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Adultery and Divorce in Calvin's Geneva

Kathryn A. Edwards

University of Southern Mississippi

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ally passionate, but uniformly elevated nature of its scholarly debates. Finally, it renders faithfully the contradictions and conundrums that beset Jewish-Gentile relations, the knowledge of which is the best antidote to the recurrent fascination of ahistorical over-simplification.

THOMAS MAX SAFLEY
University of Pennsylvania

Robert M. Kingdon. *Adultery and Divorce in Calvin's Geneva*. (Harvard Historical Studies, 118.) Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995. 214 pp. \$29.95 cloth; 14.95 paper. ISBN: 0-674-00521-X.

Recognized as a leading authority on Calvin's Geneva, especially its Consistory and relations with Protestant France, Robert Kingdon here focuses more closely on the experiences of individual Genevans during that city's Reformation. Drawing from a transcript of the twenty-one volumes of Genevan Consistory registers (1542-1564), whose production he supervised, he chooses five case studies that he describes as atypical. These microhistorical stories of divorce serve as the exceptional norm, admirably fulfilling Kingdon's purposes for writing: to contribute to a history of divorce and to illuminate the operation of the Consistory.

Kingdon begins with a wonderfully clear summary of the Consistory's structure and purposes that provides a necessary context for each case. Because the Consistory was designed to control human behavior, he sees its operation as a valuable window on attitudes during the Reformation. In particular, its varied treatment of divorce cases illuminates both the changing attitudes during that time and the complex social and cultural environment in which reformers functioned. In order to enhance the idea of an evolution in attitudes, Kingdon places the studies in roughly chronological order. Each example also highlights different circumstances which could lead, and in these cases did lead, to divorce. Beginning with the first fully documented case, that of Pierre Ameaux, Kingdon stresses the interaction of social responsibilities, cultural standards, and personal preferences in troubled marriages. Through all the cases, two persistent themes emerge. The first is the diversity of the Consistory's response. Although it generally worked to perpetuate marriage as an institution, its treatment of the parties involved varied greatly, depending on their personal circumstances and perceived moral standards as well as the political pressures the Consistory faced. While adultery would appear to be the unforgivable sin and cause an automatic divorce, Kingdon stresses the Consistory's unwillingness to accept an accusation of infidelity without substantial proof; if repeated evidence was provided, however, women could face the death penalty, a verdict strongly supported by ministers such as Calvin. Calvin himself is present throughout this work and acts as the second theme. Not only is he involved in these cases as a minister, but he is personally affected by divorce when his brother,

Antoine, with whom he lives, divorces Anne Le Fert in 1557. Calvin's unsavory role in his brother's marital tensions and eventual divorce vividly illustrates the effects a troubled couple could have on those regularly interacting with them.

Kingdon's work complements his own broader studies of Geneva as well as those made by E. William Monter and William Naphy, and his has a wider application than the title may suggest. Through his analyses of marriage and punishment he puts Geneva back into the debates over the Reformation's social impact and confessionalization. When combined with his lucidity and storytelling ability, these qualities make this book a superb source for both classroom instruction and the Reformation specialist.

KATHRYN A. EDWARDS
University of Southern Mississippi

James R. Farr. *Authority and Sexuality in Early Modern Burgundy (1550-1730)*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. 252 pp. \$45. ISBN: 0-19-5089073.

James Farr is one of the leading authorities in the United States on early modern Burgundy, a status which he has achieved in part through years of careful research in that province's departmental and municipal archives. Based on judicial records from throughout that region, this work builds on his previous studies of Dijon's artisans, political morality, and social and cultural change during the Reformation.

Despite early Protestant challenges, Burgundy remained intensely Catholic, supporting the League long after the Guises had yielded. Burgundy's *parlement* and town councils orchestrated this conservative response, a subject that Mack Holt is currently studying. Concerned with the cultural and intellectual effects of these struggles and this choice, Farr uses the Burgundian discourse about and treatment of the human body as a means of assessing the Reformation's impact on ideology and its representations. Building on recent work by Caroline Walker Bynum, Judith Butler, and many others whom he acknowledges, he regards the body as a "field of struggle," a Foucauldian site on which culture inscribes its values (6). In order to assess the relationships among law, religion, and sexual morality, Farr divides his work into two sections. The first half discusses the development of sexual ideologies. Rather than settling for the prescriptions of parlementaires and clergy, Farr attempts to assess the standards taught to "ordinary" people. Although these beliefs are difficult to access, his description of common ideas, the ways they could be transmitted, and the mutations they suffered is quite convincing. In the process, he describes the growing ideal of a "sacralized society [that] would criminalize sin." This "new moral order could be established only if people embraced self-discipline and submitted to systems of social control" (58). The second half of this work analyzes the means by