop Scrope's lost window in York by Sarah Brown. The tombs of benefactors are also remembered. Christian Steer focuses on those medieval London worthies who patronised the Order of St Francis, interestingly often cloth-merchants or, like Lord Mayor Richard Whittington, mercers. (St Francis's own father, of course, was also in the cloth trade).

Saints, relics and cults, which are, after all, the theme of this book, are especially highlighted, for instance in David Lepine's fascinating and insightful paper on the enduring patterns of personal devotions to particular saints among the late medieval higher clergy – not at all an easy subject when so much manuscript evidence needs to be disentangled. R. N. Swanson discusses whether or not one can integrate intercessory indulgences with the cult of saints, while Julian Luxford examines medieval relic-lists, which retained some of their original spiritual value but probably came to hold much the same status as charters as time went on. (One wonders what the earlier monks of Selby, who long ago treasured that stolen finger of St Germanus which actually persuaded William the Conqueror to give them the ground on which to build an abbey in the first place, would have made of that – to say nothing of the ecclesiastical authorities in Auxerre, who even today have never forgotten its theft.)

Finally, a few reflections. How appropriate that the disparate sizes of the carved figures positioned high in the West Norfolk church of St Clement, Outwell (Claire Gobbi Daunton) might be explained not merely by the desire of mischievous stone-masons to have some fun, but rather to send the deadly serious message that it was the huge demons and sinners, rather than the saints, whose punishment it was to bear the weight of the church roof for all eternity. How interesting to know that the modern equivalent of Etheldreda (Simon Horobin, 'Osbern Bokenham's Book of *Legenda Aurea*') is Audrey, and that an original manuscript of later Bokenham writings, once owned by Sir Walter Scott, was rediscovered at Abbotsford, Melrose, only in 2005. How useful it would have been to have had printed, at the end of John Scattergood's interesting article, 'Saint Erkenwald and its literary relations', the original poem about the saint rather than Dante's brief *resumé*. And how splendid that St Osmund, mentioned in several of the contributions (especially in that of David Lepine), finally made it to sainthood after some four hundred years of advocacy on his behalf: also that John Fisher was eventually recognised as a martyr saint, though after a similarly long wait. (See David Harry's thoughtful study of Fisher's last writings, and of his execution, which Fisher is said to have referred to as his wedding day – revealing, perhaps, his conscious coupling of the bonds of spiritual marriage with Christian martyrdom.) But how telling that Henry VI, Richard Rolle and even Julian of Norwich, though the focus of local cults (and in the case of Henry VI, considerable royal clout from Henry VII), were never raised to the altar.

The twenty-one contributions to this book – not all of which there is space to note here – are accompanied, at the end, by ninety-seven fine colour plates, many supplied by the authors themselves. The index is also refreshingly

comprehensive. A feast indeed. One is reminded, when summing up this eclectic miscellany, of a stanza from Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem, *Pied Beauty*:

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise Him.

WOLFSON COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE

MARIE LOVATT

Lordship and faith. The English gentry and the parish church in the Middle Ages. By Nigel Saul. Pp. xiv + 360 incl. 52 ills. Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. £75. 978 0 19 870619 9

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Nigel Saul's latest book is a study of the English parish church in the *longue durée*, with special reference to gentry involvement. Like his *English church monuments in the Middle Ages* (Oxford 2011), it attempts a broad synthesis of a major, heavily investigated field, rather than a regional study of gentry culture of the sort that its author has also produced to such good effect. It is thus an inherently ambitious book, of broader relevance to medievalists and *ipso facto* more likely to generate influence and disagreement. Whatever one thinks about it, one has to admire Saul's industry, for he manages to work through a great deal of material on the way to producing monographs any one of which would be the main product of many scholarly careers.

Readers who know Saul's work will immediately recognise the approach, tone and leanings of *Lordship and faith*. For example, the choice to focus on the gentry, which conditions almost everything about the book, is perfectly true to form. The other dominant theme, the material and functional parish church, is also a native haunt of the author. By bringing the two together, Saul responds, perhaps inadvertently, to a particular 'moment' in scholarship about the late Middle Ages. Gentry and parish church are familiar bedfellows, of course, and research on both is always going on to a greater or lesser extent. Until very recently, it was a lesser extent in both cases. This may sound peculiar to those who have laboured abidingly in these vineyards, but a disinterested glance around, and backwards, will show that studies of the English parish church in particular have fallen into (relative) abeyance compared with the quantity and quality of scholarship produced in the 1980s and 1990s. Now the parish church is re-emerging, from behind the religious house and other things, as a mainstream focus of historians, with *Lordship and faith* in the van. The gentry has also been overshadowed lately by the study of women, merchants and various sorts of corporation. While this hardly amounts to an eclipse, there is a sense in which all that is encapsulated by a fussy coat of arms – privilege, condescension, social climbing, masculinity – is out of step with contemporary academic politics and thus considered dubious. Saul, however, puts it centre stage, almost as though stressing a point of principle.