We are gradually becoming accustomed to what might be called the London University approach to the social history of eighteenth-century London. It often begins its life in Royal Holloway; this study began in the LSE, before its author migrated. Apart from their quality, what characterizes these studies is that they are grounded firmly in a finite body of primary material, usually well written, pragmatic, well aware of the secondary material, happily drawing on a number of rather accessible and generally accepted social science concepts but persistently distrusting stereotypes (especially stereotypes provided by historians of the nineteenth century), dubious of polar or indeed of any opposites and disinclined to make a crisis out of the daily drama of people striving to conduct their lives. Meldrum’s book fits well into this approach. It is notoriously difficult to write the history of domestic service, especially female domestic service. The absence of good source material giving the servants’ own view is a problem that beset Hecht in 1956 and Hill forty years subsequently. However, Meldrum is fortunate to have at his disposal some 1,500 witness depositions made by London servants at the London Consistory Court between 1669 and 1752. He has used them well. This is a worthy addition to the ‘Women and Men in History’ series.

The market for domestic service in London during the period 1660–1750 had its peculiarities. It was female-dominated and on the whole it was a sellers’ market. Wages were higher than elsewhere, even after taking board and lodging into account. Young women came to London to find employment, a new parish of settlement and a husband. They usually succeeded in all three. Manservants – far fewer in number – came for employment and settlement and perhaps to share the
reputation of London manservants as sexual predators (though if Black’s recent research on illegitimacy in Westminster is any guide, this reputation was ill deserved).

In the London of this period Meldrum moves expertly. He engages with other historians, but not polemically; he knows the field and he knows the relevant concepts. Naturally he makes much use of Earle. He tackles my own material on wages judiciously; he has a similarly judicious discussion of the nature of work and of remuneration in kind. His arguments for the rather limited sexual vulnerability of maidservants are balanced and borne out by Black’s recent work on illegitimate births, though they counter the more traditional picture, tentatively supported by Hill, as well as other views about the sexual revolution of the eighteenth century. Doubtless innocent men were at times bribed into declaring themselves the father of an illegitimate child (and usually marrying the woman subsequently, thereby hiding any act of employer violence from historians), but in the sellers’ market of London domestic service this is unlikely to have been very common. Contrary to Olwen Hufton’s suggestion for France, domestic service in London was not so dangerous an institution that town-bred girls avoided it, although it is possible that they tended to begin it at a later age. The views of Seleski – so far mostly hidden in a doctoral thesis but about to be published in a volume in this series – suggesting that nineteenth-century households were much better organized and disciplined than those of the eighteenth century and relating this to changing sexualities (and thus separate spheres) between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are gently questioned, at least in relation to London.

The Consistory Court depositions have their limitations. They are excellent on relations within the household, but they do not, for instance, enable the marriage pattern of servants to be analysed systematically. However, they do show that very few female servants had savings greater than £10, which leaves open the question of dowries. To criticize Meldrum on what is omitted is unfair – he goes beyond the depository evidence whenever he can, he does not restrict himself to this evidence, he discusses the nature of remuneration (with a suggestion of the ‘moral economy of service’ that has some meaning but which goes beyond the tight boundaries that Thompson sought to place on his own concept of the moral economy). It is not a criticism to say that one would like more. This is a well-written book that deserves to reach an audience outside its specialism. Those studying households and families will need to read it and those studying the social history of this period will benefit from it.

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DOI: 10.1017/S0268416002224236


In this initially attractive but ultimately frustrating book, John Rennie Short seeks to integrate cartographic history with its more familiar social and political
counterparts. Rejecting the notion of maps as dispassionate mirrors of nature, he examines their role in the development of the North American colonies and the United States. By seeing maps and their accompanying texts as political documents, embodying claims and ambitions, Short takes his lead from Benedict Anderson, amongst others, who has argued that they are crucial to the ways in which peoples imagine themselves and propagate national identities.

*Representing the Republic* is divided into three sections. It considers the relationship between maps and the colonial process of discovery and appropriation; the development of a national geography after the 1780s and its function in promoting a common identity; and the cartographic explosion of the post-bellum period. In the first part, the author looks at the activities of Dutch explorers and settlers in the New World and the mapping of New York state. He then proceeds to discuss the trade centred in Philadelphia, which published atlases, cadastral (land-owning) maps and educational texts. The final section discusses the federally funded surveys of the West and the relocation of the map industry to Chicago, where it was dominated by the Rand McNally company. By 1900, the US was concerned as much with the international division of territory as its internal extension towards the Pacific coast.

Short’s introductory chapter sets out the principles of ‘New Cartography’. Thereafter, however, the reader is treated to a rather prosaic and familiar story in which the maps seldom offer more than a gloss to the overall narrative of American expansion and consolidation. In the potted biographies of leading cartographers and publishers, Short sometimes gives meaningless details, such as their home addresses, or delivers mundane judgements regarding their significance. With Thomas Dobson, publisher of the first encyclopaedia in the US, for example, we learn that ‘His career spanned 1785 to 1822 – important years’ (p. 103). In the case of Jedidiah Morse, the father of geography in America (and of Samuel, the inventor of Morse Code), Short suggests that ‘Reading [him] you are aware that this is someone writing a long time ago; the style and manner are so distant from modern sensibilities’ (p. 129). As a result, the book perhaps works best as a partial guide to maps and their makers, highlighting each innovator’s main endeavours.

For a student new to the subject of maps and their production, there are valuable explanations of the processes involved in accumulating cartographic knowledge; of the symbolism of cartouche decorations and the choice of primer meridians; and of the mechanics of the ‘town and range’ system by which the vastness of American land was reduced to grid form. However, as Short admits early on, the value of examining maps in their original form cannot be underestimated. Unfortunately, the reproduction of several of the maps in *Representing the Republic* is inadequate to convey size and scale. Some illustrations are hard to decipher.

The impact of Benedict Anderson’s insights and the prevailing common sense of most scholars can make Short’s analysis appear humdrum. In the control and expropriation of indigenous peoples, the act of naming settlements and territories is well understood. We are aware of the ways in which boosters for migration schemes misrepresented the lie of the land, and how travel writers and explorers embellished their experiences. In effect, while Short convinces the reader that
maps, gazetteers and atlases contain grander designs, he fails to do more than occasionally amplify the narrative of American history recorded from other sources.

Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: religion, war, famine and death in Reformation Europe.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.) Pages 384. £42.50; paperback £15.95.

DOI: 10.1017/S0268416002234232

Those responsible for promoting this fascinating and challenging book must have wondered exactly how to describe it: some of Cambridge University Press’s publicity material misleadingly calls it a ‘textbook’. Rather, it offers some highly selective and specific interpretations and snapshots of the social and cultural experience of Europe between c. 1490 and c. 1648. One cannot appreciate the book without some grounding in the period; more seriously, one cannot always trust all its judgements. What this book does is to stimulate. It confronts the reader with potent images, both verbal and pictorial. It evokes the terrifying and unstable world of early modern Europe, which appears when the calm measured voice of the analytical historian is stripped away.

The book takes as its starting-point Albrecht Dürer’s famous graphic depiction of the four horsemen who appeared when the first four of the seven seals were opened in the sight of the author of Revelation 6:1–8. The second, third and fourth horsemen (on red, black and pale horses) are clearly associated with war, famine and death. Though the first horseman appears to denote empire and conquest, in medieval exegesis he was taken to mean the returning vengeful Christ. Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell have thus created four thematic chapters. The first chapter examines religious expectations of the last days, and how prophecies of the end shaped Protestant views of history. The second chapter looks at armies, weapons and war. It dodges the ‘military revolution’ question in favour of exploring the size, behaviour and experiences of armies and fighting. It ends with a series of graphic descriptions of sieges in the Low Countries and Germany. The third chapter explores food: what there was, why there was often too little of it, what cultural meanings were attached to it, and what happened when it ran out. Again, graphic descriptions of sieges and their attendant shortages complete the picture. The last of the core chapters, devoted to disease and death, depicts the pox, siege fever, ‘the sweat’ and plague; it describes and quotes the often supernatural explanations adduced and the preventative measures taken.

Chapters are not assigned to one or the other author, though differences in style are marked. The medical sections, by Cunningham, exhibit a lively and argumentative expository style; Grell on his home turf (for instance with Scandinavian religious history) writes lucid but slightly more restrained and prosaic description. Nevertheless there is a common approach to the book. It is phenomenological: it describes how things appeared to contemporaries. The eye-
witness viewpoint is sovereign. So all chapters alike spend longer quoting from their sources (and describing illustrations from the period) than is usual in survey books of this kind.

This ground-level approach brings problems, despite its ostensibly transparent quality. The chapter on the apocalyptic suffers from amalgamating its materials rather than differentiating them. Every reformer, we are told, was an apocalypticist expecting the end of the world. In a sense, it could hardly have been otherwise while Scripture, including Revelation, was authoritative and history was the working-out of a divine plan. Beliefs in Providence, portents or astrology and claims to reassurance under persecution are all bracketed as ‘apocalyptic’ beliefs. Yet while some who hold such beliefs actually abandon planning for the future because the Second Coming is so imminent, others (most?) do not. The late Heiko Oberman made the ingenious claim that Luther delayed church-building because Christ, the true ‘reformer’, would do a far better job soon. Philipp Melanchthon, in contrast, planned for tomorrow. Yet Cunningham and Grell bracket the ever-realistic Melanchthon with the apocalypticists, largely because of his writings on world history and astrology (pp. 24, 49, 74).

Deeper concerns arise over the presentation of food, population and disease. The chapter on food rejects Malthus (fair enough) but then fastens on the theories of Ronald Seavoy regarding population and famine. It claims that Europe suffered shortages because its population grew apace but only cultivated subsistence rather than commercial agriculture. When agriculture was ‘commercialized’, as in England c. 1650, not only did food become adequate, but the population stopped rising. Medieval agrarian historians will blanch at this black-and-white contrast of ‘subsistence’ versus ‘commercial’ farming. Worse, there seems no prima facie reason why abundant food should cause populations to stabilize (cf. pp. 205–6): rather the reverse.

Cunningham, in post-modernist fashion, then argues that diseases only exist relative to their host cultures; different bugs are perceived differently at different times. He eschews any identification between historical disease and known modern pathogens, studiously passing over rat fleas, black rats or Pasteurella pestis. Only contemporary explanations and contemporary responses are worth discussing, irrespective of their accuracy, efficacy or results. This has risks: dependence on John Caius’s 1552 description of the ‘English sweat’ leads Cunningham to report that the last wave was in 1551 (cf. pp. 272–3). He overlooks the demographically more disastrous years of 1557–9, when something often called ‘sweating sickness’ (and possibly other causes) raised the English death-rate and caused a shortage of labour in the early 1560s.

Cunningham also argues that peoples and cultures create their own diseases (an arguable view in the light of vCJD, alas) and that therefore people ought not to be seen as merely passive or reactive to them. New diseases, we are told, originated from the relentlessly rising population of the 1470–1650 period (pp. 300–2). Yet this overlooks that between c. 1350 and c. 1470 plague was a disease of declining, not rising population: its long-term repeated effects sometimes doubled the population losses caused in the first attack (see the tables on p. 15). The tables on pp. 276/8–9, which omit plagues 1350–1450, could be misleading. Even stranger
is the attribution of sexual disease to the ‘new mores of sexual behaviour’ which are alluded to but nowhere described or documented (p. 304). The pox as punishment for sin, it seems, is not just a sixteenth-century perception.

Readers will be challenged and excited by this book, which is rich in description and fertile in ideas. It is not flawless; the desire to link disparate subjects under a common heading has created a loose web of exposition, which covers its themes unequally and sometimes even perversely. Occasional signs of raw editing suggest a certain haste in its assembling. With such a vast terrain, it is a slight criticism that these bold and courageous authors have allowed themselves a little unevenness.

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DOI: 10.1017/S0268416002244239


The cover illustration chosen for this book – a rather grand, and faintly ridiculous to modern eyes, turn-of-the-twentieth-century dinner party – evokes the complex and cruel world so artfully captured by Edith Wharton in her several novels centred on New York. Indeed, at the start of the third section of his study, Sven Beckert employs an extract from one of Wharton’s best-known novels, The House of Mirth, to set the scene for the jostling for power among elite New Yorkers that he goes on to describe. Writing of the kind of New York society that The House of Mirth both captured and castigated in equal measure, Wharton argued that a ‘frivolous society can acquire dramatic significance only through what its frivolity destroys. Its tragic implication lies in its power of debasing people and ideals.’ Beckert does not, of course, phrase his conclusions in quite that way. He does, however, point the reader in that general direction in this sweeping history of New York’s wealthiest immediately prior to and following the American Civil War of 1861–65. Their story is, Beckert argues, an ‘important key to understanding the dynamics of economic, social, and political change between 1850 and 1900 and with it the emergence of modern America’ (p. 3).

In the 1850s, as now, America’s wealth was concentrated in a relatively small number of hands: quite literally, in fact, since 37 per cent of New York’s elite were married to each other. Some 9,000 individuals, representing only 1.4 per cent of New York’s population, owned assets in excess of $10,000 each, in total about 71 per cent of the city’s wealth. Families such as the Astors, the Beekmans and the Schermerhorns dominated New York financially and, to a degree, socially, but theirs was not the only money in the bank. Immigrants from elsewhere in America and from abroad contributed greatly to New York’s growing wealth. Indeed, Beckert argues, it ‘would be difficult to envision a mercantile elite more mobile, more ethnically diverse, and more specialized than the one of New York during the 1850s’ (p. 30). Such diversity brought its own problems, and opportunities. Even before the Civil War, Beckert shows, New York’s mercantile elite were devising strategies that enabled them to deal with change, consolidate their wealth,
and create for themselves the kind of world that reflected their interests and addressed their concerns. From the antebellum period onwards, kinship networks and the domestic environment were crucial in the establishment and maintenance of this bourgeois world. It was, Beckert notes, ‘in the family parlor, not the counting house, that New York’s merchant elite worked hardest to remain a community’ (p. 31).

The Civil War itself, Beckert argues, served to consolidate still further the power of New York’s mercantile elite. Political differences were set aside in the creation of quasi-governmental organizations such as the Union Defense Committee, and elite minds increasingly focused on the raising of regiments – both black and white – to help enforce the reunification of the nation. During the war, too, the establishment of the Union League Club represented the outward expression of a new-found nationalism which sought both ‘to cultivate a profound national devotion’ and ‘elevate and uphold the popular faith in republican government’ (p. 130). The war, of course, did bring about change, some of it unwelcome. The New York City Draft Riots of 1863, Beckert argues, showed elite New Yorkers ‘that the masses in general and democracy in particular bred danger’ and offered them a foretaste ‘of the confrontations that were to accompany their rise for years to come’ (p. 141). In the aftermath of war, the brave new world of a nation in which slavery had finally been eradicated contained its fair share of serpents as far as New York’s elite was concerned.

From 1865 onwards, Beckert charts the simultaneous rise of a self-conscious class and the decline of its antebellum idealism. He provokes admiration for his subjects when he describes, for example, how William H. Vanderbilt responded to his rejection by the New York Academy of Music. He simply gathered a few friends around him and constructed an entirely new organization, the Metropolitan Opera House Company. Alva Vanderbilt, in a similar vein, held a grand house-warming at her reportedly $3 million mansion on Fifth Avenue as a means of forcing social recognition from the city’s ‘old’ money, in this case the Astors. Yet, at the same time, a distinctly unpleasant element had entered this vibrant and aggressively materialist world: Social Darwinism. Advocated most famously in America by Herbert Spencer, some of New York’s leading individuals found in Social Darwinism a philosophy that explained, to their satisfaction at least, the gap between the real and the ideal as far as their relationship with their workforce was concerned. Prompted in part by the depression of 1877, Beckert argues, ‘universalist antebellum traditions of stewardship and free labor slowly gave way to notions of the unfettered rights of property and the social or even racial superiority of the holders of wealth’ (p. 211).

By the turn of the century, Beckert concludes, class formation had become ‘a conscious “project”’ (p. 265). New York’s mercantile elite expressed themselves through their increasingly elaborate homes and defined themselves through the outward expressions of dress and the acquisition of even more material possessions. They reinforced their position through attendance at newly formed organizations such as the Metropolitan Opera, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the New York Philharmonic where ‘old’ and ‘new’ money could merge to the mutual satisfaction of each, and ensured social acceptance via marriage,
increasingly to titled Europeans. They thereby ‘projected their claims to leadership into the wider society’ (p. 270), but the society they now dominated was an increasingly exclusive one, in every sense of that word, and was certainly one in which neither the poor nor the black could ever aspire to acceptance.

Beckert’s is an impressive study in many ways. It is ambitious in scope, and vibrant in exposition. The story he relates is a universal one, which will come as no surprise to New Yorkers themselves. It is, in places, rather too sweeping in some of its conclusions, and glides over issues that might have merited more careful assessment. At one point, for example, Beckert argues that ‘Americans were unaccustomed to think of their country as possessing a permanent working class’ (p. 176). Yet the idea of a permanent underclass was one which several – admittedly several of the more radical – southerners had advocated prior to the Civil War. It was by no means an argument that New York industrialists would have been unfamiliar with, and it seems unlikely that they would not, at the very least, have pondered its implications. The relationship between labour and capital is, similarly, open to further debate. Here Beckert is in danger of making the Civil War appear too decisive a watershed between the world of Abraham Lincoln and that of John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie. Beckert’s analysis of the nationalizing impact of the war itself is too brief to do the subject justice, and it is by no means clear that organizations such as the Union League Club either facilitated or inspired a new ‘national’ outlook that, in the ordinary course of events and business expansion’ would not have happened anyway. Whether it influenced the form this nationalism took is, of course, a different matter entirely. Yet it would be unfair to end on a negative note. Beckert’s study cannot be expected to pursue every avenue that his analysis has opened up. This book is a skilful and, above all, extremely enjoyable exploration of New York’s mercantile elite at a time of great change and upheaval. It deftly uncovers the structures that supported their world, incisively exposes the ideologies that both informed and constrained their outlook, and reveals, in the end, the very real limitations of the ‘American Dream’.

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DOI: 10.1017/S0268416002254235


Women, according to the Puritan minister John Cotton, ‘are Creatures without which there is no comfortable Living for men’. Historians, however, have not always concurred, and as far as warfare is concerned, have frequently regarded women as more of a hindrance than a help to their menfolk. Indeed, during the American Civil War, one Virginian officer observed ‘that no man who married during the war was as good a soldier after … those men who came into the war as
married men were as good soldiers as the single ones, but marriage during the war seemed to demoralize them” (p. 95). Common sense suggests that there may be very good reasons for this, and certainly a couple of the essays here reveal that the officer was not far wrong in his assessment. For the most part, however, the various contributors to Intimate strategies of the Civil War show that wives were of greater benefit than not as they seek to discover to what extent, if at all, they influenced their husbands during the conflict, and how the experience of war itself changed – for good or ill – the various marriages explored here.

The authors discuss the broader issues of war and marriage including the impact of the Civil War on traditional gender roles, private and public identity, and the ‘balance of power within the relationship’ (p. x). The volume is divided into two parts, covering Confederate and Union marriages respectively. Given this division, the first and very obvious point to strike the reader is that Union commanders – at least those examined here – had better luck in the marriage department than did their Confederate counterparts. Confederate commanders, indeed, seem to have been an ill-starred lot. The volume opens with Carol Blesser’s assessment of the relationship between Jefferson Davis and Varina Howell. Varina, Blesser argues, ‘was a woman of significant character and ability, a woman easily understood in the late twentieth century, and a woman badly treated by history, which often portrayed her as a burden on her husband’ (p. 4). That Davis chose the occasion of their honeymoon to take Varina to visit his first wife’s grave did not bode well for their particular union.

Blesser’s is, in many ways, a really gloomy opening chapter which, while it does not exactly set the tone for much of what follows, nevertheless introduces themes that crop up in several of the other marriages covered: power, control, misunderstandings and, above all, loss. Varina’s advice to a friend, offered many years after the war and just before her husband’s death in 1899, powerfully sums up her particular experience: ‘I gave the best and all of my life to a girdled tree’, she wrote. ‘It was a live oak, and was good for any purpose, except for blossom & fruit’ (p. 6). In Davis’s defence, he was in many ways a broken man when he met Varina. His first wife had died after only three months of marriage, and his marriage to Varina was no happier as far as children were concerned. Death dominated this marriage. Their first-born, Samuel, died while still a baby. In 1864, by which time it was becoming clear that the Confederacy was on its last legs, their five-year-old, Joseph, was killed in a fall. Of their remaining two sons, one died in 1872 of diphtheria and Jefferson Jr. died at the age of 21 of yellow-fever.

Davis’s experience was, unfortunately, by no means unusual, at least that is the impression this volume conveys. Both ‘Stonewall’ Jackson and George E. Pickett lost their first wives; the latter, indeed, was especially unfortunate in losing two before his marriage to LaSalle Corbell. Both Jackson and Pickett suffered double losses. Both their first wives died in childbirth, as did the infants. Pickett’s second wife died soon after the birth of their son, whom Pickett gave up for adoption, never to see again. Neither man reacted to these tragedies with the same resolute unwillingness to start over that Davis evinced, and both enjoyed – in Jackson’s case, only briefly – successful if occasionally stormy relationships with their wives. Union commanders, such as Ulysses S. Grant, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain and
John C. Frémont, experienced less traumatic beginnings to the married state, and in general appear to have sustained relationships of greater equanimity and equality than Davis, Lee or Pickett managed. What, in the end, are we to make of this collection of fascinating vignettes of life in Civil War America? Most of the individual stories will already be familiar to Civil War historians. The answer to the question of whether these wives influenced their husbands’ military strategies would seem to be a resounding ‘no’, with the possible exception, ironically, of Varina Davis, whose ability to forge her husband’s signature might have been put to wider use – historians can say no more than that – than previously suspected. The editors’ assertion that Civil War soldiers ‘phrased their ideology for fighting in the language of home, family, and fireside’ holds true more for Confederate troops than for Union (p. x). In either case, however, Civil War soldiers frequently invoked less domestic images as an explanation of why they fought, citing Union, country, God, or freedom as their rationale for being where they were.

Yet there is a persistent theme here, that of opportunity. For many of these wives, the war provided them with the chance to exert greater control over their lives. These were upper-class women, and this was the nineteenth century, and the respective parties in these twelve marriages, as the editors remind us, ‘subscribed to the doctrine of separate spheres’ (p. xi). The Civil War enabled many of the women to step out of their allotted sphere, to operate at a more public level, even if their role after the war became primarily one of ‘keeper of the flame’. Yet the editors’ assertion that this volume ‘bridges the artificial gap separating military history from women and gender studies – a gap that did not exist for the participants’ tells only part of the story. Certainly soldiers’ ‘experiences in camp and at the front were not completely disconnected from those of civilians’. It is essential to bring women more clearly into the picture if we hope to understand the full complexities of Civil War America. It nevertheless remains the case that there was a significant gap between battlefield and home-front, one that, with the best will in the world, neither those involved at the time nor historians since can easily cross.

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DOI: 10.1017/S0268416002264231


In 1978, the British Library acquired a remarkable archive consisting of some 89 volumes of letters, treatises, verses, accounts and printed works associated with the radical seventeenth-century sect which became known as the Muggletonians. The archive was purchased from its Muggletonian keeper, Philip Noakes of Matfield in Kent, whose death only a few months later marked the virtual extinction of an extraordinary movement that began in the 1650s. In this volume, T. L. Underwood
provides a valuable critical edition of the major autobiographical writings of John
Reeve and Lodowick Muggleton, the two apprentice tailors whose claim to be the
two witnesses mentioned in Revelation 11:3 inspired the emergence of the sect,
together with a selection of other published and unpublished early Muggletonian
materials. In rendering this body of documentation more readily accessible to
modern scholars, Underwood has shed fresh light on the complex and tangled
history of Civil War sectarianism and opens an intriguing window into the lively
religious underworld of seventeenth-century London.

Like other sects on the far left wing of the Protestant spectrum, the
Muggletonians were a product of the revolutionary ferment of ideas induced by
prolonged military conflict, the execution of the king and the disintegration of
the concept of an inclusive national church. Some of their religious views, such as their
denial of the Trinity and their insistence upon the mortality of the soul, link them
with groups like the Ranters, Seekers and Quakers. Others were unusual, if not
unique, including their belief that God was a man between five and six feet tall who
reigned in heaven six miles above the earth, that Moses and Elijah had represented
him while he took on mortal flesh during Christ’s lifetime and that the serpent had
impregnating her with the seed of Cain. Their distinctive
conception of the devil as no more than ‘man’s spirit of unclean reason’ (p. 154)
may explain a degree of scepticism with regard to allegations of witchcraft (pp.
209–11). Pacifists who rejected the use of the sword, Muggleton and Reeve were
also intensely hostile to magistrates, ministers, lawyers and medical practitioners,
denouncing the latter as ‘atheistical witches’ and ‘workers of iniquity’ (pp. 96–7).
At the same time they advocated obedience to the authorities in civil matters and
in one of their tracts heralded Oliver Cromwell as the ‘Lion of Judah’ whom God
had appointed to remove ‘the Yoke of Jesuitical Persecution, for Conscience
sake’ from ‘the necks of his People’ (p. 238).

Greatly influenced by the Ranters Thomas Tany and John Robins prior to their
own divine commissioning as God’s witnesses, Reeve and Muggleton eventually
turned on these figures, branding them false prophets and Antichrists. The
Quakers George Fox and William Penn were similarly dismissed in a series of
acrimonious pamphlets, one of which resulted in Muggleton’s conviction and
imprisonment for blasphemy. Indeed, one of the most interesting themes to
emerge from a reading of this volume is the manner in which members of the sect
used the public medium of print to articulate and prosecute highly personal
disputes with their opponents. Equally striking is the way in which Muggleton
employed it as a mechanism for validating his authority, exercising internal
discipline and suppressing rival sources of charisma like the Laurence Clarkson (or
Claxton) who challenged Muggleton for control of the movement after Reeve’s
death in 1658. Like other autobiographical writings of this period, The Acts of the
Witnesses is an elaborate exercise in self-construction: abounding in biblical
parallels, it recounts Muggleton’s sufferings at the hands of persecuting authorities
and the providential vengeance visited, by means of his own curses, upon his
enemies. Insisting upon the priority of his own revelations, Muggleton also sought
efface the impression left by other sources that Reeve was initially the central
thinker and leader of the sect, appropriating Reeve’s literary legacy as his own.
Eighteenth-century reprints of Muggletonian writings bear witness to the continuing tension within the movement sparked by differences of opinion between the two witnesses.

The inclusion of sixteen letters and ten songs illustrates further aspects of the obscure internal history of a group whose leaders never engaged in active evangelism, but rather waited for potential followers to contact them via a chandler’s shop in Great Trinity Lane. Reeve and Muggleton’s correspondence testifies to their attempts to correct sinners, censure rebels and answer the charges of critics, to reassure the doubtful and despairing and to supply pastoral advice. Muggletonians rejected the ‘outward glittering shew’ of ‘fruitless Forms of Worship’ (p. 25), meeting instead in private homes and alehouses to drink and discuss their opinions. Communal singing seems to have been critical in fostering solidarity and cementing Muggletonian identity, particularly at the lavish annual dinners celebrating the prophets’ commission – a record of the expenses incurred for one feast in 1682 reveals that the menu included roast chicken, cauliflower and Seville oranges.

Underwood’s introduction helpfully situates the sect within the context of other radical religious movements of the time, though a fuller account of the contents, structure and provenance of the Muggletonian archive would have been illuminating. Suitably annotated, this volume should encourage wider use of Additional MSS 60168–60256 and inspire further research into a sect which has too often been relegated to the lunatic fringe. Clearly many of its secrets remain to be revealed.

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DOI: 10.1017/S0268416002274238


In her earlier book, Reading witchcraft: stories of early English witches (London: Routledge, 1999), Marion Gibson established her expertise as the leading student of one of the more important bodies of source material available to the historian of witchcraft in England, the various pamphlets dealing with witchcraft which were published in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. In Early modern witches she provides the reader with the texts of sixteen of these pamphlets, ranging from the first two English witchcraft pamphlets, published in 1566, to the description of the trial and condemnation of Elizabeth Sawyer, ‘The Witch of Edmonton’, written by the Puritan minister and Newgate chaplain Henry Goodcole in 1621. In between these works come the texts of a variety of witchcraft pamphlets. Some of these, such as the description of the Essex trials of 1582 or Thomas Potts’ account of the 1612 Lancashire trials, are long pieces, their originals small books rather than ‘pamphlets’, while others are shorter, perhaps the most interesting of these being the little-known tale of bewitchment written by Richard Galis, a former mayor of Windsor, in 1579.

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There is little doubt that this collection is welcome and timely. Over the past
decade, there has been a veritable renaissance in English witchcraft studies, a
renaissance which has challenged earlier approaches to the subject, but which,
while posing new questions about the subject, has left many of them unanswered.
Here Gibson has made available an important body of source material which will
be of tremendous use to both specialists and non-specialists in the field. The
editorial standards are high. The texts are reproduced in full and in their original
form. Moreover, Gibson also provides us with the various ‘Epistles’ and other
prefatory matter which constitute an important aspect of this source. The main
bodies of these pamphlets are frequently concerned with largely factual accounts
of bewitchment, centring on maleficium, the doing of concrete harm by witchcraft.
But in the epistles and prefaces with which these pamphlets usually begin we
discover arguments which place these accounts of witchcraft in a broader moral
and theological framework. Thus the first text Gibson uses, an account of the trial
of three Essex witches in 1566, is prefaced by an ‘Epistle to the Reader’, which is
replete with properly godly sentiments, and a doggerel ‘Preface’ which sets the
factual account which follows in context. As Gibson is aware, these tracts are in
many ways problematic texts, sometimes possessing multiple meanings, which
have to be approached with care by the reader.

This process is aided by Gibson’s full and scholarly introductions to each of the
texts. Her knowledge of the material, of the ephemeral literature of the period
more generally and of the printing trade which produced it equip her to lead her
readers into the detailed context within which each of the tracts whose texts she
reproduces were written. She is also alert to the fact that the pamphlets were
written for a variety of reasons – from the financial to the propagandist – by a
variety of authors – from hack writers to that clerk of assize Thomas Potts – and
for a varied readership. These works were not simple windows onto witchcraft,
that most puzzling of historical subjects, but were rather written with a purpose,
or a number of purposes, in mind. Gibson is willing to address and elucidate the
problems arising both from the content of these sources and also from what can
be inferred about their construction and the intentions of their authors.

This collection therefore constitutes an important contribution to the growing
body of literature on early modern English witchcraft. It will prove a vital research
resource for university academics, in both history and English departments, while
it will be very useful to teachers attempting to introduce their students to primary
witchcraft sources – one suspects that many undergraduate and indeed sixth-form
projects and dissertations will be based on the material gathered here. Gibson is
to be congratulated on bringing these materials together, and on the skill,
scholarship and insights she has brought to bear on them. We hope that somebody
at some future point will provide selections of a comparable quality of later
English witchcraft pamphlets: but given the richness of what we have here, that
sentiment does seem a little greedy.

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In his path-breaking book, *Crime and the courts in England, 1660–1800* (1986), John Beattie demonstrated that the eighteenth century witnessed dramatic transformations in both the experience of crime and its punishment. A central argument was that the unique pattern of crime in London played a central role in shaping national penal policies, but this argument, though plausible, was undermined by the fact that his research, which covered the counties of Sussex and Surrey, included only a small part of the metropolis. In his current book Beattie shifts his attention to the City of London, in the period up to 1750, and he fleshes out his earlier arguments about penal policy with valuable new analysis of the changing forms of policing and prosecution. He demonstrates the central role of the City – both its experience of crime and the responses of its unusually inclusive system of government – in shaping policing and penal policies, and in doing so shows that the roots of many modern features of the criminal justice system go further back than was previously thought.

This new study is less concerned with crime itself than his previous book, but the experience of urban crime remains a vital backdrop. Even more than in other parts of the country, property offences predominated, particularly petty theft, but also violent offences such as burglary and robbery. A high proportion of the accused were women, who accounted for 51 per cent of those indicted for property offences at the Old Bailey between 1690 and 1713 – a highly unusual statistic in the history of crime. Several aspects of urban life (only briefly explored) exacerbated the crime problem and shaped responses to it. The commercial character of the City, with high levels of prosperity for some and consumer goods everywhere on public display, created unprecedented opportunities (and encouragements) for theft. The urban day grew longer, as new street lighting and urban entertainments encouraged people to use the streets later into the night. Concurrently, concern about crime was heightened by its treatment in the burgeoning printed literature of the period, including newspapers, criminal biographies and the published *Old Bailey Proceedings*. Finally, social changes led status-conscious Londoners to withdraw from many aspects of policing, leading to a quasi-professionalization of law enforcement.

Consequently, policing and prosecutorial strategies in the City shifted dramatically. The City Aldermen, who had the power to act as magistrates, withdrew from this task, leading to the creation (in 1737) of the first magistrates’ court in the metropolis, explicitly designed for what was called ‘the public administration of justice’. Both constables and night watchmen, who had been established householders serving by rotation, were replaced by salaried deputies, who often made a career out of the job. Other developments were introduced by the government in Westminster, notably more frequent and more generous payments of rewards and expenses to the prosecutors of the most serious crimes. This facilitated the increasing use of ‘thief-takers’ (private individuals who, although they were often corrupt, arguably served a public function, since they
represent the first serious effort to organize the detection of suspects), and of lawyers, who appear for the first time (in small numbers) in Old Bailey trials in the 1720s and 1730s. By the time Henry and John Fielding set up their Bow Street office at mid century, when the impetus for reform shifted to Westminster and urban Middlesex, a significant transformation in urban policing and prosecution had already taken place in the City.

Given its expected role in deterring crime, punishment was a significant aspect of policing in this period. Doubts about the use of capital punishment (not in principle, but in terms of its effectiveness) were already evident in the seventeenth century. As in his previous book, Beattie documents the long search for an effective alternative to hanging. He argues, without much explicit evidence, that public punishments such as whipping at a cart’s tail were increasingly seen as inappropriate in a polite and commercial environment like the City; this argument is possibly undermined by the fact that public whipping sentences subsequently increased, in the 1760s and 1770s. He also examines hard labour, which was seen as attractive by magistrates and legislators affiliated with the campaign for the reformation of manners, but it would have been helpful to pay more attention to the role of Bridewell as a place where many petty thieves were already put to hard labour. The story of the eventual triumph of transportation is familiar, but historians have not previously recognized the central role played by the City Recorder, William Thomson, as its architect, thus providing further evidence of the City’s role in the development of national penal policy.

This is an exemplary study of the formation of policing and penal policy, which admirably examines the influence of all levels of government, from parliament and ministers on the one hand to watchmen, constables and thief-takers on the other. The result is a story of unplanned, piecemeal changes, which often took place without recorded discussion (making them difficult to study) but that nonetheless amount to a major transformation of judicial policy, which anticipated many of the proposals advanced by Cesare Beccaria decades later. These changes were not so much a product of new theories as of responses to new social problems which developed in new social contexts, facilitated by a political system which allowed the City considerable influence on national policy. But this raises important questions, insufficiently addressed in this book, about how the perceptions of crime of the central actors in this book – London’s propertied middle classes – were shaped. Further investigation is needed into the role that the variety of types of printed literature about crime played in constructing ideas about criminality, and in formulating the dominant themes of public discussion (such as concerns about violence and the insubordination of servants). More attention needs to be paid to the selective treatment such accounts provided, especially the topics they chose to ignore (such as fraud). We need to know how ideas about youth, gender and urban respectability shaped attitudes towards crime. Having effectively demonstrated the important role Londoners played in developing new responses to crime, this book raises the question of how their ideas about crime, and their understanding of its significance in urban life, were formulated in the first place.

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The original version of this important study was published in German in 1991. This is not simply a translation: there are significant changes, including some updating in line with more recent work, particularly on Gregory of Tours, and the removal of a brief chapter on conceptions of kinship. This has been replaced with an expanded first chapter, focusing more directly on ‘inconsistencies’ in scholarly concepts of kinship. This section focuses on the debate among anthropologists as to whether distinctions can be drawn between forms of kinship that have a biological basis and those, like godparenthood, that merely use biological relationships as a frame of reference. Jussen wishes to undermine this distinction and to raise forms of so-called ‘pseudo kinship’, such as spiritual kinship or adoption, to the level of studies of descent or marriage. He is not the first to do this; one of the anthropologists he criticizes, Julian Pitt-Rivers, may have been doubtful about the veracity of such claims in 1968, when he wrote his article for the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, but he went on to formulate one of the seminal studies to argue that no distinction should be drawn between natural and fictive kinship, an essay notable by its absence in Jussen’s bibliography (see J. Pitt-Rivers, ‘The kith and the kin’, in J. Goody (ed.), *The character of kinship* (Cambridge University Press, 1973)). In fact there is relatively little anthropology represented here, for a work that so explicitly challenges anthropologists on their perceived use of terminology. This may be asking a lot, given the very thorough exploration of primary source material and the secondary works concerned with society in the middle ages, particularly, and unsurprisingly, those in German. This does, however, highlight the difficulties of constructing a work of this nature, that must cope with diverse sources and bodies of intellectual thought.

The nature of these sources (mainly saints’ lives, law codes and histories) highlights one of the great problems of studying this topic within the early medieval period, that it seems all but impossible to penetrate the patterns of social behaviour beyond a small social and clerical elite. As Jussen puts it, ‘we know nothing about the circles of people from whom members of the lower strata chose sponsors for their children’ (p. 211). This is reflected in the structure of chapters within this work, which, after dealing with the conceptual issues in chapter 1, moves on to complete the overview by presenting a case study of the kinship of King Gunthchramn. The second section, focusing on adoption, examines legal culture, King Gunthchramn and his attempts to impose parental authority on his nephews, followed by the counter-strategies of his nephews and their nobles, and finishes with a very short chapter that assesses the relative success of these strategies. The third, final and most substantial section (which makes up roughly two-thirds of the text) focuses on sponsorship, with chapters on practices in late antiquity, the role of the Merovingian bishops (another surprisingly short chapter), then chapters on the spiritual bonds of bishops and kings, nobles and
bishops, kings and outsiders, and another case study of Gunthchramn as Chlothar’s godfather, finishing with a long concluding chapter on sponsorship as a social practice.

All this Jussen manages with some skill and, in this translation, what emerges is a very engaging study. One might note with some frustration the use of subtitles within chapters and then subheadings within these (resulting in many sections of about a page), which does not help the flow of the argument. However, this is not to detract from the quality of scholarship and analysis that are evident here and the genuine attempt not simply to understand the functions of adoption and godparenthood in Merovingian society, but also to utilize that knowledge to illuminate the wider social and political network. The benchmarks for this endeavour must be the works by Arnold Angenendt and Joseph Lynch, which first opened up this field for the early medieval period and indeed, it might be argued, historical study in general during the 1980s. These, particularly Lynch’s comprehensive study, are hard acts to follow and Jussen does not (indeed does not intend to) overturn this existing work. He has, however, managed to significantly augment it and in the process produced an important study that is unavoidable for scholars of the period and will add something for those interested in understanding the problems and interactions of social and familial systems in general. This translation has usefully provided English-speaking scholars with a means of easily engaging with important continental scholarship.

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DOI: 10.1017/S0268416002304235


Originating in a small colloquium held at the Institute of Historical Research in London in 1999, these papers represent research at the coal face by a group of historians and geographers using common materials and working on a broadly similar theme. At the heart of the volume is the analysis – around a series of variables – of those documents (in particular wills) which chronicled the extent and disposal of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century (largely middle-class) townspeople’s estates at the point of their death. As the editors make clear in their introduction, ‘the book is as much concerned – perhaps more so – with the practices and processes connected with the ownership of property, as with the actual things that were possessed’ (p. 2). Indeed, only one of the essays, that by Lorna Scammell based on the contents of probate inventories, focuses on the objects that people owned. There is a good deal of astute discussion of the nature and difficulties of the sources and the complex legal contexts in which they were compiled, and much solid empirical analysis of the documents.

Three themes in particular are alighted upon. First – unsurprisingly given the volume’s publication in a series on ‘Historical Urban Studies’ – towns. Two of the essays, by William Rubinstein and David Green, are on nineteenth-century London, two are on towns in the North West (Jon Stobart, on Cheshire and South
Lancashire, 1701–60; Alastair Owens, on Stockport, 1800–57) and there is one each on the East Midlands (Penelope Lane, on Hinckley and Ashby de la Zouch, 1750–1835), Scotland (Ann McCrum, on Glasgow, Edinburgh and Leith in the 1820s) and England (Lorna Scammell, on seven dioceses, 1675–1725); only one introduces a welcome European perspective, that by Geoffrey Crossick comparing nineteenth-century England and France. Stobart suggests that in towns non-kin networks may have been more widely used than in the countryside; Lane detects distinct differences in the estates of middle-class women in a market town like Ashby and an industrial centre like Hinckley; Crossick argues that in France rural and peasant life exerted a greater influence on the culture of the urban petty bourgeoisie than in England; and both Rubinstein and Green highlight the special characteristics of London. Rubinstein presents an important revision of the results of his earlier study of wealthholders (£500,000 or more) through a survey of lesser but still substantial fortunes (£100,000 or more), detecting a decline from about 1840 in the metropolis’s dominant share of the nation’s wealth.

However, it would be wrong to say that the urban is the key analytical variable in this volume. Scammell generally finds status and wealth more important than location in differentiating between the contents of probate inventories, and more central to the contributors’ common agenda is discovering what their material can reveal about – and this is the second theme – social relationships. Stobart focuses on ‘social networks’ and ‘social reproduction’; Owens emphasizes that ‘property transmission was a social activity’ and that ‘property ownership both routinely generated and reproduced social relations’ (p. 106); and McCrum argues that ‘the social reproduction of families and households was … at the heart of the inheritance strategies of the Scottish urban middling sort’ (p. 150). Wills reveal both the continuing and critical significance of the nuclear family, and particularly in the case of those dying without offspring – the importance of contacts with wider kin and friends and neighbours. In Stobart’s words, ‘the life-worlds of townpeople were multi-layered and incorporated many overlapping communities of interest, amongst which the family was pre-eminent’ (p. 129).

Third, gender comes across as a particularly strong theme in the volume, McCrum, Lane and Green especially addressing the position of women. Generally these authors stress the positive rather than negative aspects of middle-class women’s position during the period, discovering evidence of business participation, involvement in the financial sector and a predilection through legacies for women to support (and in some cases secure a measure of independence for) other women.

In their exemplary introduction the editors go to a great deal of trouble to review the historiography of property, and highlight the distinctive contribution of the volume’s essays to this. Yet what is perhaps missing in most of the pieces is an exploration of property as ‘property’ – as a material and physical form (and especially as real estate). Crossick’s evocative photographs of retailers standing proudly in front of their shops suggest just how critical the physical character of property was to the petty bourgeoisie’s sense of personal and class identity. Crossick is also the only author here to make any serious attempt to draw out the political dimensions of property-owning. However, these essays represent fine
pieces of historical empiricism, offer important findings about the nature of middle-class social life (in particular in respect of family networks and women) and will be a must for those working on the history of testamentary documents in the period.

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