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Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays Presented to Gerald Harriss by Rowena E. Archer; Simon Walker

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bearing on much of Justice's argument. It can only have been a rising level of prosperity that enabled the "rustics" to take time away from the furrow to learn to read and, sometimes, to write. This prosperity was not evenly spread but the rebels' demands (presumably written down) at Mile End and at Smithfield made it clear that they understood that personal freedom was a prerequisite of economic advancement. Such freedom and prosperity were the essential preconditions both of the rising in 1381 (the desperately poor could not have taken time to march to London) and of the growth of popular heresy. Both required time to plan, to read, to discuss, and to write.

The insertion of these long after-thought footnotes are not the only signs of haste. Often the writing is sloppy, masquerading perhaps, as lively. But a serious work of this kind does not need to be enlivened with words like "cardinalatial" (p. 99), "articulable" (p. 127), "jimmied" (p. 169), or "wacky" (p. 223). There is some careless referencing: for example the crucial manuscript of Knighton's chronicle from which Justice has carefully transcribed the letters, is referred to throughout as Cotton Tiberius Cviii when it is, in fact, Cotton Tiberius Cvii. There are a number of footnotes (e.g. p. 203, n. 33 and p. 232, n. 130) in which Justice refers to articles he is about to write as if mapping out claims to territory. The most serious sign of haste is the unwillingness to take on board the work of other scholars that appeared between his first inspirational summer of 1990 and the publication of his book in 1994. In a dismissive footnote (p. 10) he refers to the work of Richard Green and Paul Strohm (both books published in 1992) and laments that he did not know of them earlier. He might have referred also to the important work of Susan Crane (1992) and Miri Rubin (1991). Inevitably these writers had stolen a little of his thunder but that is a common scholarly problem. Justice had sufficient ideas of his own not to need to ignore, or denigrate, the work of other scholars, however inconvenient their timing.

Justice demonstrates in *Writing and Rebellion* his intelligence, his industry, and his skills as a Latinist and paleographer. He is willing to read manuscripts as well as a wide range of printed sources and monographs. It would be impossible to finish reading this book without acquiring a richer understanding of the mentalities of late fourteenth-century England. There are some excellent ideas in this book, shored up by a number of less good ones. Not all late fourteenth-century texts have to be read in close conjunction with each other. They share, many of them, a common thought world and that may be as close as they can be brought to each other. In 1381 the voice of the peasantry in England was, unwillingly and unwittingly, recorded by monastic chroniclers. Justice has, in this invigorating book, ensured that we listen attentively to that voice.

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Rowena E. Archer and Simon Walker, eds. *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays Presented to Gerald Harriss*. Rio Grande, Ohio: Hambledon Press. 1996. Pp. xxvii, 270. \$65.00. ISBN 1-85285-133-3.

*Festschrift* volumes, of which this is one of an increasing number of examples, pose real difficulties for a reviewer. Usually lacking much of a unifying focus of content, they tend to defy the application of normal criteria for critical evaluation. Comment on one or more individual items in an essay collection such as this is possible, but the *mélange* as a whole often does not admit of an evenhanded treatment of the wide-ranging number of quite

specialized topics—in the present instance some fourteen—because they bear so little internal relationship to one another.

Such is the case with this book. The editors identify it as contributions from colleagues and research pupils presented to Gerald Harriss, a longtime member of the History Department at Magdalen College, Oxford University, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. The only claimed unifying thread connecting the fourteen essays is Harriss's general field of scholarly activity, medieval history; but even here the editors point out that none of the published offerings touches on either of two significant areas of Harriss's professional interests: viz., "the early history of Parliament [and] the continuing influence of medieval taxation in the early modern period" (p. vii).

The volume's contents are a polyglot mix of specialized writings on various aspects of medieval English history arranged in chronological order from the thirteenth to the late sixteenth century. Within this chronological frame, the essays range from an investigation of the activities and significance of late medieval royal courts and courtiers, examined by way of comparison and contrast with "household" members and more legally established formal royal ministers (the Horrox essay, pp. 1–16), through an examination of a mid-1340s case study of "diet and consumption in gentry and noble households" (the Woolgar article, pp. 17–31), to a discourse on "executors, wills and family strategy in fifteenth-century Norfolk" (the Maddern article, pp. 155–74), and an essay on the royal officeholders of Henry VII, whose success in recruiting appropriate subordinates from among local powers was a means of strengthening royal authority (Lockett, pp. 223–38).

It is probably unfair to single out any of the above-mentioned papers while ignoring the ten others; and I do so only to illustrate the range and diversity of this *estschrift*. Such diversity is both the strength and the weakness of the work itself. Arguably, most, if not all, the individual essays could find a place in one or other of the still proliferating specialist journals in medieval political, institutional, legal, sociological, and cultural history, where probably they would find their natural and more potentially interested readership. Few readers at any level of academic specialization are likely to be attracted to a volume such as this, which likely has only one or two articles of specific value to a specialist medieval historian.

The two I found of considerable interest deal with different aspects of the reign of Richard II. Maurice Keen's "Richard II's Ordinances of War of 1385" provides a keen insight into an important aspect of medieval and later English military history: the effort by Richard and his three principal royal administrators to set down rules for the maintenance and proper military deployment of an army raised for national and royal purposes. The second, by Simon Walker, examines Richard's "views on the rights and duties of kingship and the effect that these views had on his conduct and government" (p. 48). Perhaps the editors share my predilection for things having to do with Richard II inasmuch as, aside from a photograph of Professor Harriss, the only illustration in the volume is a reproduction of the Westminster Abbey painting of Richard's white hart badge.

The collection as a whole is not likely to prove of interest to a very large segment of even the academic reading public.

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