comes to feel the choices are hit or miss and that any pattern which emerges is a matter more of chance than of fact. Different individuals, one suspects, might have led to different conclusions.

It is not easy to work out the principles behind footnotes and bibliography. Quite rightly Mendyk cites Joseph M. Levine and yet the book he seems most to admire – Levine's *Humanism and History. Origins of Modern English Historiography* – never makes it to the bibliography (and appears to remain only partially cited: I could never find the date and place of publication nor a full title for that matter) whereas his earlier *Dr Woodward's Shield* and his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation do appear. And why is Oruch's work, so strongly emphasized in the text, excluded? Some primary sources appear in the bibliography and others do not. Amongst those which do there is considerable confusion about choices of editions: why, for example, do we have the 1534 edition of Polydore Vergil rather than the revised edition of 1546 or the third of 1555? In a book about and for the antiquary – "a man strangely thrifty of Time past" – one might expect particular care about accuracy and yet the notes and bibliography are far from punctilious: Leland is linked with Henry VII in Clarke's article, to give one fine bit of anachronism, and Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote a "*Historia regnum Britanniae*". In the text itself I enjoyed, *inter alia*, the reference to "other ancient Egyptian priests or barbs".

All in all this is a somewhat superficial book, one not carefully researched. One has the sense that by the time it actually came to press the author had lost some of his initial enthusiasm and that the final product is more a labour than the kind of labour of love Mendyk has been describing in the work of the chorographers themselves.

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Jasper Ridley. *Elizabeth I, the Shrewdness of Virtue*. New York: Fromm International, 1989. Pp. xi, 391. Christopher Haigh. *Elizabeth I*. London and New York: Longman Ltd., 1988. Pp. vii, 198.

Studies of many historical figures are called forth by anniversaries of birth and death, but for Elizabeth I as for Napoleon the season remains perpetual. Ironically, one is hard pressed to identify a standard work in this burgeoning genre since J.E. Neale's now outdated classic of the 1930s. Commercially successful efforts by such non-academics as Elizabeth Jenkins, Edith Sitwell and Carolly Erickson have not altogether met the standards of serious scholarship, while Paul Johnson's effort of 1974 has been rendered questionable on a number of issues by more recent scholarship. The field thus seems wide open for a new and definitive study, one which would incorporate important recent research and present a new perspective of its own.

The two new works at hand, by the professional biographer Jasper Ridley and the Oxford historian Christopher Haigh, hold great promise. After all, Ridley has already published seven historical biographies, four of them on figures in the Tudor period, while Haigh has written widely and convincingly on various aspects of Tudor politics and religion. It is thus most disappointing to find that neither of these efforts entirely fits the bill.

The thrust of Ridley's contribution lies more in placing new interpretations on familiar material than in drawing upon new sources themselves. Though he does use some unpublished material, especially on Ireland, he relies principally upon published primary and secondary sources. The resulting effort shows a well-meaning, conscientious, even devout Queen, sometimes overwhelmed by events, and often indecisive. Yet Ridley's Elizabeth remained in charge, and it was she and not her ministers – talented as Ridley construes them to have been – who made the crucial decisions and who must thus be credited with their success or failure. Though this picture usefully veers away from Neale's hagiography and may yet prove closer to the mark than many, it is difficult to be convinced by arguments which are too often uninformed of the most important of recent scholarship. One looks in vain for the influence of Norman Jones's work on the Settlement of Religion, of Winthrop Hudson and others on factions at court, on Michael Graves and others on Elizabethan parliaments, of Peter Lake and the most recent of Patrick Collinson's important works on Puritans, or even Wallace MacCaffrey's not so recent eye for detail in specific issues. In short, Ridley has defined the boundaries of his subject so narrowly as to neglect the complexity of the events and ideas which matter: it is, if not *Hamlet* without the Prince, then perhaps the Prince without the play.

From Haigh, whose accomplishments as a Tudor specialist are legion and impressive, one expects more, and indeed neither the incorporation of recent scholarship nor the presentation of a new and challenging interpretation are far to seek. One may not compare the two too strictly, for Haigh has not set out to write a biography at all. This is the second volume to have come forth in Longman's new and promising 'Profiles in Power' series, in which concise and analytic books on specific political careers are the objective. Thus Haigh ignores the more personal aspects of the Queen's life, save those of political import, to concentrate on her office and use of power.

Here we have a number of new hypotheses, many forged by an historian writing in the age of both Margaret Thatcher and her public relations men, Saatchi and Saatchi. Elizabeth remained pre-occupied with public imagery to disguise her faults as queen and her inescapable problems as a woman ruler. The last point is especially clear to Haigh. It was difficult for either Elizabeth herself or her contemporaries to escape the fact of her womanhood and – despite the reality of other female rulers of that age – the incongruity of a woman ruler in the sixteenth century. This weakness, as Haigh sees it, accounted for Elizabeth finding herself too often at the mercy of the disparate political forces around her, rather than, as Neale saw it, in command of them. Though she bullied the Church well enough, she was bullied or

manipulated in turn by many other groups: the aristocracy, whose support she still required; factions amongst her courtiers and concillors; and the commanders of her military. Haigh's Elizabeth experienced constant fear of revolt and disrespect, and thus relied on a 'rule by illusion'. Yet in the end, she was a failure, dying unloved and unlamented, victimized by her sex.

This is, of course, as far from Neale's Queen as one could get, and pretty far from Ridley's too. Not only isn't Haigh writing of Gloriana, but he also refuses to accept the very things Neale saw as most important in her reign: the Parliament, which Haigh disparages as decreasingly important; the famed concillors, whom he sees as manipulative and squabbling second raters; and the military achievements, which he dismisses almost completely.

This is revisionism in the extreme and it offers much to dwell on and much to celebrate. The departure from the shibboleths of earlier scholarship is most welcome, though no longer by now especially novel, and the emphasis on the sexual issue marks a particularly important milestone in mainstream Elizabethan scholarship. Yet overall, one is put off by the breezy self-assurance of tone and more deeply troubled by the constant tendency to argue with perfect righteousness well beyond any evidence placed before us: a tendency, in fact, reminiscent of Neale himself. Comments on the gender issue aptly illustrate both these objections. Chapters begin, in the trendiest of terms, with the announcement of stereotypes with which her contemporaries, at least in Haigh's eyes, perceived their Queen: "a pushy woman" (p. 27); "a show-off and dressed to kill", (p. 86); 'a mother, ... and aunt, ... a nagging wife, ... a seductress ...', (p. 107). These, of course, are just the tags likely to appeal to the broader reading public, but as mere labels it is hard to see that they get us very far in understanding Elizabeth or perceptions of her by her contemporaries. Fuller support for such images would turn this into a scholarly argument, but we never quite reach that level of discourse. Indeed, though we should be ever in his debt at least for raising the issue, the extent to which Haigh has informed himself of serious feminist scholarship on the subject seems limited to a single essay in *Feminist Review* cited in the Bibliographic Essay at the end.

Much of the disappointment here stems from the sense that Haigh could do better, and has. The best recent guide to the rapidly unfolding scholarship on the Elizabethan period remains the collection of essays which Haigh himself edited as *The Reign of Elizabeth* (1985): a first rate collection of shrewd, balanced and judicious essays, including Haigh's own, plus his fine introduction. The current volume stands small beside the former, and for our new standard treatment of Elizabeth herself we must still wait.

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