

## Editors' Introduction: *JBS* 53.2 (April 2014)

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The articles in this issue range in chronology from the medieval period to the late twentieth century. A number of them challenge old paradigms, from Sandy Bardsley's claim that a significant preponderance of men over women in medieval England has gone hitherto unnoticed, to Robert Saunders's argument that the debate over the Reform Bill of 1832 needs to be reread as a religious controversy as well as a political contest. William Cavert finds environmental activism, of a sort, as early as the reign of Charles I, Mark Kishlansky rethinks the politics of martyrdom, and Jennine Hurl-Eamon reconsiders the domestic life and family strategies of soldiers in the eighteenth century. Three articles touching on aspects of the history of religion make a collective case for the need to take religion seriously in the modern period, while two articles on how contemporaries thought about the streetscape of London make a significant contribution to urban history. The articles also offer a diverse set of approaches to the British past from several different methodological perspectives, from demographic and environmental histories to the politics of religion, marriage, architectural heritage, orality, and photography.

In "Missing Women: Sex Ratios in England, 1000–1500," Sandy Bardsley revisits the demographic history of medieval England. She presents evidence that there may have been significantly more men than women living at any given point in the late Middle Ages because women died more often than men did. As many as 10 to 15 percent fewer women than men may have survived childhood, and even those who did survive may have died at a younger age than their male counterparts. Bardsley's argument draws upon evidence from skeletal remains found at medieval era burial sites. She refrains from attributing this difference to any one cause, but rather suggests that a combination of factors such as nutritional, environmental, and metabolic differences, all potentially combined with socially sanctioned gender discrimination, may account for higher mortality rates. The article reshapes our understanding of late medieval society and will surely provoke further debate and discussion about the possible consequences of a skewed sex ratio for the lived experience of both men and women during the centuries between the Norman Conquest and the early Reformation.

Quality of life and the environment are also major concerns in William Cavert's article, "The Environmental Policy of Charles I: Coal Smoke and the English Monarchy, 1624–40." Cavert addresses a long-standing theme in early Stuart history: the nature and efficacy of King Charles I's regime during the fifteen years preceding the calling of the "short Parliament" in 1640 that precipitated the breakdown of governance and ultimately resulted in civil war. The article shows that the history of environmental policy can offer new insights into governance in early

Stuart England. Charles's campaign against the smoky air around the court at Westminster is revealed to be a particularly early modern sort of environmental policy: it was not aimed at cleaning up London's air for the well-being of its citizens, nor was it designed to restore the pristine beauty of the natural world. For Charles, environmental policy was part and parcel of his larger cultural, religious, and political program of order, decorum, and courtly majesty. In sum, enhancing the glory of the Crown was the desideratum of the Caroline campaign against air pollution. Cavert thus finds that the early modern age had its own sense of environmental policy, but he argues that the regulation of the environment was understood in decidedly early modern terms rather than through the conservationist paradigm that would come to prominence in the modern world.

Mark Kishlansky's "Martyrs' Tales" shows that King Charles I had much to worry about, even during his personal rule in the 1630s. Kishlansky's lively and pointed article revisits the celebrated court cases against Puritan critics of the Caroline regime. He argues that previous studies of these proceedings have been insufficiently critical of the rather partisan and self-interested accounts of the events provided by the defendants themselves. The prosecutions of John Bastwick, William Prynne, Alexander Leighton, and John Lilburne were not unusually barbaric for their age and were conducted according to established norms of legal procedure. The tales of persecution written by these self-proclaimed martyrs for the causes of religious and political liberty are revealed to be just one side of a multifaceted story. In making this argument, Kishlansky presents a strong case for taking seriously the Crown's perspective on the prosecution of its Puritan detractors and for understanding their experiences of martyrdom as self-inflicted wounds.

Jennine Hurl-Eamon's article starts with a question: "Did Soldiers Really Enlist to Desert Their Wives? Revisiting the Martial Character of Marital Desertion in Eighteenth-Century London." Her answer to this opening query is, in short, "not really," despite prevalent assumptions to the contrary. In contrast to existing scholarship, Hurl-Eamon offers a study of the ways in which male military service functioned as part of a family survival strategy for poor families, arguing that enlistment was not necessarily or even ordinarily understood by married men as an easy means by which they might legally and legitimately avoid their marital duties to provide for their families. Service in the army instead offered a stable income for many plebian men, and many thought that the supposedly low risk of foreign deployment was worth the risks entailed by their enlistment. Hurl-Eamon thus offers a nuanced and informative analysis of the complicated ways in which the expanding British fiscal-military state of the eighteenth century offered new opportunities as well as novel challenges for the lives and families of its most vulnerable citizens.

It is striking that three of our four articles on nineteenth- and twentieth-century themes explore aspects of the history of religion. While their overall arguments and larger agendas are very different, these articles collectively underscore the importance of taking religion seriously in the modern period.

In "God and the Great Reform Act: Preaching against Reform, 1831–32," Robert Saunders reexamines debates over the 1832 reform act and argues that historians have missed the centrality of religion to the struggle. A conflict more traditionally read as a political and class struggle was also very much a religious controversy. Opponents and supporters alike drew extensively on Christian language and arguments. Clerics, including Anglican clergymen, many of whom assumed that

reform would fundamentally attack the interests of the established Church, were important participants in debate, even if more often via the pulpit than the press. Saunders convincingly argues that sermons were an important source of political opinion, though clergy putatively claimed to be politically neutral; this is also, then, an argument about where to look for evidence. On all sides, God and Satan were assumed to be interested in the outcome of the reform act debate. Taking religion seriously, Saunders argues, helps explain why this conflict was so bitter and why so much more seemed to be at stake than might appear looking back from the vantage point of more radical reforms.

Ben Weinstein makes a similarly iconoclastic argument in his article, "Questioning a Late Victorian 'Dyad': Preservationism, Demolitionism, and the City of London Churches, 1860–1904." He, too, cautions against reading nineteenth-century debates in anachronistic ways. It is easy to assume that Victorian preservationists, who sought to preserve buildings of historical and architectural value, were motivated by the same types of "heritage" concerns as their late twenty-first-century counterparts, that their opponents were largely utilitarian philistines, and that preservationists and demolitionists stood in stark opposition to one another. The searing debate over the demolition of many of Christopher Wren's beautiful seventeenth-century churches in the City of London suggests, however, a different dynamic. At least some of those who wanted to demolish Wren churches were motivated by what they saw as a higher concern for souls: better, despite the loss, to tear down empty buildings and use the money to build new churches in dense areas of settlement than to maintain beautiful but useless shells. Those who supported preservation were sometimes motivated by financial concerns, and they might be said to have utilitarian agendas. Demolitionists and preservationists actually shared many of the same concerns (whether aesthetic or utilitarian), and the categories were relatively fluid in practice at this early stage of debates over preservation. The article thus makes a contribution to the study of historical memory and ways in which people have thought about the relative balance of responsibility to the present, past, and future.

In "Language Which Will Move Their Hearts': Speaking Power, Performance, and the Lay-Clerical Relationship in Modern Catholic Ireland," Cara Delay studies the relationship between clergy and laity in modern Catholic Ireland. She focuses on the role of the spoken word in the often multilingual environments of rural Ireland during the postfamine "devotional revolution": oral interaction was complicated by the fact that Irish-speaking congregations in some areas might not fully understand either the Latin of the Mass or the English of the usually middle-class priest. Priests, in turn, did not always fully understand the language of their congregations. In this context, performance became particularly important. Delay explores orality from a number of perspectives, examining topics such as sermon giving, denunciations from the altar, gossip, and folk tales. If priests were figures of great authority, or at least wished to be, their authority was sometimes undermined by the words of the laity, who did not always demonstrate the reverence that priests hoped to inspire.

Finally, Stephen Brooke turns, like Weinstein, to the streets of London. Brooke reexamines Roger Mayne's photographs of a Southam Street that has long since been ploughed under for development. The photographs that Mayne took between 1955 and 1961 of people on Southam Street have often been viewed

with a nostalgic eye, taken as they often are as reminders of the disappearance of the open-air life of the working-class street in an imagined more communal past. Brooke explores the multiple readings of Mayne and the politics of nostalgia, but more importantly, takes a fresh look at Mayne's images. He uses Mayne's vivid depictions of street life as a springboard for reflection on the intersections of class, race, gender, and generation in urban London at a time of considerable social change. Mayne did not capture a static working-class community, about to be bulldozed into submission, but rather conveyed a dynamic society in the process of changing from within.

Our next issue will also cover a broad swathe of British history from the medieval to the modern era. It will feature articles on medieval book history and early modern political thought, along with a special forum on radicalism in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century age of revolutions. The issue will conclude with articles on modern social thought, violence, and social memory in twentieth-century Belfast, and the performance of multiculturalism in the British Commonwealth in the 1960s.