

## BOOK REVIEWS

with black and white plates at the back of the book. The nuns were required to be of noble descent and were mostly from Roman families. The author does not state to what period the arms belong, but from the title of this book they are not expected to pre-date the fifteenth century. For dating information it is necessary to consult two other works, Sicari's *Blasone e stemmi di nobili domenicane a Roma* (Rome, 1994) and the two volume *Chroniques du monastère de San Sisto* (1919–20).

The ordinary uses a short-hand form of blazon, which is always somewhat challenging to interpret. It also follows the rather lamentable modern practice of placing the colour of the principal charge first, instead of the colour of the field. These difficulties are mitigated in that for every shield the full text blazon is referenced elsewhere within the text. In pulling together such a large volume of information within a single tome Popoff has created the indispensable guide for those wishing either to research Roman families or to identify arms in the churches and other great monuments of Rome.

Paul A. Fox

Michel Popoff and Michel Pastoreau, *Parliamentary Roll, d'après le manuscrit de Londres, British Library, Cotton MS Caligula A XVIII (fo. 3-21v)*, Documents d'Héraldique Médiévale 14, Paris, Le Léopard d'or 2020. 320pp + 1 map. Hardcover. ISBN 978-2-86377-269-0. €75.

This is the fourteenth volume in the series of Documents d'Héraldique Médiévale published by Léopard d'or. In his introduction Michel Pastoreau notes that the Parliamentary Roll follows on from a series of rolls of arms during Edward I's military campaigns in Scotland between 1280 and 1300. He argues that it is in effect an armorial (over 1100 arms listed by county) of the military aristocracy of England at the beginning of the 14th century. He dates the completion of the roll to about 1312, though suggesting it was substantially compiled between 1295 and 1307 when Edward I was succeeded by his son, Edward II; it is usually placed between 1308 and 1312. Pastoreau concludes that it is *un document exceptionnel*, a virtual *laboratoire* for the study of heraldry at the beginning of the fourteenth century which he identifies as being the very end of the 'classic' phase of early armory. The large numbers of shields included also enable him to make a useful statistical analysis of charges and colours, gules and argent being the most popular colours and, not surprisingly (given Pastoreau's earlier work in this field) the most common charge being the lion. He adds that the roll also represents the apogée of Anglo-Norman blazon before the growing use of Latin in such works.

The introduction, in keeping with the series, is relatively short, which probably explains why mention is not made of recent analysis of the historical value of this roll undertaken by Peter Coss, Maurice Keen, Steen Clemmensen, and especially David Simpkin. They have shown, for example, that at least 200 knights alive at the time are not included in the roll. One interesting suggestion by Pastoreau is that the roll was compiled by officers of the Crown who were in some way responsible for the nobility and military. Could Pastoreau here be thinking of some sort of very early proto-visitation



## THE COAT OF ARMS

undertaken by heralds – an intriguing thought especially when considered in the light of Clemmensen's findings?

The main part of the work, is of course, Popoff's edition of the roll itself. This follows the standard format of this valuable series: shield owner followed by contemporary blason with modern French translation, and finally, references to previous standard editions of the roll and relevant reference works. Little biographical information is provided about the shield owner, and for this one has to refer to the references provided for each entry, especially Gerard Brault's edition of *Rolls of Arms: Edward I* being *Aspilogia III* in that series. The volume ends with a short bibliography of standard reference works, an ordinary which involves a rather a generous use of abbreviations, an index of names and places, and a county index with map.

Since the Parliamentary Roll is yet to appear in the promised *Aspilogia IV* (based on the notes of the late John Goodall), Popoff's edition is a welcome addition to this series providing, for the time being at least, the most clear and most accessible edition to this exceptional source not only of medieval heraldry, but also of the composition of the English military aristocracy of the period.

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