

contemporaries. Soldiers in the Roman army of Basil's time (which was, after all, a Christian Roman army) were accompanied by military chaplains and took communion without hindrance. But this is indeed a picky, specialist's criticism of an admirable presentation of the debate about Rome's fall. I highly recommend it for classroom use.

Princeton University

Tia M. Kolbaba

**John Carmi Parsons, ed. *Medieval Queenship*. New York: St. Martin's Pres, 1998. Pp. 264. Paper, \$17.95; ISBN 0-312-17298-2.**

This collection of articles on various subjects concerning Europe's queens, *ca.* eighth century to *ca.* sixteenth century, is a valuable contribution to all students: scholars, teachers, and undergraduates alike. Both new and established scholars present a "palette of images" of medieval queens in their roles as mothers, daughters, wife, consorts, regents, rulers, political "insiders," and foreign "outsiders." The geographic range of the articles is broad. Little-studied areas such as medieval Hungary and Denmark are included, as well as the better-known realms of Capetian France and Angevin and Plantagenet England. In both style and content, this is a remarkably consistent scholarly collection. Each contribution emphasizes the complex relationship between family and power that characterized the roles of prominent women in the Middle Ages. The creativity with which some contributors, in particular Janet Nelson and Lois Honeycutt, used non-traditional sources to reconstruct women's royal roles is impressive.

The book appeals on a number of different levels. For scholars of the medieval family and of women, the articles of Nelson, André Poulet, Elizabeth McCartney, and Pauline Stafford offer new approaches to well-studied areas. They attribute to medieval queens--long regarded merely as pawns in the diplomatic marriage market--a far wider variety of experiences and power. The careers of Elvira of León, Louise of Savoy, and Giovanna of Naples clearly demonstrate that queens could wield significant authority beyond "merely" producing and educating their children. The articles, taken collectively, challenge a traditional interpretation of women's roles--that the emergence of a more patrilineally organized society after 1000 sharply limited the access of women to power. The interpretation of "power" is a central theme in the discussion. Few of the authors directly address the link between the changing status of queens and the evolution of state-like structures in Europe (exceptions include Poulet and Parsons); however, the articles provide ample material for further investigation of such issues.

In the classroom the book could easily serve as an introduction to the issues, vocabulary, and sources of aristocratic women's history. Paron, Poulet, János M. Bak, Inge Skovgaard-Peterson, and Stafford summarize key scholarship on women and

family: public versus private power, Christian and legal "theory" versus actual experience, marriage practices and politics. Students will further benefit from seeing how historians carefully use disparate types of sources (art, chronicles, charters, literature, ecclesiastical treatises) to construct a history of women. The book's illustrations are especially helpful. The articles provide models for the interpretation of primary texts concerning women of all social strata. For undergraduates (probably above the introductory level), *Medieval Queenship* is accessible and readable, yet demonstrates attention to language and detail that enables historians to piece together a portion of medieval experience. As an exercise, students can examine through discussion or in writing the boundaries and controversies that characterize the study of medieval women.

Students of all levels can appreciate the lengthy and current bibliography that accompanies the collection. Teachers preparing their lectures will no doubt benefit from the sometimes poignant, other times startling anecdotes that appear throughout the book. It is a particularly good text for use in an undergraduate course on the aristocracy, family, and/or women.

Colgate University

Joanna H. Drell

**Christopher Haigh. *Elizabeth I*. London & New York: Longman, 1998. Second edition. Pp. viii, 209. Paper, \$16.95; ISBN 0-582-31974-9.**

If Elizabeth I is on your mind, avoid the unfortunate 1998 film bearing her name and direct your attention to this readable assessment of how she exercised power. Haigh's approach is to explore Gloriana's relationship with the people who orbited around her and to key political institutions, including the official Church, the nobility, her Privy Council, the Court, Parliament, the military, and her subjects. In the process, he reveals the means by which Elizabeth survived as a ruler, especially as a female ruler. We also learn about the woman behind the mask of royalty who concentrated her energies not on analyzing and solving national problems but on surviving. Haigh's is an insightful, sometimes critical study of England's greatest icon since King Arthur.

Elizabeth began her existence under tenuous circumstances. She was conceived before her parents wed, while her father was still legally married to his first wife. Before her third birthday, she lost her claim to the throne with the stroke of a pen and her mother to the swing of an ax. Years later, we are told, she certainly reflected upon these events as examples of the power of Tudor monarchy and of the forces and factions capable of manipulating that power. Actually, the word "certainly" is at best educated speculation, but that is a vital ingredient in Haigh's approach and a useful technique for moving the story along effectively. It also presents the teacher with an opportunity to engage students in the nature of the historian's craft. We don't know,