

Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard, and John Walter, eds. *Remaking English Society: Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England*.

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This fine collection of essays, written in honor of Keith Wrightson, demonstrates Wrightson's influence on the field of early modern British social

history, both through his own work and the work of his students. If Wrightson's *English Society, 1580–1680* (1982) has shaped historians' understanding of the social dynamics of the period, his students, while they share his concern with archival specificity and nuance, have taken his ideas into many different areas of early modern studies. A list of the contributors to this volume, all Wrightson students, gives a sense of his impact: from the editors themselves to Helen Berry, Naomi Tadmor, Paul Griffiths, and Andy Wood to Phil Withington, Adam Fox, Tim Stretton, Malcolm Gaskill, Henry French, and Craig Muldrew, this is an extremely accomplished group.

The volume is effective partly because all the essays engage in one way or another with Wrightson's work: if *English Society* is the most frequent referent, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (2000) also plays a frequent role; Henry French's essay on poverty in eighteenth-century Terling picks up on Wrightson and Levine's study of the village in the seventeenth century. While at times it seems forced, the ongoing dialogue with Wrightson's work holds the collection together and allows each of the essays to shine.

The introductory essay, "The Making and Remaking of English Social History," is not just a superb review essay on Wrightson's work, but an important account of the development of social history in Britain in the 1970s. And while it focuses on Cambridge and the conversations there, it provides a wider sense of the whole field, particularly in its early years. It tracks the multiple theoretical and conceptual influences that have shaped Wrightson's work and the development of social history, as well as, more recently, cultural history.

Several of the essays in the volume take as a problematic the relationship between social and cultural history: thus, for instance, Malcolm Gaskill's essay "Witchcraft and Neighborliness in Early Modern England" moves between the social-history focus on what actually happens with witchcraft accusations, to cultural-history attention to what people thought about it and what it meant. In doing so, he turns around the Macfarlane-Thomas witchcraft thesis, that witchcraft allegations resulted from a decline of neighborliness, and instead argues that the accusations themselves undermined neighborliness — and were often the subject of real debate. Similarly, Andy Wood's essay, "Deference, Paternalism and Popular Memory in Early Modern England," uses an exploration of the wider cultural contexts to understand the ways in which popular memory helps us to understand early modern thinking about deference and paternalism, also showing how those memories change from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century: social memory is historically specific.

Space does not allow a full consideration of all the essays, but a brief description of some will give a sense of the riches in this collection. Three essays on gender address an area where Wrightson's work has been limited: Naomi Tadmor's essay "Where Was Mrs. Turner?" shows how the intensive local governance of the eighteenth century depended on the invisible work of wives; Helen Berry examines the consumption of music by castrati by middling-sort Londoners in the eighteenth century; while Alexandra Shepard uses illegitimacy to explore the differences

between paternity and fatherhood, arguing that it was constructed not just by affect, but by legal and administrative structures. Tim Stretton's essay on written bonds and litigation illuminates the famous rise of litigation in the period, and shows how, particularly in urban areas, the increase in the number of written bonds fueled litigation.

This is a strong and coherent collection of essays. While, as in any collection, there are some that are stronger than others, it is a collection that will be cited and used for years to come. Wrightson's students have learned much from him, particularly his dedication to close examination of the particulars of social life in the period. In the early 1990s, I was told by a colleague that Wrightson's Cambridge seminar was unpretentious, one people went to for lively and collegial intellectual exchange. That quality is visible in these essays: even the most energetic interventions in current historiographical debates are marked by generous readings of existing scholarship that place them in a conversation. In their analytical sophistication and their archival richness, the essays here demonstrate Keith Wrightson's deep impact on early modern British social history.

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