
Book Reviews

Maureen Carroll, *Infancy and Earliest Childhood in the Roman World: 'a Fragment of Time'* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018). xviii + 317pp. ISBN 978-0-19-968763-3. £75 (h/b).

Hipponicus, slave of Dignilla who was wife of the legate of the 22nd legion in Mainz, died in the second century aged 330 days. His slave parents, Hedyepes and Genesis, dedicated a large (over two metres) and elaborate funerary altar to him, the text on which reads, 'As he grew up, strong in frame and of handsome appearance, with Cupid's face and manner, I was not afraid to say that he was like Apollo' (p. 216). Clearly Hipponicus was loved and cherished by both his parents and owners and while such sentiments appear normal, Roman literary sources paid little attention to infants and those that mentioned them seem not to have valued very young children highly. Cicero considered that infant deaths could be tolerated because they had not yet 'tasted the sweets of life', while Seneca suggested that children were merely on loan; if they died, 'they should be remembered, but not mourned' (p. 3). Maureen Carroll's fascinating book challenges the perceived view that Roman parents had little emotional attachment to their children and by examining the rich vein of archaeological evidence, material culture and related iconography from the eighth century BC onwards shows that most Roman babies were well cared for and loved.

Such conclusions should not necessarily surprise us since the basic human impulse to care for babies will not have evolved significantly over the course of only 2,000 years.¹ Part of the reason why many believed that parents had little emotional investment in their infants was the high levels of infant mortality that prevailed in the past. Exactly how high infant mortality rates were in the Roman world is impossible to say. Carroll suggests that between 20 and 30 per cent of babies did not survive to see their first birthday (p. 147), although she also says 'as many as 30 per cent of babies' died within the first month (p. 4) (a figure that is surely too high—the population would have been unlikely to reproduce itself with such extremely high mortality rates). Likewise, 26 per cent of burials in the Champ de L'Image cemetery were infant ones with higher proportions being found elsewhere. Such figures are high, but all have equivalents in the not too distant European past—about a quarter of all burials in England and Wales in 1900 were infant ones, while the infant mortality rate in mid eighteenth century London was likely to have been in excess of 300 per thousand. Indeed, most of the Roman cemetery evidence appears to come from towns and it might be expected that mortality rates in the countryside were

¹ See R. Woods, *Children Remembered: Responses to Untimely Death in the Past* (Liverpool, 2006) for a similar study that dispels the myth of parental indifference in the past.

much lower. Carroll also argues that the well-known practice of exposing unwanted babies did not necessarily result in their death as most were taken to places where they would be discovered and this resulted in many being adopted, or at worst, taken into slavery.

Following a short introduction, Chapter 2 examines infants and children in pre-Roman Mediterranean societies. Here we find that the practice of burying some babies in houses or buildings has a long history, although the reasons why this occurred are still not fully understood. Chapter 3 deals with pregnancy, birth and health. Infants were named on their eighth or ninth day and registered within 30 days. After birth they were swaddled so that according to Plato they could be 'moulded like wax' (p. 41). Weaning took place at approximately six months, although this was very variable and often accompanied by supplementary feeding. It was only after the child's first birthday that the child could be officially mourned (p. 65). This legal precedent did not necessarily mean that an infant's death was not accompanied with grief, and much of the rest of the book is concerned with demonstrating this to be the case. Chapter 4 examines the material culture of infancy, Chapter 5 discusses images of infants that reveal their social context within family life, and Chapters 6–8 are concerned with the funerary evidence. The final chapter seeks to bring together the literary and physical evidence to provide 'a more nuanced understanding of social and behavioural patterns that might have influenced relationships between adults and their infants' (p. 14).

The book is richly illustrated with 86 figures that cover all aspects of infant life—their toys, feeding vessels, cradles, swaddling clothes and the jewellery they wore to ward off evil. The illustration of a stone votive figurine of a swaddled infant in its cradle with a pet dog at its feet is delightful (p. 96); likewise, the impression of two adults and an infant preserved in gypsum in a sarcophagus from York (p. 197), and the beautifully preserved doll from second-century Egypt with gold jewellery and human hair (p. 115). The book also includes discussions of breastfeeding and wet-nursing, and the cumulative evidence presented aptly supports Carroll's thesis that 'both the material culture and the epigraphic record indicate that for infants within the first year of their life, and even within the first weeks and months, identities and a social personhood were being constructed and developed' (p. 248). It is striking how many similarities there were between the care given to Roman and early modern infants; although there were significant differences, notably exposure, infanticide and slavery. While Hipponicus may have been loved, had he survived his life would still have been largely governed by his masters.

Maureen Carroll has produced a remarkable work that has synthesised a large amount of disparate material and it is difficult to see how it could be bettered. This book represents an important addition to the study of Roman infancy and I highly recommend it to all who have an interest in this subject.

Chris Galley

Samuel K. Cohn Jr., *Epidemics: Hate and Compassion from the Plague of Athens to AIDS* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018). xi + 643pp. ISBN 978-0-19-881966-0. £95 (h/b).

This ambitious book examines the generally accepted thesis that ‘epidemics are thought to have normally provoked hatred, blame of the “other”, and violence towards victims of the disease’ (p. 1). Set against a background of modern responses to HIV/AIDS and emerging infectious diseases such as avian influenza and Ebola, this impressive interdisciplinary study situates such outbreaks within a wider historical perspective. Cohn’s discussion starts with the plague of Athens in 430–429 BC, includes substantial discussions of plague (from the Black Death to nineteenth century India and beyond), syphilis, cholera, smallpox, yellow fever and influenza, and ends with AIDS in the late twentieth century. He argues persuasively that ‘previous understanding of socio-psychological reactions, not only to the Black Death but to epidemic disease across time, has emphasised the negative, highlighting violence, blame, and division, while being blind to epidemics’ powers to unify and strengthen societies in past times’ (p. 92).

Cohn’s analysis is based on an extensive examination of printed primary sources, although secondary material has been considered where relevant especially in the final chapter on AIDS. For the pre-modern period these sources include ‘histories, works of imaginative literature, chronicles, saints’ lives, diaries, and medical tracts’ (p. 2). Later a different source becomes available, newspapers, and their use has been facilitated by collections becoming increasingly available online. Much of Chapters 7–24 is therefore a discussion of the reporting of different epidemics with keyword searches in various combinations such as ‘cholera’ and ‘riot’ or ‘mob’ being used to identify unrest associated with epidemics. Cohn’s discussion is obviously limited by the availability of particular newspapers and whether editors chose to report certain incidents. Despite this, it manages to encompass a wide geographical area and while it focuses on the West, especially in the earlier period, from the nineteenth century onwards it increasingly includes the United States, and also Canada, India, Australia, the Middle East, China, Latin America and Africa.

The main example of epidemics being associated with fear and blame is the Black Death which caused widespread panic, ‘unleashed waves of prosecution against beggars and priests’ (p. 48) and resulted in the widespread burning of Jews, although not in England where the Jews had already been expelled, or in Italy. However, during the many subsequent waves of plague epidemics to hit Europe such behaviour was generally not replicated as ‘people began realizing that flight and abandonment were counterproductive; for self and community preservation, charity and sacrifice proved more efficacious’ (p. 67). Plague still caused some to abandon their homes, at least for short periods, and allegations of plague spreading continued into the seventeenth century; but these incidents proved to be short lived and instead of the destitute, poor or marginalised being blamed it was often the better off, or the elite, who were accused.

The disease most often compared to plague is cholera. Between November 1831 and January 1833, during the first outbreak of this disease, Cohn is able to identify 72 cholera

riots in Britain (pp. 163–4). The victims of these riots tended to be the medical profession or the elite with the aggressors being the poor and those on the margins. Protests often occurred in or around hospitals and were usually associated with victims of the disease being transported there in an attempt at isolation since the gruesome nature of cholera, quick death and high rates of mortality caused alarm throughout the whole population. This ‘class struggle’ was one born of ignorance and was fuelled by fears of murder and body snatching. Similar disturbances occurred in the Americas and continental Europe, but during the nineteenth century their frequency declined in most places, although curiously nothing is said about cholera in Britain after the 1830s.

Smallpox is mainly investigated in north America. In Britain there is little evidence of riot, although the press was ‘filled with collective actions of communities which sought to obstruct local health and asylum boards responsible for isolating and caring for the smallpox patients’ (p. 289). Most protests were again associated with hospitals, but violence was muted and instead the main action taken against smallpox was a refusal by some parents to have their children vaccinated. Likewise, syphilis was often named after certain nationalities, such as ‘Spanish pox’ or as the Japanese called it, ‘the Portuguese disease’, but this naming was not associated with blaming and the relevant nationalities were not subject to harsh treatment.

The greatest epidemic (in terms of the number of deaths it caused) was the post-World War I influenza outbreak, which Cohn characterises as ‘a pandemic of compassion’, ‘none can compare with the Great Influenza ... Worldwide, this pandemic unleashed waves of compassion, volunteerism, and self-sacrifice.’ (p. 529). There were no riots and little social unrest, although protests did occur when individuals were made to wear protective masks or places of entertainment were closed down to prevent the spread of the disease. Collectively the newspaper archives build up a picture of large numbers of mainly female, often middle class, volunteers fighting this disease, especially in North America. In Britain however, it appears that volunteers were much harder to find and instead it was the over-stretched medical profession who did most of the caring.

The bold ambition of the book, with its wide-ranging analysis over time and across space, is both its strength and weakness. It allows previous theories to be challenged and new ones to be created. There is also the sense, however, that by mainly looking at newspaper reports of disturbances related to epidemics some may have escaped notice and others may have seemed more important at the time than they do in historical perspective. Also, little information is given about background levels of disturbances within the various societies discussed; sometimes I was left wondering whether the riots reported, whilst being a direct response to the epidemic, may have simply reflected the society where they occurred. In spite of such minor quibbles, *Epidemics* is an important work that seeks to redefine how these traumatic events were experienced. Moreover, it also sets a research agenda for anyone who is interested in epidemics since many of the episodes recounted in these pages would benefit from more detailed local study. Perhaps this is a challenge that may be taken up by readers of *Local Population Studies*?

Chris Galley

Jane Whittle (ed.), *Servants in Rural Europe, 1400–1900* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2017). xii + 271pp. ISBN 978–1–78327–239–6. £19.99 (p/b).

Servants were a substantial part of the population and often a large proportion of the agricultural workforce in much of Europe from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. As such, a deeply researched study of their social and economic role in this period is long overdue. In this important new book, the eminent historian of early rural society Jane Whittle has assembled a wide-ranging group of 12 scholars to provide soundings of the nature and importance of service across this whole period. It would, of course, be impossible to cover the entire continent over 500 years, but this volume still offers an excellent selection of case studies including three chapters on England, three on the Low Countries, three on Scandinavia, and one each on Germany, France and Italy. The chronological coverage is equally strong, with multiple chapters covering each century between *c.* 1400 and *c.* 1900 and some additional material on the thirteenth and twentieth centuries.

Whittle presents an outstandingly succinct and effective introduction in which she synthesises the evidence from all the chapters and much further secondary research to set out three key arguments. First, servants were ‘an integral element’ (p. 2) in the process of household and family formation, making understanding patterns of service essential for demographic historians. However, although servants often performed a key role in maintaining the so-called ‘European Marriage Pattern’ (late marriage and nuclear families), Whittle shows that there are also important exceptions to this pattern. Second, servants were equally integral to the smooth functioning of the agrarian economy in much of Europe. They could help to even out the distribution of labour between peasant farmers, but could also serve as a substantial labour force on larger estates. Third, servants had a distinctive place in the socio-political system, as they tended to be adults but were under the authority and roofs of their employers, making them special targets for legal regulation. Servant law tended to be highly restrictive, sometimes enforcing compulsory service for poor single people and setting maximum wage ranges, though several chapters show that there was much variability and flexibility in practice.

The volume’s tight focus on servants means that it is more coherent and more amenable to the introduction’s overarching synthesis than many edited collections. Nonetheless, one of the key features demonstrated here—and emphasised by Whittle—is the extent of local and chronological contrasts. To take just one example, the authors show that the numerical importance of servants varied dramatically: Thijs Lambrect finds 13–20 per cent of households employed servants in selected Flemish villages in 1544; Christine Fertig finds 36 per cent in Münsterland in 1750; Sarah Holland finds 4–15 per cent in villages around Doncaster in 1851; and some chapters include many more figures, such as their proportion of the rural population, their gender balance, their age profile, etc. It might have been revealing to collect some of these figures from different chapters into combined tables, to drive home the argument for diversity while also inviting speculation on the reasons for these contrasts. As it stands, although Whittle offers

some very useful and persuasive thoughts on this in the introduction, the brevity of that 18-page chapter means that a more detailed synthesis remains to be done. A follow-up monograph, drawing on the case studies here as well as the additional material emerging from the various on-going studies of work, occupation and social structure in England and Sweden, could provide a clearer long-term narrative.

For many readers of this journal, and for scholars more generally, this new book will be more than merely a welcome addition to their sub-field. It undoubtedly presents a great opportunity to see expert analysis of an impressive range of sources (tax listings, censuses, account books, court records, parish registers, newspapers, and even oral histories) using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, which will be valuable for planning further case studies. However, collectively the authors prove that servants were rarely marginal or insignificant to rural society in this period, so long-term narratives of social and economic change must do better at taking account of their importance.

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Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie (eds), *Economy and Culture in North-East England, 1500–1800* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2018). xxii + 293pp. ISBN 978–1–78327–183–2. £65 (h/b), £19.99 (e/b).

The title given to the introduction of this fascinating and important new collection of essays says it all really: ‘beyond coal and class’, the two dominant themes in the historiography of the north-east of England to date. This volume makes a strong case for moving beyond this outdated and self-conscious straight-jacket and instead seeks to explore the economy and culture of those people who lived through one of the earliest episodes of industrialization. Before the development of the coal fields of county Durham and the shipbuilding industries of the Tyne and Tees, this region was one of the first industrial zones in the world, a vital link within increasingly globalised trading networks. The essays in this collection explore various aspects of that early revolution, from the development of commercial agriculture, the rise of rural elites, the material and occupational fabric of towns as various as Newcastle upon Tyne and Berwick-upon-Tweed as well as environmental, religious and communication developments. What links them all though, is the idea of regionalization as a transformative force in early modern Europe.

What is innovative about this approach is that it avoids a search for any kind of self-conscious identity for the region, but instead frames the analysis in a more fruitful way, from the perspective of regions as economic and cultural formations. In doing so, fluidity rather than rigidity is given primacy, so that the region as understood here is something that is lived through, not in, and constitutes sets of negotiated networks of relationships. As such, the book makes an important contribution to the growing body of theoretically sophisticated work on regions. It makes another general contribution, however, to our understanding of the cultural dimensions of economic change. That is, in their various ways, the contributors are interested in uncovering the cultural factors (be

they religious, gendered or class-based), that either constrained or emancipated economic agency and innovation. A critical part of this was the ways in which new cultures of work and structures of management had to evolve, with their own cultural expectations of new norms. Having said that, many of the studies here point to continuities in motivation or what we might call economic mentality. The great landowners such as the Bowes or the Durham Cathedral estates certainly continued to be motivated by the need for income and their tenants were commercially canny and opportunistic. In other words, what these essays taken as a whole tell us is that the underlying economic mentalities did not change that much; what did change—at different paces in different places—was the climate of opportunity. In order to take advantage of this new climate, new patterns of work and occupation had to be developed, as the chapters on Newcastle's occupational structures and the diversification of the shipping, coastal and overland trades across the region attest. The editors label this an emerging 'cultural geography of behaviours' and the results are fascinating in their own right, as well as for how they advance the field in the ways discussed above.

Aside from the introduction by the editors and a fascinating foreword by Keith Wrightson there are ten chapters, each covering what appear to be widely various topics—even centuries—but all of which are linked by the idea of the cultural dimensions of economic change. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, the first chapters examine the primary industry of the region: agriculture. Alex Brown in Chapter 1 charts the late medieval and early modern impulses towards commercial agriculture provided by the growing concentration of populations in the mining areas of the region and how this impacted on tenurial structures. One of the editors, Adrian Green, picks up the analysis in Chapter 2 with a discussion of innovation in pastoral and arable production, further elaborated in a different occupational context in Chapter 3 by John Brown, who examines the development of lead mining in the north Pennines. With perhaps a more obvious emphasis on the cultural aspects of economic production, in Chapter 4 Leona Skelton uses the border town of Berwick-upon-Tweed as a case study for the ways in which notions of civility began to intertwine with the urban fabric. Chapters 5 and 6 by Andy Burn and Lindsay Houghton-Varner respectively, move the geographical focus back to the Tyne, tracking the ways in which the medieval port town transitioned into an early industrial city and how religious networks (as well as economic and business networks) underpinned that process. Chapters 7 and 8, by Peter Wright and Matthew Greenhall, are focused on the networks of trade (coastal and overland, particularly with London) which encouraged a high degree of geographic mobility and cultural dynamism. Chapter 9 by Barbara Crosbie looks at one aspect of this—the burgeoning print trade—to emphasise the fact that the movement of ideas was of equal importance to the movement of people and things. Peter Rushton and Gwenda Morgan shift the focus south to Wearside and Sunderland's different institutional trajectory to economic powerhouse in Chapter 10.

Taken together, these essays, and the exemplary foreword and introduction that tie them so effectively together, represent a significant shift in our thinking not just about

the early modern north-east of England but about the development of economic and occupational cultures across Britain and Europe in this period.

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Bernard Capp, *The Ties that Bind: Siblings, Family, and Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018). 222pp. ISBN: 978-0-19-882338-4. £60 (h/b).

This book is a welcome addition to the history of the family and of early modern society. Capp quite rightly argues for the importance of studying siblings, not only because of the significant and lengthy interpersonal relationships they have in the lives of the individuals that historians study, but also as a microcosm for the inequalities of gender, age and economic power that defined early modern society. Siblings have been comparatively neglected in the history of the family due to an emphasis on household and parent-child relationships; siblings did not share households for the majority of their lives and were often separated by considerable age gaps. This neglect is surprising considering the clear wealth of primary source material through which sibling bonds and responsibilities 'emerge as significant social forces at every level of society' (p. 3).

The book is divided into two sections. The first is thematic, examining childhood, the influence of gender and age hierarchies, step-siblings, half-siblings, relationships with illegitimate siblings, and the influence of religion. Capp outlines the expectations and realities of sibling behaviour based on a very wide selection of sources, including correspondence, life writing, court records, wills and poor relief. The second section, subtitled 'Family Stories', focuses on a series of case studies, including names familiar to early modernists, such as Samuel Pepys, John Cannon or Roger North. This structure is effective; the second section allows Capp to explore the idiosyncrasies of individual families, and adds depth and nuance to the broader brushstrokes of Part One.

A particular strength of the book is Capp's focus throughout on gender, class and variation over the life cycle. Women's voices come through strongly, in a testament to Capp's meticulous attention to gender parity in his source selections and building on his previous work as a historian of early modern women. One particularly memorable section of Chapter 4 provides a fascinating and useful analysis of the emotional value and agency of sisters, addressing the relationship between economic and emotional agency and drawing constructively on recent work in the history of emotions. His attention to changes over the life cycle adds a dynamism to his analysis, arguing persuasively that the ebb and flow of economic and emotional inequality had a measurable impact on sibling behaviour. Capp's aim to cover the entire social scale breaks new ground, as previous work on siblinghood, primarily by Amy Harris and Leonore Davidoff, has tended to focus on elites. Although the uneven survival of sources amongst poorer families makes Capp's task difficult, his comparisons of experience according to class do support his main argument that 'structural tensions' (p. 197) of income and inheritance shaped sibling behaviour.

Capp's inclusion of relationships between step-siblings, half-siblings and illegitimate

siblings as a separate chapter is welcome, as their experience was different to full sibling relationships. However, a large portion of the chapter focuses on the relationship between individuals and their step-parents. Greater focus on the perspective of the siblings themselves, particularly over the life cycle, would I think have made an interesting and complicating aspect of Capp's overall thesis.

Chapter 7, on 'Siblings and salvation', also stands out. Capp examines the impact of outside forces, in this case religious difference, on the sibling ideals of obligation and affection. This chapter is an excellent analysis generally on the role and practice of faith in early modern families, covering Anglican, Catholic and Protestant non-conformist perspectives. The role of siblings in conversion and the impact of differing levels of religious (and often political) commitment within the sibling group are particularly interesting.

The Ties that Bind is a major addition to the field. There have been several excellent monographs on eighteenth-century siblinghood, particularly by Amy Harris, Leonore Davidoff and, in her work on kinship, Naomi Tadmor. Capp's conclusions that siblinghood was 'complex and contradictory', marked by rivalry and affection in equal measure, suggest considerable continuity with the later period, albeit qualified by the particular economic, demographic and religious context of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (p. 10). The book also contributes to ongoing debates in the history of the family, namely the balance between nuclear and kin, and the change from an emotionally-distant 'loose' system dominated by inequalities of primogeniture to an emotionally close and interdependent 'new kinship regime' of the Victorian period. Capp casts doubt on this idea of emotional change, arguing that 'strong emotional relationships' are evident prior to 1800 and were not incompatible with primogeniture or wider inequalities of age or gender (p. 201). Capp provides evidence of the enduring importance of kin across the life cycle in the early modern period, with siblings forming the gateway to relationships with cousins, nieces or nephews. What is clear from this book is the interconnected nature of sibling relationships; they shared money, business ventures, households, child care and emotional support. Capp's case for the pervasiveness of siblinghood makes this book valuable for any reader interested in early modern society.

Kate Gibson

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Angela Nicholls, *Almshouses in Early Modern England: Charitable Housing in the Mixed Economy of Welfare, 1550–1725* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2017). 291pp. ISBN 9781783271788. £19.95 (p/b).

Very little of the vast quantities of scholarship on poverty and poor relief in early modern England has paid attention to almshouses, making this an excellent topic for a rigorous full-length study and this is exactly what Nicholls has delivered. The book provides a comprehensive survey of almshouses in County Durham, Warwickshire and Kent—totalling 126 institutions—augmented with substantial work on other counties for further context. By undertaking such a systematic investigation, Nicholls is able to uncover many almshouses

that—because of their small size and minimal documentation—have been almost completely ignored in previous discussions of accommodation for the poor.

Indeed, one of the most important findings presented in this book is the fact that these ‘humble foundations’ were very common and they were much more typical than the larger, more famous and more tightly regulated almshouses usually cited in the existing literature. Most were not grand structures like the Lord Leycester Hospital, but rather ‘the vernacular architecture of ubiquitous rows of simple cottages’ (p. 10) or even just the benefactor’s own dwelling house converted to provide space for a few local paupers. The second important finding emerging from this study is the chronological and geographical distribution of almshouses. Work by Marjorie McIntosh, Nigel Goose and others offered some estimates for particular periods and places, but Nicholls pulls this material together and adds her own careful research to offer a new overview, showing, for example, a sharp rise in foundations *c.* 1590–1620 and another *c.* 1690–1730. Their spread across the country was also uneven. She demonstrates that only about 1.4 per cent of the population over age 60 in County Durham had an almshouse place in 1670, whereas 1.8 per cent did in Warwickshire and 3.2 per cent in Kent, part of a larger north–south divide in provision. The third key argument advanced in this book is about the experience of almshouse residents. Nicholls challenges existing preconceptions by showing that few almshouses had explicit and rigorously enforced rules of behaviour and often residents actually had more autonomy than typical poor people. On the other hand, she also finds that perhaps as many as half of these institutions provided stipends that would not cover the essential costs of their residents, making the almshouse part of a wider ‘economy of makeshifts’ rather than a comfortable pension.

Nicholls makes a persuasive case for all these arguments and presents many other smaller findings along the way. Moreover, her overall claim for the significance of almshouses in the wider context of welfare provision is important for our understanding of poverty and relief more generally. She is careful to not overstate her conclusions, arguing convincingly that almshouses were often well integrated into local relief systems and could make a substantial contribution to supporting the poor in particular localities, while acknowledging that their impact was minimal at the national level as most parishes lacked an almshouse of their own. Her chapter-length case study of the almshouse in Leamington Hastings (Warwickshire) shows just how important even a small institution could be at the local level. In the 1690s, the expenditure of the Leamington Hastings almshouse here was more than that of the statutory poor rates and the other local endowed charity put together.

There is little to quibble with in this volume. It is firmly founded in years of careful archival research and it does not shy away from engaging directly with the major debates in the wider historiography. There is a very sensible balance between the single lengthy case study, the systematic research on three selected counties, and the wider survey material to provide a national perspective. This book is thus well worth the attention of anyone studying poverty and welfare in early modern England. Likewise, scholars working on the long history of social housing will find it valuable as it shows how blurred the line could be

between philanthropical and state-run accommodation schemes, including many modern institutions that have their roots in this era. Finally, local historians who come across almshouses in their own research will find it invaluable for contextualising and understanding the role of these institutions.

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Margaret Spufford and Susan Mee, *The Clothing of the Common Sort 1570–1700* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017). ISBN 978–0–19–880704–9. xx + 332 pp. £75 (h/b).

In 2014 we lost a truly inspirational and pioneering historian of early modern England. In a series of books and articles, Margaret Spufford changed our way of thinking about a multitude of topics, including local history, reading culture, consumption and the lives of the non-elite. Written alongside Susan Mee and helped by others, Spufford's final book, *Clothing of the Common Sort*, is no different. The book looks at the clothing of children and young adults who can be broadly defined as the 'common sort'. The findings provide a wealth of information on what minors from different socio-economic groups wore, how much the items cost and how the items were acquired.

In recent years there has been a growth in the study of the clothing of the non-elite. Yet, the period before 1660 and the role of children and young adults has been somewhat neglected. Thus, in order to address this issue the authors analyse sources such as overseers' accounts, probate inventories and extant garments. The bulk of the arguments, however, are built on the novel use of probate accounts, which note the children who needed to be provided for after their parent(s) had died. From this, the clothing needs of 1,598 orphaned children from 780 families are analysed.

Chapter 2 examines the extent to which Gregory King's 1688 estimates of annual clothing consumption are accurate. Through quantitative comparisons to probate accounts, it is argued that King was broadly correct about which items of clothing were most common among the non-elite and how much they were worth.

Chapter 3 looks at poor relief and charity records to consider the attire of minors who were dependent on parochial and charitable assistance. It is argued that most of the clothing that children were provided with was 'sturdy and serviceable, and unrelated to fashion' (p. 61). Yet in spite of this, authorities still looked after the poor as there are numerous examples of them being given new clothing instead of second-hand garments and even mantuas by the late seventeenth century.

The clothing of labourers, husbandmen, yeomen and the lesser gentry are analysed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Each of these chapters look at the types of clothing that girls and boys wore and the colours and fabrics that the garments were made from. The findings are interesting but largely in line with our current understanding. As expected, the richer that somebody was, the better their children's clothing was. The probate accounts are also used here to look at fashionability, storage, washing, cleaning and the second-hand industry. It is here where the findings are more novel. For example, it is argued that the early modern second-

hand trade was not very important outside of London and that people of each social status (even paupers) tended to acquire new items of clothing.

Chapter 4 focuses on people involved in the trading of clothing and accessories. The chapter shows that people acquired their clothing from a variety of sources such as shops, fairs and markets, adding further weight to recent historical work which has shown that early modern shopping networks could be relatively extensive. The chapter also shows the importance of homemade apparel especially among richer people in the sample. This is particularly interesting as one would expect the poorer sorts to rely more heavily on producing their own garments.

Parts of the text can be difficult to read and are disorganised, meaning that it is not always easy to understand the sense of the authors and the significance of their findings. At times figures and tables are used but they are not given sufficient attention in the text, leaving it to the reader to interpret the results themselves. More judicious editing would have helped to make the book clearer and more accessible to readers. Additionally, more historiographical context and nuance would have helped to further show the significance and importance of the findings. Rather, in most instances the authors tended to just repeat that little research has been done on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to justify the work. This is a shame considering the huge effort that has gone into analysing the sources and the importance of the volume.

Despite this, the book is still interesting and useful. It addresses a significant gap in the literature and offers a fresh body of evidence which greatly expands our knowledge of the clothing of children and young adults during the early modern period.

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Beatrice Moring and Richard Wall, *Widows in European Economy and Society 1600–1920* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2017). xiii + 327pp. ISBN 97811783271771. £75 (h/b).

In their revisionist and comparative history of widows in Europe, Beatrice Moring and Richard Wall demonstrate that such women ‘were not shrinking violets, huddled in corners tearfully peeping out from under the widows’ veil, but mothers, grandmothers and businesswomen who took on the world dominated by men’ (p. 1). Taking issue with historians who equate widowhood with poverty, old age, illness and death, the authors use surveys of the poor, economic legislation, wills, contracts, property settlements, inventories, taxation data, and oral histories from Britain and Scandinavia, supplemented by existing studies of widows in other regions of Europe, to analyse the frameworks in which bereaved women operated and the strategies they relied upon to survive after the deaths of their husbands.

Widows ‘showed a remarkable ability to combine different strategies for supporting themselves and their children’ (p. 20) and were less likely to claim poor relief than widowers. Those bereaved women who sought relief tended to lack property or had succumbed to illness, problems which were exacerbated in advanced old age when they became unable to operate as independent wage-earners. Most European widows could expect some form

of supplementary relief in cash or kind, but charitable doles were never more than a supplement for those on low incomes. Many widows cohabited with children or other women, and taking in lodgers was a key component of their makeshift economies. Such strategies might be surprisingly effective, and the standard of living of widows living with wage-earning children often equalled that of labourers with young families.

The wealth of a former spouse was key to determining whether a widow had to seek relief, and the ability of a widow to inherit and manage estates varied depending on the type and amount of property she received and whether her husband left any surviving children. Those widowed at an advanced age were more likely to have acquired significant property portfolios, but decrepitude in advanced age made it difficult for many to manage their estates. The legal restrictions women faced varied across Europe, but in many cases contracts were drawn up upon marriage and when husbands retired which aimed to protect women in widowhood and to prevent conflicts arising between the widow and the offspring of her late husband. Widows often inherited workshops, but prior to the eighteenth century the authority of guilds meant that most women lacked manufacturing training and had to rely on journeymen to run operations (sometimes taking such men as second husbands), or turned to an adult son or son-in-law to take over after the death of a husband. Other widows rented the premises and sold the tools of their late husbands to male successors whilst retaining ownership of the property as landlords.

On average women were widowed between the ages of 40 and 60, and remained in widowhood for 15–18 years, but remarriage was common since being married enhanced the status of both women and men. Neither women nor men who had lost a spouse sought out members of the opposite sex who had been bereaved in similar fashion, and those who remarried most frequently were women and men aged between their twenties and early forties, but as widows and widowers aged gender disparities began to emerge: whilst women aged over 50 years tended to be unlikely to remarry it was common for widowers in their sixties to take another wife.

Widows with property found it easier to acquire new husbands, but at the same time the wealth of a widow ‘might make her independent and therefore disinclined to marry’ (p. 202). However, wealth was not the only factor which determined whether a widow remarried, and for women with semi- or fully-adult children, cohabitation with offspring offered alternatives to remarriage. Across the period 60–85 per cent of widows in northern Europe lived with at least one child, although the likelihood of mother and child being co-resident decreased with the age of the widow, and whilst women in agrarian regions tended to cohabit with married sons, in areas dominated by service or light industry they tended to reside with single daughters.

Moring and Wall have produced a wide-ranging, strongly-argued and highly-detailed study of European widowhood between the seventeenth and early twentieth centuries. The authors offer an analysis which is sensitive to the varied experiences of bereaved women across space and time, and their emphasis on female agency and networks offers further evidence of what Bernard Capp has described as ‘economies of mutual favours’, informal

systems and alliances which enabled women to negotiate some autonomy within patriarchal societies. Although their evidence is drawn mostly from Britain and Scandinavia, Moring and Wall make useful comparisons with other regions of Europe, in the process both highlighting and undermining pre-conceptions about how the experiences of widows differed between north and south, east and west. *Widows in European Economy and Society* is a challenging read, both due to the wealth of information contained within it, but also due to the boldness of its arguments. This is a book which deserves to acquire a wide readership, making historians rethink how families and households were structured in past times, and offering further proof of the central role of women in the development of the modern European economy.

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Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690–1800* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015). xvi + 461pp. ISBN 978–1–107–63994–2. £21.99 (p/b).

This is the long-awaited book from two of the leading innovators in digital history. With *Old Bailey Online* and *London Lives*, Tim Hitchcock, Robert Shoemaker and their collaborators have opened up access to 240,000 manuscript and printed pages created in eighteenth century London, primarily covering criminal justice, poor relief and medical treatment. These projects have also set the standard for digital history projects in their scale, usability and exploitation of keyword searching.² Hitchcock and Shoemaker have been careful not to impose their own interpretations on these resources. However, it seemed inevitable that they would want to use this material to make major arguments about the social history of eighteenth century England.

The book tracks the twin development of the systems of criminal justice and poor relief in London. The authors' central argument is that there was a fundamental shift from a discretionary system to an 'increasingly bureaucratic and rules-based system, administered by a cadre of salaried officers and professional lawyers and justices' (p. 9). In criminal justice, officers began to work under greater judicial control, prosecution and defence counsels became more common, and transportation and imprisonment replaced corporal punishment. In poor relief, real costs tripled over the century and by c. 1800 London was spending around £500,000 a year on poor relief. An expanding parish-based bureaucracy increased expenditure on claims and removal, the new workhouses and medical care.

These outcomes were not intended by administrators, nor were they the realization of government policy. Instead change occurred through the interactions between administra-

2 T. Hitchcock, R. Shoemaker, C. Emsley, S. Howard, and J. McLaughlin, *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674–1913*, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org> [accessed 24 April 2019]; T. Hitchcock, R. Shoemaker and S. Howard, *London Lives, 1690–1800: Crime, Poverty and Social Policy in the Metropolis*, <https://www.londonlives.org> [accessed 24 April 2019].

tors on the one side, and the poor, infirm and the criminal on the other. For example, in vagrancy removal the introduction of printed forms and basic documentation become tools used by plebeians to claim better treatment. Much of the increased expenditure on removal was in fact spent on medical care, as paupers picked up by the system argued that they needed treatment, rather than immediate removal. Time and again, new claimants emerged (unanticipated by overseers or reformers) each time a new provision was created. Unlike much recent social history, the authors make a casual argument about how those systems developed. In their view, this was not primarily discursive or ideological. Instead, change occurred in social relations; that is within the interactions between those groups involved in criminal justice and poor relief. In a sense this book represents a new materialism, where actions speak louder than words. It is also a demonstration of the law of unintended consequences.

The book begins in 1690 and proceeds chronologically through six substantive chapters, each examining periods of around 13 to 18 years. Following the contextual material of *Old Bailey Online*, the book makes a point of grounding its arguments in the demographic history of London. Life cycles and living standards are important foundations for the arguments of the book. As well as the digitised material freely available online, there are 16 datasets that readers can download at www.cambridge.org/9781107639942 under the Resources tab. These include statistics for poor relief expenditure of selected parishes, a census of the inmates of St Martins Workhouse, trends in Old Bailey trials and escapes from prisons and hulks.

Along the way, the authors make important insights into events that specialists may feel they know well. One striking example is the campaign by reformers against parish nurses in the 1760s and 1770s. Jonas Hanway published statistics on infant mortality and attacked named individuals, such as Hannah Poole (a nurse employed by the parish of St Clement Danes), for the poor quality of their care. By re-examining the manuscript sources for St Clement Danes and comparing these to claims made in print sources, the authors defend Poole's reputation. It emerges that she was probably the only nurse employed by the parish and cared for a particularly vulnerable group: the illegitimate children of pauper mothers. They conclude that the real survival rate was no better or worse than that of the Foundling Hospital, which Hanway had held up for praise. Here the benefits of digitization really pay off. Many important findings in the book result from using nominal record linkage, a technique that *London Lives* was created to facilitate. Users of the website can collect evidence on individuals across multiple sources (e.g. parish registers, bastardy examinations, coroners' records). It is a shame, however, that an early finding of the *London Lives* project—that there was very little overlap between subjects of the poor relief and criminal justice systems—is not discussed in more depth.

The book's subtitle promises a history of the 'making of a modern city'. The authors' interest in social practice certainly overlaps with recent trends in urban history. However, there is little use of spatial analysis, which is surprising given that a related digital resource, *Locating London's Past*, aims to facilitate this with data from both *Old Bailey Online* and *London*

Lives.³ It is also a partial view of London's development in this period. *London Lives* sticks to the Westminster parishes that the authors know best: particularly St Clement Danes and St Martin in the Fields. East London and Southwark are not studied in depth, a real shame as the parishes in the east grew significantly over the century. Some of the communities located there are discussed—such as silk weavers—but remain as 'stage armies' in the narrative.

If this book represents a new approach to social history, replicating it for other places could be a real challenge. That is because Hitchcock and Shoemaker have been lucky to build their own laboratory. Given the time and costs involved, how many others will be able to do the same? One is reminded of the ambition of social historians of the 1970s as they began to see the possibilities of computers and relational databases. Hitchcock and Shoemaker have been able to realise that promise in a way that Alan Macfarlane was never quite able to for Earls Colne. Let us hope that others follow with the same ambition and high standards.

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Steve Poole and Nicholas Rogers, *Bristol from Below: Law, Authority and Protest in a Georgian City* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2017). 387pp. ISBN 978-1-78327-244-0. £70 (h/b).

This is not a demographic work, but it is a study of a local population; a very significant local population. At the beginning of the Georgian period Bristol had recently overtaken Norwich as the second city, after London, in England. Daniel Defoe described Bristol in 1725 as 'the greatest, richest, the best port' with the exception of London. However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century Bristol had in turn been overtaken by Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool in the urban hierarchy. This book sets out to describe the changes which affected the population of Bristol during the long eighteenth century.

It does so in a thematic rather than a strictly chronological way, although the chapters are arranged partially in order of period. They cover popular Jacobitism and later popular politics in Bristol, the struggle against turnpikes, food riots and market regulation, naval impressment, the effect on Bristol of the American War of Independence, the diversity of dissent within Bristol through to the Bristol riot of 1831. This thematic approach results in a certain amount of overlap. It is also difficult to get an overall sense of what was going on in Bristol at any given point in time. It may be that one episode of protest had multiple causes. The brief postscript does attempt to integrate the themes and could usefully have been expanded.

There is a helpful map showing the ancient parishes of the city of Bristol towards the end of the seventeenth century. Various population estimates are given throughout the book, but it is not always clear to which geographic areas these refer. At times in the text

3 M. Davies, T. Hitchcock, R. Shoemaker, S. Howard, J. Maclaughlin and M. Merry, *Locating London's Past*, <https://www.locatinglondon.org> [accessed 24 April 2019].

'Bristol' includes Bedminster, south of the city. Frequent mention is also made of residents of Kingswood, 4 miles east of the city centre, and also of residents of Pill, 6 miles down-river. It is unlikely that either group considered themselves to be part of the population of Bristol, but the authors clearly demonstrate that their actions had a profound effect on the population of the central area.

The 1801 census gave the enumerated population of 'Bristol and the Barton Regis Hundred' as 63,645. Barton Regis, with a population of 22,831, consisted of Clifton, Mangotsfield, Stapleton, St George and the outer parts of the parishes of St James, St Philip and St Jacob, whose inner parts were in the old city. Thus the city parishes had a population in 1801 of 40,814. Bedminster, which was in Somerset, was enumerated with a population of 3,278. Therefore the total population of what might be regarded as 'Greater Bristol' in 1801 was 66,923. Kingswood was a chapelry in the parish of Bitton. The total population of Bitton parish in 1801 was 1,889 and Kingswood was probably a high proportion of that. Pill was the largest village in the parish of Easton-in-Gordano in Somerset. The total parish population in 1801 was 1,668. In 1831 the population of the city of Bristol parishes was 59,074; the population of the Barton Regis parishes was 44,812; the population of Bedminster was 13,130; making a total for 'Greater Bristol' of 117,016. Much of this growth of population had been in Barton Regis and Bedminster. Bitton and Easton-in-Gordano had also grown, but not to the same extent.

Writing history from below is always difficult because of the paucity of source material and in each chapter there is a tendency for an upward drift. This is particularly noticeable in the chapter on naval impressment, where the writers' sympathies are evidently with the needs of the Admiralty. The only chapter in which we really 'hear' the voices of those at the bottom of Bristol's population is that on the riot of 1831. The upward drift is only to be expected when the main sources used are the records of the Corporation, the Merchant Venturers, the Assize, Quarter Sessions and various national government departments, together with a wide selection of local and national newspapers.

A better title for this volume would have been *Law, Authority and Protest in a Georgian City: the example of Bristol*. It clearly describes the contest for authority among the elites in Bristol throughout the Georgian period, and the resulting protests of those who were only too well aware that they would never be part of any elite. All this is set against a national, and indeed international, framework of politics and law as it affected a provincial city, for example trade with the Americas and wars with France. The opinions of the middling sort are revealed, but rarely those of the Kingswood Colliers, the 'usual suspects' when there was any form of protest or unrest. The Pill Hobblers fare only slightly better, though it is acknowledged that they played a pivotal role in thwarting the excesses of the press gangs.

The book is well produced with a pictorial cover rather than a dust jacket. Here we do see a depiction of the faces of the 'men and women of a very low description' who hijacked the feast on Brandon Hill from the respectable tradesmen. There are further illustrations, maps and graphs in the text. There are copious footnotes and an extensive bibliography. This is divided into primary and secondary sources, and the primary sources subdivided

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into manuscripts by repository, eighteenth century printed works, edited primary works, newspapers and periodicals. There are separate sections for unpublished theses and web-based sources. There is a comprehensive index of people, places and topics.

This is a scholarly work which can be recommended to all those interested in the Georgian period of British urban history, whether from below or from above. The context of law and the responses of those in authority to the protests of those without invite comparison with the experience of other cities with a different trajectory from Bristol.

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