

work for studies of late medieval piety and practice across Western Europe, not only in England and Bohemia. This volume successfully points in new directions and toward new ways of looking at well-trodden terrain, offering an astute contribution to the growing body of work that is dissatisfied with the traditional narratives of religious categories and culture before and after the Reformation.

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PAUL JENNINGS. *A History of Drink and the English, 1500–2000*. Perspectives in Economic and Social History 44. London: Routledge, 2016. Pp. 218. \$128.00 (cloth).  
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Paul Jennings begins his no-nonsense *A History of Drink and the English, 1500–2000* with a legitimate question: Are the English an especially drunken lot? As he points out, the expression “drunk as an Englishman” goes back to at least the early sixteenth century, and in 2014, when a British Council survey of 15- to 34-year-olds around the world chose drunkenness as British people’s single worst characteristic, the choice was reiterated by the British themselves. Whether “British” in this instance can fairly be claimed by the English alone, Jennings does not say, but since the English constitute the majority of the British people it stands to reason that English drink a great deal of alcohol, have a bad reputation as drunks, and are themselves conflicted about their behavior. It is precisely to understand the “representations and realities” (2) of this situation, both in the past and present, that Jennings has researched and written this occasionally confusing but generally outstanding monograph.

Let us start with the confusion. Jennings begins with five assertions: that alcohol is integral to human societies; that societies are ambivalent about its effects; that the history of drink reflects broader economic, social, cultural, and political developments; that drink has always had a global dimension; and that drink culture always has local and regional variations. If not universally applicable, these assertions nonetheless clearly apply to many societies, including England and the European societies to which England is historically and inveterately connected. Comparisons with these societies are illuminating because they reveal that, historically speaking, the English have not been terribly heavy drinkers, though like many northern European peoples, when they do drink they often get drunk. Notably, the English have emphasized beer and spirits over wine, but a similar pattern prevails in much of Northern and Eastern Europe. Moreover, the long-term decline in per capita alcohol consumption in England in the last five hundred years, but especially in the past one hundred and twenty-five years, is in line with trends in almost every other industrialized Western nation. Indeed, if there is anything unique about the history of English drinking, it is the rise of wine since 1960. From under 10 percent of the total alcohol market in the 1950s to more than a quarter of the market since 2000, wine is now an integral part of English drinking culture, and the United Kingdom is regularly the world’s biggest importer of wines. Just as Britain is leaving the European Union, English drinking habits are more focused on wine than at any time since England lost Bordeaux to France in 1453. In short, the English might like getting drunk, and they have certainly learned to enjoy a glass of imported wine, but they are not a nation of great drinkers.

Another point of confusion occurs when Jennings asserts that “drinking has historically been part of the desirable life for most people, and improvements in living standards have facilitated increased consumption” (26). I have no doubt that this is true, and in fact Jennings does an excellent job at showing the statistical correlation between prosperity and drink, with the

exception of what Jennings calls the anomalous period of roughly 1880–1950, when drinking declined despite some material improvements in peoples' lives. However, if the history of England has been one of gradual if not at all consistent material improvement since 1500, why is per capita consumption today so much lower than historians believe it to have been in the Renaissance and early modern eras? This is a question that Jennings does not explicitly raise. His book would be better had he attempted to explain this conundrum rather than leave the answer to be pieced together by the reader.

Those complaints aside, Jennings's book answers more questions than it raises. The second chapter, on the production and sale of alcohol in England, therefore mostly beer, is a masterly treatment of the changes in brewing and breweries, publicans, pubs, and off-licenses from 1500 to the present. Likewise, chapter 3, "Places and Spaces," is a careful, almost loving study of the physical changes within English ale houses, taverns, inns, and pubs, and an explanation of the competition these have faced in retailing alcohol. As Jennings half laments, there are now more types of places to drink than ever before, many of them unattractive to pub purists. Less lamentable, however, is the related fact that new drinking spaces include large numbers of women, which had long not been the case.

In chapter 4, Jennings makes a point that many who do not think about drinking often fail to grasp, namely is that drinking is "an intensely meaningful activity" (113). Drinking and socializing with drink has been a medicine for both physical and psychological pain, a precursor to sex, a form of celebration and a component of ritual, an assertion of gender and social class, and, of course, a source and manifestation of friendship. With the exception of the medicinal uses of alcohol, at least as prescribed by a physician, almost none of this has changed. What has changed (and here is where I wish Jennings had placed more emphasis in order to answer the question I raised earlier) is the link between drink and work—as thirst-quencher, strength builder, or form of bonding with workmates—and the amount of drinking and prevalence of drunkenness when people sit down to drink. As Jennings says, "drinking was transformed into a more purely recreational activity over the nineteenth and into the twentieth century" (113), and it was this process that led to a lower per capita consumption, if not always to less drunkenness at the end of the evening.

Jennings uses this last point to create a perfect segue into a chapter titled "Drunks." This is one of the book's shortest chapters but to my mind also one of the most important, for it shows that drunkenness and getting drunk have both meanings and a history and should not be dismissed just because the agents might themselves not remember the evening's activities. Indeed, as some of my own work attempts to show, drunkenness is perhaps best imagined as a hyper-assertion of the meanings ascribed to drinking in Jennings's previous chapter. What may be surprising to some contemporary observers of England is that the scale of public drunkenness has steadily diminished in the past two centuries.

From drunkenness, Jennings turns to "anti-drink" in order to explore how some drinking behaviors or, in the extreme case, any drinking at all, came to be seen as a social problem. As Jennings correctly points out, drunkenness has been condemned as a sin since the time of Noah, if not before, but a sin and a social problem are not the same thing. It was only with industrialization and the rise of middle-class political power that the idea of drunkenness was transformed from the former to the latter. Public health officials and general practitioners in our own era continue to warn of the negative consequences of alcohol abuse, but there is no longer much desire to eradicate drinking altogether. There is, however, a desire, and many would argue a need, to regulate alcohol for both fiscal and health reasons. England, like all nations, has never found a perfect balance between social order, sociability, public health, and taxation, and in fact its alcohol licensing system was fittingly described in the nineteenth century as "a labyrinth of chaotic legislation" (184). Pub opening hours from World War I until the early twenty-first century in England, as well as in Wales and Scotland, were some of the least liberal in the Western world and gave these nations a strong claim to having the strangest drinking culture on the planet, although this has since changed to a small degree.

It is slightly dissatisfying that Jennings makes no comment on where he thinks legislation should go from here, saying only that legislating alcohol is a “highly charged political issue” that will continue to be shaped by both global and local trends. And, as Jennings says in his conclusion, drink in England will continue to have a history. That in itself is not a controversial thesis that future historians of drink in England will have to grapple with, but future historians will, if they are clever, turn to Jennings’s book for an extraordinary distillation of secondary works, and an outstanding summary of the continuity and change in the history of drink and the English between the years 1500 and 2000.

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PETER N. LINDFIELD. *Georgian Gothic: Medievalist Architecture, Furniture and Interiors 1730–1840*. Medievalism 8. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016. Pp. 265. \$99.00 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.105

In his excellent *Georgian Gothic: Medievalist Architecture, Furniture and Interiors 1730–1840*, Peter Lindfield aims to rehabilitate Georgian Gothic by rescuing it from the condescension and criticism of the nineteenth-century Gothic Revival and taking it seriously as an expression of the taste of its times—one that evolved and developed alongside and in dialog with other aesthetic and architectural genres. There is plenty on the idea of good and bad taste, but these are the opinions of contemporaries rather than judgments made by the author. Indeed, it is one of the great strengths of his book that Lindfield does not seek to take sides; instead he lays out the challenges and opportunities faced by those wishing to deploy gothic designs in eighteenth-century England, and he explores in detail some of the historic houses that were the product of these endeavors.

In the opening chapter Lindfield sets the tone with an assessment of the changing ways in which eighteenth-century architects sought to understand Gothic architecture. In contrast with classicism, which could draw on Vitruvius and others, Gothicism lacked an organizing framework or set of principles. Coupled with the widespread nature of medieval buildings across the country, this allowed the development of a wide variety of approaches to and interpretations of Gothic. Having outlined this context in the opening chapter, Lindfield then offers a broadly chronological approach, tracing the development of the Gothic from Batty Langley to AWN Pugin via luminaries such as William Kent, Thomas Chippendale, Robert Adam and James Wyatt, but also lesser-known individuals, including Henry Keene, William Porden, and Lewis Cottingham.

Lindfield begins his narrative in the 1730s, with early attempts to incorporate gothic designs into a classical architectural framework. This involved adding decorative elements plucked from medieval buildings to designs that otherwise were rigidly classical: quatrefoils and ogee arches were thus found alongside ionic columns and entablature both in plans for buildings and illustrations for books. There was no notion that this classical gothic was in any way authentic, yet it was both widespread and formed an important foundation on which subsequent manifestations of gothic architecture were constructed. Indeed, the various manifestations of what we know as Rococo Gothic—a term often used dismissively, but which Lindfield uses as a more neutral description—were closely linked to these early experiments both in its several forms and its free use of medieval devices. These became part of the mainstream of design in the 1740s and 1750s through the pattern books issued by Chippendale and others, so that “gothic” furniture was found in houses up and down the country. Mostly, it was placed in essentially classical architectural settings, but occasionally there were more thoroughgoing gothic schemes, as at Croft