

digital preservation because, as the size and number of repositories with long-term preservation responsibility for the digital material grow, additional volumes of works will be written. Ross Harvey's *Preserving Digital Materials* is an excellent introduction to the long-term preservation of digital materials and is a worthy addition to this field of study's discourse.

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**Gender and Petty Violence in London, 1680–1720.** JENNINE HURL-EAMON. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005. 227 p. ISBN 0-8142-0987-4.

The period covered by this book, 1680–1720, was a turbulent one in the history of England. David Underdown aptly entitled his study of England during the period (1603–1660), *Revel, Riot and Rebellion*, and there is sufficient evidence that the years examined by Hurl-Eamon were equally unquiet.<sup>1</sup> After all, this period saw the end of the Popish Plot, the death of Charles II, Monmouth's Rebellion and the so-called Bloodless Revolution, the Williamite wars, the Jacobite risings, and the final shift of the throne from Stuart to Hanover. These events combined with a period of great growth in both population and economy, and its attendant social upheaval in London. It is not surprising that during all this change and disturbance there was some accompanying petty violence, but in the past historians have not had a real way of tracking and documenting this violence. Hurl-Eamon has shown here one vital, overlooked, source.

It must be clear that in referring to petty violence the author is dealing with those issues which were generally considered to be misdemeanours, and which did not warrant resolution in the main courts. Instead, these were those levels of crimes, ranging from verbal assault through to attempted rape, for which the system of punishment was relatively lenient. In fact, for many of the cases Hurl-Eamon is uncertain as to whether they even achieved a judicial hearing or resolution. The level of official intervention into these cases was a "recognizance," a legal mechanism by which the accused was bound to appear and answer the charge. In physical form, this mechanism was represented by a slip of parchment upon which the putative assault was described by the plaintiff. The primary basis for this study is the recognizances that originated with the Westminster Sessions, mainly those created between 1685 (the year of Charles II's death and Monmouth's Rebellion) and 1720. According to Hurl-

1 David Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603–1660* (Oxford, 1987).

Eamon, the courts were not interested in prosecuting most violence, and that as a result “the vast majority of these incidences of petty violence are recorded nowhere else” (p. 2). In examining these documents she selected only those 7,129 recognizances utilizing the word “assault.” She drew further upon these materials to isolate any forms of violence in which gender played a part, thus allowing her to attempt a distinction between types of violence carried out by the differing sexes – for example, she notes that her studies suggest that political violence was usually carried out by men, while women’s violence was generated by more personal issues (p. 3).

Hurl-Eamon must be congratulated for noting the utility of these recognizances. Every historian hopes to discover some previously unidentified source, and just as Robert Darnton used the records of the Société typographique de Neuchâtel to demonstrate the intellectual interests of eighteenth-century France, Hurl-Eamon has found a valuable tool for illustrating the types and levels of violence endemic to London at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> An associate professor of history at Trent University, Hurl-Eamon received her doctorate from York University for a dissertation that was the basis for this book. Published by the Ohio State University Press as part of a series entitled “History of Crime and Criminal Justice,” the book reflects the author’s primary interest in issues of gender, demonstrated by such chapter titles as “Female Assault Victims: Pregnant Women and Battered Wives as Prosecutors,” or “Female Assailants: Women as Rioters and Rescuers.” Appendices describe the primary source material: the Westminster Assault Recognizances and the Bishop of London’s Consistory Court Defamation Deposits, and Accounts of Felonious Violence in the *Old Bailey Proceedings*.

This book is an excellent example of the benefits of research and of possessing a good historical nose, in order to be able to recognize the value of the recognizances. Perhaps the only caveat I have before whole-heartedly recommending this work, and it may be only a cavil, is that in the emphasis upon gender the author may have done herself something of a disservice, in as much as this book should more properly be constituted as a study of all petty violence, rather than attempting to delineate the violence on gender lines.

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2 Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, MA, 1982).