

experience, does not provide an opportunity for students to learn how to handle non-textual sources, and can leave them with a narrow and false view of the types of materials with which historians work. A more minor disadvantage, but one worth mentioning, is that the lack of anything but text, in conjunction with narrow side and bottom margins, gives many of the pages a dense, uninviting look.

For a work devoted so exclusively to literary sources, there are surprisingly few references to text per se in the questions the editors provide at the end of each section. Some directing of students towards language and what it reveals, and does not reveal, as well as towards the way the circumstances under which a document is formed affect its wording and content, would have been helpful. The questions are otherwise useful, although the frequency of one question per document can create a once-over-lightly impression. Instructors who want their students to get the most out of these volumes will have to develop questions of their own in order to more exhaustively mine the various documents.

Instructors may also have to do some research of their own. Since the editors' introductory material is brief, and explanatory footnotes few, students will often desire more information than they have been given. In a number of cases, the class will even experience frustration as some documents end at suspenseful moments. Students will want to know what happened to the people whose stories they have been following, and they will be disappointed if their teachers cannot tell them. Where the class is small enough, and the library sufficiently rich in historical sources, this natural curiosity can be channelled into research assignments, coupled, perhaps, with oral reports on the findings. Bibliographic support will have to come from the instructor as *America Firsthand* does not contain any lists of supplementary sources.

Read with care, these two volumes will provide a host of memorable images—homeless people camping in a large field near Baltimore during the Panic of 1819; a grievously wounded Union soldier beseeching his sister to come to him on the Cedar Mountain battlefield; a gathering of Harlem Renaissance writers sitting on the floor and eating peanuts while doing readings of their poems and plays; the elaborate social cliques among girls in a 1950s Iowa small town. This is visceral history and it should move students.

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John Carmi Parsons, ed. *Medieval Queenship*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. Pp. 264. Cloth, \$49.95.

John Gillingham, ed. *Richard III: A Medieval Kingship*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. Pp. 154. Cloth, \$29.95.

Medieval Queenship, edited by John C. Parsons, is a richly informative anthology. The contributors examine the experience of women of ruling houses of Hungary, Denmark, Leon, and Navarre, as well as the better-known Carolingians, Capetians, Plantagenets, and Valois. The occasional rise-to-power of an exceptional woman is an accepted fact. But these writers see status as most often gained by reputation of fertility combined with virtue, and maintained through responsibility for children. As Parsons puts it, the process of the new royal bride was "a passage from daughter's descent and wife's sexuality to maternal care." Later, he explores the Plantagenet queens' education of their daughters for life in foreign courts, and urges further search in the vernacular literature for the "self-perceptions" of medieval women.

The queenship approach opens up fresh insights on the power and the problems of royal women in the early realms of Leon, Hungary, and Navarre. In Denmark, the chronicler Saxo (twelfth century) worked from fiction and legend into a more factual style. For fourteenth-

century Denmark, church and royal sources give solid evidence on the career of Margaret I; she ruled in full power, beat the Swedes in war, and established the Union of Kalmar. Janet Nelson believes Charlemagne used his daughters' influence to keep his sons' ambitions in check. She traces their role in the works of court poets, among whom were Alcuin and Theodulph of Orleans. Pauline Stafford shows how twelfth-century author William of Malmesbury worked away from earlier stereotypes toward a more truly historical and sympathetic view of queen Aethelfryth and "Empress" Mathilda. In the last chapter, Lois Hunnicutt assesses twelfth-century authors Orderic Vitalis, John of Salisbury, and Bernard of Clairvaux. She believes they would not exclude a royal woman from some "public authority," but doubts they would accept a woman ruling in her own right. In France, a woman could never have had full authority, but a powerful regency was shaped gradually by Blanche of Castile (mother of St. Louis), Anne of Beaujeu, and Louise of Savoy.

An important feature of the anthology is the use of non-literary sources: portraits, murals, busts, coins, and medals, which show queens crowned, with their kings, or with sons for whom they act as regent. The most impressive pictorial evidence is the painting series showing Louise of Savoy acting in the tradition of Blanche of Castile, and instructing her son, Francis I.

With its rather small print, long solid paragraphs, and documentation in parentheses in the text, the book is not for the average freshman or sophomore in the world history survey. But it provides a valuable resource for lecture material, student reading, and discussion for courses in women's history, the medieval survey, or special-period medieval classes.

For classes of fairly advanced and motivated students, the chroniclers' half-misogynous, half sympathetic views, and their portrayals of good and bad queens could develop lively discussions.

The anthology *Richard III: A Medieval Kingship*, edited by John Gillingham, features a survey chapter by the editor and contributions by seven other leading medievalists. As a study of an enigmatic and controversial figure, it should have much appeal for students. The contributors develop different and sometimes conflicting perspectives. The chapters on "Formative Years" (Michael Hicks) and "Year of Decision" (Colin Richmond) show Richard's frustrations as a "younger son," his ambitions amid the viciousness of the War of Roses, his buildup of landed power, and the flat, cold, deadly moves to eliminate rivals and get control of the young princes Edward and Richard. Richmond believes it was the demise of the princes that destroyed the Yorkist monarchy and caused increased mistrust of the king. This thought fits well with Rosemary Horrox's view on the government, that while Richard started with a helpful network developed by Edward IV, support faded as his actions released his ruthlessness. Michael Jones sees a similar loss of trust, bringing betrayal by Stanley and Northumberland at Bosworth Field. Alexander Grant believes that both Edward IV and Richard III failed to maintain a foreign-war policy that would have helped keep peace at home. He holds that Richard was seen by other rulers as unreliable; also that with the strong French contingent in Henry Tudor's forces at Bosworth, that event was really the last battle of the Hundred Years' War.

The many valuable insights in these chapters illuminate rather than change the view of Richard as an able leader, ruthless beyond the usual standard of his times. But two of the contributors are "pro-Ricardian." In the chapter on the court and its culture, Anne Sutton portrays Richard as an impressive prince, a patron of culture, and an emulator of the distinguished court style of Burgundy. P. W. Hammond, on the changes in the "Reputation of Richard III," traces the image from the distorted views of the Tudor writers, to later and more balanced judgments. His Richard is an able man with inner anxieties, morally little worse than many of his contemporaries. This conflicts with the Richard of Colin Richmond, who sees his actions as political behavior of "staggering unconventionality." He then continues, "if we want

to explain, rather than simply gape, we must be prepared for the unpalatable." So are Sutton and Hammond whitewashing Richard III? Given a careful setting by an instructor, this and other issues could create several involved (and heated) sessions of class.

The format of the book is attractive. On some pages, special-topic boxes of maps, genealogies, chronologies, and other subjects give helpful sidelights on the period. The bibliographic style consists of "Further Readings" at the end of each chapter. Portraits of leading figures will enhance interest, and the book is thoroughly indexed. As mentioned, of the two books reviewed here, *Medieval Queenship* would be of interest to advanced students and professionals. *Richard III: A Medieval Kingship*, also a fully professional work, will have an appeal for the survey-level student as well as for the more advanced. Either has potential for lively controversy: Does Hillary Clinton recall Margaret I of Denmark? Is Richard III an unjustly maligned prince, just a tough guy of his times, or a real sociopath?

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James Vernon. *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture c. 1815-1867.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Pp. xviii, 429. Cloth, \$69.95.

In this important though sometimes obscurely written and badly edited book, James Vernon challenges the traditional notion that the English Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867 increased the effective participation of the population in politics and argues instead that during this period "English politics became progressively less democratic." Using the five constituencies of Oldham, Tower Hamlets, Boston, Lewes, and Devon for his illustrations, Vernon shows that as the elite had to grant the demands of Englishmen for direct participation in politics, it was able to find ways to make that participation all but meaningless.

During the nineteenth century symbol substituted for substance. Through ceremonies and rituals the elite defined political virtue as loyalty to the political structure from which most of the celebrants were excluded. Political theater and melodrama, with processions, banners, ballads, and oratory, prevented the development of substantive discussions. The use of tickets for political dances, dinners, and tea-parties kept out the wrong elements and made clear who was expected to be active in politics and who was not. The mass of the people became observers rather than participants, and the leaders became heroes to rather than advocates for their followers.

Registration of voters limited their numbers. The expansion of the number of polling places and the use of the ballot fragmented the population and made it less potentially dangerous: voting became an individual rather than a collective act.

The use of print rather than speech as the primary means of political communication isolated workingmen, reduced their solidarity, made them easier to manipulate, and thus reduced their power to "create their own politics."

The creation of parties, far from giving the people a stronger voice in politics, actually decreased their influence. By regulating and disciplining their members, parties kept political discourse within acceptable bounds and thus helped the oligarchy to retain control.

The expansion of democracy in England during the nineteenth century, therefore, turns out to be a myth—or, as Vernon says, a "sham." Informal participation in politics decreased, and formal participation had less and less meaning. The pretense of social and cultural inclusion was substituted for political inclusion.