

by a long chalk, it has deprived us of his reflection on several more recent works on both the national and urban scene. A second disappointment lies in the occasional narrowness in treating — or failing to treat — three groups which seem potentially relevant for Evans's theme. First, the important point about London-Norwich relations would have gained by some treatment of merchant or familial links between the two centres. Second, one wonders about the still substantial Dutch and Walloon immigrant population, which numbered about 3,000 at the turn of the century: what impact they might have had on local affairs, and to what extent their example of congregationalist religious organization (since c. 1570) may have influenced the rise of Independency in Norwich in the late 1640s. Finally, could the seventy percent or so of the population who were not freemen have been so devoid of influence as to justify such sparse treatment? We ought at least to learn something about the rioters of April 1648, and whether their outcry had further expression.

Despite a few flaws however, Evans's work does much credit to the genre of which it is a part. It takes a rightful place among other studies which illuminate politics on the periphery in England's most tumultuous century.

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G. R. QUAIFFE. — *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives: Peasants and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth Century England*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1979. Pp. 282.

Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives is an exceptionally well-documented analysis of illicit sex among peasants in Somerset (only, not England) between 1600 and 1660. Using mainly the records of the Quarter Sessions and the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Bath and Wells, G. R. Quaife located one case of a woman sexually touching another, two of male homosexuality, a few instances of incest, rape and masturbation, and no evidence of oral sex. Most prosecutions, running into the hundreds, were for fornication and adultery.

Attempting to "contain" the "tendency to dehumanize the past" with quantification (p. 242), Quaife sketches the experiences of individuals. Although he offers his work as a "basis for later comparative studies" (p. 5), historians will find his study of limited value because it is more anecdotal than quantitative. Phrases such as "one of every ten", "over three-fifths", "typical", and "common" fail to convince that chance results have been ruled out. What level of significance should be assigned to three-quarters of a "very few" (pp. 229-30) or to forty percent of a "small" sample (p. 235)? Researchers doing comparative studies need to know the size of the sample.

"What was the extent of illicit sex in early-seventeenth-century Somerset? — a stupid question. There is no way in which it can be answered satisfactorily" (p. 56). The recording and prosecution of illicit sex were affected by visibility, degree of concern, and definition. About a third of Quaife's book examines bastardy, undoubtedly because illicit sex that resulted in pregnancy was more visible than illicit sex that did not. Bastardy, of course, was of considerable concern to parish authorities who sought to avoid maintenance of illegitimate children. Quaife argues

persuasively that “economics, not morality, was the prime consideration of the parish” (p. 245). Many bastardy cases (what percentage of how big a sample?) were recorded only because disagreements arose over maintenance. It was not bastardy *per se* but pauper bastardy and the bastardy of reputed fathers who refused to support their offspring that were intolerable. Although more women than men were punished, most unwed parents went unpunished.

Parish and county authorities also prosecuted illicit sex that might disrupt the peace of the community, for example, rape, adultery and prostitution. Generally, illicit sex threatening neither a community's finances nor its order was not prosecuted.

Quaife challenges the traditional view depicting Puritans as uncompromising zealots against sexual immorality. Puritans, as well as Anglicans, only mildly denounced premarital sex if a promise to marry had been exchanged before the sexual act. After a promise to marry, which could be oral or written, public or private, the peasant couple considered themselves man and wife and sexual intercourse followed. If pregnancy occurred, usually the couple married. Quaife asserts that peasants labelled sex following betrothal licit, while secular and ecclesiastical authorities considered sex preceding marriage solemnized by a minister illicit. Different definitions resulted in selective reporting and prosecution.

Despite difficulties quantifying illicit sex, Quaife concludes that the frequency of premarital sex declined during the first six decades of the seventeenth century.

Perhaps the weakest part of the book is Quaife's failure to question his sources. Quaife reports that six in every ten single females charged with illicit sex during the Interregnum told examining Justices of the Peace that they had consented only after males had promised to marry them. Only one in ten admitted having sex “in order to satiate her lust or fulfil her love” (p. 68). Quaife never considers whether females might have withheld comments alluding to their sexual desires and stated what they hoped would be more acceptable to examining male magistrates. In Quaife's favour, the girls did not go in the other direction and plead only a momentary lapse from ideal Christian sexual behaviour. Quaife employs “spinster” as a synonym for single female. Yet, this reviewer has discovered references to married spinsters in the Quarter Sessions records of Stuart Lancashire, as Carol Wiener has for Stuart Hertfordshire.

Quaife's uncritical use of documents extends to acceptance of their portrayal of women. Most single women were depicted as sex objects giving sex to insatiable, predatory males in order to obtain love or a promise of marriage. After marriage, roles were reversed, and females discovered their husbands unable or unwilling to satisfy their strong sexual needs and of necessity sought fulfilment in adulterous affairs. In his discussion of widows, Quaife returns to unattached, meek females using sex to turn unscrupulous, sexually aggressive males into husbands. Quaife neither explains nor questions this flip-flopping in the court records between the female as victim and as aggressor.

Ideal Christian morality — intercourse for procreation within a marriage solemnized by a clergyman — was best accepted, Quaife claims, by “respectable women”, that is, the wives and daughters of yeomen. “Respectable men”, or those sufficiently wealthy to be able to maintain the illegitimate children they might father, enjoyed almost total sexual freedom and gave only nodding acceptance to Christian morality. Quaife contends that for respectable men and women, sex was a moral issue; in contrast, for the majority of peasants, sex was amoral. But if, as Quaife claims, sixty percent of unmarried peasant couples had sexual relations only after exchanging a promise of marriage, a promise that made sex licit according to the mores of the peasant community, then most peasants were not

amoral. Quaife may be correct when he claims that peasant sexual behaviour differed from that of wealthier groups because peasants were less indoctrinated with Christian morality, but different behaviour does not demonstrate amorality.

Despite occasional failure to consider alternative hypotheses, Quaife has written a stimulating book. Discussed are seasonality and location of illicit sex, age of unwed mothers, loose clothing that permitted ease of access, "a miscellany of sexual practices", ecclesiastical and secular punishments, and less restrictive attitudes toward exposure and petting. Also surveyed are the avenues by which authorities became aware of illicit sex, including rumour which, Quaife contends, was fairly reliable. Quaife concludes with a critical comparison showing convergence and divergence between his findings and those of Edward Shorter and Lawrence Stone. Historians will find this book a notable contribution to seventeenth-century social history.

There are generous selections from the documents, a useful glossary, and an appendix with five maps.

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ALFRED PERRENOUD. — *La population de Genève du seizième au début du dix-neuvième siècle. Étude démographique. Tome premier: Structures et mouvements.* Genève, Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Genève, 1979. Xv, 611 p.

Rendre compte d'un ouvrage qui a mis presque dix ans à se faire ne peut que procurer des frustrations autant à l'auteur qu'au recenseur. C'est pourquoi, tout en étant bref, je tenterai de dégager les apports considérables de même que les lacunes importantes de ce travail. Disons d'emblée qu'il s'agit d'une monographie historique remarquable qui s'inscrit dans le cadre de la démographie urbaine: Genève entre 1550 et 1830. Les sources sont multiples: données fiscales, recensements, registres mortuaires, contrats de mariage, registres d'état civil, registres d'étrangers, reconstitution des familles, etc. L'auteur se montre extrêmement critique face à ces sources et ses résultats sont présentés avec beaucoup de prudence. Et pourtant, cela ne l'empêche pas de manifester beaucoup d'imagination à la fois dans ses méthodes d'analyse et ses interprétations.

Le plan du livre révèle bien le souci qu'a l'auteur de tirer la démographie de son piège statistique et formaliste pour la situer dans le contexte social plus global. Aux structures démographiques, il n'hésite pas à juxtaposer les structures familiales et sociales. À la conjoncture démographique, il allie la conjoncture économique. Ainsi, la première partie (pp. 1-66) traite des effectifs démographiques et des flux (bilan naturel, soldes migratoires, etc.). La deuxième partie (pp. 67-228) aborde les structures démographiques (rapport des sexes, état matrimonial), familiales (dimension et composition des ménages) et sociales (activités socio-professionnelles, classes politiques). La troisième partie (pp. 229-350) se concentre sur les migrations: importance de la population étrangère, origines géographiques des migrants, population temporaire. Enfin, la dernière partie (pp. 351-496) met en relation le mouvement des mariages, des naissances et des décès avec la conjoncture économique.