

Unlike the social reformers whom she discusses, Professor Fingard does seem to understand the underclass. She is sensitive to the social, familial, gender and racial problems faced by people on the margin, and her excellent work reveals a clearer picture of the complex social life in 19th-century Halifax.

There is one final point to be made. The publication of *The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax* indicates the vitality of regional presses in this country. There may be an unfortunate tendency to downplay the significance of this work simply because it was not published by one of the major scholarly or commercial presses in Toronto. Both Professor Fingard and Pottersfield Press are to be commended for this book.

David Mills  
University of Alberta

\*\*\*

George Huppert — *After the Black Death. A Social History of Early Modern Europe*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986. Pp. xiv, 169.

George Huppert's *After the Black Death* is both an engaging account of life in early modern Europe and a synthesis of some of the best recent social history. Huppert places his book in the tradition of the *Annales* approach to history, as exemplified by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, and specialists will recognize many of the articles and monographs he draws upon. They will recognize them with pleasure, however, for Huppert has succeeded in incorporating two of the strengths of *Annalist* social history — evocative detail and quantitative precision — into a book which is accessible both to students and the general public.

*After the Black Death* deals with the 14th-18th centuries, and presents vivid portraits of the disparate social groups which made up the Third Estate. His organizing principle is the community, whether depicting villager or city-dweller, urban patricians intent on social mobility, artisans and peasants rebelling against erosion of tradition, and even those outcasts who have no place within any community. A major assumption of the book is that those four centuries constitute a distinct period in European history, which is defined by the precarious balance worked out by individuals and communities between available resources and population.

Yet, this was not a static period, and Huppert must reconcile continuity of demographic patterns and rural and urban traditions with significant change in social structure. This is a problem posed by much *Annales* history, for it is not easy to reconcile an emphasis on the *longue durée* and the Eternal Village, as exemplified by Sennely (1-9), with urban rebellion in Romans (88-99), or rapid social mobility among nobility (65-66). Indeed, many of the works Huppert cites emphasize on either continuity or change, that is, either Sennely or Romans; Huppert, in order to produce a successful synthesis, has to present both.

He does this by implicitly extending Lawrence Stone's image of the English upper class as a "bus or hotel, always full, but always full of different people" (66) to the most basic structures of early modern European society, the village, the city and the *seigneurie*. These, for Huppert, remain constant, populated to the capacity of existing resources. What does change is who owns or works or administers them. Huppert is

especially interested in depicting changing property relations. The village may be eternal, but its inhabitants begin as serfs, gain control of their land and become free peasants, only to ultimately lose control to absentee landlords. The land itself does not change, but the nature of village ownership does. The city, too, is eternal in a way, but control of it shifts from the original commune to mercantile elites. Seigneurial privilege persists unchanged, but *seigneurs* themselves increasingly come from the Third Estate. Interestingly enough, one social group, slaves, do disappear entirely, incorporated into the community as servants. Still, though a marginal group disappears, the margins of the community do not: what changes is who occupies those margins.

Huppert is at his best in delineating this rhythm of continuity and change, which he does in the first eight chapters. Chapter 9, "Private Lives", begins by stressing the importance of the family, but in fact, focuses mainly on the relationship between husbands and wives. Huppert barely mentions children at all nor — despite his interest in property — the importance of inheritance in family life. Chapter 10, "Worldly Minds", is the least convincing. Huppert's contention is that European society was consistently secular from the 14th century, which he supports with evidence from the village of Montailou as well as by the frequency of attacks on the clergy. It seems to me, though, that the century of Reformation does not provide much evidence of indifference to religion: Huppert's own example, based on the testimony of Domenico Scandella, the miller from Montereale, suggests widespread anticlericalism, certainly, but not necessarily irreligion. Still, both chapters are valuable in presenting colorful personalities to the reader unfamiliar with Origo's or Ladurie's or Cipolla's account of them.

My main disappointment with the book comes from my interest in the history of medicine. I had hoped that a book entitled *After the Black Death* would integrate attitudes towards disease and death into our picture of early modern European life. Instead, disease is mentioned only as one natural regulatory mechanism, with the Black Plague as a grim example of what happened once, and would happen again, if population ever rose too high. A number of specialized studies exist on attitudes to disease and death within the *Annales* tradition, and would have enhanced Huppert's analysis.

Taken as a whole, the book makes for a not-quite-tidy package, as Huppert himself admits. Yet, he does an excellent job of drawing the reader from chapter to chapter, so that one is left with a reasonably coherent picture of a world which, after all, has never proved amenable to tidy historical packaging. *After the Black Death* stands as an admirable synthesis, and includes a bibliographic essay and an unusually good index. It would be a useful introduction to *Annales* historiography as well as to the social history of early modern Europe. This "was a world which embraced change, even while denying that change was occurring" (150), according to Huppert, and he has described that world in a way which is both clear and evocative.

Lisa Rosner  
*Stockton State College*

\*\*\*