Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History

Edited by Joel T. Rosenthal and Paul E. Szarmach

Abstracts

Bubonic Plague in the Visigothic Kingdom: A Reassessment of Sources and Methods
Bernard Bachrach, University of Minnesota

DURING THE PAST decade or so it has become clear that the Justinianic pandemic, c. 542–750, was caused by *Yersenia pestis*, the bacterium that causes bubonic plague. As a result, a considerable quantity of work has been published to demonstrate that the Justinianic pandemic delivered an immense blow to the population, economy, and society of the late antique world. Much of this analysis rests upon the use of "proxy data" from the medieval plague and also from modern occurrences of the bubonic plague to quantify the impact of the Justinianic plague on the Roman world and its successor states in the West. Here it is argued that a reassessment of the sources and methods with regard to the Visigothic kingdom shows the impact of the plague on the Iberian Peninsula has been greatly exaggerated.

The Ducal Office in Ottonian Germany from a Military-Administrative Perspective
David Bachrach, University of New Hampshire

OVER THE COURSE of the tenth and early eleventh century, the Ottonian kings of Germany substantially modified the ducal office, to whose holders they assigned important administrative functions. These

included the protection of royal fiscal assets, the supervision of counts, and most importantly the direction of military affairs at the regional level. In developing the competencies of this office, the Ottonians drew extensively on the administrative inheritance of their Carolingian predecessors. However, the dukes of the Ottonian period differed significantly from those of the ninth century and earlier in holding territorially defined jurisdictions with corresponding fiscal assets that made possible the conduct of their duties. The Ottonian ducal office has benefited from significant scholarly attention for the better part of two centuries. For the most part, however, scholars have focused on either constitutional or political questions, rather than administrative ones. The burden of this essay is to illuminate the administrative roles of the Ottonian dukes, primarily in military affairs, with a specific emphasis on the *regnum* of Lotharingia for which we have the best surviving source material regarding the duties and actions of the dukes.

Women and Crime in London, 1272–1327: Predicaments and Recourses
Henry Summerson, Independent Scholar

BASED ON THE rich variety of judicial sources surviving from the decades on either side of 1300, this essay examines the crimes committed by and against women, in the context of a society in which they were united, in legal terms, only by their disadvantages. Numerically their offenses were markedly fewer than those of men; generically they were much the same. Women alone were subjected to rape, but in the exercise of force, they could show themselves as violent as their menfolk. Unsurprisingly, poverty was a major factor, leading many women, especially migrants to the city, into theft and prostitution, and so into a world characterized by disorder and criminality. Not all succumbed, however, and the determination of other women to conduct their lives with propriety and uphold legality made a significant contribution to keeping London's crime rate down.

"Spiritual Gentlemen"? Rank, Status, and Identity and the Late Medieval English Secular Clergy
David Lepine, Exeter University

IN THE TWO centuries after 1300 English society became increasingly stratified. As rank became more clearly defined and new gradations emerged, it became necessary to establish the secular clergy's place in the social hierarchy; they were as acutely aware of status and rank as the laity. The medieval Church was itself deeply hierarchical and developed its own gradations of rank based on ordination and benefice or officeholding. These two parallel hierarchies developed broad equivalences as early as the twelfth century. By the mid-fifteenth century they had become much more precisely defined. The place of the secular clergy in lay society—set out in elaborate precedence lists—was in practice determined by their birth, ecclesiastical rank, and education. Their concern about their lay status is most clearly expressed in an increasing use of heraldry and a gentry lifestyle. The identity of the secular clergy was based on their status as priests, the benefices they held, their ecclesiastical rank (canon, dignitary, or bishop), and their academic qualifications. In addition, many clergy expressed a personal identity and piety that can be seen in their monuments, seals, rebuses, mottoes, and Latin verse epitaphs.

A Death in Florence: John Catterick, Bishop of Exeter (d. 1419)
Christian Steer, University of York

JOHN CATTERICK, BISHOP of Exeter, died, aged about forty-five years old, in his palazzo in Florence on the Feast of the Holy Innocents in 1419. He signed his last will and testament at the George Inn, Dartmouth (Devon), three years before, but during his final illness the bishop made two codicils, both drawn up as public instruments and witnessed before his household. These three documents shed important light on the life and career of a Lord Spiritual, a friend of kings and princes, of popes and bishops, who was not only preoccupied with the wellbeing of his family, household, and estate workers, but decided—almost at the hour of his death—to be buried in the church of the Friars Minor in Florence. This essay will consider what was so special about the friars' church of

Santa Croce and why an Englishman abroad would want to be buried among the worthies of Tuscany. The provisions made in Catterick's will, and what they reveal on his view of the world, will be considered alongside the silence concerning the bishop's tomb, a product of the Ghiberti workshop, and the important role played by others in the burial and commemoration of Catterick in the Franciscan church of Florence. The bishop of Exeter was a diplomat in the service of church and state, and this essay will suggest how both influenced the construction and composition of the tomb monument of John Catterick and the important role played by Pope Martin V.

The Portrait of Edward Grimston: Contextualizing an Artifact
Compton Reeves, Ohio University (emeritus)

THE PORTRAIT OF Edward Grimston is the oldest recognized portrait of an English person where the subject of the portrait, the painter, and the date are known. Edward Grimston followed his father into the service of the De la Pole family, and it was in the service of the English government and of William de la Pole, marquess of Suffolk, that found Grimston on the Continent in 1446. In the city of Bruges Grimston's portrait was painted by Petrus Christus. This article explores the context of Grimston's life and service, the artist Petrus Christus in Bruges, and the circumstances under which the portrait came to be created.

Brothers in Arms: The Early Modern Traffic in Military Technology between Japan and Europe
Paul Hartle, St. Catherine's College, Cambridge

THIS ESSAY EXPLORES the exchange of the culture and technologies of violence between the mid-sixteenth century, when the first Portuguese navigators reached Japan, and the early seventeenth, when the new Shogunal policy of near-closure to the West severely restricted this traffic, to be renewed only by the 1853 entry of American warships into Japanese waters. It investigates the ways in which Europeans and Japanese understood—or rather imagined—one another in terms of their warrior cultures. It examines the traffic in arms and its impact: for

the Japanese, the importation and subsequently manufacture of firearms, transforming Japanese warfare and probably contributing substantially to the unification of the country; for the Europeans, the admiration for Japanese skill in the traditional arts of war of armoring, horsemanship, and archery, and most of all for the apogee of those arts, the Japanese sword. War at sea and the impact of European mapmaking and shipbuilding on Japan's seaborne defense are also considered, illustrated in the combination of Dutch sea power in the form of artillery with Japanese land power in the form of infantry, which together, at the Siege of Shimabara in 1637–38, suppressed one of the most dangerous revolts against the Tokugawa Shogunate: Brothers in Arms.