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Alcohol, Sex, and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe

A. Lynn Martin

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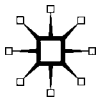

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To Noreen
In sickness and in health
Till death us do part

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I dedicate this book to my wife, Noreen, trusted adviser, best friend, and life's companion.

1
Introduction

'Drunkenness desires lust.'[1] This was how the Elizabethan Robert Greene described the connection between the consumption of alcoholic beverages and sexual activity, a connection that many people assume results from the physiological effects of drinking. Anthropologists have discovered, however, that drinking behavior and drunken comportment are socially mediated; they are learned behavior and comportment. The consumption of alcohol causes physiological changes that are scientifically verifiable, but much of what passes for drinking behavior and drunken comportment varies from one society to the next. What is typical for a drunk in one society is not typical in another. In some societies drunks are violent and aggressive, in others they are peaceful and passive; in some alcohol arouses sexual passions, in others it dampens them.[2] As a result, studies of drinking can provide insights into cultural and social patterns. In the words of Thomas Brennan, 'We can learn a great deal about society through the prism of a wine glass.'[3] This book proceeds from a study of drinking behavior and attitudes toward drinking in traditional Europe, that is, about 1300 to about 1700, focusing on England, France, and Italy. In traditional Europe the consumption of alcohol led to an increase in amorous and sexual activity and an increase in aggressive and violent behavior. An examination of drinking can also provide insights on gender relations.

The functions of alcohol in traditional Europe

Alcoholic beverages, primarily in the form of ale, beer, and wine, had a variety of functions during this period, functions that reveal their role

then was far more important than it is today. Alcohol was the ubiquitous social lubricant; every occasion called for a drink. People concluded business deals and settled personal disputes at taverns or alehouses over a pot of wine or a jug of ale. Every special and even not so special occasion presented an opportunity and an excuse for drinking. Apprentices celebrated their rise to the rank of journeyman with banquets that featured enormous amounts of drinking,[4] and students did the same when they finished their degrees.[5] (Some things have not changed.) At the Venetian arsenal each worker received two liters of wine to celebrate the launch of a new galley.[6] Hunting provided another occasion to drink. In Lorenzo de' Medici's poem on *The Partridge Hunt* the hunters celebrated their catch 'beside the cask of cooling wine', even though

> The Trebbiano wine was most suspicious,
> But longing will make anything delicious.[7]

The English usually celebrated with wholesome barrels of ale rather than suspicious casks of wine. The citizens of Droitwich paid their respects to a bishop who had restored a saltwater spring by marking his anniversary with drinking parties.[8] Parish churches raised money by holding church ales, brewing ale in the church with equipment owned by the church, selling it to parishioners and visitors from the surrounding area, and applying the proceeds to both recurrent and extraordinary expenditures such as the repair of the church tower. As noted by Katherine L. French, 'people who worshipped together drank together.'[9]

Alcohol marked the important rites of passage of birth, marriage, and death. After the ceremony of baptism in some French villages friends and relatives kidnapped the child, took it to the nearest tavern, and held it for ransom until the parents came and purchased drinks.[10] When the wealthy merchant Francesco di Marco Datini married at Avignon in 1378, he provided his guests with the fine wines of Provence as well as Chianti and sparkling Carmignano from his native Tuscany.[11] In March 1553 the Londoner Henry Machyn recorded in his diary the funeral of John Heth; after the ceremony 'they had wine and figs and good ale … and [the] company had twenty shillings to make merry with ale at the tavern.'[12] As in the rites of birth, marriage, and death, so also the festivals of both the liturgical year and the agricultural calendar were occasions for drinking. The mayor, sheriff, and council of Bristol observed All Saints' Day by attending service at church and then walking to the mayor's place, 'there,' in the words of

the town clerk, 'to have their fires and their drinkings with spiced cakebread, and sundry wines; the cups merrily serving about the house.'[13] In fifteenth-century Nottinghamshire mowers enjoyed a feast when they finished their lord's meadow; the lord provided them with pottage, meat, bread, and of course ale. After the meal ritual required them to leave and reenter the hall three times, drinking ale on each reentry, and then walking (perhaps staggering) home with a bucket of ale on their shoulders.[14] An indication of the importance of festive drinking comes from Piedmont, where mobile taverns sold wine from carts at rural festivals.[15]

Alcoholic beverages accompanied royal, civic, religious, and fraternal rituals. When Queen Isabella made her public entry into Paris in 1389, she progressed to the street of St. Denis where the fountain ran in streams of wine instead of water. According to Froissart's *Chronicles*, 'Around the fountain were young girls handsomely dressed, who sang most sweetly, and held in their hands cups of gold, offering drink to all who chose it.'[16] Almost three hundred years later, in 1670, a fountain with wine flowing from eight dolphins marked the entry of Louis XIV into Lille.[17] In 1576 the municipal dignitaries of Liverpool celebrated Queen Elizabeth's Accession Day by distributing sack (the preferred drink of Shakespeare's Falstaff) and white wine in a ceremony outside the town hall.[18] At Venice, when the doge went in procession to the church of Santa Maria Formosa he did not distribute drinks but received them. The parish priest presented him with gifts of oranges, wine, and a straw hat.[19] The fraternal guild of the Assumption at Lincoln commenced its feast with an elaborate ritual that centered on the opening of three barrels of ale.[20] A different type of fraternal ritual occurred at Montpellier in the sixteenth century when Felix Platter and his fellow students gained the friendship of two visiting soldiers who promised henceforth to take the students' side in quarrels. Platter wrote in his journal, 'to mark the engagement into which they had entered, they were baptized with a glass of wine, which was poured over their heads.'[21]

Contrary to Karl Marx, religion was not the opiate of the people, alcohol was. Alcoholic beverages often provided the only refuge and the only comfort from the harsh realities of daily life and the even harsher catastrophes and disasters that were too often a feature of existence in the past. In his *Bread of Dreams* Piero Camporesi presents a disturbing picture of the masses in traditional Europe: 'the frenzied, "dazed," and "drugged," the chronic and temporary drunkards.'[22] According to a seventeenth-century epic, *Praise of*

Yorkshire Ale, the 'dazed' and the 'drugged' gained protection of a sort from the elements:

> The tattered beggar being warmed with ale,
> Nor rain, hail, frost, nor snow can him assail.[23]

When commenting on the excessive drinking by the unemployed, the English Puritan Robert Younge noted, 'they drink that they may drive away time.'[24] One of the unemployed made a list of the places he stayed overnight during a trip in 1612; except for one barn all of his refuges were alehouses.[25] Appropriately, the English custom of a help ale could provide relief when disaster struck; the victim or friends and neighbors would brew some ale, the proceeds from the sale alleviating the disaster. Richard Sheale was a minstrel from Tamworth who was a victim of robbery in the sixteenth century; as he recorded in one of his ballads:

> My neighbours did cause me to make a pot of ale,
> And I thank God of his goodness I had a very good sale.[26]

Alcohol was also a fundamental part of the medical pharmacopoeia. Physicians and pharmacists often used alcoholic beverages, especially wine, as a solvent for ingredients in remedies. For example, 43 of the medicinal recipes in the first English gynecological handbook contained alcohol.[27] Although some people counseled moderation in the use of alcoholic beverages, no one suggested abstention, and the consensus was that alcohol was necessary to maintain good health, while the consumption of water could be dangerous. Arnald de Villanova, professor of medicine at Montpellier in the early fourteenth century, established the therapeutic qualities of wine in his *Liber de vinis* (1310): 'If wine is taken in right measure it suits every age, every time and every region. It is becoming to the old … to the young … [and] to children.'[28] The Florentine humanist Marsilio Ficino agreed with Arnald de Villanova that wine was good therapy, as he wrote in his *Three Books on Life*, 'Bacchus [the god of wine] gives us three things to preserve youth, first, those hills exposed to the sun; on these hills, moreover, the sweetest wine; and in wine perpetual freedom from care.'[29] More prosaic than Ficino was the English physician Andrew Boorde, who praised wine for its beneficial effects in his *Dyetary of Helth*, published in 1542. Wine in moderation, according to Boorde, quickened a person's wits, comforted the heart, scoured the liver,

'rejuiced' and nourished a person's powers, and comforted and nourished both mind and body.[30] The apprentice trader Roger Lowe (died 1679) affirmed that alcoholic beverages could be a source of refreshment and could recharge a person's energies. When chided for his habit of drinking at alehouses, Lowe replied, 'I could not trade if at some times I did not spend twopence' on ale.[31]

Alcohol was also a necessary component of most people's diet. People drank a significant proportion of their daily consumption of calories. They of course drank water, but in the period before safe alternatives such as tea and coffee, many began their day with a draught of ale or wine at breakfast and continued drinking throughout the day. Benjamin Franklin described the drinking habits at the printer's shop in London where he worked in the 1720s: 'We had an alehouse boy who attended always in the house to supply the workmen. My companion at the press, drank every day a pint before breakfast; a pint at breakfast with his bread and cheese; a pint between breakfast and dinner; a pint at dinner; a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work.'[32] Franklin thought his companion's drinking excessive, but the general pattern was toward excess rather than temperance. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's peasants of Languedoc, both male and female, consumed one and a half to two liters of wine a day,[33] and the average daily consumption among adults at Bologna and Florence during the fifteenth century was almost two liters.[34] The amount of alcoholic beverages consumed is covered in Chapter 2. For now suffice it to state that in traditional Europe people consumed large amounts of alcohol as a matter of course.

The functions of alcohol made normal drinking a social rather than an antisocial activity in traditional Europe. The consumption of alcoholic beverages contributed to social cohesion and integration and fostered communal solidarity.[35] According to the anthropological perspective on alcohol, as stated by Mary Douglas, 'celebration is normal and … in most cultures alcohol is a normal adjunct to celebration. Drinking is essentially a social act.'[36] The anthropological approach is one of 'problem deflation' that credits social authority, cultural norms, and communal ritual with controlling abnormal drinking behavior.[37] Nonetheless, these controlling forces are not completely effective, for abnormal drinking behavior exists in all societies, often resulting in economic and medical problems. In traditional Europe abnormal drinking behavior could result in antisocial activity such as adultery and violence that threatened social cohesion and integration. In other words, the picture was not always one of jolly peasants and artisans

enjoying cakes and ale in the meadows or on the village greens. The mechanisms that triggered antisocial drinking are unclear, but the widespread belief that the consumption of alcohol could stimulate sexual and violent behavior established a cultural construct that ultimately had an effect on behavior. In other words, beliefs about the effects of alcohol influenced drinking behavior and drunken comportment. Whatever the precise mechanisms, a proportion of the drinking in traditional Europe did not contribute to social cohesion and integration but led instead to social tension and division, especially in gender relations.

Variations over time and place

To state the obvious, Europe experienced enormous changes between 1300 and 1700. The demographic collapse in the wake of the Black Death and the gradual increase in population during the following centuries, the decline of serfdom, the spread of commercial and protoindustrial activity, increasing urbanization, the rise of nation-states in France and England, territorial consolidation and foreign influence in the Italian peninsula, the split in Christendom between Protestantism and Catholicism, the beginnings of the Scientific Revolution, and the development of vernacular literature and Renaissance humanism and art were some of the more notable occurrences during the period. Nonetheless, the traditional drinking pattern remained essentially the same throughout the four centuries. Alcoholic beverages retained their functions in social jollification and ritual and as a psychotropic, medicine, and food. Few changes occurred in drinking behavior, in attitudes toward drinking, and in the beliefs about alcohol. Variations in the traditional pattern did exist however over time and space. One of the notable geographical variations was between the wine-producing and drinking areas and those that consumed ale or beer. Italy consumed little beer, but France was divided between the wine-drinking south and the ale- and beer-drinking north, although the cultivation of the vine extended further north than it does in modern France.[38] Even England produced its own wine, although in small quantities and of questionable quality. When King John sampled the local wine at Beaulieu Abbey in 1204, he immediately called for his steward, 'Send ships forthwith to fetch some good French wine for the abbot!'[39] Ships full of French wine regularly plied the Channel to supply the needs of England's ruling class, and often the supply was great enough to permit widespread consumption among the ruled.[40]

Some of the variations over time were functions of changes in demographic pressure on agricultural resources. In late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century England overpopulation meant that ale was a rare luxury for the poor and an occasional treat for the middling peasant. The demographic slump that followed the Black Death resulted in a daily per capita consumption of perhaps one gallon.[41] At the end of the seventeenth century, on the other hand, the figure was about one quart of beer a day for every man, woman, and child, enough according to the contemporary statistician Gregory King to account for 28 per cent of annual per capita expenditure.[42] Le Roy Ladurie's peasants of Languedoc consumed their one and a half to two liters of wine a day from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, but they were in a favorable position. As population pressure increased after 1500, throughout much of France peasant consumption of wine declined, and by the seventeenth century workers in towns were drinking more wine than their counterparts in the French countryside.[43] When John Locke visited the area near Bordeaux in 1678, a poor peasant's wife told him that, even though they had a little vineyard, their usual diet was rye bread and water.[44] At Florence, the disastrous decline in population following the Black Death was in part responsible for its citizens enjoying a daily supply of almost two liters of wine in the fifteenth century, but another factor was the widespread planting of vineyards in Tuscany that occurred in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[45]

Other changes occurred in the type of alcoholic beverages consumed. Mead was not a popular drink in France and Italy,[46] and in England it had a steady decline in popularity during this period but probably not, as one scholar claimed, as a result of the declining use of wax candles in churches due to the Protestant Reformation.[47] A change that had enormous ramifications was the introduction of hops in the brewing of ale and the consequent creation of a new drink called beer. In England ale brewing was a domestic industry dominated by alewives. Their brew was usually sweet, sometimes flavored with herbs and spices, and spoiled if not consumed within several days. The addition of hops created a bitter drink that was stronger and lasted longer than ale, but the complexities of the brewing process led to the development of large commercial breweries that had no role for the traditional alewife. Precision is difficult, but after gaining reluctant acceptance in the fifteenth century, beer replaced ale as England's national beverage by the end of the sixteenth century, while ale retained its popularity in the north and in some rural areas.[48]

Cider was popular only in the southwest of England and in northeastern France and in the latter only from the second half of the fifteenth century.[49] By the sixteenth century the inhabitants of Normandy were notorious drinkers of cider, but on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt in 1415 they and their English allies faced insults from their French wine-drinking enemies:

> As for you, English and Normans,
> Get back to your ale
> On which you are all nourished.[50]

As the seventeenth century progressed distilled spirits became available throughout Europe, but their widespread popularity and the horrors of Gin Lane were a development of the eighteenth century.[51] In England, for example, the consumption of gin rose from 1.2 million gallons in 1700 to 8.2 million in 1743.[52] Another development that began towards the end of the seventeenth century and gained pace in the eighteenth was the establishment of vineyards that specialized in producing wine of the finest quality. Accompanying this development was the use of corks and glass bottles that made vintage wines possible. In traditional Europe people usually consumed new wine, at times wine that was less than a week old, ideally rationing its consumption so it would last until the next vintage. In short, most wine was mediocre, spoiled easily, and did not cellar well.[53]

The end to the drinking pattern of traditional Europe also occurred in the eighteenth century. The consumption of spirits was one factor in the transformation, and they created social and medical problems that were greater than those caused by the consumption of ale, beer, or wine. Tea and coffee also became widely used during the eighteenth century and often competed with beer and wine in even lower-class households. Because of the need to boil water to make tea and coffee, water became safe to drink. Even though increased urbanization resulted in the pollution of water supplies, tea and coffee became safe alternatives to the consumption of alcoholic beverages. This development, in combination with the social and medical problems of spirits and aggravated by the dislocation and anomie of the industrial revolution, led in the nineteenth century to the first movements to promote complete abstinence. Although some individuals practiced complete abstinence in traditional Europe,[54] alcoholic beverages were so fundamental to the fabric of society that advocates of temperance at most promoted moderation in drinking. Moderation of a sort: An Order of

Temperance established at Hesse in 1600 restricted its members to seven glasses of wine with each meal, and that at two meals a day for a total of fourteen glasses.[55]

Alcohol, sex, and gender

Despite these changes and the variations over time and place the association between the consumption of alcohol and sexual activity has remained constant in Western culture. The association had its roots in ancient history and is evident in the biblical account of Lot and his daughters. After fleeing Sodom and Gomorrah and losing his wife to a pillar of salt, Lot lived in a cave with his two daughters. The elder daughter proposed to the younger a means of having children (Genesis 19:32): 'Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring through our father.' More appealing than this story of incest is the connection between wine and human sexuality in the Song of Solomon (7:8–9, 12): 'May your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, and your kisses like the best wine that goes down smoothly, gliding over lips and teeth.... Let us go out early to the vineyards and see whether the vines have budded, whether the grape blossoms have opened and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love.' The erotic relationship did not apply just to wine but also to clusters of grapes and vineyards.

The association was also evident in Ancient Rome. Pliny the Elder and other ancient authors collected gruesome stories that indicated women did not drink wine in Republican Rome. One man clubbed his wife to death for drinking wine, and relatives starved a woman to death for taking the keys to the wine cellar. Valerius Maximus (*Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* 2, 1, 5) claimed that this resulted from the connection between intemperance in wine and lechery in body; drinking wives were adulterous wives.[56] Republican women did in fact drink some wine, despite efforts to restrict them, and the stories could reveal more about the conservative moralizing of the authors than actual practice. Nonetheless, the moralizing is evidence of a belief in the association between alcohol and sexual activity. The author Terence provided similar evidence in his *Eunuchus* (4, 5). In references to the goddess of grain, the god of wine, and the goddess of love, Terence proclaimed, 'Without Ceres and Bacchus, Venus grows cold.' In the remarkable succinctness of seven words (six in Latin) the statement proclaimed that the fires of carnal love required the fuel of both food and wine.

The biblical and classical views came together in the warnings of the first-century Pope Clement I who cautioned girls and boys against drinking wine because it aroused the passions.[57] The connection between drink and sex has endured from ancient times through traditional Europe to the present, as indicated by Ogden Nash's witticism, 'Candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker.'

Just as enduring and with far greater impact has been the patriarchal nature of European society. Its roots antedate both the Old Testament and Republican Rome, and, although its rhetoric and methods have varied over the centuries, its primary purpose and effect have always been the subordination of females.[58] The subordination began at birth, when males often received better treatment than females, continued through marriage, when women passed from the control of their fathers to the control of their husbands, and did not even end at death, when burial customs privileged men. The peasant woman's contribution to the household economy was often necessary to ensure the survival of the family, and as a result the relationship between peasant husband and wife could be a partnership of mutual support.[59] Wives of artisans similarly worked alongside their husbands in a family-based unit of production, but increasing restrictions on women's work in guild regulations eroded this arrangement.[60] The brunt of many of the restrictions on female activities fell on women from middle- and upper-class families, which cloistered women and controlled their marriages.

Over the past thirty years the work of feminist historians has demonstrated the way patriarchal attitudes in traditional Europe affected the lives of women, but they have also revealed that women were not completely passive bystanders in their subordination. For example, in 1977 Joan Kelly-Gadol posed the question, 'did women have a Renaissance?' Kelly-Gadol challenged Jacob Burckhardt's assertion that women enjoyed a position of perfect equality with men during the Renaissance, and she concluded that all the advances of the period served to remove Italian noblewomen from economic, political, and cultural affairs and to make them dependent on their husbands.[61] Since Kelly-Gadol posed the question, scholars have been demonstrating the breadth and depth of female involvement in cultural and intellectual affairs, especially as authors but also as artists.[62] Another example concerns the position of women in law. In addition to analyzing the repressive effects of patriarchal legal systems, historians have been examining the way women attempted to use these systems to their advantage. Tim Stretton's recent study of the English Court of Requests shows how

women challenged the legal doctrine of coverture, whereby they had no legal identity separate from their husbands.[63]

The final example is the phenomenon of the disorderly or unruly woman. In traditional Europe women were considered prone to sedition and riot, to uncontrolled and uncontrollable behavior. Disorderly wives challenged their husbands' authority and thereby the natural order of things in a patriarchal society. In the analysis of Natalie Zemon Davis the image of the disorderly woman took form in festive rites of inversion – the world turned upside down – as the woman on top. According to anthropologists, such rituals of status reversal function to reinforce the prevailing social order. Davis disagrees; the image of the disorderly woman could also undermine male authority by demonstrating behavioral options and by sanctioning sedition and riot.[64] In short, some scholars have emphasized patriarchal power and privilege, while others have stressed the ability of women to soften and to circumvent the constraints of patriarchy. Included among the latter is Bernard Capp who examines gender relations in an essay entitled 'Separate Domains? Women and Authority in Early Modern England' and concludes that 'ordinary women in early modern England were not the helpless, passive victims of male authority.'[65] Patriarchy was not a hegemonic, monolithic system, but one that contained contradictions and functioned through compromises.[66]

According to contemporary male authors, the two central pillars of patriarchal society were chastity and subordination, female chastity and female subordination to men.[67] Chastity and subordination formed the primary foundation, to continue the architectural metaphor, of the patriarchal family. The consumption of alcoholic beverages by women threatened both their chastity and their subordination to men, and by extension it threatened the family. The association between alcohol and sexuality led to assumptions that drinking wives could be adulterous wives, and drinking wives could also become disorderly wives who could challenge their husbands' authority. Men feared the sexuality and the disorderliness of sober women; drinking women escalated their fears. As a result men in traditional Europe attempted, as they did in Ancient Rome, to place curbs on the consumption of alcohol by women. According to the predominant ideology, such curbs were necessary to preserve the family.

The problem with this analysis is that the evidence indicates women consumed alcoholic beverages, in some cases in gargantuan amounts, as a matter of course. Alcohol was a fundamental part of the diet for both men and women. In other words, male concerns about drinking

by women and the role of alcohol in their diet form a historical conundrum. Perhaps the solution lies in the context of drinking behavior rather than in the actual drinking, that is, men placed restrictions on the time and place rather than the drink. Another complicating factor was the effect of drinking on male behavior. If a drinking woman could become a disorderly woman, then drink could certainly make men violent. Another problem concerns the effects that drinking within a marriage had on a couple's relationship, perhaps leading to confrontations between a disorderly wife and a violent husband. A final problem concerns the reasons why men and women drank as they did. Anthropologists have suggested that males in modern societies drink to gain power, because of the sensation of macho strength alcohol gives to them.[68] If this fits the male experience in traditional Europe, could it explain the female experience? Did women drink to assert their independence in a patriarchal society?

Sources and method

I do not know of another historical study that attempts a sustained treatment of the issues raised in this book. The secondary literature on the history of women and gender relations in traditional Europe has now become so vast that it defies mastery, and much of the best recent scholarship in medieval and early modern studies focuses on the topic. Some of this work touches on the role of gender in drinking behavior; examples include Susan Dwyer Amussen's 'The Gendering of Popular Culture in Early Modern England,' Anthony Fletcher's *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500–1800*,[69] Laura Gowing's *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London*,[70] and Barbara Hanawalt's 'The Host, the Law, and the Ambiguous Space of Medieval London Taverns.'[71] On the whole, however, alcohol has received little attention from feminist historians. For example, neither Natalie Zemon Davis nor Joy Wiltenburg mentions the role of alcohol in their analyses of disorderly women.[72]

Similarly, many studies of sexual behavior in traditional Europe have relatively little information on any association between sex and alcohol. An example is Kathryn Gravdal's *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law*, which is completely teetotal save for a single reference on the drunkenness of local priests.[73] Other temperate studies of sex include Samuel Kline Cohn's *Women in the Streets: Essays on Sex and Power in Renaissance Italy*,[74] James R. Farr's *Authority and Sexuality in Early Modern Burgundy (1550–1730)*,[75] Alan Haynes' *Sex in*

Elizabethan England,[76] Martin Ingram's *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570–1640*,[77] Ruth Mazo Karras' *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England*,[78] Carol Kasmierczak Manzione's 'Sex in Tudor London: Abusing Their Bodies with Each Other,'[79] Maria Serena Mazzi's *Prostitute e lenoni nella Firenze del Quattrocento*,[80] Leah L. Otis' *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc*,[81] Michael Rocke's *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence*,[82] and Jacques Rossiaud's 'Prostitution, Youth, and Society in the Towns of Southeastern France in the Fifteenth Century.'[83] That is such a formidable list that it might question any connection between alcohol and sex. On the other hand, some books dealing with the history of sex do demonstrate such a connection; included here are John Addy's *Sin and Society in the Seventeenth Century*[84] and G. R. Quaife's *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives: Peasants and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth-Century England*.[85]

The secondary literature on alcohol is also large, but much of it focuses on the history of a particular drink such as wine or beer rather than on drinking behavior and attitudes toward drinking. Two excellent studies that examine popular drinking behavior in Europe set a high standard for other work on the topic. The first of these is Peter Clark's *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200–1830*. As indicted by its title, the focus of Clark's book is the institution of the English alehouse, but drinking behavior is inseparable from alehouses and taverns, as Clark reveals throughout in his analysis. The second is Thomas Brennan's *Public Drinking and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris*.[86] Although the focus of Brennan's book is beyond the chronological limits of this study, his methodology, analysis, and conclusions are of immense value in any attempt to examine drinking behavior. A third book stands alone in its relationship to my work. This is Judith M. Bennett's *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300–1600*. The focus of Bennett's book is patriarchal society and the way it 'worked to maintain male privilege and female disadvantage.'[87] It maintained male privilege and female disadvantage in the brewing industry, as brewers replaced brewsters when beer replaced ale as the beverage of choice. One of Bennett's chapters examines the association between alcohol and both female sexuality and female disorderliness and concludes that by the sixteenth century the English associated sexual license and disorderly behavior not with brewing *per se* but with 'just *female* brewers and *female* alesellers.'[88]

This examination of alcohol, sex, and gender in traditional Europe is not the definitive treatment of the topic. The chronological limits are

too long and the geographical limits are at the same time too large and not large enough (missing central, eastern, and northern Europe as well as the Netherlands, the Iberian peninsula, and the British Isles outside England) to provide anything more than suggested conclusions and agenda for future research. Problems of interpretation and the sheer bulk of the primary and secondary sources require the same qualifying cautions. I have not used archival sources but have read a wide variety of primary and secondary sources. English sources predominate; this results partly from their accessibility, partly from the prolific scholarship by historians of England. Sources from the early modern period are more abundant than those from the late Middle Ages, but I have tried to draw my evidence from both periods and from France and Italy as well as England. My efforts to document drinking behavior over time and space create problems of historical context as the evidence moves from medieval London to Renaissance Florence to the Paris of Louis XIV, but the inclusion of the context in many cases would create an unwieldy analysis and a much longer book. Many of the contemporary authors were so revealing in their testimony that, when possible, I prefer to let them speak for themselves. Unfortunately, not enough of them speak in the 'other voice' of women's own experiences and attitudes. When historians attempt to understand the constraints of patriarchal society, they too often have to rely on patriarchal sources.

The different types of sources cited in the pages that follow create problems of interpretation. For example, the use of household accounts to determine daily per capita consumption of alcohol can result in misleading conclusions if the number of persons in the household rose or fell, or if servants pilfered drink, or if improper storage ruined it, or if any other factor affected either the amount consumed and the number consuming. The use of prescriptive literature can create confusion between rhetoric and reality. Repeated denunciations of drunken behavior in sermons, for example, might be an indication that the behavior was widespread; on the other hand, they could reveal a widespread belief that isolated cases of the behavior deserved denunciation. The use of legal sources poses other problems. As Thomas Kuehn has demonstrated in his critical analysis of works of microhistory based on legal sources, historians cannot use testimony from court cases to construct a narrative. Such testimony was not a representation of reality but a means to win a court case. Historians can use records from court cases to reconstruct the case, and they must take care in doing this because of the shortcomings in the recording of the actual testimony in trials and interrogations.[89] Nonetheless, I use both prescriptive literature

and court records to demonstrate the relationship between drinking and both sexual activity and disorderly and violent behavior, not because they are representations of such activity and behavior, but because they are representations of beliefs and perceptions about the same.

The use of fictional sources – plays, poems, ballads, songs, stories, and novels – likewise creates problems of interpretation, especially in determining the relation between fiction and reality. According to Michel de Certeau, contemporary fictions can be as informative as contemporary reality in creating imaginative reconstructions.[90] Another perspective comes from Michel Jeanneret, who defends his use of fictional works by arguing that they 'do not of course represent the world; but neither can they not represent it,'[91] which seems an awkward way of stating that fictional works obviously reflect the world in which they were created. The following pages do not contain imaginative reconstructions, but they do contain works of fiction as reflections of reality, especially as they reflect male views on various aspects of gender relations. In addition to this use of fictional literature, I use it to demonstrate the cultural construction of drinking behavior and drunken comportment. In traditional Europe people learned that alcohol stimulated amorous and sexual behavior as well as aggressive and violent behavior. This cultural script included works of fiction, and the fiction could reinforce the cultural script. On occasion the depictions of drinking behavior in fiction had their counterparts in the representations of reality created from legal and other sources. An example of this is the cultural construction of the unruly women and representations of such women in legal and other sources. A final reason for the use of fictional sources is to reveal the way authors have depicted the relationship between alcohol, sex, and gender.

The purpose of what follows is to demonstrate that in the Western cultural tradition, especially in England, France, and Italy between 1300 and 1700, people learned that the consumption of alcoholic beverages resulted in behavior that was erotic and violent. If it was a mere function of physiology, the gargantuan amounts consumed would have resulted in couples going back to bed after breakfast, priests groping worshippers instead of saying mass (that is, all the time instead of occasionally), dairy maids spending all day in the hay, wives forever in revolt against their husbands, and young men in perpetual rebellion against authority. Because drinking behavior and drunken comportment were learned behavior and comportment, people under the influence of alcohol on occasions behaved in an erotic and violent manner.

Just as drinking behavior was learned, so also were the appropriate time and place – the occasions – for erotic and violent behavior, so that couples attended their duties after breakfast, priests said mass, dairy maids milked the cows, wives obeyed their husbands, and young men went to work.

2
Women and Alcohol

Late in the fourteenth century a citizen of Paris wrote a set of instructions for his young wife. The instructions reeked with patriarchal authority and included advice on managing the household and avoiding vices such as the sin of gluttony. Personifying gluttony was a woman who had trouble rising in the morning in time for church as a result of a hangover. 'When she has with some difficulty risen, know you what be her hours? Her matins are: "Ha! what shall we drink? Is there nought left over from last night?" Then she says her lauds, thus: "Ha! we drank good wine yesterday evening." Afterwards she says her orisons, thus: "My head aches; I shall not be at ease until I have had a drink." '[1] The woman had the obvious symptoms of an alcoholic. Modern studies reveal that the rate of alcoholism is much higher among men than among women; in North America the rate for men is six times the rate for women.[2] The instructions of the citizen of Paris do not indicate a higher rate for women in traditional Europe; he was intent on making a point to his wife. They do indicate that women consumed alcohol.

Cross-cultural studies of drinking in modern societies have shown that both men and women drink in 109 of the 113 societies surveyed, while men drink in all 113. In almost half (53) men drink more than do women; women drink more than men in none.[3] In other words, while women consume alcoholic beverages, men usually consume them in greater quantities and as a result have greater alcohol-related problems than do women. For example, a survey of drinking in France revealed that 90 per cent of the men and 56 per cent of the women consumed alcoholic beverages in the preceding 24 hours. The men drank the equivalent of 68 cc of pure alcohol, the women 23 cc or about one third the consumption of men.[4] Obviously, the records from

traditional Europe do not permit such precision, but they do permit the conclusion that women drank, and in some places and at some times they drank amounts that many people would consider extraordinary. As noted in the previous chapter, wine, beer, or ale formed an essential part of most people's diets, both men and women. Despite patriarchal restrictions women were also participants in social jollification and ritual, and they used alcohol as a psychotropic and a medicine. Misogynistic literature could assert that all women were drunkards, just as it asserted that they were all sexually insatiable.[5] On balance, drinking by women in traditional Europe approximated the situation in modern France, that is, not all women drank, but most of them did, and men drank more than did women.

Abstinent and temperate women

Two groups of women in traditional Europe did not consume alcoholic beverages, holy women who led ascetic lives and poor women who could not afford to drink. The former abstained through choice, the latter through necessity; the former's abstention was absolute, the latter's variable. Two of the better known holy women of the late Middle Ages, St. Catherine of Siena and Margery Kempe of King's Lynn, abstained from wine. Catherine did so permanently, Margery for four years until her confessor directed her to drink.[6] Other female ascetics likewise refused to drink wine, but not because they considered it a sin.[7] Indeed, one of the miracles attributed to St. Catherine was refilling a cask of her father's favorite wine that she had emptied by giving it to the poor.[8] As explained by Caroline Walker Bynum, both male and female ascetics renounced wine as well as bread to prepare the way to consume the holy bread of the eucharist and to become Christ in mystical union.[9] Nuns did not normally follow the examples of these holy women and on occasion consumed the wine produced by their 'miracles'.[10] When the Archbishop of Rouen visited the convent of St.-Amand-de-Rouen in 1249 he decreed that the nuns receive 'a measure of wine … each according to her needs and in equal measure,' whatever that meant.[11] In some ale-drinking areas nuns had to be content with weak ale, while their male cohorts in monasteries quaffed the better strong ale.[12] Some nuns refused to be content with the inferior brew; for example, when the Bishop of Lincoln visited Godstow Abbey in 1445 a nun complained about the quality of the ale.[13]

The inability of the poor to consume alcoholic beverages varied over time and place. As mentioned in the last chapter, the pressure of

population on available resources during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries made ale a rare luxury for the poor peasant in England, while similar pressures increasingly restricted the drinking of French peasants during the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, some evidence shows that peasant women abstained for reasons other than poverty. The peasant woman encountered by John Locke during his travels in France indicated that both she and her husband drank water, but in the Creuse during the same period women were passive spectators of male drinking: 'If they accompany their husbands or their kinsmen to the tavern, it is to wait on them respectfully, but not to share their refreshment.'[14] The anonymous late sixteenth-century poem *Le monologue du bon vigneron* presented the views of a 'good vine-grower' who drank only his own wine 'and not water, which is only worth putting in soup.... I leave that for my wife to drink... Women, children, and many of the poor can easily spend their entire lives without wine and with only water.'[15] Early in the eighteenth century Edme Rétif de la Bretonne recalled that his mother just drank water that her husband had reddened 'only by an idea of wine.'[16] In other words, patriarchal constraints resulted in a third group of women who did not consume alcohol. In France such restrictions on women probably operated throughout the period. For example, at Montaillou early in the fourteenth century women did not drink much, and men often did not even offer them wine,[17] but documentation of similar restrictions is thin. Italy produces little evidence of such constraints, even though Lorenzo de' Medici's poem about a jolly group or *Symposium* of drinking men referred to 'the simple woman's water.'[18]

Drinking women

In spite of patriarchal restrictions, demonstrating that women drank alcohol in traditional Europe is comparable to demonstrating that they ate food. Rather than a case of *bibo ergo sum* it was a situation of *sum ergo bibo*. Records reveal that Cecily, the Duchess of York and the mother of Edward IV, enjoyed a drink of ale or wine each day after Evensong and a cup of wine one hour before going to bed,[19] that three ladies in waiting at the court of Henry VIII shared a gallon of ale each morning at breakfast,[20] that after her divorce from Henry VIII Catherine of Aragon had difficulty obtaining Spanish wine,[21] and that during the reign of Louis XIV ladies at the French court sampled five or six types of wine for breakfast.[22] Such anecdotes provide ample information on royal women and their entourages, but the records also

provide evidence on the drinking behavior of other women, including the poor. When the indefatigable traveler Fynes Moryson visited Paris early in the seventeenth century he seemed amazed by a poor woman begging for a cup of water, even more amazed that she drank it and merrily went on her way.[23] Charity was usually in the form of alcoholic beverages, not water. At Rome Margery Kempe begged meat and wine on behalf of a poor woman but drank the wine herself because it was sour and gave the woman her own good wine.[24]

The distribution of drinks during civic rituals and at funerals could provide the occasional indulgence for the poor, both men and women. For example, 1,440 gallons of ale were distributed at the funeral of Lady Margaret de Neville in 1319.[25] Similarly, the accounts of Eleanor de Montfort reveal that in 1265 during the month of May her household gave 147 gallons of ale to the poor.[26] On a more regular basis charitable institutions such as hospitals provided daily rations that included drink. An analysis of the distribution of wine or cider at French hospitals demonstrates a daily allowance of 0.35–0.75 liters.[27] The fourteenth-century regulations of the leper hospital at Sherburn, Durham, stipulated that, 'Every brother and sister is to have … one gallon of ale served so that each of them has a gallon a day.'[28] According to the records at St. Thomas' Hospital in London between 1570 and 1574 inmates had a normal ration of one quart of beer a day with an additional pint during summer,[29] and at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in 1687 it was three pints plus an additional pint of ale on Sundays and Thursdays.[30]

In his study of peasant diet in medieval Italy, Massimo Montanari argues that wine was not a luxury; the difference in the consumption of wine between the rich and the poor was a matter of quality and not quantity. Montanari thinks it impossible to determine the amount consumed by peasants during this period but nevertheless concludes that it was 'much more than that of today: two, three, four times more'.[31] Some precision is possible as a result of maintenance agreements established in return for the surrender of land by one peasant family to another. These agreements stipulated that the recipient provide the previous holder with a stated amount of food. In 1291 Margaret atte Green of Girton, Cambridgeshire, received enough barley to provide her with 2.6 pints of ale a day,[32] which is about the same amount promised to Emma del Rood of Cranfield, Bedfordshire, in 1438, although for some women the amount of land surrendered was so small that water had to suffice for the most part.[33] Elsewhere men made similar arrangements in their wills on behalf of their widows.

In the rural community of Santena in northern Italy the wills often stipulated 246 liters (five *brente*) of wine a year.[34] Less generous was the food pension for Aleata Viguier of Eguilles in Provence, who received an annual ration of only 173 liters, not of pure wine but of the low-alcohol watered wine known as *piquette*.[35]

Agricultural laborers including women often received food in lieu of wages. In 1410 the vine growers of St. Amant received two liters of wine a day, but the source does not indicate if women workers received the same amount.[36] At Toul in 1575, however, magistrates fixed the daily ration for workers in the vines at 2.5 liters for men, 1.25 liters for women, the equivalent of not quite two bottles.[37] That amount would not only supplement their diets but could also make them somewhat merry. The evidence indicates that peasant women drank enough to become drunk. In her examination of medieval English coroners' inquests Barbara A. Hanawalt found that the rate of drunken accidents was higher among peasant women than among peasant men. She cites the example of Albreda Foleweye who dropped her infant son, John, into a pan of hot milk.[38] According to some witnesses, Italian women (and men) seldom became drunk. Early in the eighteenth century a French Jesuit remarked that everyone in the countryside surrounding Bologna drank, man, woman, and child, but they remained sober and hence were beyond reproach.[39]

One of the few 'other voices' to comment on women's drinking was Moderata Fonte. In *The Worth of Women*, written about 1592 and published posthumously in 1600, she advocated wine in moderation,[40] and Christine de Pizan gave similar advice in *Le livre de la cité des dames* (1405): maidens 'should water their wine and make it a habit to drink little.'[41] On occasion testimony from foreigners indicated that French women did drink in moderation. The Italian humanist Petrarch observed that the wife of his overseer at his retreat near Avignon drank wine that resembled 'vinegar mixed with water.'[42] In the early seventeenth century Fynes Moryson noted that most French women and all virgins drank water.[43] Later in the century the Italian priest Sebastiano Locatelli made a similar observation; women did not drink wine, 'for in France, one of the greatest insults one can address to a woman is to tell her that her breath stinks of wine.'[44] Both Moryson and Locatelli immediately qualified their statements by claiming that women hid their drinking, and they both produced evidence that refuted their generalizations.

Jean-Louis Flandrin, in an article comparing different drinking customs in Europe, argues that the wine-drinking people of southern

Europe, like the Italians around Bologna, drank without becoming drunk, while the beer-drinking northerners never learned to hold their liquor. In Flandrin's analysis the French and especially French women followed the advice of Christine de Pizan and were moderate drinkers who wisely mixed water with their wine. To support his case he cites examples of French travelers in England who expressed amazement at the copious drinking by English women in contrast to the moderation of the French; in 1672 Jouvin de Rochefort asserted that, 'they drink as much as the men.' Flandrin also points to the above-mentioned observation by the Italian priest Sebastiano Locatelli.[45] Flandrin does not include, however, Locatelli's encounters with drunken French women on his journey back to Italy. Three tried to board his boat but fell into the water, one of these women vomited all over him, and a maid did the same over one of his traveling companions. When he came to the town of St. Maurice a fair was in progress, so he watched the dancing by girls with faces flushed with wine, and in the town of Sion he presented wine to the dancers, who distributed it to the old women first.[46]

Locatelli found no examples of *le bon vigneron*, who let his wife drink water. At Dijon in 1642 a vine grower's wife, obviously the wife of *le mauvais vigneron*, allegedly drank four to five pints of wine a day, enough to make her 'spoiled by wine.'[47] English travelers to France, just as French travelers to England, could express their amazement at the drinking by the French, both men and women. In his *View of France*, published in 1604, Robert Dallington noted the astonishing dining habits of the French, for in addition to their ordinary meals they 'make collations three or four times a day, a thing as usual with the women as men, whom you shall see in open streets before their doors, eat and drink together.'[48] If Flandrin is right in claiming that the French and especially French women mixed water with their wine, they were drinking a lot of water.

The old French feudal epic *Raoul de Cambrai* put a nice twist to any patriarchal constraints on drinking by noblewomen. When Raoul's mother urged him not to go to battle, Raoul ordered her to go to her room and drink rather than meddle in affairs.[49] Some four hundred years later the endurance of such attitudes might have been the cause for the comment by the widowed Madame de Sévigné that she would rather drink than remarry.[50] Even though the villa that provided the fourteenth-century setting for Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* had cellars stocked with precious wines unsuitable for 'sedate and respectable ladies,'[51] women at the top end of the social scale, like the poor and

the peasants, drank, and some of the same types of evidence permit a certain amount of precision regarding the amount.

Wealthy husbands in Piedmont left instructions in their wills on the amount and type of wine for their widows and dependents. In 1345 Opezzino della Rocchetta stipulated that the three women in his household receive a daily ration of 2.5 liters of pure wine and another 2.5 liters of *annacquato* or watered wine. More generous was the will of Gasparone Allione; in 1385 he left a supply of five liters of pure wine a day to three women.[52] In 1441 at Barjols in Provence the widow of Jean Quinson received an annual supply of 360 liters.[53] Household accounts similarly provide information that is somewhat precise. The accounts of the aristocratic Marguerite de Latour, Prioress of Toul, reveal that between 1410 and 1412 the women in her entourage consumed 0.75 liters of wine a day.[54] The household accounts for a Pisan notary in 1428 indicate that the family of four, including the husband, his mother, wife, and young male servant, consumed 1,820 liters of wine a year, or 455 liters each, the equivalent of over six and a half bottles of wine a day for the family. In the same year the members of the household of the wealthy merchant Giovanni Maggiolini, comprising the family and two slaves, each consumed 683 liters.[55] Finally, an example from England. According to the household books for Lord and Lady Percy of Northumberland in the early sixteenth century, each morning they shared a quart of beer and a quart of wine for breakfast, and Lady Margaret and Master Ingram in the nursery shared a quart of beer.[56]

To sum up, women obtained their alcoholic beverages in the form of charity, through bequests and wills, as wages, and in daily rations. They would normally drink in the private space of the home, more precisely in the kitchen with their meals in the presence of their family. Men also drank at home, but they had more opportunities than did women to drink in the public space of taverns and alehouses. Women had ready access to alcohol. Before the advent of beer, many English wives would either make their own ale or, in the more substantial households, oversee its production by servants. The more complicated process of brewing beer for domestic consumption was also a female task. When not making their own or overseeing its production, women would purchase it from neighboring alewives or alehouses. Even if men purchased the household's supply of alcohol, women often were responsible for managing the cellars. In a sermon delivered in 1427 San Bernardino warned bachelors that their wine would turn to vinegar without a wife to care for it.[57] The evidence from traditional Europe

presents a much different picture than the one from Republican Rome of families forbidding women to have access to drink.

The functions of alcohol

In addition to the daily drinking as part of their diet, women used alcoholic beverages for social jollification, and they were also participants in the many rites and rituals that featured ale, beer, or wine. Much of the material regarding this aspect of their drinking behavior is relevant to following chapters and will consequently feature there. Women took part in that typically male activity of drinking toasts to a person's health. In Paris, Sebastiano Locatelli and his traveling companions twice encountered aristocratic women who demanded that the Italians join them in toasting the King's health. One, whose 'astonishing beauty' and 'fair eyes threatened to inflame our hearts,' demanded, 'If you're no Spaniard, answer the toast; otherwise we shall take you for an enemy of His Majesty.'[58] In her letters to her daughter, Madame de Sévigné often mentioned the toasts drunk to her. For example, on 30 July 1689 she wrote of a dinner she attended at Vannes, 'and the wine of St. Laurence sparkled, and your health was drunk in a low voice between Monsieur and Madame de Chaulnes, the Bishop of Vannes and me.'[59] One of the customs associated with the Maypole festivities in some parts of England involved maids drinking healths on their knees.[60]

Drinking provided an opportunity for women to gather to enjoy each other's company, and the enjoyment of each other's company provided an opportunity for a drink. At York in 1341 a group of women came to the house of Alice de Edern to sample her ale.[61] In 1623 Elizabeth Wilson brought her produce to sell in London and then gathered with her friends for drinks at the King's Head before returning home.[62] Grace Field of Cunningham, Essex, admitted in 1628 to being occasionally merry and once drunk with her friends.[63] In 1649 a girl in Somerset took some malt to a local brewer and asked him to brew some beer with it so that she and her female friends could make merry by drinking it.[64] An example of drinking on festive occasions comes from a London parish in 1557, where on Easter Monday women played games before ending their day at a tavern over drinks and food.[65] Such occasions must have been commonplace, but the documentation exists only for those cases that resulted in accidents or criminal activity. Works of fiction reveal other possible occasions for women to drink together. Two seventeenth-century English ballads featured 'a crew of

merry girls' who gathered for a swim at a river. In one they brought cider and perry 'of each such a quantity, that was more than enough'. In the other,

> Nell a bottle of wine did bring
> with many a delicate dainty thing,
> Their fainting spirits to nourish and cherish.[66]

An English Christmas carol, likewise from the seventeenth century, told of girls singing through the streets with their wassail bowls in hopes of receiving a drink of ale.[67]

One event that was an almost exclusively female celebration and that has ample documentation was childbirth. Pictorial depictions of the births of the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist often indicate both the presence of women only and the consumption of alcohol by those present. The best example is Albrecht Dürer's engraving *The Birth of the Virgin*. Eleven women have gathered to assist St. Ann and to share drinks from three pitchers, one of which seems empty. One woman drinks directly from another pitcher, while another woman pours a drink for St. Ann from the third. One woman holds a cup in her hand, and another woman sits next to St. Ann's bed, her head resting on a corner of the bed, overcome with either exhaustion or drink. No men are present; they are off drinking elsewhere. When Rabelais' Gargantua was born, his father, Grandgousier, was 'drinking and kidding with the others.'[68] In England the onset of labor pains was the signal for all the woman's gossips, that is, her friends, to gather at her house. The gossips busied themselves preparing the mother's caudle, a special drink made of warmed wine or ale with sugar and spices. The purpose of the caudle was to maintain the mother's strength and spirits, but the other women sampled it, and visitors would receive a drink.[69] Several practices illustrate the importance of alcoholic beverages in childbirth. One was the tradition in many places of bringing food and drink to women in childbirth, so much so that in 1540 the Mayor of Chester tried to limit it by sumptuary legislation.[70] Another practice was for parish overseers of the poor to subsidize the drinking by supplying alcohol for poor women.[71] Lords, either through custom or generosity, sometimes presented drinks to their peasants. An example comes from the journal of the Norman nobleman Gilles de Gouberville, written between 1549 and 1563. He sent cider to his peasants and neighbors when they were giving birth.[72]

The drinking continued following the births in celebrations, baptisms, christenings, and churchings. Although new fathers were

expected to pay for the drinks, women quite often organized the events and did much if not most of the drinking.[73] Henry Machyn recorded in his diary what drinks were served at the christenings he attended in London in the middle of the sixteenth century: hippocras (spiced wine), muscatel, and French, Gascon, and Rhenish wine, always in 'great plenty.'[74] The churching of women, more formally the rite of 'Purification, Thanksgiving and the Churching of Women,' which was required of women after birth, was an occasion for so much drinking that authorities in several towns tried to limit it through sumptuary legislation.[75] The raucous drinking celebrations associated with birth could at times overshadow the Christian rituals. Men poked fun at the robust drinking by women on these occasions. According to the misogynistic anonymous author of *The Bachelor's Banquet* (1603), when the gossips gathered to celebrate a birth they tried the patience of the new father; 'down they sit and there spend the whole day in breaking their fasts … helping him away with his good wine.'[76] A late seventeenth-century ballad sang of the merriment following the birth of triplets; forty wives came to the gossips' feast and consumed so much ale that they drank ribald healths to the proud father:

> Here's to thee, neighbor!
> Is he not a lusty man, and fit for women's labor?[77]

The new mother did not have to limit her drinking to the celebrations, because according to medical opinion alcoholic beverages such as white wine, claret, walnut liqueur, and brandy helped her recuperate from the birthing experience.[78] Most physicians advised breastfeeding mothers to drink wine mixed with water or weak wine, but one advised them to abstain from both Venus and Bacchus.[79] During the actual birth, her caudle was primarily a medicine, and if no caudle was available, midwives supplied wine, ale, or distilled alcohol, called *aqua vitae* and *eau de vie* or the 'water of life' because of its supposed medicinal qualities. Medical opinion supported the midwives' use of alcoholic beverages as a medicine to ease the birthing process. Brandy supposedly helped 'ungrease' the child and free it from the womb.[80] When not drinking it straight, women often took alcohol in the form of a solvent for other medicinal ingredients. For example, in 1663 the physician of the Countess of Newcastle advised her to 'take the powder of cassia, saffron and borax' in 'a spoonful of burnt white wine' when she was 'in travail.'[81] Midwives seemed to go beyond the prescriptions of physicians in their use of *aqua vitae* to ease the pains of birth, however,

and their reputation for relying on it was so notorious that it became proverbial. In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (II.v) a forged letter worked with Malvolio 'like *aqua vitae* with a midwife.'

The frequent use of *aqua vitae* during childbirth might account for its becoming the preferred medicine for women, or at least the perception that women preferred to use it. In Thomas Deloney's novel *Thomas of Reading* (1600), a husband reacted to his wife's illness by sending for *aqua vitae*,[82] and in *The Bachelor's Banquet* the sick wife required the same.[83] The use of *aqua vitae* in childbirth and its subsequent use as a medicine might in turn have led toward the end of the seventeenth century to the consumption of spirits by women on a broad scale, especially by upper-class women. Thomas Tryon commented in 1682, 'of late years many English women have betaken themselves to the drinking of brandy and other spirits … so that she is nobody that hath not a bottle of it stand at her elbow.'[84] Early in the eighteenth century Edward Ward ridiculed the drinking of brandy by an aristocratic lady in his *Adam and Eve Stripped of Her Furbelows*: 'As soon as she rises she must have a salutary dram to keep her stomach from the colic, a whet before she eats to procure appetite, a plentiful dose for concoction, and to be sure a bottle of brandy under her bedside for fear of fainting in the night.'[85] Aristocratic ladies in France also gained a reputation for drinking spirits during the seventeenth century; they arrived at social functions drunk and required assistance on leaving supper parties.[86] When Martin Lister visited Paris in 1698 he ascribed the corpulence of French men and especially women to their drinking 'strong liquors.'[87] In the following year the comedy *Les comédiens de campagne* by Legrand made the point that the consumption of brandy by women was an entirely new development.[88]

Just as women in childbirth could use ale and wine in addition to *aqua vitae*, so also they could use ale and wine as medicine at other times. Moderata Fonte recommended sweet wine such as muscat as a medicine for the chest and the stomach as well as the use of wine as a solvent for herbs such as rosemary; 'it really is amazingly effective against all kinds of ailments.'[89] In this use of alcoholic beverages at times a fine line could exist between drink as medicine and drink as psychotropic, especially in the case of childbirth. A similar fine line applies to Madame de Sévigné's statement that champagne 'enlivens the heart,'[90] and her report on a woman who drank much wine before her execution.[91]

Men also poked fun at women for their supposed propensity to turn to the bottle when sick or under stress. In one of the Elizabethan jests

concerning a Master Hobson, his wife became so annoyed when her husband played a trick on her that 'for a month after she lay sick in her bed and would eat nothing but caudles made of muscadine.'[92] According to the misogynistic English poem *The Schole-House of Women* (first published in 1541), wives pretended to be sick once or twice a week so they could stay in bed and receive visits from and share drinks with their gossips.[93] When the nurse of Shakespeare's Juliet (III.ii) had to inform her that Romeo had killed her cousin Tybalt, the stressful situation made the nurse request some *aqua vitae* for herself. Then (IV.v) when she found Juliet lying deathlike on her bed she called,

> Alas, alas! Help, help! my lady's dead!
> O, well-a-day, that ever I was born!
> Some *aqua vitae*, ho! my lord, my lady!

The description of a poor shepherd's wife in a medieval miracle play demonstrated the psychotropic use of alcohol; with a house full of children she sought refuge in drink and laid sprawled in a drunken stupor in front of the fire.[94]

Playing with statistics

The use of statistics on aggregate consumption of alcohol in traditional Europe poses problems of interpretation and precision. According to Thomas Brennan, the use of such statistics fails to consider the social and cultural functions of drink. After issuing this warning Brennan nonetheless proceeds to an analysis of statistics.[95] I shall follow Brennan's example in both the warning and the analysis. Table 2.1 lists the daily per capita consumption of ale or beer over time and place in England. Table 2.2 lists the annual per capita consumption of wine in liters for French and Italian areas, households, and towns. The pints, quarts, and gallons are imperial measurements, slightly larger than their equivalent in the United States (1.201 US gallons equals 1 imperial gallon). A liter is equivalent of 1.056 US quarts or 0.880 imperial quart.

Almost all of these statistics come from secondary sources, although for some I have made a few of the calculations to achieve a degree of comparability. Household accounts often included aggregate consumption of alcoholic beverages that have no benefit for this exercise unless they stipulated the precise number of consumers in the household. The figures for most towns derive from a study of excise duties in taxation records to determine the amount of wine sold in the town each year.

Table 2.1 Daily consumption of ale or beer in England

Acton Hall, Suffolk (household of Alice de Bryene)	1412–13	1 gallon[96]
Berkeley (household of the Countess of Warwick)	1421	1.4 gallons[97] Plus one third gallon of wine
Earl of Northumberland (noble household)	1512	1.5 quarts[98]
Coventry	1520	1 quart[99]
London (household of seven people)	mid-1600s	3 quarts[100]
London	1700	1.4 pints of strong plus 0.8 pint of small beer[101]
England	1700	0.4 pint of strong plus 0.2 pint of small beer[102]

Table 2.2 Annual per capita consumption of wine in liters in France and Italy

Paris	early 1300s	193–200[103]
Bruges	early 1300s	100[104]
Florence	1338	248–93[105]
Venice (household of Bernardo Morosini)	1343–44	720[106]
Siena	1350–1400	415[107]
Volterra (each person above the age of three years)	1367	335[108]
Sicily (adult laborers)	1373	313[109]
Vic (noble household)	1380	730[110]
Florence	1395–1405	255[111]
Estimated ration for one adult at the Hospital of San Gallo		
Bologna	early 1400s	200[112]
Genoa	early 1400s	286[113]
Appennino modenese	15th century	407–509[114]
Murol (noble household)	1403–20	730[115]
Carpentras	1405	390
Carpentras	1406	210[116]

Table 2.2 (*continued*)

Pisa (household of the notary Ser Ludovico)	1428	455
Pisa (household of Giovanni Maggiolini)	1428	683[117]
Arles (noble household)	1429–42	800[118]
Nantes	15th century	100–200[119]
Florence (consumption estimated by Lodovico Ghetti)	*c.* 1455	288[120]
Lyon	*c.* 1550	*c.* 200[121]
Bologna	17th century	300–50[122]
Rome	1636	210[123]
Paris	1637	155[124]
Rome	1660	270[125]
Lyon	1680	200[126]

The next step is to calculate the annual per capita consumption by dividing the amount of wine by the population of the town. Of course, much wine escaped the attention of the tax collectors, and James B. Collins estimates that the tax records understated the consumption of wine by at least 25 per cent.[127] Late in the seventeenth century English excise records indicated a daily consumption of about 1 pint per person, but this might understate the consumption of ale and beer by 50 per cent. To help put these figures in context, in 1995 the annual per capita consumption of wine in France was 63.5 liters and in Italy 60.4; the daily per capita consumption of beer in the United Kingdom was not quite a half pint (102.7 liters per person per year), all of which is meager in comparison with the figures in Tables 2.1 and 2.2. In traditional Europe 60–3 liters of wine per year would be an indication of temperance. For example, the Venetian Alvise Cornaro (1475–1566) advocated a sober life in his *Discorsi intorno alla vita sobria*; he consumed 143 liters of wine a year, or a bit more than a half a bottle of wine a day.[128]

Only a few of the figures in the two tables are age specific, none is gender specific, while class specificity is difficult to establish because the noble and bourgeois household accounts could include provisions for slaves, servants, and retainers. The correspondence of Alessandra Strozzi, for example, mentioned a female slave who drank too much wine.[129] A safe surmise would be that the poor did not consume as much as the rest of society, even though they had occasions to do so.

David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber's analysis of the Florentine *catasto* or tax survey of 1427 reveals that 14 per cent of the population had no taxable assets.[130] This is about the same percentage of households (15 per cent) at Carpentras in the early fifteenth century that did not have provisions of wine.[131] Another surmise would be that the very young did not drink as much either. At Modena in the fourteenth century officials gave tax concessions to proprietors of taverns, inns, and hostels for the wine consumed by members of their families. The amount conceded for children between the ages of four and seven years was 204 liters per year, 306 liters for those over the age of seven. This seems excessive. An analysis of the Florentine *catasto* of 1427 reveals that 37 per cent of the population was aged fourteen and under,[132] so that those who were too poor to drink much and those who were too young to drink much constituted about 50 per cent of the Florentine population. This was probably typical; most towns in traditional Europe had a high proportion of poor and of children in their populations.

What follows is pure play. The tax records of a hypothetical town reveal an annual per capita consumption of 274 liters of wine, which is the equivalent of a modern, 0.75-liter bottle of wine a day. The table of annual per capita consumption of wine indicates that 274 liters would be a moderate amount. According to James B. Collins, the tax records understated the amount by 25 per cent, so accounting for this makes the total 342 liters. If women *never* consumed wine, the total for the male population is 684. If half the male population was either too young or too poor to consume much and therefore consumed 'only' half a liter a day, that would mean that the remaining males consumed 1,185 liters a year or 3.2 liters a day. By playing the same game with the Sienese figure of 415 liters per person per year, the result is over 5 liters a day.

The drunken stupor resulting from over 5 liters of wine a day could make many men incapable of exercising their patriarchal authority over their wives and daughters. In fact, one of the plays in the *Commedia dell'Arte* featured a comic boozing father whose daughter, Isabella, was in danger of becoming pregnant as a result of his lack of supervision.[133] The inescapable conclusion from these statistics and these games with statistics is that women drank a substantial amount of alcohol. To play another game, if women drank one third as much as men, the amount they drink in modern France, then in that hypothetical town women would account for 250 liters a year or not quite 0.7 liters a day, men 750 liters, or a bit more than 2 liters a day. To return to Isabella, if she became pregnant and continued to drink

0.7 liters a day, her child had a good chance of developing fetal alcohol syndrome. Both the anecdotal and statistical evidence presents the people of traditional Europe, men and women, as living in an alcohol-induced daze that began in the womb and continued until death, beginning each day with a drink of wine or beer and continuing until the end of day with a sleep caused by drunken stupor, that is, unless there exists a means of explaining it away.

Explaining it away

If people in traditional Europe drank ale, beer, or wine with a low alcohol content, this would moderate the image of excessive consumption derived from the statistical and anecdotal evidence. Peasants and the poor in France and Italy sometimes drank wine made by pouring water onto the pressed grapes and then fermenting this liquid. The resulting drink, known in France as *piquette* and in Italy by various names such as *mezzo vino*, *acquarello*, and *annacquato*, was very weak. The strength of the normal wine is impossible to determine with any degree of accuracy, but this has not prevented some historians from making guesses or assumptions about it. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie claims that the wine in Languedoc was 5 per cent alcohol,[134] Marcel Lachiver thinks that the French wines of the fourteenth century were often less than 7–8 per cent,[135] Thomas Brennan assumes that the wines of the *ancien régime* were 10 per cent,[136] G. Pinto proposes that the wines of Tuscany were 10–11 per cent,[137] while Jacques Revel merely states that the wines consumed at Rome in the seventeenth century usually had a low alcohol content.[138] This compares to the 11–13 per cent of modern table wines. The alcohol content of wine is determined by the grape yeast converting the sugar in the grapes into alcohol, so vineyards in the warmer south should have produced stronger wines than the vineyards of the north because of the high level of sugar. Under ideal conditions the maximum strength is about 15 per cent because at that level the alcohol has destroyed the yeast, but the traditional winemaking techniques were far from ideal. A safe conclusion would be that the wines were weaker than modern wines but probably not by much.

The strength of beer and ale was more straightforward than that of wine. To make beer or ale brewers added yeast to water and malted barley. Since the sugar content of malted barley is relatively invariable, to make a stronger drink the brewer used less water. Another method, similar to the making of *piquette*, was to pour water over the wort after removing the first brew and fermenting it. The resulting drink, called

small ale or small beer, had an alcoholic content comparable to *piquette*. During the Middle Ages most domestic brewing produced inferior ale that was weak, thick, and sweet, 'muddy, foggy, fulsome, puddle, stinking,' according to one thirteenth-century complaint.[139] Hopped beer was generally stronger than ale because the addition of hops helped complete the brewing process. The advice given to farmers in 1710 reveals that by then home brewers had mastered the techniques of making beer: 'make three sorts of beer, the … strongest for your own use, the second is what is called best beer, whereof each man ought to have a pint in the morning before he goes to work, and as much at night as soon as he come in…. Small beer they must also have in the field.'[140]

According to the *Northumberland Household Book*, in the early sixteenth century one quarter of barley produced 83 gallons of beer. Modern brewers reckon that one quarter should produce 76 gallons of strong or 150 gallons of mild beer, so the 83 gallons were on the strong side. G. G. Coulton calculated the figure for Coventry in Table 2.1 by using the ratios in the *Northumberland Household Book*, that is, one quarter to 83 gallons. Had Coulton used different ratios the results would have been less but stronger beer, or more but weaker beer. The amount of pure alcohol consumed would not have changed.[141] Possibly the best conclusion here is that medieval ale was often weaker and early modern beer was sometimes stronger than the modern drink, but Peter Clark suggests that in the early modern period probably a third of the drink was either small beer or small ale.[142]

Other types of evidence indicate that people in traditional Europe were not drinking just watered wine and small ale or beer. A catalogue of contemporary complaints of drunken behavior would fill a volume. A colorful example is from *The Anatomie of Abuses* by the Elizabethan Puritan Phillip Stubbes, who described the behavior of 'maltworms' at alehouses: 'how they stutter and stammer, stagger and reel to and fro like madmen, some vomiting, spewing, and disgorging their filthy stomachs; others pissing under the board as they sit.'[143] This and other complaints from late medieval and early modern England, France, and Italy indicate that people were consuming strong drink. Similarly, two poems, one Italian and one English, point out the gradual increase in drunkenness with each additional drink of alcohol. The Italian poem was written by the Florentine Domenico di Giovanni, called Il Burchiello (1404–49). The first drink sharpened his wits, but by the fifth his head was steaming. All the remaining seven drinks gradually increased what is colloquially known as 'Dutch courage' (with apologies

to the Dutch!) so that at the twelfth drink he would seize the great sultan himself.[144] The English poem was written by Francis Thynne and published in 1600. Thynne's first drink was pleasing to the palate, but the fifth heated the brain:

> The seventh makes thee like a horse
> that runs without a rein
> The eighth thy senses doth confound,
> and takes away thy brain.
> The ninth doth make thee like
> a swine to foul the place.
> The tenth doth make thee worse than mad
> and hated with disgrace.[145]

In short, the bulk of the evidence dealing with the strength of alcoholic beverages leads to the conclusion that they were not exceptionally weak drinks; this does not explain away the image of excessive consumption.

Other factors might help explain away the image. As mentioned in the introduction, the use of household accounts to determine the amount of drink consumed poses difficult problems of precision as a result of possible uncertainties regarding the amount consumed and the number consuming. The use of institutional accounts poses the same problems, and both household and institutional accounts create further uncertainties arising from questions on qualitative and quantitative comparability.[146] For example, was the gallon of ale shared by three ladies in waiting at the court of Henry VIII the same volume as the modern gallon, and was the ale strong or weak?

Spoilage would make some drinks unpalatable. Ale spoiled if it was not consumed within several days of brewing, but the addition of hops served as a preservative in beer. Wine presented more of a problem because it had to last until the next vintage, and wines were prone to spoil, especially as a result of the unsophisticated winemaking technology and before the widespread use of the cork and the bottle. Rather than discard undrinkable wine people tried to salvage it by various means. Gervase Markham's seventeenth-century guidebook, *The English Housewife*, devoted 24 of the 38 paragraphs in the chapter on wines to repairing spoiled or otherwise undrinkable wine; included were remedies for foul, faint, ill, hard, and sour wines.[147]

Other factors might help explain away the special circumstances of women. Perhaps the women who received rations of ale or wine in wills and maintenance agreements or as wages sold them to buy food

rather than drank them. This was not likely because the wills, maintenance agreements, and wages also included the provision of other food. Perhaps wealthy women gave their drink to the poor. Perhaps their fathers, husbands, brothers, or uncles confiscated it for themselves. As in cases such as *le bon vigneron* and the father of Rétif de la Bretonne mentioned above, patriarchal authorities at times placed restrictions on drinking by women, and at times women accepted the view that they should be moderate drinkers. On the whole, however, the restrictions reduced rather than eliminated the drinking. Reduced by how much? If men drank three times what women drank, women could still be drinking a substantial amount.

Another factor that might help explain away the image of excessive consumption is fetal alcohol syndrome. Despite the long history of beliefs that alcohol harmed the fetus, the modern description of the problem did not occur until 1973, when two scientists, K. L. Jones and D. W. Smith, described it and coined the term fetal alcohol syndrome.[148] The more important effects of drinking during pregnancy are (1) a significant decrease in the weight of the fetus, leading to increased and significant perinatal mortality, that is, mortality during the last five months of pregnancy and the first month after birth, (2) mental deficiency among the survivors, resulting in an average IQ of 70, and (3) abnormal physical and especially facial features. Early research indicated that only alcoholic women endanger their children, but subsequent research suggests that an average of only two drinks per day can result in a significant decrease in body weight, and a good weight at birth is an important factor in determining an infant's survival. The authors of one report conclude that, 'there is no known safe dose of alcohol, [and] there does not appear to be a safe time to drink.'[149] If women were drinking substantial amounts of alcohol in traditional Europe, then evidence of the fetal alcohol syndrome should exist. As it happens, historical demographers have demonstrated the very high rate of infant mortality in traditional Europe, with one in four or even one in two children not surviving until the age of five. Perhaps a portion of this mortality resulted from fetal alcohol syndrome. On the other hand, the distinctive facial features, especially the upper lip, should be visible in portraits, but an examination of thousands of contemporary paintings has not yielded significant examples of them.[150]

Of all the factors that might help explain away the image of the excessive consumption of alcohol one of the most substantial relates to the primitive level of agricultural technology. The figures from Table 2.2

indicate that towns such as Bologna consumed large amounts of wine. With an annual per capita consumption of 300–50 liters and a population of 60,000 in the seventeenth century, Bologna would require an annual supply of 18–21 million liters of wine. Bologna's current population is 600,000; if it consumes the modern Italian average of 60.4 liters of wine per person per year, then 36 million liters would supply the city. The high productivity of modern agriculture makes the 36 million a much easier task than the 18–21 million. One possible explanation is that Bologna – and all the other towns in traditional Europe – was draining the wine from the countryside. As noted above, in the seventeenth century the inhabitants of French towns consumed more wine than those in the countryside, and this might also have occurred in Italy at the same time, but the French Jesuit who traveled in the area surrounding Bologna early in the eighteenth century claimed that every man, woman, and child drank wine. In the late Middle Ages, according to the already cited judgement of Massimo Montanari, Italian peasants drank two to four times more than they do today, and as noted in Table 2.2, during the fifteenth century the annual per capita consumption of the residents of the rural area of Appennino modenese was between 407 and 509 liters of wine. If people in traditional Europe were consuming the amounts of wine, beer, and ale indicated by Tables 2.1 and 2.2, they were devoting a considerable proportion of their agricultural resources to the production of alcoholic beverages.

Another factor that might help explain away the image is the method of drinking. Returning to Thomas Brennan's critique of the use of statistics on aggregate consumption, the social, cultural, and dietary functions of drink in traditional Europe could prevent the problems associated with the heavy solitary drinker. If every occasion called for a drink, every occasion likewise had standards of drinking behavior. The consumption of alcoholic beverages with meals mitigated the effects of alcohol and hence reduced the incidence of drunkenness. The drinking culture of modern Italy does not lead to drunkenness, partly because 'the average Italian rarely eats without drinking or drinks without eating.' Other features of Italian drinking culture noted by scholars are the early introduction of children to the consumption of wine, contempt for drunks, and a take-it-or-leave-it approach to wine, that is, the ability to say, 'no.'[151] Nonetheless, such a drinking culture and all the factors considered above are not successful in explaining it away.

Although much of the evidence in this chapter pulls in different directions, most of it supports a conclusion that during both the late

medieval and early modern periods women drank in England, France, and Italy. Attempts to explain away the figures on the aggregate consumption of alcohol modify the figures but not significantly. As in modern France, not all women drank, but the majority did, and, although men consumed more than women, women drank substantial quantities. Patriarchal restrictions might have prevented some women from drinking and reduced the drinking of others. The answers to the questions how many women and reduced by how much must remain tentative, but the evidence points to not many and not much. More effective than patriarchal restrictions in limiting the consumption of alcohol were the religious convictions of some women and the poverty of many others. Even the poor could drink during the rites, festivals, and rituals that were a feature of life in traditional Europe and that featured the drinking of alcoholic beverages.

3
Sex and Alcohol

As Mrs. Knowles complained to Dr. Johnson, 'the mason's wife, if she is ever seen in liquor, is ruined; the mason may get himself drunk as often as he pleases with little loss of character.'[1] The ruin resulted not just from the liquor itself but from the association between liquor and sex. To preserve her honor a woman should never become drunk, better yet drink little, best of all never drink. In contrast to the effects of drink on the promiscuous woman, Bacchus never had power over the virtuous maiden in Chaucer's 'Physician's Tale.'[2] In short, two different images of women emerged that were dependent on the quantity of alcohol consumed: the good image of the woman who drank a little and the bad image of the woman who drank too much and as a consequence gained a reputation for unbridled sexuality.[3] Studies of differential drinking in modern societies demonstrate the existence of a double standard in appropriate drinking behavior. Men suffer a loss of honor if they are poor drinkers, if they cannot hold their liquor, if they are easy drunks; they demonstrate their macho virility by consuming large amounts. Nonetheless, they do not lose as much honor as do women who drink a lot or become drunk. Such women gain a reputation for their lack of self-control, which leads to sexual promiscuity and in turn leads to the loss of respect.[4]

As noted in the introduction, the connection between sex and alcohol had its roots in the ancient world and continues to the present. In the Western tradition the connection has become so much a matter of course that people believe it results from the physiological effects of drinking. The conventional medical view, as expressed by a former spokesperson for the American Medical Association, is, 'As far as sexual behavior is concerned, it is well known that alcohol reduces the inhibitions of individuals and removes the controls.'[5] Recent research,

however, has found no physiological correlation between the consumption of alcohol and sexual behavior, which ranges among alcoholic women from frigidity to promiscuity. The evidence indicates that social, cultural, and even psychological rather than physiological factors influence the relationship between drink and sex. For example, both men and women *expect* alcohol to affect their sexual behavior. Rather than drink affecting sexual behavior, the latter can influence the former, for women with sexual dysfunctions tend to drink more than do other women.[6] An obvious exception to this is the woman so overcome with drink that she passes out and is incapable of resisting advances. Michel de Montaigne told the story of a widow who became pregnant to her great surprise. She arranged an announcement at church a promise to marry the person who would admit to the deed. A young farmhand thereupon confessed that he had found her so drunk and 'in so indecent a posture that he had been able to enjoy her without waking her. They are still alive and married to each other.'[7] Of course, had the farmhand been that drunk the results would have been quite different.

The symbolism of alcohol

In one of Leon Battista Alberti's *Dinner Pieces* a widow became pregnant after an affair with a young lover. When the lover spurned her, she attempted to kill herself and the unborn child by fasting. An old woman visited her and gave her the inspiration to live, just as the lover returned. The story concluded with the old woman proclaiming, 'Let us drink, laugh, and love.'[8] The story encapsulated the connection that existed in traditional Europe between alcohol and life, sexuality, fertility, and regeneration. This symbolic connection predated Christianity; the Roman god Liber, often called by the Greek names Dionysus or Bacchus, was both the god of wine and the god of fertility, while Isis, the wife of the Egyptian god of fertility, Osiris, was the inventor of alcoholic beverages.[9] Within Christianity the regenerative symbolism of alcohol increased as wine attained potent symbolic force. Christ likened the Jewish people to a vineyard, himself to a vine, and his father to a vinedresser, and the wine of the eucharist became the blood of Christ that could give eternal life to Christians.[10] As described by the English monk John Lydgate, Jesus was the grape and the vine,

> Which on the cross for our redemption
> In a [wine]press pressed with great pain,

> Copiously the red liquor ran down,
> Thy precious blood was price of our ransom.[11]

In the thirteenth century Matthew of Rievaulx wrote that the eucharistic wine came from 'the grape of a virgin's womb.'[12] The symbolic connection between Jesus and wine reached its erotic culmination in the words of the French theologian Jean Gerson: 'In [Christ] is the true vine, whose wine generates virgins and not only generates them but impregnates them.'[13]

The Christian symbolism of wine as a regenerative, procreative, and erotic force continued in ritual and literature. In the Venetian festival of The Twelve Marys on 30 January young men went in procession to the church of Santa Maria Formosa, where they distributed sweets and wine to young women. On the following day the young women also received sweets and wine at the homes of twelve wealthy citizens. As interpreted by Åsa Boholm, both ceremonies were procreative rituals in which the giving and receiving of food and wine represented 'a sexual union between the groups of young men and the girls.'[14] The regenerative symbolism of wine flowed to other alcoholic drinks, even cider. In Devonshire on the eve of Epiphany, farmers gathered around their apple trees and toasted them three times with:

> Here's to thee, old apple tree,
> Whence thou may'st bud, and when thou may'st blow!
> And whence thou may'st bear apples enow!
> Hats full! – caps full!
> Bushel-bushel sacks full,
> And my pockets full too! Huzza!

Walter Minchinton interprets the ritual as a fertility rite with the phallic apple tree at its center.[15]

As in ritual so in literature: the regenerative, procreative, and sexual power of alcohol, especially wine, was a frequent literary motif in medieval works such as the *Carmina Burana*.[16] In the twelfth-century *Contest of Wine and Water*, wine boasted to water,

> By my force the world is laden
> With new births, but boy or maiden
> Through thy help was never bred.[17]

The literary banquets or symposia of the humanists celebrated wine for its regenerating and liberating qualities. As noted by Michel Jeanneret

in *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*, drinking and eating symbolized 'the great cycle of fertility.'[18] For Boccaccio wine was a servant of Venus,[19] for Chaucer it was 'the servant of love and sensuality,'[20] for Rabelais it was a reviving and rejuvenating force that, with bread, gave life to both body and soul,[21] and for Shakespeare it was the symbol of desire and lust.[22]

In his *Vita Nuova* Dante wrote that whenever he saw his beloved Beatrice, 'I tremble in this drunken state.'[23] Another literary motif that drew on the symbolism of alcohol was drinking and drunkenness as a metaphor for love. For twelfth-century troubadours love could make a man drunk 'without even tasting a glass or a bottle.'[24] Chaucer's contemporary John Gower confessed in his *Confessio Amantis* that he was drunk with love. He was drunk with thoughts of his beloved in her absence and drunk by looking at her in her presence; the more he drank the more thirsty he became. Sobriety would only come when he was able finally to drink the forbidden draught.[25] In his play *Il geloso* (1544) Ercole Bentivolgio compared love and drink by juxtaposing the comments of a lover and a drinker:

> *Fausto*: Ah, my Livia, that I might be near to you.
> *Raspo*: Ah, cask of Greek wine, that I might be near to you.
> *Fausto*: That these eyes of mine might look on your beautiful eyes and be gratified by your serene light.
> *Raspo*: That I might drink a draught to my pleasure, so I might satisfy this great thirst.[26]

Less sophisticated than Bentivoglio's witty dialogue was the seventeenth-century English song that declared a lover's lips were two bowls of claret, her breasts two bottles of white wine, and her eyes two cups of canary.[27]

As Sidney Mintz has said, everything can be a substitute for sex.[28] Everything can likewise be a metaphor for sex, but the frequent use of the vine, wine, and other types of alcohol as metaphors for sex in traditional Europe derived from their symbolic connection to sexuality and regeneration. According to the fifteenth-century author of *Les xv joies de mariage*, after an affair making love to your husband was like drinking bad wine.[29] In a story by Matteo Bandello (1480–1562), the first lover of the sixteen-year old Pandora of Milan 'sucked out the sugared juice of that grape.'[30] The male grape pickers became elm trees in Luigi Tansillo's sixteenth-century poem *Dal vendemmiatore*, while the female pickers became grapevines. In reference to the practice of

trellising vines on trees, the men proclaimed that if the trees did not hold the vines in their arms the grapes would not be worth picking. The poem ended with the plea, 'you be the vines, let us be the elms.'[31] Pierre Gringore's farce *Raoullet Ployart* (1512) made similar use of a vineyard. Raoullet was a vinegrower whose wife complained that he had not been doing enough work on her vine; 'my vine spoils for lack of plowing.' If Raoullet was not capable his wife would get his servant to do it.[32]

One author used sex as a metaphor for breaching a barrel of wine; another used breaching a barrel as a metaphor for sex. In George Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* (1706), a man greeted his friend with an offer of a drink from a special, unopened barrel of wine: 'I reserved the maidenhead of it for your welcome to town.'[33] John Aubrey's *Brief Lives* included the story of a handsome young apprentice whose master had died. The widow called him into the cellar one day and asked him to 'breach the best butt in the cellar for her … His mistress after married him.'[34] Other drinks beside wine could become sexual metaphors. A late sixteenth-century ballad featured Mother Watkins ale:

> He took her by the middle small,
> And gave her more of Watkins ale …
> Her color waxed wan and pale
> With taking much of Watkins ale.[35]

Mother Watkins ale was semen. Another ballad told of a shepherd high on a hill who encountered a pretty maid passing by:

> Thou shalt taste of my bottle before thou dost go,
> fa la.
> Then he took her and laid her upon the ground,
> fa la.[36]

Conception and pregnancy

The procreative and sexual symbolism of alcohol was reflected in medical opinion on cures for barrenness and impotence and on aids in conception. According to Arnald of Villanova hippocras was a marvelous cure-all that helped women conceive.[37] John Gerard's *Herball* (1597) recommended brandy for impotent men; after all it was the water of life,[38] while others thought it prevented barrenness in

women.[39] Andrew Boorde's *Breviary of Helthe* (1547) recommended 'good' drinks for women and 'restorative' drinks for men to help them procreate, but for men who had trouble getting an erection his versions of Viagra were hippocras and elegant, bastard, and Gascon wines. In addition to good drinks, women should take the powdered testicles of a boar with wine.[40] Boorde might have obtained that cure from a fifteenth-century English handbook on gynecology that stated a woman must drink the powder with good wine.[41] For other cures alcohol served as a solvent. Under a heading entitled 'how to make a woman conceive a child if God wills,' the handbook suggested: '1 handful each of calamint, catmint, fennel, pellitory, savory, hyssop, artemisia, rue, wormwood, anise, cumin, rosemary, thyme, pennyroyal, and mountain origanum, a gallon of wine, 6 gallons of water, boil them, and have her take this medicine.'[42] Far simpler were William Harrison's suggestion that saffron steeped in wine 'encouraged' procreation,[43] and Nicholas Culpeper's advice that carrots either taken in wine or boiled in wine helped conception, while asparagus and both clary and wild clary provoked lust when taken with wine.[44] Pietro Mattioli (1501–77) recommended the powdered penis of a stag and black pepper with malmsey wine for 'a man whose conjugal ardor has cooled.'[45] Significantly, wine was seldom recommended as a solvent in recipes for contraception.[46] Boorde even recommended washing the penis in white wine as a cure for venereal disease,[47] and a remedy for syphilis was baths of wine and herbs.[48]

Such were the opinions of the learned, and popular opinion concurred. The satirical *Sermon joyeux des quatre vents* (about 1500) credited wine with making people produce babies.[49] A specially made ale from Anthisne near Liège had a reputation for its procreative and aphrodisiac properties. According to contemporary testimony, 'François de Anthisne lived well and fathered ten children, thanks to partaking frequently but never to excess of this mixture.'[50] An early seventeenth-century story about Mother Bunch celebrated the special qualities of her ale in making maids pregnant: 'being asked who got the child, they answered they knew not, only they thought Mother Bunch's ale and another thing had done the deed, but whosoever was the father, Mother Bunch's ale had all the blame.'[51] Cock ale, usually made by boiling a rooster in ale, had a celebrated reputation in seventeenth-century England for restoring waning sexual powers in men.[52] The growing popularity of coffee houses in London during the second half of the seventeenth century led to the complaint that, unlike ale and beer, coffee made men impotent. Tracts such as *The Ale-wives Complaint Against*

the Coffee-Houses (1675) and *The Womens Petition Against Coffee* (1674) blamed coffee for turning men into eunuchs. *The Wandering Whores Complaint for Want of Trading* (1663) proclaimed, 'the coffee-houses have dried up all our customers like sponges.'[53]

Belief in the regenerative and procreative effects of alcohol was also evident in medical opinion concerning cures and diet during pregnancy. In *The Diseases of Women with Child* (translated into English by Hugh Chamberlen in 1672), François Mauriceau encouraged women with morning sickness to drink wine diluted with water.[54] Just as alcohol was used as a solvent in recipes to help conception so it was used to prevent miscarriages. Andrew Boorde's recipes used red and white wine, 'wine elegant,' and stale ale,[55] while Culpeper recommended wine with snakeweed, and beer with tansy.[56] Jacques Guillimeau suggested toast dipped in red wine with powdered roses and cinnamon, not to eat but to put on the woman's navel.[57] Medical opinion was almost unanimous that the diet of pregnant women should include alcohol. For example, the advice in Thomas Raynalde's translation of Eucharius Roeslin's *Birth of Mankind* was 'to drink pleasant and well savoring wine.'[58] Disagreement existed, however, on the appropriate strength of the brew. The advice of the physician to the Duchess of Bourbon, daughter of Charles VII, in 1480 was: 'The proper drink is white wine or red wine of thin consistency with a bouquet and notably hot and dry. And let her above all shun the use of water.'[59] On the other hand, both Mauriceau and Scévole de Sainte-Marthe (*Paedotrophia*, 1584) argued that pregnant women should mix water with their wine.[60] To mix water with wine was to drink it in moderation, and many recommended a reasonable or moderate amount of alcohol. John Locke, for example, favored small beer and disapproved of spirits.[61]

As stated above, medical opinion was *almost* unanimous in recommending alcohol; many physicians counselled moderation, while others issued dark warnings about the consequences of excessive drinking for the unborn child. Sometimes these authors addressed their warnings to men. Early in the fifteenth century Giovanni Morelli noted in his *Ricordi* that a man should not be drunk when his children were conceived or they would be weak, stunted, or (possibly even worse) female.[62] According to a seventeenth-century Italian treatise men who drank red wine would produce sons who were strong but wild, with the wits of an animal.[63] Some authors included women in their warnings. An early English medical tract warned pregnant women against drinking until they were drunk.[64] In *I libri della famiglia* Leon Battista Alberti

wrote, 'The doctors say, and they give ample reasons, that if a mother or father are low and troubled because of drink … it is reasonable to expect the children to manifest these troubles. Sometimes, in fact, they will be leprous, epileptic, deformed, or incomplete in their limbs and defective.'[65] Robert Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, first published in 1621, cited ancient Greek authorities on the harmful effects of alcohol on the unborn to make a similar argument: 'If a drunken man get a child, it will never likely have a good brain … . One drunkard begets another … . Foolish, drunken, or hair-brained women most part bring forth children like unto themselves, morose and languid.'[66] Given modern medical knowledge of fetal alcohol syndrome, much of this was good advice, but the authors deserve congratulations for their fortuitous juxtapositions rather than praise for their perspicacity. Burton reported that the condition of a man who went reeling and staggering all of his life resulted from his pregnant mother seeing a drunken man reeling in the streets.[67]

Variations on Lot and Terence

The biblical account of Lot's incest and Terence's observation on the connection between Venus and Ceres and Bacchus were recurring themes in the observations on the effects of alcohol on sexual behavior. All but two of the authors who cited Lot condemned alcohol for turning virtuous men into sexual maniacs. One of two exceptions was the irreverent François Villon (1431–?); in *Le testament* he introduced to Lot 'the soul of good late Master Jean Cotart,' a great drinker and a good drinking companion. After mentioning Lot's incestuous relations with his daughters, Villon assured him, 'It's not to reproach you that I bring it up.'[68] Those who cited Terence were usually praising alcohol for its erotic stimulation, but several authors used Terence in their arguments against drunkenness. The twelfth-century Augustinian canonist Pierre the Chanter (died 1197) cited both Lot and Terence in describing the links between gluttony, drunkenness, and sexual vice.[69] In *I libri della famiglia* Leon Battista Alberti quoted Terence when warning young men against 'an abundance of rich meals.'[70] Nicolas de La Chesnaye likewise cited both Lot and Terence as well as Valerius Maximus in *La condamnation de banquet* (about 1503–5). La Chesnaye produced a rambling attack on the evils of drunkenness that condemned wine for, among many other things, encouraging and promoting lust, sensuality, and carnality.[71] In the sixteenth century Helisenne de Crenne used Terence to insult the inhabitants of an entire town in

one of her 'invective letters': 'Being submerged in vicious idleness, you surprisingly go beyond Epicurearn pleasures, claiming Venus, Bacchus, Ceres as your earthly gods.'[72] Finally, Roger Edgeworth quoted Terence and Valerius Maximus in his sixteenth-century sermon but replaced the story of Lot with a quotation from Paul's letter to the Ephesians (5:18): 'Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery.'[73]

The authors who cited Lot's story form a varied group, ranging from the poets William Langland and Chaucer to obscure preachers and an anonymous misogynist, but they usually used the story to condemn the sin of gluttony and to support moderation in the use of alcohol. In *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, for example, Langland made the following point:

> And drink for when you are dry, but drink within reason;
> Beware of being the worse for it when you should work.
> For Lot, when he was alive, from his love of drink
> Did things to his daughters that pleased the devil.[74]

Chaucer used the story in 'The Pardoner's Tale' for precisely the same reason:

> Witness the Bible, which is most express,
> That lust is born of wine and drunkenness.
> Look how the drunken and unnatural Lot
> Lay with his daughters, though he knew it not.

Chaucer continued by cursing gluttony.[75] An Elizabethan 'Homily against Gluttony and Drunkenness' followed the earlier tradition, with the author threatening God's vengeance on those who abused alcohol and condemning alcohol for bringing men to 'filthy fornication … whoredom and lewdness of heart.'[76] The other exception to using the example of Lot to condemn excessive drinking was the sixteenth-century misogynistic poem entitled *The Schole-house of Women*. The author used the biblical account to condemn female sexuality and to blame Lot's daughters for their duplicity in getting him drunk to take advantage of him. They

> Made him drunk, and so at last
> Meddled with him, he sleeping fast.[77]

Another factor that these citations of Lot had in common was their gender specificity; men were doing the drinking, and their drinking

was resulting in their sexual misbehavior. The authors were directing their warnings at men, and this applied as well to Leon Battista Alberti's use of Terence to warn young men. Men of all conditions received warnings, the young and the old, the priests and the princes. An anonymous seventeenth-century English pamphlet warned young gentlemen traveling abroad that, 'intemperate drinking is the … fuel of all filthy lusts.'[78] Dante's friend Brunetto Latini (died 1294) directed his comments to old men. He wrote in *Il tesoretto* that gluttony and drunkenness led to lechery:

> An old man who is encumbered
> By this filthy taint
> Truly sins doubly.[79]

In 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council encouraged temperance among clerics to keep them from committing sins of the flesh,[80] while in the fifteenth century Jean Meschinot's *Les lunettes des princes* issued a stern warning to princes:

> For drunkenness leads to lust,
> Whether in the father, the son, or the son-in-law.
> Through this sin life is shortened,
> And death eventually occurs.[81]

The warnings of many authors were not gender specific; they attacked the effects of excessive drinking on lascivious sexual behavior without directing their comments to either men or women. Thomas Stubbes, who was infamous for his attacks on May Day celebrations and other aspects of Elizabethan popular culture, condemned excessive drinking for provoking lust.[82] At about the same time Carlo Borromeo, as Archbishop of Milan, was attacking the May Day celebrations because the drinking and drunkenness of the day led to debauchery 'with an infinity of other disorders that dishonor the name and the religion of Jesus Christ.'[83] The warning of the fifteenth-century Englishman John Coke was not gender specific but beverage specific; in contrast to the wholesome English beverages of ale, beer, mead, cider, and perry, the French drank wine, which made them 'prone and apt to all filthy pleasures and lusts.'[84] For the fifteenth-century Frenchman Jean Molinet wine in general was not the culprit but one particular wine: 'The wine of Reims is a wine of lechery.'[85]

The number of authors who made negative comments about the effects of alcohol on sexual behavior were equally divided between those who addressed drinking by women, those who addressed drinking by men, and those whose comments were gender neutral. Many of the authors who focused their attention on women used the occasion to make misogynistic statements on the female condition. The difference in their approach is subtle but significant. The story of Lot was a warning to men to curb their drinking; alcohol was the evil agent leading otherwise virtuous men astray. In the references to women and alcohol the agent was not so much the alcohol but women, as a result of their weakness, their vulnerability, and their perverse nature. A good example is *Le chastoiement des dames*, composed in the thirteenth century by Robert de Blois. The author's cynical warnings to women focused on those aspects of their behavior which earned them poor reputations, namely, their conversation, their attendance at church, their appearance, and their conduct during banquets. Rather than discreet and gentlemanly warnings the result was a commentary on female behavior:

> And she who gluts more than her fill
> Of food and wine soon finds a taste
> For bold excess below the waist!
> No worthy men will pay his court
> To lady of such lowly sort.[86]

Chaucer returned to the connection between sexuality and alcohol in 'The Wife of Bath's Prologue.' This woman with attitude complained that lechers knew from experience that a drinking woman had no defense against their advances.[87] San Bernardino of Siena advised widows against drinking well, also eating well and sleeping well (they should sleep fully clothed on straw), or else they would 'come to a bad end.'[88] A seventeenth-century ballad proclaimed that when a woman was drunk 'all keys will fit her trunk.'[89] A misogynistic pamphlet entitled *La mechancete des filles* (1736) echoed the sentiments of the Wife of Bath; women devoted to drink were easy to seduce.[90] A French proverb summed up the attitude of many of these authors:

> A wanton and drunken woman
> is not mistress of her body.[91]

In contrast to these authors with their misogynistic sentiments were those who simply wanted to warn women of the consequences of

drink. The early fifteenth-century English poem entitled *How the Goodwife Taught her Daughter* warned that, when offered good ale,

> Moderately take you thereof that no blame befalls you,
> For if you are often drunk, it reduces you to shame.[92]

Some of the warnings were vague, almost as if respecting the modesty of the women to whom they were directed. The fifteenth-century drama *Le mystère de la résurrection* stated,

> a woman who drinks too much …
> whether widowed or married,
> often loses her good name.[93]

Christine de Pizan's advice in *Le livre de la cité des dames* was that a maiden must 'be careful never to be seen affected by too much wine, for she who has such a fault would be expected to have no other good,' but Pizan was explicit enough to note that superfluous food and drink could stimulate lechery.[94] In the sixteenth century Guillaume de La Taysonnière made the connection more explicit in his *L'attiffet des damoizelles*; too much wine could make women throw their honor to the wind for it carried 'the torches of Venus.'[95]

For every author who condemned the link between drink and sex another praised alcohol, and especially wine, for its aphrodisiac properties. Those who favorably quoted Terence included the Florentine humanist Marsilio Ficino, the sixteenth-century French poet Clément Marot, and François Rabelais in the third book of *Pantagruel*.[96] Others put their own twist on the famous lines. When the severe winters of 1543 and 1544 damaged vineyards in many places in France, the female poet Pernette du Guillet wrote that, 'Venus will be cold during these two winters.'[97] Joachim du Bellay's poem in praise of Bacchus proclaimed that without him the flame of Venus would only be half as passionate.[98] Other authors offered the praise without bothering with the words from Terence. According to Remy Belleau (1528–77) in his poem on the vintage, Bacchus sometimes seduced otherwise reluctant girls,[99] and a seventeenth-century English ballad praised Bacchus for opening 'every woman's door.'[100] Rather than praising Bacchus, a twelfth-century poem proclaimed that Venus poured damnation on sober souls.[101] The beneficial effects that flowed from alcohol's liberating influence were especially a feature of popular literature. According to a song from the late Middle Ages, ale would 'make the tinker bang

his wife.'[102] The English ballad *The Cup of Old Stingo*, dating from the middle of the seventeenth century, praised stingo, that is, strong beer, for making a parson kiss a pretty wench.[103] Earlier in the century *The Man in the Moon Drinks Claret* sang the virtues of wine for making an old man lusty,[104] while a saying first noted in 1639 asserted, 'Wine makes old wives wenches.'[105]

A popular variation on the erotic effects of drink was the amorous effects; it made people fall in love, and the poets accordingly sang its praises. From the twelfth century came:

> Bacchus wakes within my breast
> Love and love's desire.[106]

According to the Italian version of the Round Table, a knight admitted that he fell in love; 'it was the wine that made me do it.'[107] In the fourteenth century Boccaccio in *The Life of Dante* noted that wine could make both young and old fall in love.[108] In the seventeenth George Etherege in *She Would if She Could* called champagne a love potion.[109] Significantly, the love potion that made Tristan and Iseult fall passionately in love with each other despite their best intentions came in a cask of wine or a cask of mead, depending on the version.[110]

Jean Bodel (died 1210) told the story of a merchant's wife from Douai who warmly welcomed her husband back from a trip lasting three months. She looked forward to spending the night in his arms, but the meal she prepared included too much wine that promptly put him to sleep.[111] Just as disagreement existed on the beneficial effects of alcohol for conception and pregnancy, so also not everyone agreed on the aphrodisiac properties of drink. Four of the great literary figures of the sixteenth century produced dissenting points of view. Pietro Aretino (1492–1556) confessed that he was a glutton for love, a bigger glutton than those who sat all day at the table.

> They swill down wine, while I, my turtle-dove,
> Choose milk and find I am content with it.[112]

François Rabelais was more pointed in his comments than was Aretino. He admitted that wine in moderation could be an erotic stimulation and cited the words of Terence, but the physician Rondibilis advised Panurge that, 'from intemperance in wine there comes to the body a chilling of the blood, a slackening of the sinews, a dispersal of generative seed, a numbing of the senses, an impairment of the movements,

which are all handicaps to the act of generation.' Friar John said, 'I believe it. When I'm good and drunk, I ask for nothing but to sleep.'[113] Michel de Montaigne addressed the issue on two occasions in his *Essays* and made the same point both times. In the essay 'Of Drunkenness,' he argued that, 'sobriety serves to make us more lively and lusty for the exercise of love.' He returned to the topic in 'The Story of Spurina'; this time he cited Terence and then claimed, 'But with me Venus is much more sprightly when accompanied by sobriety.'[114] Shakespeare commented on the topic through the porter in *Macbeth* (II.i) and seized its essence in remarkably few words; drink 'provokes the desire but it takes away the performance.'

Weddings

All the themes developed in this chapter come together in the rite of marriage – the Christian symbolism of wine, the symbolic connection between alcohol and sexuality, fertility, regeneration, and life, the role of alcohol in conception and pregnancy, the praise and condemnation of drink for its erotic effects, and the occasional inability to perform resulting from overindulgence. The celebration of a wedding with large amounts of wine had a famous biblical precedent. The first of the signs of Jesus as told in *The Gospel according to John* (2:1–11) was changing water into wine for the wedding at Cana. Christ's intervention at Cana indicated his approval of the holy sacrament of matrimony. For most women the occasion marked the transfer from their father's authority to that of their husbands. For the sixteenth-century moralist Giovanni Mario Favini the transformation of water into wine was symbolic of this transfer of authority. Addressing his comments to a new wife, Favini argued that Jesus, by changing poor water into good wine, wanted 'to signify that she, like water, an imperfect material compared to wine, must be wholly changed into the wine which is her husband: serving him, obeying him, subjecting herself totally to his will and to the nod of a good husband.'[115]

The role of alcoholic beverages in weddings began before the ceremony during the often protracted negotiations between the two contracting sides, sometimes undertaken at an alehouse or a tavern over a pot of ale or a glass of wine.[116] In the ritual of betrothal that followed successful negotiations, the couple confirmed the agreement with drinks. In England custom required the couple to make their vows to marry in public, often at a meal, and to seal the contract by drinking to each other and the man presenting a gift, usually a ring.[117] In France

the sharing of drinks assumed an almost sacramental nature; according to a ritual book dated 1536 the priest conducting a betrothal ceremony made the couple drink in the name of marriage.[118] Whether or not a priest was present, the sharing of a drink of wine was central to the ritual. This is evident from the testimony in a legal case brought by a widow, Henriette Legouge of Troyes, against Jean Binet in 1483 for breaking a betrothal contract. 'The father told his daughter to sit down at the table beside Jean Binet; then he poured wine into a glass and told Jean Binet to make his daughter drink from it in the name of marriage. Jean Binet obeyed without saying anything. Henriette drank without saying anything either. When this was done, Henriette's uncle said to her: "Make Jean drink in the name of marriage, as he made you drink." Henriette presented the glass to the defendant. He drank from her hand and then said to her: "I want you to receive a kiss from me in the name of marriage," and he kissed her. Then those who were present said to them: "You are betrothed to one another; I call the wine to witness."'[119] Another legal case from Turin in the early eighteenth century, this time involving rape, revealed the role of wine in an involuntary betrothal. A servant named Caterina Ghiga testified that Nicolao Bianco had forced her to have sex with him, even though 'I had used all my strength in order to defend myself.... Afterwards both of us having gone into the pantry and I, having immediately taken out the wine for my mistress's supper, we drank that same wine, he first and I after, and he was toasting me "to my wife," and I toasted him "to my husband."'[120]

In one of the stories of Giambattista Basile's *Pentameron* the bride 'was decked with a thousand flowers and sprays, which made her look like a newly opened tavern.'[121] This seems appropriate for the drinking that accompanied weddings in traditional Europe. On the wedding day the drinking began at the wedding breakfast, sometimes held at an alehouse or tavern.[122] According to a ballad entitled *Search for Claret* (1691), young couples came to the Mitre tavern in London before their weddings to drink enough so that they would have the courage to take their vows, 'for ever and for aye.'[123] The author of *In the Christen State of Matrimony*, published in 1543, complained that, 'when they come to the preaching they are half drunk, some all together.'[124] Few probably behaved as badly as did Petruchio in Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* (III.ii):

> But after many ceremonies done,
> He calls for wine: 'A health!' quoth he; as if

> He had been abroad, carousing to his mates
> After a storm: quaff'd off the muscadel,
> And threw the sops all in the sexton's face. …
> This done, he took the bride about the neck,
> And kiss'd her lips with such a clamorous smack
> That, at the parting, all the church did echo.

After the formal ceremony the couple drank to each other to 'seal the marriage-bands.'[125] In England some weddings, especially clandestine ones, occurred at alehouses and taverns, despite opposition from the ecclesiastical authorities.[126] For example, a Gloucestershire couple married at an alehouse after her father had opposed the match. Wife sales, an alternative form of wedding, could also take place at alehouses.[127]

Now the drinking began in earnest. The author of *In the Christen State of Matrimony* complained again: 'When they come home from the church, then begins excess of eating and drinking and as much is wasted in one day as were sufficient for the two newly married folks half a year to live upon.'[128] The amount of drink consumed was, in truth, gargantuan. The Parisians gave four wagons of wine to Henry V of England on his marriage to the daughter of the French King in 1420.[129] When Charles the Bold of Burgundy married in July 1468 two statues of archers on either side of the entrance to the palace poured out wine; one armed with a crossbow poured white wine, the other with a longbow red wine.[130] Henry Machyn favorably recorded in his diary that, 'there were no … drinks that could be had for money that were wanting' at a wedding he attended in London in 1562.[131] William Cecil, Lord Burghley, supplied 1,000 gallons of wine for his daughter's wedding in 1582.[132] The celebrations and the drinking could last a long time. Edmund Verney recorded in his memoirs that he and his wife attended a wedding in 1675; 'we had music, feasting, drinking, revelling, dancing, and kissing: it was two of the clock this morning before we got home.'[133] This was relatively restrained; the celebrations of the wedding of John Newby's son in the 1670s at Widow Watson's alehouse near Birstal, Leicestershire, lasted two days,[134] while royal and aristocratic occasions could endure for months.[135] Wine was the beverage of choice, even in England among those who could afford it. Machyn recorded that at the wedding of a draper to the daughter of the town clerk in 1559 the guests enjoyed 'hippocras and muscadel, plenty to everybody.'[136] Hippocras was also a popular drink at weddings in some areas of France,[137] while for peasants in some areas cider was their 'dear delight.'[138] What about water? A severe frost destroyed

vineyards throughout much of Italy in 1234, so that the chroniclers complained, 'weddings were celebrated more with water than with wine.'[139]

When Edmund Spenser married Elizabeth Boyle in 1594 he apparently wanted everyone at their wedding to become drunk:

> Pour out the wine without restraint or stay,
> Pour not by cups, but by the belly full.[140]

Several customs helped increase the likelihood of everyone becoming drunk. One was the use in some cases of taverns and alehouses as venues for the celebrations.[141] Another was the English tradition of bride ale, from which has derived the modern word 'bridal.' Like the many other types of English ales, the bride ale was a method of raising funds, in this case for the newly married couple. In one form the bride herself could brew the ale, and the couple provide food and entertainment to ensure a good turnout. In the other form friends and neighbors could bring the food and ale and provide any other requirements for a successful occasion. Whatever the form, the couple hoped to receive enough money either to pay for the considerable costs of the wedding, or to contribute to their costs of establishing a household, or and more ideally both. Whatever the form, the tradition contributed to the drunkenness of the occasion.[142] Even at wife sales the drinks flowed because of the custom of the new husband treating the former husband to all he could drink.[143]

Another custom that made the drink flow was the tradition of toasting the bride and groom. The guests toasted both, and the groom of course toasted his bride, as he did in a seventeenth-century English ballad:

> Now, here's a health to my bride!
> come, pledge it, you merry blades;
> And to all married couples beside:
> we'll now be as merry as the maids.[144]

While on his journey back to Italy Sebastiano Locatelli stayed at an inn in the small French town of Nantua where he observed the wedding celebrations of the innkeeper's daughter through a hole in the door that connected his room with the bridal chamber. 'There I saw a large table, set with food and drink, round which were seated some forty persons, all drinking more than they were eating. Every time the bridegroom drank, all the guests did the same, having first clinked glasses all

around … . The bridegroom, who had all the men on his left, clinked glasses with his neighbor, the bride with hers; and so the glasses rang in turn … like a peal of bells in honor of the triumph of Bacchus.' Locatelli was fascinated by the presence of a huge bed, and to discover the purpose of it he had to peek through the hole for more than three hours. At last the couple laid on the bed fully clothed, the priest delivered a sermon and offered them some wine, and everyone left and took the lights with them, much to Locatelli's regret.[145] The drink offered by the priest was probably a version of *resveil*, a heavily spiced wine that promoted lovemaking and fertility. What is now the most famous *resveil* in the world was drunk by Martin Guerre and Bertrande de Rols on their wedding night.[146]

One of the best indications of the excessive amounts of drinking that occurred at weddings was the authorities' attempts to restrict it. Medieval ecclesiastical synods in both England and France condemned the drunkenness that attended the holy sacrament of matrimony.[147] Authorities at Chester, Halesowen, Kendal, Manchester, and Wakefield attempted to place restrictions on bride ales. At Halesowen, Worcestershire, for example, in 1573 officials put limits on the amount of ale brewed and the number of people at the wedding dinner. The authorities at Kendal, Cumberland, went further; in 1575 they decreed that no public or private drinkings should accompany weddings and later forbade drinkings before and after the wedding.[148] By contrast, the municipal officials in some towns of northern Italy ordered taverns to provide wine at cost during weddings.[149] Throughout Italy sumptuary legislation designed to curb the excesses of wedding banquets did not place restrictions on the consumption of wine. The Venetian regulations of 1562, for example, limited the number of courses, forbade the consumption of all wild animals and certain fish, and required fruits of the seasons and modest confections, but had nothing on wine.[150] Perhaps the Italian tendency to remain sober rather than becoming drunk influenced the regulations.

Even Italians could become drunk as enormous quantities of alcohol flowed at weddings. The Franciscan friar Salimbene described in his chronicles how a relatively few banished men were able to seize control of the town of Parma in 1247. The defenders of the city were drunk from celebrating a wedding and were consequently easy prey.[151] An English curate became so drunk during a wedding party at an alehouse that he arrived late for his evening service and was incapable of reading the prayers.[152] Of greater significance, of course, than drunkenness among the guests was the drunkenness of the groom and his

consequent inability to consummate the marriage. The French poet Pierre de Ronsard (about 1524–85) claimed that a drunk groom at a wedding was worth as much as a drunk warrior during a siege.[153] In the medieval French story *The Knight with a Sword* (*Le chevalier à l'epée*) Sir Gawain celebrated his wedding with much wine, but when he and his bride were left alone 'he did his will.'[154] In Chaucer's 'The Merchant's Tale' when old January wed young May he impatiently waited during the celebrations, drank some spiced wine to heighten his desire, and then labored until the break of day.[155] Aside from these references to the husbands, the sources that document the consumption of alcohol at weddings were gender neutral. Only one source, the medieval French *fabliau* entitled *Du sot chevalier* by Gautier Le Leu, mentioned the bride drinking, and this occurred not during the wedding celebrations but after the husband had consummated the marriage 'more than three times in quick succession'. The wife said,

> I'm dying of thirst.
> If you don't bring me something to drink,
> I believe you will see me die now.[156]

In some French villages just as people kidnapped a child after baptism and held it at a tavern for a ransom in drinks, so also did they kidnap the bride and hold her at a tavern for the same purpose.[157] This custom was related to the French tradition of the *charivari*. The *charivari* took different forms but was usually a ritual enacted by the youth of a locality to enforce social norms. One of the more famous occasions of a *charivari* was directed at the young Martin Guerre when he was unable to consummate his marriage; on this occasion the *resveil* did not work.[158] The focus of most *charivaris* was weddings, especially those that contravened conventions such as when a widower married a young girl or when a local girl married someone from outside the village. The young men considered these marriages as threats to their chances of finding a suitable wife. On these occasions the youths would gather outside the newly married couple's home and make a noisy din until the victims would assuage their anger by giving them money. Significantly, the money was for drinks, called 'wedding wine'; the 'wedding wine' could alleviate the lost opportunities for sex. An example occurred in 1569 at Transloy, whose young men demanded wine, 'which one is accustomed to give to the young fellows of that place when someone from elsewhere married one of the girls from there.'[159] If the victims refused to pay or paid a paltry amount, then

the good-natured fun could turn ugly. The records document many cases of fatal confrontations, such as that of Etienne Tisserand, a servant who married his master's widow at Lyon in 1668, refused to pay enough money for drinks, and died from a pistol shot.[160]

According to the cultural script, drink led to sex. Such was the message of holy scripture, the wisdom of the ancients, the advice of the medical practitioners, the verses of the poets, and the sentiments of the popular literature. Some writers praised alcohol for this, but others condemned it and issued warnings about its effects. When these moralists warned men, alcohol was the dangerous agent that could challenge virtue. When they warned women, the danger came from women's own nature, which made them susceptible to the risks of drinking. Even the moralists, however, recognised the positive regenerative and procreative qualities of wine. The sacrament of matrimony, approved by Christ's intervention during the wedding at Cana, was according to Christian doctrine established for the procreation of the faithful. Despite the moralists' condemnation of excessive drinking at weddings, the connection between alcohol and sexuality and fertility created the opportunity for rampant drinking during the celebrations before and after the formal ceremonies, even if the alcohol robbed some men of both their sexuality and their fertility.

4
Alehouses, Taverns, and Prostitutes

'The adulterer and usurer desire to enjoy their sin alone, but the chiefest pastime of a drunkard is to heat and overcome others with wine that he may discover their nakedness and glory in their foil and folly.' This was how, in his sermon 'Woe to Drunkards' dated 1622, Samuel Ward explained the propensity of drinkers to drink together.[1] Drinking was a gregarious and sociable pastime in traditional Europe. Richard Allestree listed the main reasons for drinking in *The Whole Duty of Man*, published in 1678; at the top of his list were good fellowship and the preservation of friendship.[2] Studies of modern drinking behavior have emphasized the masculine exclusiveness of such fellowship and friendship. The English pub, the French tavern, and the Greek café have been centers of male drinking rituals that have excluded females. As noted by Dimitra Gefou-Madianou, the insecurity of men in households and with feminine company led them to seek male solidarity in drinking establishments.[3] Men fled feminine control by taking refuge with their fellow escapees in pubs, bars, taverns, cabarets, and cafés. The privatization of women that has been associated with the development of the modern family also applied to their consumption of alcoholic beverages; women drank by themselves, with other women, or with their families but usually in private and seldom in the public space of taverns and bars.[4]

Peter Clark's book on *The English Alehouse* and Thomas Brennan's book on *Popular Drinking and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, a study that focuses on taverns and cabarets, are the starting points for any examination of these drinking establishments. Clark points out the differences between English inns, taverns, and alehouses. Inns were large and fashionable and offered drink, food, and accommodation to travelers who could afford more than the bare essentials; taverns sold

wine and other drinks to the middling and upper sort; while alehouses sold ale and beer and provided food and lodging to those who could not afford inns.[5] For succinctness and wit, few descriptions of the functions of a tavern could surpass the one in John Earle's *Microcosmography*, published in 1628: 'It is the busy man's recreation, the idle man's business, the melancholy man's sanctuary, the stranger's welcome, the Inns-of-Court man's entertainment, the scholar's kindness, and the citizen's courtesy. It is the study of sparkling wits, and a cup of sherry their book, where we leave them.'[6] England had many alehouses. Clark estimates from a survey conducted in 1577 that the number was 24,000, or one for every 142 inhabitants. A less reliable survey taken in 1636 suggests the figure might have been between 89 and 104 inhabitants for every alehouse.[7]

The main difference between the French tavern and cabaret had disappeared by the end of the seventeenth century, but originally the cabaret had tables and chairs and permitted its customers to consume wine on the premises, while taverns sold wine to take away and consume elsewhere. France had two other types of drinking establishments, the *guinguette* and the café. *Guingettes* sold wine outside the city limits of Paris, thereby avoiding tax imposed on wine entering the city, and they consequently had more space for leisure and entertainment. The café sold coffee and spirits. Both were eighteenth-century developments, although the first café opened at Paris in 1672, and the *guinguette* had even earlier precursors.[8] Parisian town registers from the fifteenth century listed 200 taverns; one estimate that the number might be as high as 4,000 is a wild exaggeration.[9] A census taken in 1670 listed 1,847 cabarets in Paris, a density similar to that of the English alehouse.[10] The provinces likewise had a large number of taverns; one area of Brittany in 1625 had one tavern keeper to 100–150 people,[11] even small villages of some 500 people had two or three taverns,[12] and Pierre Goubert reckons towns had one tavern for every 100 inhabitants including children.[13] The sources do not give any information on the number of Italian drinking establishments, as is the case for some of the other developments considered in this chapter.

The sociability of drinking

In his much maligned and often praised book, *Centuries of Childhood*, Philippe Ariès contrasted the public sociability of medieval society with the private domesticity of the modern world. Before the seventeenth

century most people spent their time in the company of others in the public space of streets, squares, and village greens in a promiscuous mixing of ages, classes, and sexes. Beginning in the early modern period the bourgeoisie increasingly withdrew from contact with the vulgar multitude and sought privacy in the domestic setting of their families.[14] This development paralleled a shift in the sociability of drinking from public space to the relative privacy of taverns and alehouses. In England the older form of sociability was evident in such traditions as the church ales, as John Aubrey nostalgically recalled in his 'Wiltshire': 'There were no rates for the poor in my grandfather's days, but for Kingston St. Michael (no small parish) the church ale of Whitsuntide did the business. In every parish is (or was) a church-house to which belonged spits, crocks, etc., utensils for dressing provisions. Here the housekeepers met, and were merry, and gave their charity. The young people were there too, and had dancing, bowling, shootings at butts, etc., the ancients sitting gravely by and looking on. All things were civil, and without scandal.'[15] The defenders of church ales produced a formidable list of arguments in their support, and many of the arguments focused on the role of church ales in the promotion of sociability and solidarity, concord and conviviality. Church ales promoted Christian love, led to the resolution of quarrels and to the end of controversies, increased local unity, fostered neighborliness, and brought the rich and poor together. One bishop reportedly banned sermons that interfered with church ales.[16]

The church ale was the most prominent example of the many festive drinking occasions that Ronald Hutton has documented in *The Rise and Fall of Merry England*.[17] The 'fall' of the title refers to the gradual decline in festive celebrations that occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Of the many causes of this decline one of the more prominent was the opposition of some authorities and especially the Puritans to the disorder and debauchery that accompanied festive drinking. Church ales, so it was claimed, resulted in murder and bastards.[18] In 1628 Richard Rawlidge recalled in another piece of nostalgia that in the sixteenth century people scorned alehouses and would not want to be seen there but instead took advantage of the festive occasions for their recreation in 'public exercises.' 'But now … those public exercises are left off, by reason that the preachers of the land did so inveigh against them …. What then followed? Why, sure, alehouse haunting …. The preachers did then reprove dalliance and dancings of maids and young men together, but now they have more cause to

reprove drunkenness and whoring that is done privately in alehouses.'[19] The assault on festive drinking was part of a much larger development that Peter Burke has characterized as the combat between carnival and lent, that is, between popular culture and elite culture, as the godly few attempted to reform the manners and the entertainment of the lower class.[20] Subsequent scholarship has questioned the rigidity of Burke's division between elite culture and popular culture, but to a great extent his 'combat' still holds true.

The same developments occurred in France. According to Mack P. Holt in his study of 'Wine, Community and Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Burgundy,' French Catholicism promoted sociability and conviviality. As proclaimed by *le bon vigneron*, 'Eat good food and drink the best wine with your neighbor.'[21] In France, however, the public sociability of drinking focused on the youth groups who usually called themselves Abbeys or Kingdoms of Misrule. The groups organized local festivities; as catalogued by Natalie Zemon Davis, these included 'masking, costuming, hiding; charivaris…, farces, parades, and floats; collecting and distributing money and sweets; dancing, music-making, and the lighting of fires, reciting of poetry, gaming, and athletic contests.'[22] With the assistance of political authorities, reforming bishops under the influence of the Council of Trent banned many of these activities in an attempt, like the English Puritans, to create 'a piety that was enduring, serious, and austere.'[23] The repression of the activities of the youth groups left a vacuum that was filled by the cabaret or the tavern. Early in the seventeenth century the lawyer Claude de Rubys made a statement that Richard Rawlidge would echo in 1628: 'It is sometimes expedient to allow the people to play the fool and make merry, lest by holding them in with too great a rigor, we put them in despair…. These gay sports abolished, the people go instead to taverns, drink up and begin to cackle, their feet dancing under the table, to decipher king, princes…the state, and justice and draft scandalous, defamatory leaflets.'[24]

The shift in drinking from public space to alehouses and taverns eroded the promiscuous mixing of ages, classes, and sexes that was a feature of the festive drinking occasions. To a certain extent the rich no longer mixed with the poor, the young and the old no longer interacted, and men and women no longer shared a drink together. Drinking establishments were predominantly male space and centers for male sociability. For example, at Havering in the sixteenth century the recreational life of the men centered on social drinking at

alehouses,[25] perhaps singing songs such as *Good Ale for my Money* that celebrated the joys of drinking fellowship among a baker, a tailor, a smith, and their friends:

> A good coal fire is their desire,
> Whereby to sit and parley.
> They'll drink their ale, and tell a tale,
> And go home in the morning early.[26]

As will be discussed below, women did have occasion to patronize English alehouses and taverns, but they were in a minority. French men dominated taverns and cabarets even more than did their English counterparts. Judicial records examined by Thomas Brennan indicate that in the first half of the eighteenth century the percentage of female customers in taverns was as low as seven.[27] At Lille the figure could have been zero, for in 1673 the municipal magistrates forbade women to drink at cabarets. Pierre Ignace Chavatte was a citizen of Lille who kept a journal that recorded his frequent trips to a cabaret where, in his words, 'I took some recreation with my friends.' After 1673 he could take his recreation safe and secure in the masculine exclusiveness of his sociability.[28]

The devil's church

The fourteenth-century instructions by the citizen of Paris to his young wife included the following warning: 'The tavern is the devil's church, where his disciples go to serve him and where he does his miracles.'[29] A similar argument, so similar that it and the citizen's instructions probably came from a common source, occurred in *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, likewise from the fourteenth century: 'You have heard of both lechery and gluttony. These sins arise most commonly at the tavern, which is a well of sin. It is the school of the devil, where his disciples study, and the chapel of satan, where men and women serve him. God does His miracles in His church; the devil does his, which are the opposite, in the tavern.'[30] Other authors characterized taverns and alehouses as nests of Satan, schools of drunkenness and violence, nurseries of naughtiness and of all riot, excess and idleness, secret dens for thieves, cheaters and such like, receptacles of all manner of baseness and lewdness, wombs that bring forth all manner of wickedness, and rousy rakehells. In fact, one tavern at Chester was called Hell,[31] and in 1640 a resident of Chester had to answer charges that he had kneeled and drunk to the devil's health at an alehouse, but not in Hell.[32]

For the middling and better sort of people the church and the alehouse/tavern represented polar extremes. In contrast to God's work in the church the alehouse/tavern was the venue for drunkenness, which was the gateway to all the other sins, including swearing, blasphemy, fornication, and murder. The devout, and particularly devout women, should never darken the threshold of such establishments.[33] Questions of morality aside, taverns and alehouses increasingly competed with local churches as centers of community life. Both Protestant and Catholic reformers attacked the mixing of the sacred with the profane that was a feature of medieval Christianity. The use of churches for ales and churchyards for dances was a sacrilegious profanation of the sacred. As a result taverns and alehouses replaced parish churches as centers of communal solidarity and sociability and served as venues for the celebrations of religious rituals such as baptisms, marriages, and funerals after the completion of the church services.[34]

In reference to early modern England, Keith Wrightson has claimed that 'the struggle over the alehouses was one of the most significant social dramas of the age,'[35] and the same struggle over taverns occurred in France and in Italy. The struggle had medieval antecedents. As early as 1285 authorities in London imposed a curfew on taverns as a means of controlling disorder.[36] According to Martin Ingram, the legal records of medieval Nottingham reveal 'ill-regulated alehouses … where servants and others, including certain of the borough's supposedly celibate clergy, drank, whored, gambled, stole, embezzled, quarrelled, ran riot and sometimes ended up dead.'[37] The struggle gathered pace in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To the Puritan clergyman George Gifford the fellowship and sociability of drinkers in an alehouse deserved censure rather than praise. In response to a statement about 'good fellows and honest men' meeting at an alehouse, Gifford argued, 'I do not mislike true friendship, which is in the Lord, knit in true godliness, but I mislike this vice.'[38] In a similar attack Arthur Dent was more pointed than was Gifford. Dent put his opponents' point of view as follows: 'If neighbors meet now and then at the alehouse … I take it to be good fellowship, and a good means to increase a love among neighbors.' Dent's response was, 'There is no true fellowship in it, it is mere impiety; if we may call impiety for poor men to live idly, dissolutely, neglecting their calling, while their poor wives and children sit crying at home.'[39]

Across the Channel French Catholics echoed the concerns of English Puritans. In 1581 the police bureau of Nantes complained that the 'artisans and craftspeople of the town and faubourgs … pass the greater

part of working days in taverns, gambling and getting drunk.'[40] A complaint from another town stated, 'most of the craftsmen in the town … are so dissipated that they never leave the inns and taverns either by night or by day. They sit there squandering their assets and all the income they are able to win by their labours and industry. The result is that most of their families are on the verge of starvation.'[41] The same pattern emerged south of the Alps. In 1588 the preachers of Florence mounted a concerted campaign against the taverns of the city. According to one account, 'Almost every day the preachers, especially at the Duomo, railed against the taverns of our city, Florence. They said that the taverns are, if not absolutely, then generally the ruin of our young men and boys, and that it would be excellent to get rid of them.'[42]

If taverns and alehouses were the devil's churches, the tavern keepers and alehouse keepers were his ministers and thereby rivals to the ministers of Christ. Some keepers played this role with apparent relish. Late in the sixteenth century Edward Harvye and his wife of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, faced accusations that their alehouse drew 'disordered and unlawful company [who] use drinking, gaming, playing at cards, and other misdemeanors as well in service time on the Sabbath day as at other times.'[43] Thomas Jackson, an alehouse keeper from Eccleshall in Staffordshire, had to answer charges in 1599 that he denounced the Puritan minister during church services and on Ascension Day led a large group of revellers over the minister's grass in an attempt to destroy it.[44] According to a petition against Edward Myller, an alehouse keeper at Hockwold cum Wilton, Norfolk, he was 'a notorious swearer, a scoffer at religious duties, a choleric, hasty, moody man.'[45] The curé of the French village of Fretigny complained in 1661 that in the twenty years he had been there the tavern keeper, Macé Blot, had not once taken Easter communion. He and his children were hardened sinners who sold wine during mass and whose tavern was a place of 'swearing, blasphemy, execrations, and drunkenness.'[46] In 1682 the curé of Claiveisolles complained that all attempts to prevent Louis Bellet from opening his tavern during mass and vespers had failed. When the curé had read the injunctions against the opening of taverns during church services, Bellet stood at the back of the church, shouted abuse, and told the curé to climb the steeple 'to make himself better understood.'[47]

In his study of heretics in Venice John Martin has documented another way that the tavern could serve as an 'anti-church.' Taverns were ideal places for the spread of heretical opinions and for people to

express subversive religious ideas. One morning in 1549, for example, a monk encountered a group of men eating together at a tavern. When he encouraged them to go to mass, one replied, 'What mass could be more beautiful than that of our sharing a meal at this table?'[48] As far as England is concerned, Peter Clark documents a number of cases of religious subversion in alehouses but doubts that drinking establishments posed a significant threat to the ecclesiastical authorities.[49]

More significant for Clark was the alehouse as a center of irreligion.[50] The focus of this irreligion was the observance of Sunday and the attempts by authorities to close taverns during church services. During the Middle Ages ecclesiastical authorities throughout Europe waged a losing battle against people patronizing taverns and alehouses on Sundays and feast days. In 1274 Humbert de Romans, general of the Dominicans, argued that Christians should not have to observe so many feast days because people merely used them to drink in taverns and to commit other sins.[51] During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the ecclesiastical authorities received reinforcements in the form of regulations by local and national governments forbidding the opening of drinking establishments during church services. For example, in 1574 the instructions to the constables of the English town of Rye in Sussex required them to search the taverns every Sunday and feast day and to compel anyone there to come to church.[52] An indication that the regulations did not produce the desired effects was their repetition by succeeding governments,[53] and the complaints of the godly continued. In 1560 Bishop James Pilkington wrote, 'come into a church on the sabbath day, and ye shall see but few, though there be a sermon, but the alehouse is ever full.'[54] According to a complaint made in 1591, in Lancashire and Cheshire the streets and alehouses were so crowded during church service that the only people in church were the minister and his clerk.[55] In the seventeenth century the Company of the Holy Spirit in Grenoble disapproved of the city's taverns remaining open during mass and in consequence contributing to disorderly behavior on the day of worship.[56] The curé of Massérac near Nantes complained in 1640 that his parishioners went to the tavern instead of mass on Sundays.[57]

Most people probably did adhere to the regulations and exhortations to attend church services on Sundays and holy days, but a significant proportion did not. The campaign of the godly to enforce worship by closing alehouses and taverns produced a hostile reaction from these people, and they resented the threat posed to their Sunday recreation. Early in the seventeenth century the residents of Lancashire villages

refused to go to church and instead remained in the alehouse or threw stones from the churchyard on the roof of the church during services.[58] Some showed their resentment in crude ways, like the man from Leeds who vomited on the communion table during a Sunday morning prayer service in 1627.[59] In France workers in both town and country demonstrated a smouldering resentment against the closures and did their best to ignore the regulations. In January 1634 an official at Nantes discovered more than 44 taverns opened during church services, and other inspections found taverns with some 25 to 30 customers.[60] The struggle over Sundays reinforced the impression that a tavern or an alehouse was an 'anti-church'; when the church was open the 'anti-church' had to close. As put by one Englishman in 1550, the campaign of the godly was counterproductive: men drank in alehouses instead of attending church services, and when they finally did attend, the preacher berated them for their absences, and so they turned 'into the alehouse and let the church go.'[61]

Prostitutes

The close connection between prostitution and drinking establishments was another factor in making the alehouse/tavern an 'anti-church' in the eyes of the godly. According to Jean E. Howard, the tavern and the prostitute Doll Tearsheat in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part II*, embodied the threat of female sexuality without the masculine control of either father or husband.[62] However, rare was the prostitute in traditional Europe who escaped some form of patriarchal control. Rather than embody the threat of unfettered female sexuality, the close relationship between the alehouse/tavern and prostitution demonstrated the connection between the consumption of intoxicating beverages and sexual activity. Prostitutes did not tout for customers in drinking establishments to escape patriarchal control; they did so because they knew from experience that they had the best chance of finding customers there. The connection was self-reinforcing, because men looking for sex knew likewise from experience that their best chance was in the alehouse/tavern. In 1612 the Puritan Thomas Dekker attributed the increase in prostitution in London to the 'almost infinite number of tippling houses' and appropriately compared their rapid spread through the suburbs to the spread of syphilis.[63]

In discussing the period between 1500 and 1660, Peter Clark argues, 'alehouses functioning as organised brothels were probably the exception.' Nonetheless, he notes a growing link between prostitutes and

alehouses, and he attributes it to such things as the closure of the brothels in Southwark during the reign of Henry VIII, the numerical preponderance of women over men in large towns, and the high demand for the services of prostitutes among traveling laborers away from home.[64] He failed to consider the connection between drink and sex. An unpleasant depiction of that connection comes from a description of a tavern by the late medieval Italian poet, Francesco di Vanozzo:

> The fume of the wine
> goes straight to the head,
> and the body is filled with lust
> for human flesh with such great rage
> that until the next day
> they stay with the vile whores.[65]

The connection between prostitution and drinking establishments had several variations. Some brothels were located near a tavern as a means of increasing their trade. When Henry V ordered a series of raids on the low life of London, his investigators discovered that 'many strumpets and pimps' were located behind one tavern.[66] A more common practice was for prostitutes to tout for trade at drinking establishments. In late medieval England even small villages such as Thornbury, Gloucestershire, had taverns where both lay and clerical drinkers could find prostitutes.[67] At York in 1472 the clergyman John Derby was prosecuted for going to 'the tavern of John Betson every night and there having colloquies and conversation with various whores' who were seeking business.[68] When the Swiss Thomas Platter visited London in 1599 he noted the great swarms of prostitutes at alehouses.[69] In 1627 an investigation of the London suburbs of Bloomsbury, Petticoat Lane, Radcliffe, and Wapping discovered 'many immodest, lascivious, and shameless women' luring men at taverns and alehouses.[70] The pattern continues in Italy and France. Fifteenth-century Florentine prostitutes searched for customers in taverns that were notorious for their disreputable clientele.[71] At Grenoble during the seventeenth century prostitutes touted for tricks during the summer at the cabarets outside the city and then frolicked in the surrounding vineyards and fields.[72] The encounter between prostitute and customer was a popular theme in literature. According to Samuel Rowlands' poem entitled *The Knave of Clubbs*, printed in 1611, when a country bumpkin came to town, a prostitute lured him into an alehouse with a promise of 'what you will' in return for a drink.[73] *Le Courtois d'Arras*, a thirteenth-century

elaboration of the parable of the Prodigal Son, described the encounter between Courtois and two prostitutes in a tavern; after seducing him, they left him drunk and penniless.[74]

Another variation was for barmaids and female tavern keepers to supplement their income by working as prostitutes, or, as in one case prosecuted at Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, in 1434, a prostitute could supplement her income by operating an illegal tavern.[75] In fact, in 1578 Margaret Fishe of Catton claimed, 'There cannot be any alewife thrive without she be a whore or have a whore in her house.'[76] In 1394 John Rykener, a male prostitute who called himself Eleanor, worked as a tapster in Burford where he had sex with foreign merchants and friars.[77] In Florence in 1492 three cooks who worked at a tavern were convicted, not of prostitution, but of acting as pimps for boy prostitutes there.[78] England furnishes many examples of females prosecuted for selling both drink and body. In 1471 the house of the alewife Joanna Skeppere at Brandon, Suffolk, attracted 'lecherous and suspicious' men on visits to her tapster.[79] London magistrates in 1498 charged two women who worked at the Bell – Joan Blond with being a whore and Agnes Thurston with being a bawd.[80] The wife of Richard Battyn of Corsham, Wiltshire, faced charges in 1604 that she kept an unlicensed alehouse and had sex with her customers.[81] At about the same time a barmaid in Somerton, Somerset, despite protesting her innocence and claiming that she had rejected the drunken advances of a customer, was convicted of prostitution as a result of her previous encounters with the court.[82]

Some alehouses and taverns also functioned as brothels, and some tavern keepers kept brothels. In the fourteenth century a general roundup of criminals in London netted a group that included the aptly named Joan la Tapstere and operated both a brothel and a brewhouse which had a reputation for attracting clients with bad character.[83] Late in the following century London officials charged the owner of The Busche tavern with acting as a pimp for his servants.[84] In 1376, when neighbors noted that disreputable men and women visited the Parisian inn of Agnès Piedeleu at all hours of the day and night, they denounced her to the authorities, who charged her with procuring.[85] The punishment for a woman convicted in 1676 of keeping a 'good' tavern was a whipping through the streets of Lille, while a man convicted of the same crime in 1683 faced banishment from the city for fifteen years.[86] Florentine magistrates charged Niccolò di Giunta in 1379 with corrupting Monna Riguardata di Venture by persuading her to sell both his wine and her body in his tavern.[87] In England magistrates heard many

cases of alehouse keepers accused of similar offenses, including William Rauson and Thomas Fernes of Chester, accused in 1463 of keeping prostitutes in their alehouses, and Alice Filenes, a tapster also of Chester, who faced her last of several charges of keeping a brothel in 1510.[88] In 1567 the magistrates at Chelmsford, Essex, prosecuted twelve unlicensed alehouse keepers, four of whom were also charged with keeping brothels. One of these was the aged Mother Bowden whose sole prostitute was her daughter.[89] The keeper of The Bear in London faced charges with eight women in 1579 because the women stayed there all day, drinking and eating with the customers and keeping them company.[90] Finally, in the 1660s the London apprentices Gervase Disney and John Mildmay visited an ale house that they later learned also functioned as a bawdy house.[91]

The English government rarely concerned itself with the regulation of alehouses, except as a source of revenue. Before 1500 local authorities had an informal system of licensing, while increasing local regulation in the sixteenth century was far from effective with perhaps half of the ale sellers operating without a license. The situation did not change much in the seventeenth century, despite increasing complaints from the Puritans.[92] Local authorities had no common approach to the specific problems posed by bawdy drinking establishments. In London they attempted in 1393 to control the public brawling and violence that developed from men 'consorting with common whores at taverns, brewhouses of hucksters, and other places' by confining prostitutes to restricted areas. The city issued similar regulations late in the fifteenth century and in the next century ordered taverns and alehouses to prohibit prostitutes from using their premises.[93] In 1492 the officials in Coventry attempted to prevent prostitutes from working as barmaids by ordering that drinking establishments should not hire tapsters or women of 'evil name, fame, or condition.'[94] The Mayor of Chester went one step further in 1540 by ordering that no woman between the ages of fourteen and forty could be an alehouse keeper.[95] In 1630 Charles I required Cambridge University to apply its old regulations against taverners and innholders who kept women of ill repute for use by the students.[96]

The regulations on prostitutes in France and in Italy were more permissive than they were in England. In the fifteenth century the towns of southeastern France studied by Jacques Rossiaud permitted prostitutes to solicit in taverns,[97] while many towns of late medieval Sicily, including Corleone, Palermo, and Siracusa, required prostitutes to live and work at specially designated taverns.[98] In 1460 the Venetian government attempted to regulate the working conditions of prostitutes

by forbidding them to work in inns, taverns, or bathhouses during daylight and by requiring the keepers of those establishments to charge the women reasonable amounts for room and board, no more than two ducats per month.[99] Medieval Europe was relatively tolerant of prostitution; many towns in France even had their own municipal brothels. During the sixteenth and seventeenth century medieval tolerance yielded increasingly to reforming rigidity as religious and secular authorities combined to enforce social discipline on what was considered an ungodly and unruly population. London closed its brothels in 1546, Paris in 1560.[100] By 1580, when Henry III issued the edict of Amboise ordering the closure of all brothels in France, many of the municipal brothels had already disappeared.[101] Of course, edicts and regulations did not put an end to prostitutes; many continued to tout for trade in taverns.

Female keepers

The last scene of the medieval mystery play from Chester entitled *The Harrowing of Hell* focused on an unscrupulous alewife:

> Sometime I was a taverner
> A gentle gossip and a tapster,
> Of wine and ale a trusty brewer,
> Which woe hath me wrought.
> Of cans I kept no true measure:
> My cups I sold at my pleasure,
> Deceiving many a creature,
> Though my ale were nought.

As punishment for her bad ale and other malpractices the alewife went to hell, where a demon greeted her: 'Welcome, dear lady, I shall thee wed!'[102] The scene demonstrated the popular perception of alewives and female alehouse and tavern keepers as disreputable swindlers that Judith M. Bennett documents in *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300–1600*. Bennett attributes the perception to misogyny,[103] which is an incomplete explanation. The other occupation that had a reputation for disreputable swindling was the masculine miller, as illustrated by Chaucer's portrait of a cheating and vulgar lout:

> A wrangler and a buffoon, he had a store
> Of tavern stories, filthy in the main.
> His was a master-hand at stealing grain.[104]

The miller and the alewife were responsible for the preparation of the two staples, bread and ale, and as a result both endured vituperation for swindling, whether justified or not.

Another aspect in the popular perception of alewives and alehouse and tavern keepers was their unbridled sexuality, as illustrated by a popular ballad about an alehouse keeper named Hanna Horrocks and her daughter, who kept the Old Swan in Petticoat Lane, West Derby:

> But Robin the Baker, a man of round wit,
> He often goes thither to get a fresh bit,
> Old Mother Rump and her daughter plump
> They never will refuse it.[105]

Bennett likewise attributes this part of the reputation to misogyny, which once again is an incomplete explanation. The close connection between drinking establishments and prostitution and the perception of alcohol as a sexual stimulant would result in an expectation that a woman who worked at an alehouse or a tavern would be prone to sexual misconduct. A concrete illustration of this expectation is the argument of a thirteenth-century canon lawyer that a man who permitted his wife to work at a tavern could not charge her with adultery if the sin was associated with her work.[106]

As noted in the introduction, alewives brewed much of the ale in medieval England but had to yield to male-dominated commercial brewing of beer in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the other hand, throughout both the medieval and early modern periods alehouse and tavern keeping remained a female occupation. At Montaillou early in the fourteenth century women ran the taverns, sometimes in concert with their husbands.[107] In Sicily during the late Middle Ages women held a quarter of the contracts for the operation of taverns.[108] At Nantes and elsewhere in Brittany in the seventeenth century women owned 20–60 percent of the taverns, sometimes with their husbands, and operated most of the remainder.[109] Women kept taverns and alehouses in fourteenth-century Shrewsbury and London,[110] fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Yorkshire,[111] early sixteenth-century Chester,[112] and seventeenth-century Devon.[113] Of the 43 alehouse keepers listed at Salisbury in 1630, 15 were women.[114] Many of these women were widows who had taken over their husband's job when he had died. Sometimes poor widows received permission to operate modest establishments as a means of earning a living and thereby relieving the local poor rates of the burden of their

support. A final reason for the preponderance of widows was the fear that young female keepers could turn the alehouse/tavern into a house of ill repute.[115]

As noted above, many female keepers had unsavory reputations for selling both their drinks and their bodies. Others led scandalous lives, such as the seventeenth-century tavern keeper who was the concubine of the curé of Saint-Germain-les-Champs and the mother of his child.[116] The popular literature of the period reinforced this reputation. An English ballad entitled *The Lamentations of an Alewifes Daughter* (1612) described how a wealthy older man seduced the daughter with her mother's connivance.[117] Both John Lydgate and Alexander Barclay wrote poems attacking women who used sexual allurements to sell ale.[118] The ballad entitled *The Industrious Smith* (1635) told the story of a poor smith who decided to improve his situation by having his wife sell ale. Things went from bad to worse as he first found his wife flirting with customers and then in bed with one. Her reply on each occasion was, 'these things must be if we sell ale.'[119]

One group of seventeenth-century ballads that focused on good fellowship in a tavern or alehouse often featured a foolish and stubborn man who was easily led astray by a female keeper despite the wise admonitions of his patiently suffering wife. The ballads end with the vindication of the wife and the revelation that the keeper was only after his money, which she pursued by playing on his erotic fantasies. In a ballad written by Thomas Lanfiere entitled *The Good Fellow's Consideration; Or, The Bad Husband's Amendment* (about 1677), the good fellow described the female keeper's attempts to gain his business:

> Sometimes she in a merry vein would sit upon my knee
> And give me kisses one or twain, and all to sweeten me.[120]

Another, *Two-Penny Worth of Wit for a Penny; Or, The Bad Husband Turn'd Thrifty* (about 1680), had similar lines:

> My hostess she would be so merry with me, …
> And with slobbering and kissing she pleased me to th' life.[121]

The final example, written by John Wade, was entitled *A Caveat for Young Men; Or, The Bad Husband Turn'd Thrifty*:

> She'd chuck me under the chin,
> and perhaps would give me a kiss,

As Venus drew Adonis in,
My hostess would never miss.[122]

To reiterate a point made earlier, misogynist sentiments help explain these lines, but the vindication of the wives demonstrates that misogyny is an incomplete explanation.

The clientele

Studies of modern drinking behavior reveal that the major consumers of alcohol in most societies are the young men between puberty and their mid-thirties.[123] This observation fits the clientele of drinking establishments in traditional Europe, although historians have observed geographical differences in the pattern. When crimes or disturbances occurred at taverns in Paris the police interviewed those present and recorded their age, sex, and other particulars. Thomas Brennan used these records to quantify the age and sex of the customers. As already noted, males outnumbered females by a ratio of more than 10 to 1. Few of the male drinkers were in their teens, about 5 per cent, and only 10 per cent were over the age of 50. Two-thirds of the male customers were aged between 20 and 40, and most of those in their twenties were unmarried.[124] James B. Collins used less quantifiable evidence to arrive at the impression that the drinkers in Brittany were predominantly unmarried men between the ages of 15 and 30. In the one case that revealed the age of the customers ten of the fourteen were aged 18 to 40.[125] For the English alehouse Peter Clark believes that the clientele formed two major groups. The first included young unmarried men who were apprentices, journeymen, and servants. The second group comprised young and middle-aged married men. As was the case in Paris, few old people were patrons, although Clark suggests that this was a reflection of demography, since the old constituted only a small proportion of the population.[126] Other studies are less precise in their reconstruction of the clientele of drinking establishments. Julius R. Ruff, for example, notes that in the *sénéchaussées* of Libourne and Bazas the customers were predominantly men,[127] and Robert C. Davis observes that the taverns of Venice were male space.[128]

Few cities went as far as Lille in establishing a complete ban on women drinking in taverns. The authorities at Coventry and Chester attempted to prohibit the possibility of prostitutes working in taverns by their decrees of 1492 and 1540, and early in the seventeenth century the ordinances of the bakers of Coventry went one step further by

forbidding women to deliver bread to drinking establishments.[129] As the goodwife advised her daughter, tavern haunting would ruin a woman's reputation.[130] Women who visited taverns and alehouses ran the risk of being mistaken for prostitutes, especially if they were unaccompanied or went there at night.[131] Not only randy men but also police searched drinking establishments for women who might be touting for customers. In 1731 a Parisian keeper complained that the police closed his cabaret for serving a group that included males and females even though everyone was quite respectable.[132] Aside from the possibility of ruined reputations, unwanted advances, or possibly a night in prison, women were reluctant to encroach on the male space of drinking establishments, especially since their presence was unwelcome. Women in search of their husbands found it less threatening to stand outside and call rather than to enter. In 1701 a woman searching for her husband in a Parisian tavern sent her son-in-law to find him. In the same year, when another woman entered a tavern to look for her husband, the tavern keeper told her that 'she was certainly bold to come there.'[133]

Taverns and alehouses did serve women, and women of varying conditions had occasion to drink there. Two priests took Margery Kempe to a tavern in Rome and made her have a drink, even though they knew her tendency to weep and whoop uncontrollably during religious services, so much so that people considered her drunk.[134] Two men took a pregnant Margaret Marr to a tavern in London where, over a pint of wine, she confessed that her husband was not the father of the child.[135] The ability of women to patronize drinking establishments varied over time and space. In Venice women could drink in taverns only during carnival, and even then they had to be wary of jealous husbands.[136] Although women did not drink much wine at Montaillou in the early fourteenth century, they did drink at taverns,[137] but as already noted by the seventeenth century in most areas of France taverns were bastions of male sociability. Peasant women in medieval England were frequent visitors to the village alehouse during the day while their husbands were working in the fields, a practice that resulted in tales about a husband accusing his wife of spending her day gossiping in drinking establishments while he labored for their keep.[138] Peter Clark argues that by the late seventeenth century the stigma attached to women drinking in alehouses had relaxed somewhat, but foreigners had much earlier expressed their amazement at the number of women drinking in English alehouses and taverns.[139] For example, the author, probably a Venetian nobleman, of an anonymous relation

on England, dated about 1500, was surprised to discover that 'ladies of distinction' visited taverns.[140] A French nobleman who visited England during Oliver Cromwell's Protectorate expressed his amazement in a letter: 'Your lordship will not believe me that the ladies of greatest quality suffer themselves to be treated in one of these taverns, where a courtesan in other cities would scarcely vouchsafe to be entertained.'[141]

Women visited drinking establishments for the same reasons that men did. At the top of the list came enjoyment and entertainment, as noted by Thomas Platter when visiting London in 1599: 'the women as well as the men, in fact more often than they, will frequent the taverns or alehouses for enjoyment.'[142] The anonymous French visitor to England noted that for amusement 'they drink their crowned cups roundly, strain healths through their smocks, dance after the fiddle, etc.'[143] Probably more typical than straining healths was a merry party of married couples. For example, a Yorkshire yeoman Adam Eyre wrote in his diary (1646–48) that he 'borrowed Christopher Marsden's mare this day to carry my wife and myself to John Shawe's [alehouse] of Swindenwalls,' where they met other married couples. 'We stayed til night and then came home.... We met this day only to be merry.'[144] In 1656 a group comprising two married couples and three single men met at an alehouse in Lancashire and listened to a fiddler while drinking 'all the ale in the house.'[145]

Not all women patronized alehouses and taverns for the purposes of making merry. Some women came to conduct business,[146] some to make purchases,[147] and others undertook marriage negotiations, either on their own behalf or on behalf of someone else.[148] Some women came to spread slanders and to confront enemies; at an alehouse in Holborn in 1572 Margery Wright slandered the wife of John Thomas, and in a London tavern in 1611 Elizabeth Fryer told Margaret Yard that, 'thou art ... my husband's whore; moreover, thou art a whore, an arrant whore, and a filthy whore.'[149] Just as male vagabonds sought refuge in alehouses on their journeys so also did female transients, such as the widow Jone Hailie who stayed at alehouses on her journey from London to Rye in 1572.[150] Some women just wanted to drink. Richard Gough's *The History of Myddle*, written in 1701, contained the story of Judith Downtown; prior to her marriage she worked as a servant in alehouses and then impoverished her husband by going to the alehouse every day to drink.[151] Finally, just as the tavern and the alehouse were the focuses of male sociability and solidarity, these establishments also performed the same function for women, as will be discussed in another chapter.

Courtship was another reason for women going to alehouses and taverns, which served as important venues for young men and women to meet potential partners. A late seventeenth-century ballad detailed the exploits of inconstant William who courted several girls at once:

> Sometimes to the tavern with Betty I go,
> And like a true lover much kindness I show;
> I kiss, nay I hug, and I cuddle her then,
> And vow I will marry, but I know not when.[152]

Another ballad sang of a dandy from London who fell in love with a young maid while visiting The Crown in Nottingham. He attempted to seduce her with fair words and promises of marriage.[153] In French literature taverns were also venues for courtship, as it was in the play *L'inconstant vaincu* (1661); the girl tried to regain her lover's affection by drinking with him in a tavern.[154] The literary depictions had their equivalents in real life. In 1588 Robert Chapman courted Agnes Newman at the alehouse in Holborn where she worked by calling her to his table, drinking to her, jesting with her, and asking her to sit by him.[155] The diary kept by Roger Lowe reveals the role of the alehouse in his courting. In 1663 he recorded several occasions of making merry with female servants and wenches at alehouses, and in the following year he approached his future wife at the Tankerfields alehouse in Ashton. She was there with a rival, Henry Kenion: 'at last they came by us and I moved Emm to stay to drink with me, which she did.'[156] Most of these examples come from England, which might be an indication that English drinking establishments were less exclusively male space than those on the continent.

Aside from courtship, young men and women found other attractions at taverns and alehouses. As already noted, one of the attractions for young men was the prospect of encountering prostitutes. The apprentice Nicholas Moore found a similar reason for returning to an alehouse in Essex in 1634; the keeper's wife urged him to come back when her husband was absent.[157] In Renaissance Florence homosexual youths sought contacts at taverns, the two most prominent being the Buco and Sant' Andrea.[158] Taverns and alehouses offered other inducements besides sex. Keepers procured dancing bears, jugglers, and minstrels to lure the young men and women to come and have a drink.[159] In addition to courting, Roger Lowe spent a lot of time in alehouses talking to others, playing games, conducting business, and of course drinking.[160] Drink remained the main attraction. Servants drank at the

alehouse of Lewis Nicholson in Essex 'after divine service, sometimes til night, half the night and sometimes the whole.'[161] Despite the continuous efforts of university authorities, students at Cambridge and Oxford were notorious for their alehouse haunting. As a student at Cambridge the same Samuel Ward who preached 'Woe to Drunkards' kept a diary that included such transgressions as 'going to the tavern with such lewd fellows.'[162] An indication of the extent of the drinking was the action taken in 1639 by the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University in suppressing 200 alehouses in the town.[163] The suppression did not resolve the problem, for in the 1670s members of Balliol College had a reputation for drinking so much at a disreputable alehouse that art was added 'to their natural stupidity to make themselves perfect sots.'[164]

Secular and religious authorities viewed alehouses and taverns as the chief culprits in the corruption of the young. The sixteenth-century English magistrate William Lambarde believed that alehouses provided youths 'so ready means to feed their pleasures and fulfil their lusts,'[165] and some of the godly even argued that the minimum age for entering alehouses should be 25.[166] Early in the seventeenth century the residents of Little Bedwyn in Wiltshire complained that their servants would not stay home but instead went to alehouses where they neglected their master's business.[167] Apprentices were required to shun the attractions of taverns and alehouses. A typical contract for an apprentice from the Merchant Tailors in 1451 stipulated that he should not frequent taverns.[168] Similarly, in 1565 when William Bothill of Liverpool was apprenticed to Oliver Garnet, a tailor, his indenture required him 'to reject the illicit lure of … alehouses and taverns.'[169] Such contracts were hard to enforce, and authorities tried other measures to keep the young away from the temptations and attractions of alehouses and taverns, temptations and attractions that would lead to other sins and ultimately to perdition. One measure tried by some magistrates was to require the keepers to forbid entry to their neighbors' children and servants.[170] Another measure, enacted at Basingstoke, Hampshire, in 1516, was to forbid keepers to serve apprentices after seven o'clock and servants after nine.[171] At Arras in 1550 authorities closed the cabaret du Glay for fifteen days because some youths and prostitutes had drunk there together on Good Friday.[172]

The young disliked these attempts to control their trips to the alehouse or tavern. As James B. Collins has argued, in France the young were at the margins of society, unmarried, poor, and mobile. One of their few assets was their relative freedom, and they revelled in the anarchic atmosphere of the tavern. They resented attempts by authorities to

restrict this freedom and to restrict their drinking.[173] They moreover believed they had the right, as well as the duty, to take part in drinking contests and to get drunk.[174] As a consequence young men took the lead in protesting against the closure of taverns on Sundays and other feast days, and they opposed the attempts to curtail festive drinking.[175] In England apprentices resented the restrictions placed on their leisure activities and turned to alehouses in defiance of their masters and the authorities.[176] For example, at Springfield, Essex, early in the seventeenth century a group of servants 'mocked and flouted' those responsible for charging the alehouse keeper who entertained them.[177] This was, however, relatively mild in comparison to the violence that was always possible with young drinkers, a topic covered in another chapter.

Thomas Brennan has noted that both the brothel and the tavern were unordered, anarchic space, where customers felt they had the freedom to act in a disorderly manner free from normal constraints.[178] Perhaps the close connection between drinking establishments and prostitution resulted from them attracting the same type of customer looking for sociable or erotic release from the pressures of daily life. Alcoholic beverages reinforced the connection. Just as Chapter 3 attempted to demonstrate a connection between the consumption of alcohol and sexual activity, this chapter has tried to show the connection between drinking establishments and prostitution. These connections were not the only reason for alehouses and taverns acquiring a reputation as an 'anti-church', but the connections were at the center of concerns about women and young men patronizing these establishments. Moralists had previously expressed their concerns about the sociable drinking that accompanied the communal festivals and rituals, but the decline in the public drinking led to an increase in trade at drinking establishments, which in turn attracted more expressions of concern. Patriarchal constraints succeeded in restricting female participation in the drinking culture of taverns and alehouses, more so on the continent than in England, but young men retained their role at the center of this culture. Although the evidence indicates that drinking establishments were male space, women ventured into this space, and alehouses and taverns were venues for courtship. This seems contradictory and raises questions regarding the extent of female presence in taverns and alehouses. It definitely requires further research, especially on the apparent absence of women in the drinking establishments of France and Italy.

5
Sexual Encounters

At the trial of Louis Gaufridi for witchcraft at Aix in 1610 the defendant described the banquet at the witches' Sabbat: 'Sometimes they ate the tender flesh of little children, who had been slain and roasted at some synagogue, and sometimes babes were brought there, yet alive, whom the witches had kidnapped from their homes if opportunity offered.' And, yes, the witches drank malmsey wine for sexual stimulation.[1] Given their consumption of babies, given the ritual of inversion that was their Black Mass, and given all of their other perversions that often included sexual orgies, the use of malmsey wine to stimulate witches sexually seems somewhat less than diabolical; more typical for a wedding than for those paying homage to the prince of darkness. Not quite two centuries previously in 1447 the authorities at Florence had condemned Giovanna called Caterina of the parish of San Ambrogio for practicing sorcery; she distilled water from the skulls of dead men, mixed it with wine, and gave it to Giovanni Ceresani to provoke his lust for her.[2] Given the widespread belief in the aphrodisiac properties of alcohol noted in Chapter 3, Giovanna might have foregone the distilled water from the skulls of dead men, presented Giovanni with a cup of plain malmsey wine instead, and avoided her punishment, which was beheading. These two episodes demonstrate that the relationship between alcohol and sexual activity was more complex than indicated by the warnings and the praises contained in the same chapter. Much depended on time, place, and circumstances.

Foreplay

The erotic and amorous effects of alcoholic beverages could manifest themselves in various ways. Just as the drinking of wine or ale could

make someone fall in love, men could fall in love with women who served them drink, and the presentation of drink had erotic significance. In both Robert Wace and Layamon's twelfth-century versions of the *Arthurian Chronicles* King Vortiger fell in love with the fair Rowena when she served him ale at a banquet. She presented the cup to him and said, 'Wassail, lord king.' The account by Wace continued, 'So merry was the king, so well had he drunk, that he desired the damsel in his heart.'[3] A similar story from *The Pentameron* of Giambattista Basile told of a king who fell in love with Renzolla, the daughter of a peasant who served him wine. She 'filled his cup so often and well that he drank as much love from her eyes as wine from her cup.'[4] In the thirteenth century Colin Muset wrote a poem about the fair lady 'with the colored cheek and the pretty heart' who served him good wine.[5] Pierre de Ronsard likewise connected the offer of wine to love:

> My lady drinks to me: then giving her cup to me,
> 'Drink,' she says, 'this remainder where I have poured my heart:'
> And then I press to my lips the vessel,
> Which, like a ferryman, passes her heart into mine.[6]

Alcoholic beverages, especially wine, were popular gifts, as demonstrated by the correspondence of Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle, when he was Lord Deputy of Calais between 1533 and 1540. He presented gifts of wine as payment for services rendered and as bribe for services sought.[7] Alcoholic beverages were likewise popular gifts among lovers, perhaps for the same purposes. The presentation of no other object to a loved one could have an effect as erotic and as amorous as the presentation of drink. Rather than saying it with flowers, the sexual symbolism of alcohol made it an ideal gift from those who sought to gain another's affections. The best illustrations of this occurred in works of fiction. In Chaucer's 'The Miller's Tale' the lecherous clergyman Absalon sent sweet wine, mead, and spicy ale to the carpenter's wife,[8] and a seventeenth-century ballad sang of a milkmaid who received bottles of ale from her suitor.[9]

Taverns and alehouses often provided convenient places for young people to court, but the rituals of courtship could also include drinking together, regardless of the location. Courting rituals required young men to demonstrate their restraint in delaying their sexual gratification,[10] and a good way of showing such restraint was to behave as a gentleman even after the consumption of alcohol. Lacking such restraint was a future Essex judge whose courtship of a woman ended

abruptly when he vomited in her lap.[11] A late seventeenth-century ballad described the courtship of Thomas and Mary at a fair on a summer's day and pointed to Thomas' lack of restraint:

> We'll drink before we part;
> come, give us a bottle of wine ....
> And when they were full of canary,
> their stomachs began to rise,
> Then Thomas began to court Mary,
> with hand upon one of her thighs.[12]

For many couples the sharing of drink was part of the courting process, and for some the preference for similar drinks could be an auspicious omen. As the impatient Falstaff declared to Mrs. Page in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* (II.i), 'You love sack, and so do I. Would you desire better sympathy?'

Drink could provoke lust or promote love, depending on one's point of view, but according to literary representations of sexual affairs it also functioned as foreplay for a couple who intended to make love. In the anonymous sixteenth-century play *La venexiana* the widow Angela invited the young foreigner Iulio to her house for an assignation. Iulio arrived in an obvious state of excitement and eagerness, only to find Angela leisurely offering him some wine:

> *Angela*: Drink a drop, and let's rest.
> *Iulio*: ... I've already drunk a bit; I don't need any more.
> *Angela*: This little bit, for love of me.
> *Iulio*: For love of you, if it were ... arsenic, I would drink it.[13]

Adulterous wives likewise provided lovers with wine before consummating the relationship. In Jean Bodin's *Vilain de Bailluel* a peasant's wife served capon, cake, and wine to a priest before offering him dessert, and in the same author's *Le foteor* the gigolo and the wife took a bath and shared wine together.[14] An anonymous medieval *fabliau* told the story of a cobbler named Baillet whose wife invited a wanton priest to play whenever Baillet was away. The pair 'didn't spare the strongest wine, but drank it in good measure.'[15] Two English ballads told similar stories of a woman who hired a tinker, in one to mend her kettle and in the other her cauldron, while her husband was out. In one ballad before he went to work the woman insisted that he receive

'good liquor,' and in the other the tinker demanded a glass of the best drink.[16]

Works of fiction also credited wine with providing Dutch courage to those too reluctant or too shy to make erotic arrangements. Bénigne Poissenot's *L'esté* (1583) described a queen who drank wine to gain enough nerve to declare her sinful desires to the charming knight Combabe.[17] The so-called water poet, the prolific John Taylor (1580–1653), used few words when writing *In Exaltation of Ale and Beer* that ale 'will set a bashful suitor wooing.'[18] Just as drink could serve as foreplay, so also could it seal the couple's relationship afterwards. A ballad from the early eighteenth century sang of a couple meeting on Enfield Common and spending the night in 'youthful pleasures':

> And in the morning, by day's adorning,
> We rose and drank a glass of wine together.[19]

Because of the erotic connotations of drink as well as food, one of the attractions of brothels was the good food and drink available there.[20] This tradition continued in England despite Henry II's regulations and their later reiterations against the serving of any drink or food in London's brothels.[21] Spying neighbors noticed tables set with elaborate food and drink in seventeenth-century Burgundian brothels.[22] As noted in the previous chapter, prostitutes often touted for trade in taverns and alehouses, but even one who worked the streets could take her customer to a drinking establishment for a drink, which would constitute part of her wage.[23] Sometimes, as Robert Greene described in *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage* (1591), the drink in the tavern was also a method of sealing the deal.[24]

Popular literature depicted the drink between a prostitute and her customer as a type of foreplay to get them in the mood for sex; the literature also depicted the unfortunate consequences of too much foreplay. A seventeenth-century ballad described the encounter between a merchant's son and a pretty 'beggar-wench'; he promised her gold if she would spend the night with him, took her to an alehouse, purchased her dinner, 'and called for liquor of the best.' When he awoke the next day, she had gone and had taken his clothes and money.[25] Three other ballads, all concerning a tailor, told of similar encounters with similar results; the drink functioned as foreplay and prepared both the woman and the tailor for sex, and unfortunately for the tailor the drink also functioned as a soporific.[26] Court records reveal that these stories of seduction and betrayal were based on actual cases of prostitutes often

working together to leave their clients drunk, without clothes, and without money.[27] Worse could happen; one man was robbed and murdered after meeting a woman at a London tavern.[28] An early eighteenth-century ballad described the turning of the tables; a man encountered a prostitute, they retired to a tavern where they drank wine, locked in amorous embrace, enjoyed themselves more than once, and when she went for more wine he 'whipped into an alley.'[29]

Seduction and rape

A man who wanted to seduce a woman could ply her with drink. One of the stories in Boccaccio's *Decameron* told of Alatiel, daughter of the Sultan of Babylon, who through a series of mishaps came under the control of the nobleman Pericone da Visalgo. Pericone was smitten by her beauty, but try as he might his advances were unsuccessful. His passions raged until he thought of a means of fulfilling his desires. Alatiel liked wine, but her Moslem faith meant she was unaccustomed to drinking it, so Pericone planned to get her drunk at a banquet and then take advantage of her. The plan succeeded; after the guests had left Pericone accompanied Alatiel to her bedroom, where she undressed in front of him, 'being rather more flushed with wine than tempered by virtue.' A night of agreeable lovemaking followed.[30] Jean de La Fontaine retold the story in the seventeenth century and stressed, as did Boccaccio, the seductive qualities of wine, especially for someone who was not used to drinking it.[31] Since most women and even girls in traditional Europe would have been accustomed to drinking at least some alcohol, the chances of a successful seduction would have been accordingly less with them than with Moslem women.

According to some stories, however, successful seduction could follow the drinking that occurred on festive occasions. In a medieval English poem a woman described how she kept a 'high holiday' with Jack. He paid for her ale and made her drink a lot:

> Soon he will take me by the hand,
> And he will lay me on the land … .
> In he thrust and out he drew … .
> 'By God's death, you cause me woe.'
> Upon this high holiday!

More woe followed when her 'womb began to swell.'[32] Similarly, the play entitled *The Ordinary or the City Cozener* (1635) by William

Cartwright mentioned 'a great belly caught at a Whitsunale.'[33] An actual case involved Grace Dives, the wife an alehouse keeper of St. Paul's parish in Exeter. In 1687 she faced charges of attempted procurement. She had allegedly tried to make her maid serve more than drink to her customers; when the maid refused, Grace suggested a quart of brandy, which would so 'fuddle' the maid that 'they might do with her what they would.'[34] Not only men plied women with alcohol.

Neither in fiction nor in reality were all the attempts to seduce women by plying them with alcoholic beverages successful. A fictional account of unsuccessful seduction comes from the seventeenth-century ballad entitled *Shall I? Shall I? No, No, No!* that sang of the courtship of a wanton lad and a comely lass named Betty. After taking her for a walk in the fields without success, he took her to a tavern, 'feasting her with costly wine'. Success eluded him again: ' "Come let's dally, shall I? shall I?" But she answered, "No, no, no!" '[35] *The Life of Christina of Markyate* presents a case of parents using drink to effect the seduction of their daughter. Christina was a twelfth-century saint who was never canonized. Against her will her parents arranged a marriage, but she vowed never to consummate it. Not to be thwarted, her parents made her serve as a cupbearer to the important nobles attending a guild festival. According to the anonymous biographer, 'They hoped that the compliments paid to her by the onlookers and the accumulation of little sips of wine would break her resolution and prepare her body for the deed of corruption.'[36] A more straightforward case of attempted seduction comes from a court case at London in 1630. A woman charged Peter Marsh with unwanted advances after she had eaten artichokes and drunk wine with him. The complaint alleged that, 'Peter Marsh would have plucked her down into his lap and would have put his hands under her coat but that she would not suffer him; and strived to kiss her and would have put his tongue into her mouth.'[37]

In his analysis of sexual violence in the towns of southeastern France in the fifteenth century, Jacques Rossiaud notes that no evidence exists of a correlation between the frequent public rapes of young women by gangs of young men and heavy drinking by the young men.[38] Studies of modern drinking behavior likewise indicate that no correlation exists between the consumption of alcohol and incidents of violent rape and sexual assault.[39] In support of Rossiaud's argument court records and popular literature produce few cases of drunken men raping women. One of the few literary cases comes from *The Dialogues* of Pietro Aretino. A group of men invited a prostitute to a banquet in a vineyard, and when they became drunk they took turns raping her

until the following morning.[40] Drunken soldiers raped many women at Ludlow in Shropshire in 1459, but soldiers have always been guilty of sexual violence, drunk or not.[41] In fourteenth-century London 18 men came to a tavern with the intention of abducting Emma Pourte, the ward of the tavern keeper. They drank four gallons of ale, possibly for Dutch courage, before making their move, so this was not a case of drink-inspired sexual violence.[42] G. R. Quaife uncovered several cases of drunken rape in his study of seventeenth-century Somerset. One girl tried to convince the magistrates that a drunken neighbor had taken her against her will. Two men grabbed a woman with a poor reputation at an alehouse and took turns raping her in front of the other customers, who made a joke of it. When five drinkers found a couple fornicating on the stairs at an alehouse in Wanstrow, they pulled the man off and 'had the carnal knowledge one after another very shamefully.'[43]

More common than rape with violence was nonconsenting sex arising from the effects of alcohol, which is rape without the violence. The most obvious case was the widow mentioned by Montaigne, who became pregnant while in a drunken stupor. Just as obvious was the case of Susan More, a 25-year-old servant living in London, who was the victim of what is now known as date rape. In 1608 Thomas Creede began courting her by buying her a pint of wine. On one occasion he plied her with so much wine that she became drunk and sick, whereupon he 'had the carnal knowledge of her body.'[44] A less obvious fictional case was that of Boccaccio's story of Alatiel, but a fine line exists between taking advantage of a drunk woman and using alcohol to overcome the resistance of a reluctant lover. Still less obvious was the story from an early eighteenth-century ballad of a girl who blamed her pregnancy on a knave who followed her to the alehouse and then followed her home and crept into her bed.[45] A final example is not at all obvious. The diary of the English clergyman Ralph Josselin (1616–83) recorded in October 1648 that the pregnant maid of John Read left his service and claimed that he was the father. Josselin wrote, 'the man once a great professor, admired for his parts, but his base corruptions grew too strong, he fell to drunkenness.'[46] This could have been a case of drunken force, less likely a case of the seduction of a drunk woman, and more likely a case of a man using his position to take advantage of an inferior.

Quaife notes that when single women were questioned by local magistrates after giving birth to an illegitimate child, about 10 per cent stated that they had 'consented' to have sex under the influence of

alcohol. A woman lost her virginity in a stable when she was drunk, two men persuaded a woman to drink until they were able to take advantage of her, one became pregnant after drinking too much liquor, a soldier purchased a pint of wine for a woman and then persuaded her to have sex with him, a man purchased a flagon of wine for the purpose of seducing a virgin, and a man filled a servant with drink and then followed her to bed.[47] These cases might be the result of men taking advantage of women so drunk that they were unable to fend off unwanted advances. They might be the result of women seeking to blame the demon drink for their own moral lapses. Another possible explanation concerns broken promises to marry. A man who promised marriage could expect to have sex with a woman, which made a promise of marriage one of the more effective ways of seducing a woman, as illustrated by the man who 'wished the devil would tear him in pieces if he did not the next day procure a license to marry.'[48] Come the bright light of day the prince of darkness might not have so terrified him. A likely scenario might have been that a couple agreed to marry, they celebrated with a few drinks, went to bed partly due to the drink and partly due to the agreement, and in the morning the man absconded.

Medieval canon lawyers argued that drunkenness was a mitigating factor in sins concerning extramarital sex, which would mean that married men and women who committed adultery while under the influence of alcohol would receive milder penances than those imposed on the sober.[49] Similarly, French legal custom recognized drunkenness as a mitigating factor in the commission of murder, but the principle did not apply to a woman who committed incest with her father in 1618 while under the influence of 'too much wine.' She, like her father, was burned at the stake.[50] A complicated legal situation developed at York in 1418 concerning a marriage contract. A couple agreed to marry, broke off the engagement, and then consummated their relationship when one of them was drunk. Was the couple legally wed? According to a fourteenth-century treatise on ecclesiastical discipline the answer was no, because the drunkenness did not indicate consent.[51] Taking their cue from the canon lawyers and legal opinion, people attempted to excuse their illicit sexual behavior by blaming it on alcohol. For example, in 1609 Robert Scawe contested Ellen Tinckham's charge of a broken promise to marry her by claiming that he had sex with her only when she came to his bed after he had been drinking.[52] Men arrested in Paris for sexual offenses with prostitutes claimed in their defense that they had been drunk and hence not

responsible for their actions.[53] Of course, in that case men could pretend to be drunk and thereby avoid condemnation for their behavior. *La clef d'amour*, written in the thirteenth century, suggested that men feign drunkenness as a way of excusing bad behavior:

> When man behaves like arrant sot,
> The drink is blamed, the drinker, not.[54]

Rape in modern societies is often unreported. If men (and women and parents) could 'fuddle' women with drink, if men could blame their sexual misconduct on drink, and if men could feign drunkenness to excuse their behavior, the incidence of unreported rape in traditional Europe was probably much higher.

In alehouses and taverns

A common theme of English popular literature was festive drinking by lads and lasses followed by festive copulating often in a rustic setting. The setting for the ballad *Come All, Great, Small, Short, Tall* (1696) was 'down in a vale on a summer's day,' where 'all the lads and lasses met to be merry' with 'cakes and ale and cider and perry':

> Then went the glasses round,
> Then went the lasses down.
> Each lad did his sweetheart own,
> And on the grass did fling her.[55]

Another ballad from the early eighteenth century told of a group of young people who gathered for such wild dancing that when it was over 'they sweat and they stunk':

> Cakes and ale flew about; they clapped hands and drank;
> They laughed and they giggled until they bepissed 'em;
> They laid the girls down, and gave each a green mantle,
> While their breasts and their bellies went pintle a pantle.[56]

Although the evidence reveals many cases of festive drinking leading to festive copulating, much of this popular literature was nostalgic whimsy, written by Londoners who longed for summer days in fields and vales, filled with cakes and ales in the company of willing lasses. Most of the evidence of illicit sexual encounters implicated taverns and

alehouses rather than fields and vales. Martin Ingram's examination of church court records at Wylye between 1619 and 1621 revealed that most of the married women and their lovers who were prosecuted for adultery had some link with the village's inns and alehouses,[57] and G. R. Quaife's work on court records from seventeenth-century Somerset reveals many cases of illicit sexual activity arising from drinking at an alehouse or a tavern. For example, a man prosecuted for fornicating in a bean patch claimed that because it was a holiday he had been drinking heavily at two or three alehouses and had intended to sleep it off, but then he found a willing woman.[58]

As centers of popular culture alehouses and taverns could feature the crude behavior and humor associated with Rabelais' *Gargantua*. In addition to being crude, the behavior and humor reflected a rather loose sexual culture. All of these elements combined to create an atmosphere of carnival license throughout the year.[59] Patrons sang songs with suggestive lyrics; favorites would have been those which pandered to male fantasies, such as a seventeenth-century ballad entitled *The Jovial Companions* that recounted the exploits of three men who travelled throughout England, always drinking the best ale, beer, and wine and paying for it by having sex with the female keeper and her servants, all 'with a hye down, ho down, lanktre down derry.'[60] Some of the songs could be more suggestive than others. For example, Robert Bankes made fun of the husband of his mistress at an alehouse near Ely. He made the sign of the cuckold at him and sang, 'For I did but kiss her, for I did but kiss her and grope her, and so let her go.'[61] In 1632 a servant at an alehouse in Rymes composed a ribald song that poked fun at the some of the local Puritans by implying they committed adultery. One customer liked it so much that he paid a quart of wine for a copy and then showed it around the town.[62]

Competing with songs for crudity were suggestive pictures and jokes about genitals or their exposure. Henry Nicholson, a seventeenth-century curate of Easby, Richmond, was drinking at an inn when he had to relieve himself. Rather than piss under the table, as the Puritan Philip Stubbes claimed was normal procedure in such establishments, he asked the landlady to bring him a chamber pot. When she did, he asked, 'Help me out with it, Bonny Face, for it has grown rather short,' to which she replied, 'So has my arm.'[63] A man from West Lamyat faced charges that he pulled out 'the privy member of Thomas Lane, being asleep, and did put it upon a child's shoe.'[64] According to the testimony of George Lingard in 1674, Ann Savage often exposed herself at his alehouse in Northenden; she also reached into men's

breeches and grabbed 'their members,' shaking and commending some of them.[65]

Taverns and alehouses were also places where lovers could pass the time fondling each other. On 29 June 1663 Samuel Pepys met his mistress, Mrs. Page, at the Rhenish wine house, where, as he recorded in his diary, 'I did give her a lobster and so do touse her and feel her all over, making her believe how fair and good a skin she has, and indeed she has a very white thigh and leg, but monstrous fat.'[66] This was quite innocent in comparison with the behavior of other couples. William Eccerson reported in 1694 that at an alehouse in Wigan he had watched John Wilkinson and Ellen Laithwaite fondling each other, she 'handling his prick and he had his hand on her placket.' After three hours of such behavior John leaned Ellen against the wall and 'had carnal knowledge of her.' A similar case occurred in 1663 at an alehouse in Macclesfield, where a patron saw Samuel Elcocke with his hand on Sarah Whamley's 'commodity,' while she put her hand in his codpiece.[67] The comic possibilities of the crude behavior and humor of alehouses and taverns were too good for dramatists to pass. In the anonymous play with the unimaginative title *Les yvrognes* or *The Drunkards* (1684) three companions spent an evening at an inn getting drunk and making obscene propositions to the hostess and her maid amid a violent quarrel with a wife, arguments over a game of cards, and vomiting.[68]

A repentant Thomas Hoccleve looked back at his wayward youth when he wrote *La male rege de T. Hoccleve* early in the fifteenth century. He confessed to succumbing to the temptations of Bacchus at the sign of a tavern and to succumbing to the temptations of Venus inside the tavern. Hoccleve, however, was timid by nature and never scored more than a kiss or two.[69] According to a poem written perhaps in 1521 by Clément Marot on behalf of 'Capitaine Raisin,' the captain might have wished that he had shared Hoccleve's timidity. Bacchus lured the captain to the tavern, where he was infected with syphilis, and now, as a result of the doctor putting him on a special diet, he could no longer drink wine.[70] Obviously, not everyone who entered a drinking establishment succumbed to the temptations of Venus, and many would have been happy to come away with a kiss or two.

Others under the influence of both alcohol and the loose sexual culture of alehouses and taverns went further then a few kisses. William Thornily reported that he had seen Robert Sydebottom and Isabella Ashcroft committing adultery at an alehouse in Bredbury, Stockport, in 1663. When Isabella told Robert that someone was watching them,

Robert replied, 'God's wounds, I will fuck out my fucking if the king come.'[71] In the following year at Leyland a married couple claimed that Maria Darwen had fornicated with Captain Bayard on the bed in the loft of an alehouse,[72] while another couple used the alehouse toilet.[73] In 1630 John Roger boasted that he had sex five times in one night with Mary Shothill at an alehouse in Knutsford, Cheshire.[74] Two married couples were drinking together at an alehouse in Glaston, when one of the husbands left with the other's wife and went to The Crown. There they did not continue drinking but rented a room for an hour or two.[75] The dalliance at taverns and alehouses, like the crude behavior of their customers, appeared in popular literature. A merchant complained in a seventeenth-century ballad that his wife went to the tavern with the music teacher, 'and there on her lute he must play.'[76]

Just as young couples used alehouses and taverns for courtship, so also they used them for sexual liaisons. For example, when Joan Lowe and an apprentice fell in love, they met at several alehouses in Salisbury to have sex together.[77] Local magistrates attempted to prevent such meetings because of their concern that the local poor rates would have to support any resulting illegitimate children. For example, in 1576 authorities imprisoned for 48 hours a tiler from Hull who kept an alehouse and permitted an unmarried couple to stay there overnight for the purpose of fornication.[78] Magistrates also questioned the mother of an illegitimate child to determine the particulars of her sexual activity so that the father could be identified to support the child. The particulars quite often indicated that alehouses had provided the opportunity and the location. For example, in 1693 Agnes Lumman of Exeter confessed that Peter Randell 'had carnal knowledge of her body' twice, once in an alehouse and once under a hedge.[79] Perhaps the unrestrained use of alehouses for sexual encounters might explain why some communities had high rates of illegitimacy while others did not. An example of a high rate comes from Branfield, Suffolk, where 14 per cent of the children born in 1539 were illegitimate. Branfield had a large number of unlicensed and unregulated alehouses.[80]

Taverns and alehouses not only provided the opportunity and the location for unmarried couples, but they also provided venues for prostitutes to ply their trade. The Bell at London featured in several reports of whoremongering early in the sixteenth century. The barber John Somer was accused of committing adultery with two prostitutes there, and in 1519 Elizabeth Tomlins found the priest Gregory Kyton at The Bell when they had apparently arranged an assignation.[81] The Bell was

also the location for an episode involving apprentices in 1579. A group of six apprentices persuaded the keeper to permit them to stay there until dawn and then took turns with two prostitutes. In other incidents occurring in London at about the same time the apprentice Roland Bradshaw admitted that he had sought prostitutes at The White Lion and The Bee, and a companion informed the magistrates that a stationer's apprentice named Hugh Rawlyns had fetched a whore at The Cross Keys and had taken her to The Blue Boar. In 1578 yet another apprentice, Edward Pew, confessed that he had sex with a prostitute at an alehouse in Southwark.[82] Not all the men made randy from drinking at alehouses were successful in their search for sex. Four men drinking together at an alehouse near Castle Cary, Somerset, in the seventeenth century decided to get a whore if they could find one after midnight; the woman they sent for refused to come.[83]

The liaisons between prostitutes and apprentices also concerned local magistrates, which indicates that the attempts to enforce celibacy on single women were not solely related to the economic costs of bastardy to the community. As explained by Paul Griffiths, the religious and political authorities considered youth as a period for the development of appropriate discipline for life as an adult. This discipline had reinforcing economic and moral attributes; young people should become hardworking and demonstrate civility and piety. They should not be whoremongering in alehouses and taverns.[84] In opposition to the concerns of the authorities were notions of manhood and masculinity. According to these notions, a young man should gain sexual experience as a means of achieving the masculine confidence necessary to secure his place at the head of a household.[85] The macho notions associated with drinking combined with those associated with sexual experience to make drinking establishments the proving grounds for young men.

Just as Peter Clark attempts to explain the link between prostitutes and alehouses, so also he attempts to explain the role of the alehouse in illicit sexual encounters. Here he attributes it to the relaxed attitude of society and particularly parents toward premarital sex, especially if the couple were betrothed. Another factor according to Clark was the result of demographic developments; the rising age at marriage coupled with an increasing proportion of the population aged in their teens and twenties led to more sexual contacts among the young unmarried. Once again, he does not note any connection between drink and sex.[86] France and Italy produced little evidence of illicit sexual behavior in taverns, just as they produced little evidence of

courtship there. As suggested previously, this might be evidence that women were more at home in the English alehouse than they were in the continental tavern. In any event, although much of the illicit sexual activity clustered around drinking establishments, the consumption of alcohol was a facilitator no matter where it occurred. For example, at Durston a group gathered for food and drink, and as the drinking continued some noticed that one of the women had put her hand inside a man's codpiece. When the two made an excuse to go outside, the others sent a man to find a stick with which to beat them back inside. It took him too long to find a stick.[87]

Promiscuity and impotence

In the Italian version of Tristan the magical qualities of a beautiful horn meant that if an unfaithful wife tried to drink wine from it the wine would spill on her breast; only chaste women could drink from it. When the suspicious King Marc forced Queen Iseult to drink from the horn, the wine spilled all over her breast. 'Then the king had the horn given to the other ladies, but of the 686 only 13 proved loyal, and these not by their own desires; they had fully as much will as the others, but they had not been invited, so they remained true.'[88] The use of the horn and the wine in this test had its obvious symbolism, implicating wine in giving a husband his horns. Although 673 of the 686 were unfaithful, the sources contain only a few references to what could be considered women who were genuinely promiscuous. Alcohol was likewise implicated in their promiscuity. For example, Antoine de La Sale's *Jehan de Saintré* (1455–56) described the moral decline of an aristocratic lady who visited a monastery and enjoyed the fine table there. While under the influence of wine she exchanged amorous glances with the monastery's abbot, and the combined effects of food and drink led to the loss of her honor.[89] A ballad from the late seventeenth century described the exploits of the 'wanton wife' of a 'young honest poor tailor.' The wife 'used to ramble for her recreation' and met a sailor who took her to a tavern for some heavy drinking followed by a night of recreation.[90]

The role of alcohol in literary depictions of promiscuous women had counterparts in court cases. In 1635 at Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, Margaret Heywood faced charges of being a drunk and a whore. She allegedly had sex ten times with William Day in Cow Lane and even boasted about it. In his defense William claimed that Margaret was so drunk that she could 'neither stand nor speak.'[91] The charges laid

against the behavior of Mary Hatton of Great Budworth, Cheshire, in 1670 were similar. She misspent a holy day in wassailing with ale and apples, spent a whole day at an alehouse drinking, slept with John Longshaw at his house, stayed with Richard Lawrenson at an alehouse until midnight and then went to bed with him, invited John Hough to sleep with her, and attended a rowdy drinking party.[92] Margaret Heywood and Mary Hatton were perhaps alcoholics, and their excessive drinking was blamed for their outrageous sexual behavior. However, as pointed out in Chapter 3, studies of modern drinking behavior indicate that women with sexual dysfunctions tend to drink more than do other women. Perhaps their promiscuity led to their drinking. The case of John Cannon indicates that men were also more likely to have sex after they had been drinking. Cannon had his first sexual experience in 1696 at the age of 12 when older friends taught him to masturbate. From the age of 20 he began to socialize with women but carefully avoided having penetrative sex with them despite the opportunity to do so, despite rather heavy fondling and mutual masturbation with them, and despite being engaged to two women at the same time. He did not lose his virginity until the age of 25 when he had sex with a servant after a night of drinking.[93]

A seventeenth-century English ballad told the story of a drunk knight riding a horse through the countryside when he met a lady among the cocks of hay. He tried to seduce her first with fair words and then with bribery. The lady reacted to this threatening situation by outwitting him; a drunk knight was no match for a clever lady.[94] In this story the drunkenness of the knight impaired his chances for a successful conquest. The more alcohol a man consumed the greater the chances of impaired performance caused by physiological dysfunction. Rabelais' depiction of Bacchus as a ruddy-faced youth indicated the vigor that came from wine, but his lack of a beard signified the loss of virility that resulted from overindulgence.[95] Similarly, a late seventeenth-century play portrayed Bacchus as a drunkard who neglected his wife, Venus.[96]

The drunken, sleeping, impotent man was a popular figure in literature. For example, one of the stories by Bonaventure Des Périers described the lives of the 'good drunk Janicot and Jeannette his wife.' Janicot was an obvious alcoholic who went to sleep with a bottle of wine next to him, and 'most often a third person was there sleeping in the same bed, dancing the Trevisan dance with his wife.'[97] In *An Amorous Dialogue between John and His Mistress* (1572–76) the mistress complained that her husband never came home until after midnight

or one o'clock, and then he was so drunk that he just laid there like a blockhead:

> Such usage as this would make any one mad,
> But a woman will have it if 'tis to be had.

The mistress proposed to John that they take advantage of her husband's drunken sleep:

> My meaning is honest, and thou art the lad,
> Then give it and take it where 'tis to be had.[98]

The early seventeenth-century play *Célinde* by Balthazar Baro retold the story of Holofernes and Judith. Holofernes was a tyrant who fell in love with the beautiful Judith. He prepared for a rendezvous with her by drinking, on the principle that, 'Venus is more pleasant after a bit of wine.' Unfortunately for him, he drank more than a bit, fell asleep, and literally lost his head.[99]

The historical records contain few actual cases of husbands so drunk that they could not fulfil their matrimonial duties, but a safe assumption is that many men went to bed dead drunk on occasion. In the seventeenth century Sir John Leeke complained of 'the foulest churl in the world,' husband to his precious Katherine. The only virtue he had was that he seldom came to bed sober, and hence seldom imposed on Leeke's precious Katherine.[100] Some men were so drunk that their condition could affect either their performance or their memory of it, or perhaps both. At Dorchester, Dorset, a drunk gardener, John Edwards, came to the house of Sarah Hancock; despite his condition he managed to have sex with her before collapsing into a drunken stupor.[101] On occasion excessive drink even prevented women from engaging in sex. After drinking together at Fordington, Lincolnshire, one evening, Henry Reade and Anne Baxter, the wife of the barber-surgeon, agreed to return to her place. Reade successfully made it into her bed, but she collapsed on the stairs and made so much noise that she awoke her neighbors, who told her to go to bed. 'No,' she protested, 'for there was a roguing knave in her bed already.'[102]

Not every inn, tavern, and alehouse in traditional Europe was a center of illicit sexual activity and loose sexual culture. As documented by Tessa Watt, some drinking establishments had depictions of biblical scenes painted on their walls, even if they might be of Susanna.[103] Isaac Walton described a country inn with twenty ballads posted on

the walls for the entertainment of customers, even if some of the ballads were bawdy.[104] Enough evidence exists, however, to demonstrate a link between drinking establishments and adultery, fornication, and prostitution. A link also existed between festive drinking occasions and similar behavior. The common factor in both of these links was the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Males and females began drinking at an early age, and they began drinking early in the morning and continued until late at night, every day, week after week. As noted several times previously, if the physiological effects of alcohol were the cause of the sexual activity, then the resultant pattern of illicit sexuality would begin at an early age, and it would begin early in the morning and continue until late at night, every day, week after week. Because drinking behavior was learned, people also learned that time, place, and circumstance triggered the amorous effects of drinking, and the time, place, and circumstance focused on alehouses and taverns and on festive drinking occasions.

6
Unruly Women and Violent Men

Studies of male drinking behavior in modern societies note that one of the reasons men drink is because of the feeling of power that alcohol gives them. In his article entitled 'Drinking as a Manifestation of Power Concerns,' Richard A. Boyatzis states that, 'men drink alcoholic beverages to attain, or regain, a feeling of strength.' Drinking makes men feel strong and important, and it makes them feel that they can dominate or influence others. This attribute of alcohol can have a detrimental effect on the other reasons men engage in drinking. After fleeing from the threatening and civilizing female presence in the home, men take refuge in male-dominated drinking establishments and engage in macho drinking contests with companions, colleagues, and neighbors. The fellowship of the drink reinforces ties of identity and solidarity. The jolly congeniality of such activity is misleading, because violence always lurks around the corner. Ties of identity and solidarity can be directed against outsiders, drunken jokes that make fun of a fellow drinker can become insults impugning his masculine honor, and the feeling of dominance and influence that comes from alcohol can lead to aggressive, assertive, and even violent behavior. What about women? According to Boyatzis, alcohol does not work that way for women. Drinking makes women feel more feminine, less assertive and aggressive, and less concerned with power.[1] In traditional Europe, however, alcohol made women assertive and aggressive, and it made them challenge patriarchal power. Women drank to escape subordination. At least that was how men perceived drinking women.

The unruly woman in literature

In *Le livre de la cité des dames* Christine de Pizan outlined the exemplary life that a reformed prostitute should lead: 'She could spin; care for

women lying-in; or tend the sick. She would live in a little room on a respectable street among good people. Living simply and soberly, never would she be seen drunk or gorged, ill-tempered or quarrelsome, or gossiping.'[2] In short, she should not fit the cultural pattern of the unruly woman. The unruly woman was a frequent theme in misogynistic literature, a male creation that expressed men's fears about insubordinate women. One of the few exceptions to the male domination of this theme was Christine de Pizan's portrayal of unruly servants, who were the reverse image of the reformed prostitute. Instead of living frugally and soberly, the servants took advantage of the absence of their mistress and master to invite the maids from across the street and other cronies to gather for food and drink, a meat pie charged to the master and the best wine in the house. In short, they had a jolly good time and got drunk but retained enough cunning to hide all traces of their unruliness.[3]

Traces of drinking unruly women appeared in many works of literature but several focused on them. The setting for *Des iii dames de Paris*, by Wautriquet Brassenel de Couvin, was a feast day, perhaps Epiphany, at Paris in 1320. It told the story of three women, Margue, the wife of Adam de Gonnesse; her niece, Marion; and a hairdresser, Dame Tifaigne; who spent a whole day drinking at a tavern.[4] A late medieval English song with the refrain,

> Care away, away, away –
> Care away for evermore!

featured the complaints of a henpecked husband against his shrewish wife who drank a lot.[5] The topic of a late medieval popular song from Bologna was two women, the English would have called them gossips, who went to a tavern to drink wine.[6] Two anonymous English carols, one from the late fifteenth century and the other from the early sixteenth century, dealt with the drinking sessions of unruly women. One told the story of six gossips, Elinor, Joan, Margery, Margaret, Alice, and Cecily, who periodically gathered for food and drink at a tavern.[7] The subtitle of *The Boke of Mayd Emlyn*, written about 1520, stated that she 'had five husbands and all cuckolds':

> Oft would she seek
> The taverns in the week,
> Til her wit was thin.[8]

The Tunnyng [Brewing] of Elynour Rummyng by John Skelton (1460?–1529) described an alewife who supposedly kept an alehouse near Henry VIII's castle Nonsuch. Elynour was the archetypal keeper from

hell – Skelton even called her the devil's sibling – whose ale contained chicken droppings, but who nonetheless had a huge crowd of unruly female customers eager to buy it.[9] Samuel Rowlands' *Tis Merry When Gossips Meet* (1602) was about a widow, a wife, and a maiden who met in the street and then went to a tavern where they ate sausages, drank wine, and gossiped for hours.[10] Finally, some English ballads, including *Foure Wittie Gossips* (about 1630),[11] *My Wife Will Be My Master* (about 1640, others 1681),[12] and *Gillian of Croyden* (1707),[13] focused on unruly women who drank.

A common theme in all of these depictions of unruly women was the role of alcohol, usually at a tavern with other women, as an essential if not causative factor in their unruliness. Not all literary portraits of unruly women attributed their actions to drink. As mentioned in Chapter 1, neither Natalie Zemon Davis in her article 'Women on Top' nor Joy Wiltenburg in her book *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* consider the role of alcohol in their analyses. The role of alcohol in the works listed above was the most obvious in the earliest, *Des iii dames de Paris*. Margue and her niece Marion were on their way to purchase some tripe at a tavern, when they encountered Madame Tifaigne:

> Said she: 'I know a wine so rare,
> it's like no other grown before.
> Who drinks it, it will soon restore.'

The three immediately headed for the tavern to try it. After drinking large amounts of this wine, Margue was not all that impressed; it made her mouth feel queer, so she ordered some grenache. The grenache went down well, too well, for they soon had to order more, so the waiter brought each a pail. There they sat drinking from dawn until the dead of night. The trend continued in the other depictions of unruly women. The two women from Bologna wanted strong, undiluted wine at the tavern but settled for weak wine, five barrels and a quart of it. When Elinor, Joan, Margery, Margaret, Alice, and Cecily met once a week for drinks at a tavern, they rejected small drinks and purchased the best wine, which they praised for its good effects on their health. They proclaimed that the only reason they came was for the good drink.

Whenever Elynour Rummyng brewed ale, an unruly horde of women flocked to buy it, and in Skelton's description they presented a sorry spectacle:

> With their heals dagged,
> Their girdles all to-jagged,

Their smocks all to-ragged … .
Some wenches come unlaced,
Some housewives come unbraced,
With their naked paps,
That flips and flaps, … .
Such a lewd sort
To Elynour resort.

The justification given by the four witty gossips for spending the day in the tavern drinking was that their husbands had been there the night before doing the same thing. In his depiction of a cheating tavern keeper called Trick the Tapster, John Gower poked fun at city ladies who went to taverns at dawn as easily as they might go to church or market. Trick the Tapster had no qualms about cheating these women who cheated their husbands.[14] *The Good Gossippes Songe* was from a morality play about Noah's flood. As the water rose and the fear of drowning spread, a woman suggested to her gossips that they have a drink before departing, for a pot full of good malmsey wine would revive both heart and tongue.[15] Only two of the depictions of unruly women pictured them drinking at home rather than at the tavern, and only another two did not include sociable drinking with gossips. For the authors the mere presence of women in the male space of alehouses and taverns was a sign of insubordination. A solitary woman drinking in that male space was not a threat to patriarchal power, because she would have been permeable to male domination, but a group of women would have been capable of maintaining their independence.

A late fifteenth-century poem proclaimed that wives,

To the tavern they will not go,
Nor to the alehouse never the more,
For, God knows, their hearts would be woe
To spend their husbands' money so.[16]

This was misogynistic satire. The spending of their husbands' money was another male concern that became a common theme in depictions of drinking unruly women. The wife who would be master even complained when her husband gave her £40 to spend. Maid Emlyn gave her husband's money to her new lover. In addition to the expense of the drink was the expense of the fine food that they consumed in enormous quantities. The three women of Paris ate food with their wine, but soon demanded something special: a goose with

a bowl of garlic on the side. When Margue ordered the grenache, she added,

> Bring waffles and patisseries,
> shelled almond meats, a round of cheese,
> pears, spice, nuts – go buy the stuff.

The two Bolognesi likewise gorged on eight capons, one of them stuffed, 200 eggs, and seven plates of gnocchi and lasagne. Elinor, Joan, Margery, Margaret, Alice, and Cecily wanted meat to eat with their wine, goose, pig, capon's wing, or pigeon pasties. In the poem about the shrewish wife she ate and drank all that her henpecked husband earned.

If unruly wives did not have any money to pay their shot, then they found other ways of buying the food and drink. The female customers of Elynour Rummyng were so desperate for a drink that they were willing to pawn anything for it; many lines of Skelton's poem formed a list of what the women offered, including a wedding ring, hose, girdle, ladle, cradle, and saddle. Some of the items, such as the hatchet, wedge, spinning wheel, spindle, thimble, and needle, were important for the domestic economy of the peasant family. Not only were unruly wives spending money, but they were also wasting their time in drinking establishments when they could have been contributing to the household economy. The two Bolognesi delighted so much in their festive life of drinking and eating that they wanted to quit working.

In the depiction of drinking unruly wives from *The Schole-House of Women* the anonymous misogynist author observed,

> And when these gossips are once met,
> Of every tale and new tiding
> They babble fast, and nothing forget.
> They put, 'I warrant,' between each thing.[17]

One of the few weapons that women could use in their struggle with patriarchal domination was their tongues. Men considered unruly women as threats to masculine control because unruly women were gossiping women. Hence, another reason why a solitary woman in a tavern or an alehouse was not threatening was because she had no gossips with whom to gossip. Another aspect of an unruly woman's

tongue was the potential to become a scold, punishable by the infamous scold's bridle. Even so, the depictions of drinking unruly women did not usually portray their gossip as capable of undermining male authority and did not usually portray scolds. The three women of Paris gossiped about their lovers and discussed the quality of the wine, and Margue advised her niece on the proper way to drink it. Gillian of Croyden gossiped about political affairs; the end of war meant that soldiers would come home to drink with her and her friends, the 'Czar of Muscover' was ten feet tall, and the king would give his crown to the Prince of Wales. This was hardly threatening, but women of course had no public role and should have left the discussion of political affairs to men. The wife who would be master made her husband's life miserable with her continual scolding, and the author of *The Boke of Mayd Emlyn* claimed that all women had a tongue like the devil in hell and were great stirrers of debate.

Another theme in the depiction of drinking unruly women was simply their unruliness. Even before the grenache arrived Margue started singing a drinking song with the words:

> My dears, let's have ourselves a spree;
> the mug who puts it on the line
> will never get to taste the wine.

Then, in the dead of night, she and her two companions decided to dance in the street, since no one would see them, but they were mindful of keeping their clothes clean, so they took them off. And so they danced completely nude, sang a love song, and gossiped about their gigolos. Someone stole their clothes, of course, they fell into an open sewer, and met the dawn by lying together dead drunk in the middle of a road. The townspeople were horrified to discover them, obvious murder victims, and buried them. When the three women of Paris revived in the cemetery late that night they made their way back to the tavern for some more wine, collapsed again in the same place, were found again by the horrified townspeople who suspected the work of the devil, but this time Madame Tifaigne woke up and shouted for the waiter, 'Let's have another round!' One of the women from Bologna pissed so much against a tree that she exposed its roots, and the two of them bathed nude in the public baths. Elynour Rummyng's customers were so volatile that Elynour had to keep the peace by threatening to break their heads. Joan was testy, 'angry as a wasp'; another was a 'foul

slut' who had a quick tongue. The gossiping Alice was a drunk who 'pissed where she stood.'

Contributing to the unruly, disorderly behavior was the women's sexual promiscuity, especially under the influence of drink. Maid Emlyn was the most promiscuous of the unruly women, having five husbands and making cuckolds of them all. She kissed men in taverns, had an affair with a cousin who was a clergyman, took another new lover as soon as her first husband died, spent her third marriage to an old man in adulterous relations, and had to endure a sentence in the stocks when a sergeant caught her fornicating with her lover. Another late medieval popular song from Bologna sang of an unruly, drunken sister-in-law. She proposed to another woman that they bring a young lad to the house, give him something good to eat and to drink, including a barrel of wine, and then take turns with him.[18] The wife who would be master did not drink with her gossips but with good fellows at disreputable alehouses. The focus of the discussion between the widow, the wife, and the maid in Rowlands' '*Tis Merry When Gossips Meet* was sex. The widow proclaimed that, 'wine and virginity kept stale drink flat,' and insisted that women had as much right as men to sexual fulfilment. This was all the sex in the depictions of drinking unruly women, which is surprising. As a result of the connection between alcohol and sex and male fears of female sexuality the expectation would be that depictions of unruly behavior would exploit this connection and these fears.

Another theme in the depiction of drinking unruly women was their cunning in hiding their drinking behavior from their husbands. The message here for men was that they must be vigilant in supervising their wives. Elinor, Joan, Margery, Margaret, Alice, and Cecily were determined to enjoy their outing without their husbands' knowledge, so they arranged to meet without anyone seeing them. In the other English carol, the wives sneaked home and told their husbands that they had been to church, but they indicated that this was not true by soon falling asleep. Maid Emlyn managed to keep her first husband ignorant of at least one of her affairs, but when the last husband learned of her sentence in the stocks he drank himself to death. Some of Elynour Rummyng's customers proclaimed that they did not care what men said about them running to drink her ale, but

> Some, loathe to be espied,
> Start in at the back side,
> Over the hedge and pale,
> And all for the good ale.

This was all, which is not surprising. According to the male construction of unruly women, even though they could be cunning in hiding their behavior, a better effect would result from their open challenge to their husbands.

The final theme in the depictions of drinking unruly women was their insubordination and threat to patriarchal power. Just by secretly gathering for drinks in a tavern with their gossips when they were supposed to be home working indicated a challenge to their husbands' authority. Some of the challenges were surreptitious rather than direct, all talk and no show. One of the wives in the English carol feared a beating from her husband if she was caught, but Alice said that she feared no man. When one of the wives complained of her husband's continued ill treatment, Alice responded in a loud voice, 'God give him a short life!' while Margaret claimed that if any man would strike her twice she would give him five. Yet they hid their drinking from their husbands, and in the other English carol when the wives left the tavern they cravenly told their husbands they had been to church. In addition to pawning their own possessions and many important tools for the family's domestic economy, the customers of Elynour Rummyng pawned their husbands' hood and cap. The symbolism of selling the garments that covered a husbands' head indicated a challenge to their authority, but the challenge again was surreptitious and not direct.

Other depictions of drinking unruly women portrayed direct challenges. The shrewish wife made her henpecked husband accompany her to the tavern and wait there while she drank, and whenever he said, 'It shall be thus,' she called him a liar, and whenever he said anything about her spending all he earned she beat him. The husband of the wife who would be master could never please her even by doing all of her housework, and she even kicked him out of the matrimonial bed. John Lydgate's *Mumming at Hertford* presented the husbands' complaints against their wives and the responses of the wives. Robin the husband of Beatrice Bittersweet complained that she drank, refused to make his supper, and when he protested she hit him with her distaff.[19] Maid Emlyn threw things at her first husband's head if he said anything about her behavior, called her second husband 'dodypate', killed her third husband by pushing him down a well and mourned him by keeping a red onion to make her eyes weep. The incidence of violence among these depictions was rare. Elynour threatened her drinkers if they misbehaved, none of the unruly women committed acts of violence against other women, and a few challenged their husbands'

authority by beating them. The murder of a husband was the ultimate challenge.

The unruly woman in 'life'

As noted by Joy Wiltenburg, the cultural construction of women often did not bear any resemblance to real women.[20] Yet drunken unruly women did appear in journals, memoirs, and legal sources. When the Italian priest Sebastiano Locatelli was on his return trip to Italy, he encountered a group of unruly women on a boat, whose behavior was a direct result of their drinking. They made it impossible for the other passengers to sleep on shore before embarking, fell into the water when boarding, and then seized each other by the hair and accused each other of causing the fall. Three of them were wine merchants, one of whom so beautiful that Locatelli stated that she looked like a 'chaste Judith,' which seems an ominous sobriquet. 'Judith' was not a scold but turned out to be witty and charming at lunch on shore the next day, so much so that a woman travelling with Locatelli became jealous. When they returned to the boat, 'Judith' and Locatelli fell asleep, and when Locatelli awoke he discovered that she had not decapitated him but had vomited all over him.[21]

English sources document several 'real' unruly women. John Aubrey's *Brief Lives* described the wife of Sir John Popham as vain and insubordinate and 'in her husband's absence would have all the women of the country thither, and feast them, and make them drunk, as she would be herself.'[22] At a Quaker meeting in Buckinghamshire in 1682 Susan Dover confessed that she was guilty of 'keeping evil company' in alehouses and abusing herself with drink; as a result her fellow Quakers with justification had accused her of 'disorderly walking.'[23] In *The History of Myddle* Richard Gough told the story of the unfortunate Thomas Hayward, who was an enterprising farmer who became poor as a result of his wife, Alice. She was so wicked and such a shrew that he could never find any peace at home, so he spent his time and his money at the alehouse, while she likewise spent his money at home on excessive amounts of spirits.[24] All of this is pretty tame. A better (or worse) example is Mary Frith, better known as Moll Cutpurse, whose exploits were the subject of a play written in 1611 by Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton entitled *The Roaring Girl*. Her notoriety resulted in her prosecution in 1612 for public immorality. At her trial Frith admitted to being a drunkard, a blasphemer, a companion of disreputable company in alehouses, and a transvestite, but she denied being

a whore or a bawd. Her sentence required her to perform penance at St. Paul's Cathedral, which resulted in a magnificent performance of remorse, rumored to be the result of drinking a large quantity of sack.[25]

Another example of an unruly woman from fifteenth-century France, while not strictly speaking a court case, illustrates the problems of using the records of such cases. Guillaume de Flavy and his brother Charles claimed that Guillaume's wife, Blanche de Ovrebreucq, behaved in an unruly manner. She drank too much, used foul language, urinated in public against a wall standing up like a man, and mistreated and beat her servants. Guillaume and Blanche, a wealthy heiress, had married in 1436, when she was ten years old and he already an old man. Their relationship soured when she blamed him for the death of her mother and when he assaulted and imprisoned her father for preparing to lodge a complaint against him with the Parlement of Paris. In the resulting quarrel each side leveled complaints of the other's behavior to gain support, and the reciprocal rounds of complaints resulted in the accusation that Blanche was an unruly woman.[26] True or false?

During *Mardi gras* at Valenciennes in 1547 drunken women ruined the festivities when they refused to take part in the games and started quarrels from which developed fights with stones, wounding many and nearly killing some.[27] As in the example of the woman charged with incest with her father, a claim that they were drunk would not count as extenuating circumstances for these women; drunkenness in a woman was confirmation of the charge. According to Martin Ingram's study of the scold in early modern England, when authorities accused a woman of being a scold they usually charged her with committing one or more other acts of misbehavior, including drunkenness.[28] For example, at Hempnall, Norfolk, in 1597 Mary Stracke faced charges of being 'a common drunkard and sower of discord between neighbors and a breaker of the Christian charity.' The vicar confirmed that she was 'busy with her tongue.'[29] In 1632 authorities at Broughton prosecuted Margaret Knowsley for being a drunkard and a scold, and those at Wigan, Lancashire, brought similar charges against Elizabeth Barker in 1637. Elizabeth allegedly accompanied her friends to alehouses and drank at their expense, which could have resulted in disputes between her friends and their husbands over the cost of the drinks. The indictment stated that she was a 'common sower of debate and strife between man and wife and [did] usually go about to set dissension and discord among … neighbors.'[30] Drunkenness also accompanied charges of being 'masterless' or 'out of service.' At Dorchester, where authorities stocked both men and women for drunkenness, Mary Savage endured

the stocks in 1630 for drunkenness and for being without work, a charge renewed in 1632, 'having lived of long time idly and disordered and out of service.'[31] In 1672 in Devon Mary Please similarly faced charges that she was 'out of service' and that she drank with another woman's husband at an alehouse on Sunday.[32]

Joan Goodman joined two men and another woman in sneaking out of an Essex church during the morning sermon and then spent the afternoon drinking at an alehouse. When they returned for the evening service Joan stumbled out, this time sleeping outside until the end of the sermon.[33] These charges against Joan Goodman as well as the others considered above were at the lower end of the scale of severity, still bad enough to represent challenges to authority but not involving violence or illicit sex. Included in Chapter 3 were two examples of unruly women condemned for their sexual misbehavior, the member commender Ann Savage and the wanton wassailer Mary Hatton. Margery Suffield's case combined drunkenness, sexual misbehavior, and violence. Her husband claimed that not only was she a drunk but she was also a 'drunken sottish whore' who had a man in her room. A neighbor reported that she chased her husband out of the house when he was half dressed.[34] For other women their drunken violence got them into trouble. In 1615 at an alehouse in Norfolk the wife of William Metcalf hit the keeper's wife and boy when they refused to sell her another drink. In the following brawl Metcalf and his wife battled against the keeper's household.[35] In 1590 Joan Smith travelled to Kingsland, Hackney, with 'Dobbs' wife and the widow Wyatt.' After stopping for a drink, the two companions renewed an old quarrel and began fighting with each other. Joan intervened as best she could but took exception to the intervention of a bystander, William Crowther, who hit one of the women.[36]

Some female keepers showed traces of that alehouse keeper from hell, Elynour Rummyng. In 1379 the ale seller Juliana Fox faced charges at Thornbury, Gloucestershire, for welcoming 'priests and others into her house at illegal times, viz. around the middle of the night.'[37] Officials at Nottingham prosecuted Letice Dodsworth and Elizabeth Fox for their 'evil conversation' and for keeping their tavern open after nine o'clock in the evening in contravention of the ordinance of 1463.[38] They also fined Elizabeth Wright because 'she is a common scold and holds a common tavern about the middle of the night.'[39] At Bradfield in 1597 a complaint against Margaret Addingham accused her of keeping a disorderly alehouse by permitting people to play unlawful games, 'and has suffered lewd and suspicious persons to play all night and sleep in the daytime.'[40] When an official visited the tavern

of Mme. Bastard at Nantes on a Sunday in 1641 to enforce the regulations against opening during church services, she told him that he should be at church rather than in a tavern. More serious were the keepers who were accused of acts of violence. In 1664 and again in 1667 female tavern keepers at Nantes incited riots against inspectors of the wine duties.[41] In 1687 at Exeter Michael Cockram, a serge weaver, brought charges against Ann Fandrell, a widow who ran an alehouse, for hitting him with a quart and breaking his head.[42] In a case that seems the opposite of Elynour, at Malton, Yorkshire, in 1614 a female keeper faced charges of refusing to sell small ale to her poor neighbors; 'she said she will rather give it to her swine than draw it for them.'[43]

Mothers who committed infanticide and women accused of witchcraft constituted two extreme types of unruly behavior. In their study of infanticide Peter C. Hoffer and N. E. H. Hull found little correlation between drinking and infanticide.[44] As for witches, in addition to drinking malmsey wine for sexual stimulation at the witches' sabbat and the sacrilegious mocking of consecrated wine,[45] many accounts of their *maleficia*, or evil deeds, included such things as making casks of ale burst or spoil, transferring ale from one place to another, and bewitching people so they could not drink.[46] Among Elynour Rummyng's customers was a woman, in Skelton's words,

> With the feathers of a quail
> She could to Bordeaux sail;
> And with good ale barm
> She could make a charm
> To help with a stitch:
> She seemed to be a witch.[47]

According to their accusers, a common practice of witches throughout wine-producing areas was to sneak into cellars, to drink wine from casks, and then to replenish the amount taken by defecating or urinating into the casks.[48] I found no examples of women accused of making pacts with the devil while under the influence of alcohol, but imagine that the accusers would not have wanted to limit the witch's liability by giving her any possibility of pleading extenuating circumstances. On a different level, Julio Caro Baroja in his study of witches examines the link between drunkenness and hallucination and concludes, 'The true witch, a turbulent and slightly unbalanced person, must often have been drunk.'[49] If alcohol was hence responsible for making some women become 'witches,' it could also help detect them, for in 1657 at

Quingey, Franche-Comté, officials obtained a confession of witchcraft from a woman after plying her with wine.[50]

All things considered, these cases of 'real' unruly women seem small beer indeed, especially when read as representations of legal indictments rather than as representations of reality. Drinking men were more likely to be 'unruly' than were women. In Susan Dwyer Amussen's analysis of 62 petitions complaining of the unruly behavior of neighbors that survive in the records of the Norfolk Quarter Sessions from 1590 to 1609 only one woman was accused of offenses relating to drink, while men were accused of similar offenses in 39 per cent of the cases.[51] Men were also more likely than women to face charges of drunkenness. Court records from Banbury, Oxfordshire, between 1625 and 1638 listed 96 indictments for drunkenness, not one of which involved a woman.[52] The definition of drunkenness was gender specific in terminology but not in concept: 'where the same legs which carry a man into the house, cannot bring him out again.'[53] To return to Boyatzis' claim that drinking makes women feel more feminine, less assertive and aggressive, and less concerned with power, the male construction of the drinking unruly woman in literature does not support such a conclusion. With the sole exception of Christine de Pizan and the confession of the Quaker Susan Dover, not just the literature but all the sources used thus far in this chapter have been male. The nature of the historical records makes it difficult to find specific evidence to support a conclusion that women drank to escape subordination and to challenge male domination. On the other hand, I have argued throughout that drinking behavior and drunken comportment were learned behavior and comportment. The male construction of the drinking unruly woman taught women that they could drink with their gossips in taverns and alehouses to escape male domination.

Drinking men

The merchant of Prato, Francesco di Marco Datini, spent many evenings with his close friend Ser Lapo Mazzei sharing a flask of good Carmignano wine. Ser Lapo would later recall, 'In tasting those good wines we did nothing but laugh.'[54] This charming scene illustrates that much of male sociable drinking did not occur in taverns or alehouses. Aubrey's *Brief Lives* described the drinking sessions of Bishop Richard Corbet and his chaplain Dr. Lushington, who 'loved one another. The bishop sometimes would take the key of the wine-cellar, and he and his chaplain would go and lock themselves in and be merry.'[55] In his

diary Samuel Pepys often mentioned going to taverns and alehouses for drinks with his friends, but he often wrote about drinking with friends in the privacy of homes or of other settings such as in a coach. On 7 May 1660 he stated, 'After I was in bed Mr. Sheply and W. Howe came … I gave them three bottles of Margate ale and sat laughing and very merry till almost one o'clock in the morning.'[56] On 28 June 1664 Pepys noted that he drank at the 'mum house' with his Uncle Wight; 'he do complain of his wife most cruel as the most troublesome woman in the world, and how she will have her will.'[57] A seventeenth-century ballad entitled *The Catalogue of Contented Cuckolds* reflected the behavior of Uncle Wight. The ballad sang of 'ten honest tradesmen' who 'did happen to meet at a tavern,' a brewer, baker, cook, tailor, turner, goldsmith, sailor, merchant, doctor, and surgeon, and they all complained of their wives' behavior. They found relief in sociable drinking with other men and drowned their sorrows in drink.[58]

Just as poets could sing the praises of the erotic and amorous effects of alcohol, so also could they sing its praises as an antidote to love and to women; as one poet put it, ' 'tis better to be drunk with wine than love.'[59] A common theme was the use of wine to cure lovesickness and its use as a substitute for sex.[60] The lovesick poet Antoine-Girard de Saint-Amant (1594–1661) wrote in *L'enamouré* that his condition made him drink only '*dix pintes par jour*,' that is, about 16 of the smaller English pints a day![61] Not only men expressed these sentiments; in her drinking song Louise-Geneviève de Sainctonge (1650–1718) noted that drink could serve as a substitute for love:

> Friend, it's your fate to follow Love,
> 'Tis mine to be always drinking.[62]

Claude Malleville (1594 to 1596–1647) wrote two ballads that praised wine for those like himself who were unlucky in love; wine was the river of forgetfulness that released him from care and made him sleep.[63] Similarly, in Ercole Bentivoglio's play *Il geloso* Rospo contrasted a cask of wine that filled him with joy to love that filled a man with sighs and lamentations.[64] An anonymous seventeenth-century ballad noted the related sorrows of love, drink, and debt:

> 'Twas love that made me fall into drink,
> And drink made me run into debt.[65]

A similar ballad entitled *The Merry Boys of Europe* (1681) with a markedly misogynistic point of view proclaimed that the bottle was

better than a wife or a mistress because it could put an end to sorrows and banish strife whereas a wife or a mistress only increased them.[66]

While the poets could praise alcohol as a substitute for sex, most of the young men quite often had no choice but to turn to drink instead of gaining sexual gratification. The European marriage pattern meant that young men had to wait ten years or more after puberty before marrying, and in the intervening years of enforced celibacy the tavern and the alehouse became the focus of their social lives. As discussed in Chapter 4, young unmarried men were often the main clients in drinking establishments, where they courted young women and sought prostitutes and promiscuous sexual liaisons, much to the horror of the authorities, who disapproved of both the sex and the drink. The lively culture of the young thumbed its nose at the authorities by demonstrating a keen interest in both sex and drink; since sex was often denied to unmarried men, they took to drink. As noted in Chapter 3, when a widower married a young woman or a man from another village married a local girl, the young men demanded drink as compensation. Medical opinion gave support to the authorities by arguing that alcohol and especially wine was harmful for the young. For example, Thomas Elyot wrote in *The Castel of Helth* (1541) that young men should not drink much wine and then only wine mixed with water because it made them 'prone to fury and to lechery.'[67] In *The Haven of Health* (1584) Thomas Cogan expressed his opinion that students drank far too much wine, and this was the reason why many students had dull wits, poor memories, and damaged livers.[68]

Just as young men did not heed the warnings of the authorities, so also they ignored the advice contained in the medical literature. They drank a lot. David Underdown's study of Dorchester provides some evidence of the amount consumed by young men in the 1630s even though the measurements were not very precise; a group of young men drank nine jugs of beer at an alehouse in one evening, another group of possibly five drank four double jugs on Guy Fawkes night, and three young men drank a dozen beers during one night's drinking at an alehouse.[69] When he was 21 years old John Evelyn (1620–1706) noted in his diary that as a young drinker he had trouble keeping pace with the merry drinking of a group of older men.[70] The seasoned drinkers were the older men, and they could put the attempts at binge drinking by the young to shame. Peter Clark records the drinking exploits of three men assisted by one woman at Barnwell near Cambridge; at one sitting they drank a barrel of strong beer, about 35 gallons. Clark adds that this might have been an exaggeration. Most people could not afford

such extravagance, exaggerated or not, and Clark suggests that the typical drinker consumed about three pints at a time,[71] while wealthy aristocrats could engage in macho drinking contests that lasted for days.[72] Drinking contests appealed to all classes, and they obviously contributed to the heavy consumption of alcohol in drinking binges. One form of drinking contest was customary at some village festivals: to provide free ale to bachelors as long as they could stand.[73] Another form was what the English call sculling and the Americans call chugalug, that is, to finish a drink in one go. In the curiously entitled *The Letting of Humours Blood in the Head-Vaine* (1600), Samuel Rowlands might have been referring to that type of contest when he wrote, 'Man, I dare challenge thee … to drink half pots.'[74]

Rowlands' challenge probably always provoked a response in the sociable atmosphere of a tavern or an alehouse. Some of the young men could accept challenges from the seasoned drinkers, since rivalry existed between the unmarried men and the married men, between those without sexual outlets and those with wives.[75] Visitors could accept challenges in defense of the reputations of their villages. The tensions resulting from this rivalry and these challenges could increase with the loss of honor that accompanied defeat in the battle of the half pots. The large amounts of alcohol, the challenges, the defeats, the loss of honor, the presence of outsiders could change the atmosphere of alehouses and taverns from sociable to threatening. In his poem 'Upon Drunkenness' Samuel Butler (1612–80) wrote that the drunk neglected everything

> For madness, noise, and bloody fights;
> When nothing can decide, but swords
> And pots, the right or wrong of words.[76]

Alcohol and violence

Studies of violent crime in modern societies demonstrate that alcohol was a factor in more than 50 per cent of the homicides and assaults. When the perpetrator was drunk, the level of aggression increased.[77] Scholars who have attempted to quantify the level of alcohol-related violence in traditional Europe have found that the role of alcohol was not as great as in modern societies. According to Barbara Hanawalt's analysis of late medieval coroners' inquests, drink played a role in only 6 per cent of the 130 murders in London and in only 4 per cent of the

347 cases in rural Northamptonshire, and the figures for murders occurring in a drinking establishment were 8 per cent and 7 per cent respectively.[78] Jonathan Dewald, in his examination of criminal cases at Pont-St-Pierre, discovered that 20 per cent of the crimes occurred at cabarets,[79] and the records studied by Julius R. Ruff in the *Sénéchaussée* of Libourne indicate that 9 per cent of homicides and 17 per cent of assaults took place with alcohol present.[80] These studies probably underestimate the role of alcohol; given the amount normally consumed, my hunch would be that the incidence of alcohol-related violence in traditional Europe would approximate the modern situation. On the other hand, most men began their drinking at breakfast and continued throughout the day; just as time and place were factors in alcohol-inspired sexual activity, time and place had similar functions in alcohol-inspired violence.

The studies of violent crime in modern societies fail to demonstrate why a connection exists between alcohol and crimes of violence, but they do note that arguments precede a majority of alcohol-related cases of homicides. An analysis of drink-related violence in traditional Europe can isolate several factors that might have precipitated the violence, but some violent acts had no identifiable precipitants. One of the best illustrations of this occurred at Bromham, Bedfordshire, in 1272. Four men were obviously spoiling for a fight after drinking in a tavern. When the son of the vicar happened by, they challenged him by asking who he was. In response he replied, 'A man. Who are you?' whereupon one of the men split his head with an axe and killed him.[81] Incidents such as these led to the perception that drinking men were violent and dangerous. According to the instructions of the citizen of Paris to his young wife, she should never permit a drunk person to get close to her because this was dangerous.[82] Even drinking songs, which normally celebrated the camaraderie of drinking, could sometimes sing of the blows when liquor flows.[83] The camaraderie and sociability that were supposed to be a feature of drinking could lead to violence, because a refusal to drink with someone was a confession of enmity. For example, at an alehouse in Leeds in 1642 William Jackson told Nicholas Holmes, 'If you will not come in and drink a cup I will not be friends with you.' Unfortunately for Nicholas, even though he did come in for a cup, before the night was over William knifed him to death.[84]

Some incidents of alcohol-related violence had several contributing factors. The best illustration of this came from the inquest into the death of Joseph Walton in 1648. Henry Beecroft went to an alehouse in

Halifax, Yorkshire, to collect his pay from Thomas Whittwham. Joseph, who was drinking with Thomas, insulted Henry by making indecent proposals about his wife: 'If I could get you dead I would have her.' Joseph and Henry then argued over the bill, and then when Joseph struck him, Henry retaliated by hitting him with a tool, killing him. In other words, the disputed pay, the insult, and the argument were the precipitants.[85] Sometimes disputed testimony made the precipitants unclear, as illustrated by an incident in a cabaret at Pîtres in 1709. According to Jacques Le François, the keeper and the keeper's family tried to force him to leave for no apparent reason and then assaulted him when he tried to stay. According to the keeper, Jacques had assaulted one of his customers, and, when the keeper intervened, Jacques beat him as well. According to other testimony, the keeper had replaced Jacques as the customary tenant of some land, and this had resulted in bad relations between them.[86] Another case from Grenoble provided few clues. An agricultural laborer joined some glovemakers at an inn for a night of heavy drinking and card playing. After they ate a supper of cheese, they departed in good spirits, but a fight suddenly erupted in the street; three of them were seriously wounded.[87]

One surprise is that I found no evidence of alcohol-related violence precipitated by arguments over a woman. As a result of the role of drinking establishments in courtship and their use by prostitutes, the possibility of rivalry erupting into violence would seem to be high. Games, unlike women, were the occasions for many drink-related acts of violence, especially if they involved gambling.[88] When an argument developed between two men over a game of shove-halfpenny at an alehouse in Hertfordshire, one killed the other with a knife.[89] Two men were playing cards at an inn in La Peyrousse late one feast day in 1626 long after the keeper and his family had gone to sleep. When the two began fighting the keeper awoke, tried to separate them, but was mortally wounded.[90] Even games of tennis and skittles could result in violence. After a game of tennis at Dijon in 1556 the loser purchased drinks at a cabaret, but after drinking too much the contestants began attacking each other with stones and knives.[91] In 1642 at Dijon a group of bakers drained a jug of wine before playing a game of skittles; when one player objected that another had stepped over the line he received a cracked skull.[92] Drinking contests – Rowlands' challenge to drink half pots – could end in violence. A local curate, Abraham Smith, got involved in a quarrel in widow Cooke's alehouse at Over in 1676 when Jonathan Robinson challenged him to scull a whole flagon of ale. Smith only managed to drink part of it and refused the offer

of assistance from another drinking companion. Smith grabbed Robinson's hat, always a provocative act, and punched him in the ear.[93]

Unsurprisingly, disputes over bills could lead to violence between keepers and customers. In 1731 a man and two women refused to pay their account at the alehouse of Robert Turnbull in Newbiggin, Northumberland. When Robert grabbed the man's work tool one of the women cut him with a knife. A similar incident happened to a female keeper at Woburn, Bedfordshire, in 1741; after refusing to pay, three men grabbed her throat, pulled her hair, and threw her on the ground.[94] At Grenoble a Protestant nobleman quietly ate his supper and drank a bottle of wine but then attacked the keeper when presented with what he thought was an exorbitant bill.[95] On occasion the customers argued among themselves. In 1642 Parson Joseph Erneshaw of Southowram, Yorkshire, joined three other men for an evening of drinking at an alehouse. Come time to pay the bill, Joseph refused to pay his part, claiming that one of the other drinkers, John Houldsworth, owed him money. After an exchange of threats John hit the parson in the eye with a rod and killed him.[96]

Many studies emphasize the role of honor in drunken violence. In his examination of honor and social status in Mediterranean societies, the anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers notes that although violence is not recognised as a proper means of achieving desired outcomes, men are expected to protect their rights or be considered cowards. Festivities are occasions for sociable celebrations, when protection of rights should not influence behavior, but under the influence of alcohol young men engage in threatening activity as an expression of rivalry.[97] In a satirical statement Voltaire claimed that feast days had cost the state more subjects than did wars.[98] On feast days throughout France drunken youths defended the honor of their village by battling drunken youths from other villages,[99] and the fights often began in taverns.[100] In Venice supporters of rival residential factions could become engaged in drunken fights even when drinking sociably with their fellow guild members. In 1670 a large group of cobblers drinking at an inn began debating the merits of their own factions, and a violent brawl followed.[101]

In addition to the attempts to defend the honor of an area against outsiders, some felt it necessary to defend the honor of a class, especially if the highly born wandered into the lower-class space of an alehouse. According to William Hornby's poem 'The Scourge of Drunkenness'

(1614?), gentlemen drinking at alehouses ran the risk of challenges from lower-class knaves:

> There every upstart, base-conditioned slave …
> A gentlemen unto his teeth will brave.[102]

On a feast day in 1654 a young peasant named Jean Tourdes was drinking heavily at a cabaret in Aurillac. When Hugues Navarre, a notary, entered the cabaret in search of a friend, Tourdes shouted a drunken insult at him, claiming that all notaries were useless forgers. Hugues defended the honor of his profession and returned the insult by comparing Jean to a well-known local drunkard. After Jean left the cabaret Hugues followed him and further defended his honor by beating him senseless.[103]

Other outbursts of drunken violence were neither the result of defending the honor of an area or the honor of a class but of defending one's own honor. In 1536 at Saint-Hilaire near Cambrai two men came to blows in a cabaret as a result of a hat. Hotinet Cuisette had a marvelous hat decorated with feathers. As a joke Jean Lempereur pulled one out, Hotinet drew his knife, and Jean brandished his staff. Jean got the upper hand, and when the keeper intervened Jean knocked him to the ground. The keeper's brother-in-law leapt to his defense and killed Jean with a spear in the eye.[104] In 1575 Bernard Yvain was drinking at a tavern in Floringhem. As a joke he poured beer over the head of a drinking companion who had fallen asleep. A friend of the companion challenged Bernard and asked him why he had done it. Bernard replied, 'As a joke,' but then to avoid losing honor he added, 'Do you want to talk about it?' Further verbal exchanges led to a duel in the village square, where Bernard was mortally wounded.[105]

Students form a special category. Their drunken violence often appeared so mindless that an analysis of causes and precipitants would produce few conclusions. Town–gown disputes were legendary, so obviously one of the precipitants was the long-standing antagonism between university students and townspeople. If townspeople were not available for a fight, then students from other colleges would suffice, as occurred between students of Christ Church and Corpus Christi in 1658. If students from other colleges were not available, then fellow students, as at All Souls in 1632.[106] The violence of students had roots in medieval universities. In the thirteenth century Rutebeuf noted that when a peasant made sacrifices to send his son to the University of

Paris, soon after arriving the son exchanged his father's products of the plow and labor for weapons, traded his gown for a coat of mail, and drank to get drunk. 'That is how three or four hundred students put the University in a state of war.'[107] Many students at the University of Toulouse spent the night before Easter Day, 1335, getting drunk in taverns. Come morning they interrupted Easter services with a *charivari*, that is, making as much noise as they could in the streets. When an official went to arrest the ringleaders one of the students slashed off his nose, lips, and part of his chin with a knife.[108] At Rome students had a reputation early in the fourteenth century for wandering from tavern to tavern while armed and 'committing manslaughter, thefts, robberies and very many other things.'[109] Not just students but young men in general had reputations for alcohol-related violence. An indication of this was the response of nervous local authorities to possible threats to order. At the first signs of widespread disaffection officials in London immediately imposed a curfew on servants and apprentices and closed the alehouses.[110]

In a few incidents alcohol-related violence was precipitated by political developments. At Nantes in 1668 and 1669 taverns were the focus of protests against the collectors of the new duties on wine, with the collectors either fleeing in fear or forcibly ejected. For example, in November 1668 the customers at the tavern of Henriette Legallois shouted, 'haro, haro', and made so many threats that the collectors beat a hasty retreat. Worse followed in November 1669 when a large crowd attacked two collectors, injuring one and killing the other.[111] At London in 1682 several outbreaks of violence occurred between young whig supporters of Monmouth and young tory supporters of the Duke of York. During one the young whigs discovered a group of tories at the Queen's Head Tavern toasting the health of the King, Queen, and Duke of York. One of the tories ventured outside with his sword but was thumped and beat a hasty retreat. The whigs threw stones and the tories retaliated by throwing furniture from the tavern. At another outbreak of violence the tories claimed victory by smashing the whigs' supply of ale and breaking the windows at the King's Head Tavern.[112] At Oxford in 1683 a tavern brawl between townsmen supporting Monmouth and students who were toasting the Duke of York turned into an ugly, full-scale town–gown riot.[113]

The scale of alcohol-related violence ranged from pushes and punches to murder and mayhem. At the lower end of the scale the object of the violence was property rather than people. A poem in honor of Bacchus by Angelo Poliziano (1454–94) expressed the sheer

joy of wrecking a tavern after merry drinking with companions.[114] The night watch at York encountered a group of servants returning from a drinking binge and arrested them for smashing windows 'at unlawful times in the night,' and at Norwich another group faced charges in 1601 for breaking windows and knocking down a wall after spending several hours drinking in an alehouse.[115] A relatively simple fight could on occasion develop into a full-scale riot. For example, an alehouse brawl at Walsall, Worcestershire, in 1610 spilled into the streets, where other inhabitants joined the fray so that over one hundred people were involved.[116] The Venetian brawl between rival factions of cobblers was especially nasty: 'One of the most ardent among them (maybe also incited by the anger of Bacchus) punched a companion in the face. Another, seeing his friend offended, knocked [the attacker] off his bench onto the ground.... Another pulled out one of the wide knives they carry, cutting in a blow two fingers off [that one's] left hand... until [finally] everyone had pulled out daggers, knives, cleavers, swords, boathooks, harpoons, and [even] skewers from the kitchen.' The toll was three dead and eleven badly injured.[117]

At times the combined scale of the incidents was more remarkable than the scale of any one particular event. For example, the French intendant at Lille, Claude Le Peletier, was so disturbed by the drunken violence there that in 1669 he forbade people to carry knives, since in only one year he had issued 1800 letters of remission for homicides committed with knives.[118] Although traces of many acts of violence exist in legal records, many others have of course left no trace; the vast majority had no significant consequences aside for the people directly affected. One tavern brawl that would have significant consequences occurred in 1286 between two young cousins of the Canellieri family of Florence. The resulting vendetta between the two branches of the family led to the famous dispute between the Black and White Guelphs, a dispute that in turn led to Dante's expulsion from Florence in 1302.[119]

Many of the cases cited above indicate that tavern or alehouse keeping was a dangerous occupation, as dangerous as law enforcement is today. In fact, on occasion tavern and alehouse keepers performed as enforcers of the law. As noted by Barbara Hanawalt in her study of medieval London taverns, male and female keepers had the legal right and duty to police their premises, 'to act as *paterfamilias* or *materfamilias* over both the household and the guests.' Keepers were legally responsible for the behavior of their customers.[120] While keepers could face prosecution for the misdeeds of their customers, two cases illustrate

that the enforcement of law could be somewhat casual. At Dorchester in 1637 members of the night watch heard drunken singing coming from an alehouse. When they investigated they discovered a group of men from Sherborne sharing drinks. Instead of resulting in a confrontation, when the Sherborne men offered them a drink, 'good fellowship prevailed,' and the watchmen even agreed to guard their belongings.[121] A similar case with a different ending occurred at West Leigh, Lancashire, in 1652. Two watchmen heard noise and saw light coming from an alehouse. On investigation they discovered five men 'drinking healths, singing, and swearing in a most disorderly manner.' The watchmen reminded the revelers that an act prohibited drinking after nine o'clock at night, whereupon two of the men replied, 'We know there is such an act but we'll not obey it, for we'll drink as long as we please.' And the watchmen went on their way.[122]

The cultural construction of the unruly woman was fully developed in literature. The unruly woman drank in taverns and alehouses in the company of other women, she spent her husband's money and wasted her time, her gossip and scolding could be sources of discord, while not sexually promiscuous in deed she could be so in word, and she could either hide her insubordination or issue direct challenges to male authority. Although the cultural construction of the unruly woman could influence female behavior, male representations of actual cases of deviant drinking indict men much more for violent behavior than they indict women for 'unruly' behavior. In contrast to the full development of the drinking unruly woman in literature was the cultural construction of male alcohol-related violence in fiction; aside from Angelo Poliziano's merry destruction of a tavern, poets and authors ignored the topic, except for violence between husbands and wives, a topic covered in the next chapter. The examples of male violence come from legal records and hence should be considered as representations of court cases rather than representations of reality, but for most cases the records are unambiguous in noting the commission of an act of violence, often murder, and in locating the act in the context of the consumption of alcohol, most often in drinking establishments. Many minor acts of aggression or violence probably were not serious enough to warrant investigation or intervention by the legal authorities. To put this deviant behavior in its proper perspective, however, most of the time the consumption of alcohol by males and females led to neither violent nor unruly behavior but contributed instead to social integration and jollification.

7
Husbands and Wives

In the fifteenth century Simone Prudenzani told the story of a husband determined to teach his drunken wife a lesson. After she had passed out during one of her binges, he shut her in a cabinet. When she awoke she believed she had died and gone to hell, and then she asked for a drink.[1] Jean de La Fontaine retold the story in the seventeenth century and reversed the roles. The French wife was more enterprising than the Italian husband, for she put her husband in an actual tomb, disguised herself as a phantom, and awaited his awakening. 'Who are you?' he asked; 'The cellarer of the kingdom of Satan,' she responded, so he asked for a drink.[2] The reversal of the roles illustrates that the drinking of both husbands and wives could create marital discord or worse. Ecclesiastical courts had long accepted habitual drunkenness by either partner as grounds for separation in marriage.[3] To return to the reference to the kingdom of Satan, a drunken violent man married to a drunken unruly woman would be the archetypal marriage from hell.

According to Lyndal Roper, German authorities considered alcohol to have different effects on men and women. The violence and vomit of men indicated that they broke their boundaries when drunk. The sexual promiscuity of women indicated that others broke into their boundaries; they were sexually permeable.[4] Unlike German authorities the consensus in England, France, and Italy was that drink affected men and women in the same manner; it made both males and females break their boundaries in acts of violence, and drink could open the sexual boundaries of both males and females. One difference resulted from the greater propensity of men to become violent; drunk or sober women were less likely than men to commit acts of violence.[5] Other differences did not result from differential behavior but from prevailing patriarchal fears and attitudes. Men of course feared female sexuality,

which they considered permeable when women were sober; the fears increased when women were drinking. The existence of a sexual double standard meant that drinking men were not as sexually threatening as drinking women.

As a result of the concerns about the breaking and the opening of boundaries, prescriptive literature advised maids to be careful in choosing a husband. A ballad entitled *The Wonderful Praise of a Good Husband, or, The Kind and Careful Mother's Counsel to Her Daughter* (1685–88) warned against marrying a bad husband who by 'drinking and feasting with harlots' soon dissipated his estate.[6] *The Married-Womans Case* (about 1630) warned single women to reject a suitor who haunted alehouses because he would make a bad husband. When he came home from the alehouse he would seize any opportunity to beat her and as a result she would seldom appear 'without her face black.' She might lack food but she would never lack blows.[7] Works of fiction illustrated the warnings from the prescriptive literature. In the medieval French *fabliau* entitled *Jouglet* an old woman tried to persuade a man to give his daughter in marriage to her son by claiming, 'he doesn't know a thing about taverns.'[8] In Niccolò Machiavelli's play *Clizia* (written about 1524) Sofronia told her husband that their servant Pirro would make a bad husband because he was 'always in and out of taverns.'[9] When Sir Thomas Smith prepared his orations for and against the marriage of Queen Elizabeth, he warned her about 'the Dutchmen and the Dane … with the great love which they have to drink … . What pleasure shall it be … to have an husband which shall almost ever be drinking or sleeping?'[10] Although ballads, plays, and stories frequently depicted unruly and promiscuous wives, the prescriptive literature had little advice for the young man seeking a wife. Leon Battista Alberti claimed that a drunken woman might be beautiful, but no one would call her a beautiful wife,[11] which could serve as a warning to bachelors. Perhaps moralists felt no need to warn young men; depictions of drunken women would suffice.

Good fellows and shrewish wives

As mentioned in Chapter 4, a group of English ballads told of good fellows drinking at taverns and alehouses despite the sound advice of their wives. Their flavor is evident from their somewhat repetitive titles; in addition to those mentioned in Chapter 4, *The Good Fellow's Consideration; or, The Bad Husband's Amendment,*[12] *Two-Penny-Worth of Wit for a Penny; or, The Bad Husband Turn'd Thrifty,*[13] *A Caveat for Young*

Men; or, The Bad Husband Turn'd Thrifty,[14] others included *The Heavy Heart, and a Light Purse, Being the Good Fellow's Vindication to All His Fellow-Companions,*[15] *The Good Fellow's Resolution; or, The Bad Husband's Return from His Folly,*[16] *The Bad Husband's Folly; or, Poverty Made Known,*[17] *The Carefull Wife's Good Counsel; or, The Husband's Firm Resolution to Reform His Life, and to Lay up Something against a Rainy Day,*[18] and *A Dainty New Dialogue between Henry and Elizabeth, Being the Good Wives Vindication and the Bad Husbands Reformation.*[19] As is also evident from the titles, none of these ballads contained much that was original, which is an understatement.

To a certain extent the ballads about good fellows portrayed them as the mirror image of the unruly women. Just as unruly women gathered for drinks with friends in drinking establishments, spending money needlessly and wasting their time, while sometimes engaging in sexual activity or more often talking about it, so did the good fellows. Of course, the big difference between unruly women and good fellows was the women's subversion of patriarchal authority, but the activities of the good fellows were subversive of the family, which was a fundamental prop of patriarchal society. Another difference was that all the good fellows, as indicated by the titles of the ballads, ultimately followed the counsels of their wives and reformed their lives, whereas unruly women never gave any indication that they would amend their unruly behavior. The catalyst for the reformation of the good fellows was not the irrefutable nature of the wife's advice, however, but the realization that the female keeper was only interested in the good fellow's money. This followed the female keeper's refusal to extend credit to him once he had spent all of his money at her establishment.

As noted in the previous discussion of the ballads about good fellows, one theme was the sexual attraction of the female keeper. Another theme was the dissipation of the husband's estate or his abandoning work as a result of his almost uncontrollable desire to go to the tavern or alehouse and to drink with his companions. A contributing factor was the incapacity to work that resulted from his excessive drinking. As one good fellow confessed,

> Once I had means and lived well,
> my neighbors all they know it;
> But, by ringing of the alewives' bell,
> I quickly did forgo it.[20]

Another would spend a week at a time in an alehouse and leave only when his money was gone, while sometimes draining 18–20 flagons at

a time.[21] One husband spent all of his money, sold all of his goods, and reckoned £150 went to his keeper.[22] The wife of one good fellow had to pawn her wedding ring and to sell her petticoat to relieve him when he had spent his money,[23] and Elizabeth complained to Henry that he had pawned the clothes off their backs to pay for his drink.[24] Although not strictly a good fellow ballad in spite of its name, *The Good Fellows' Frolick* from the late seventeenth century featured several workers who proclaimed their willingness to pawn their work tools and hence their livelihood for a taste of 'ale that was so brown'. A weaver would pawn his shuttle, the tailor his bodkin and thimble, and a 'lusty porter', who boasted that he did not fear his angry wife, his sack.[25]

A consequence of the economic decline was the suffering of the family. While one good fellow drank sack his children lacked small beer and had nothing to eat.[26] Another admitted:

> My children were bare, and hard they did fare,
> And I of their misery never took care.[27]

While one husband spent his money in the alehouse, his wife almost died with grief 'to hear her children cry'.[28] One wife complained:

> My children and I must sit until we starve and pine;
> While you your guts full get of tobacco, beer, and wine.[29]

The final theme of the good fellow ballads was the treatment of the wise wife, who usually remained patiently suffering at home, but from time to time offered a gentle admonition. The husband sometimes responded with anger,[30] but on occasion the response was more pointed:

> If my wife chance to say that any thing she did lack,
> I would call her base whore and be sure pay her back.[31]

Some good fellows reacted with violence; when one husband came home at two in the morning, if his wife said a word he would kick her about the room.[32] When one wife complained and her husband threatened her with a beating, the wife replied that she could not keep her mouth shut when all the money went down her husband's throat. The more she spoke, however, the more he drank to spite her.[33] When chided by Elizabeth for wasting his money on drink, Henry could at least claim that he never wasted any on whores.[34]

Although the good fellows were fictional, some cases bear a striking similarity to them, even to the eventual, or at least promised, reformation of the husband's behavior. In 1593 at Rye, Sussex, John Syms confessed to the charge that he was often drunk, frequented alehouses, abused his wife, and mistreated both his wife and children; he promised to amend his ways.[35] Other husbands gave no indication that they would reform. At Dover, Kent, Jane Saffrey complained that her husband, Nicholas, frequented alehouses where he spent most of his money, leaving his wife and children in want. He pawned his work tools to have money for drink. When Jane asked him for money for bread, he beat her, and when she went to the alehouse to fetch him, he threatened to knock her down.[36]

Some of the themes from the good fellow ballads appeared in Christine de Pizan's comments on the relations between drinking husbands and their wives. In the part of her *Book of Fortune's Changes* that discussed the misfortunes of women, she described the bleak existence of a woman married to a wicked husband. While he was out drinking the children were crying at home. 'O gods! What sweet paradise!' Although he often had too much to drink, he beat his wife as a matter of course and not just when drunk:

> One must always go in fear:
> That's what makes perfect the constraint
> That subjection imposes.[37]

Pizan's advice to the artisan's wife in *Le livre de la cité des dames* imposed a different form of subjection. She should make her husband stay willingly at home, attracted by her love, so that he would not be tempted 'to join those foolish bands of young men in taverns' and thereby dissipate his earnings. The wife should treat her husband with tenderness and remember that a quarrelsome wife, a smoky hearth, and a leaking roof were the three things that drove a husband away from home.[38]

Robert Younge would have agreed with Christine de Pizan. He claimed in *Sinne Stigmatized* (1639) that one reason a man drank so much was that his quarrelsome and shrewish wife drove him to the alehouse so that his house and his dwelling place were two different things.[39] Instead of a shrewish wife driving her husband to drink, some ballads sang of the henpecked husband whose wife tried to stop him drinking at a tavern. *The West Country Weaver* (about 1685) complained of the wife's reaction when he happened to meet a friend and went to share a flagon with him. She would immediately appear 'like a loud and

invincible shrew' and throw the flagon at him.[40] Similarly, *The Patient Husband and the Scoulding Wife* (about 1683) contrasted the bachelor's merry life of wine, women, and song with the husband's strife whenever his wife found him in an alehouse.[41] As in ballads so in life: In 1667 Joan Williamson found her husband drinking in a Cheshire alehouse and 'uttered many base words and curses' against him.[42] In French farces from the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century shrewish wives attacked their husbands by references to their drinking. One wife claimed her husband was 'drunker than a madcap,'[43] and another called hers a '*sanglant yvrogne*', literally a 'bloody drunk.'[44] When a jealous husband accused his wife of adultery in *Un mari jaloux qui veut éprouver sa femme*, the wife replied that he must be drunk to make such an accusation.[45]

In contrast to the complaints by wives of their husbands' drinking, whether in fiction or in reality, I found few cases of husbands' complaining about their wives' drinking, aside from the literature on unruly women. One case comes from *Thomas of Reading* (1623), Thomas Deloney's short novel. A group of husbands complained about their wives gathering at a neighboring inn, 'where, ere they parted, they were made as pleasant as pies.' The husbands' attempts to restrain them only steeled the wives' resolution to continue the practice, and the wives' resolution in turn made the husband determined to tame them. The wives argued, 'if a woman keep her house, then you will say she is melancholy, if she walk abroad, then you call her a gadder; a puritan, if she be precise; and a wanton, if she be pleasant, so there is no woman in the world that knows how to please you.' In short, the wives made their case so well that the husbands did not know how to answer and 'so left them to their own wills.'[46] Richard Gough in his *History of Myddle* called the wife of Francis Clarke of Newton a 'sad drunken woman.' Late one night when Francis went to fetch her home from the alehouse, she managed to flee from his grasp, 'ran back to the alehouse, bolted him out, and would not come home that night.'[47] Usually, however, wives rather than husbands sought their missing spouses at alehouses and taverns, and one wife in Paris was brave enough to ask the keeper not to serve her husband any more.[48]

The economic cost of drinking

A recurrent theme in the prescriptive and literary sources was the economic consequences of drinking excessive amounts of alcohol; authorities complained of young men spending time and money at

drinking establishments, unruly women spent their husbands' money, pawned important possessions when they had no money, and wasted their time, and good fellows likewise wasted time and money, pawned goods, and left their families to suffer the consequences. On the other hand, except for the literary representations of the unruly wives, few sources depicted women wasting time and money on drink; men were more often the culprits. One of the few cases of a wife dissipating her income concerned the wife of Anglebert Théodore Berg. He and his wife left domestic service in Paris and attempted to make a living as wine merchants. However, as Anglebert complained, his wife drank all the profits. As a result their business suffered, they often fought with each other, and they eventually separated.[49] The story of the Bergs helps illustrate why women were so seldom depicted as the person guilty of spending time and money on drink. The Bergs evidently had no children; in families with children the mother could have a greater sense of responsibility to them than did the father and hence refrain from wasting time and money at drinking establishments. The occupation of the Bergs made it possible for the wife to have access to drink and plenty of it; in most families the husband's ultimate control of finances prevented women from spending it at taverns and alehouses.

A late medieval poem entitled *The Debate of the Carpenters Tools* suggested one of the consequences of a husband drinking. A wife complained that her husband spent on ale all she earned from spinning yarn; he could spend in an hour what it took her four hours to earn.[50] Bonaventure Des Périers' story about the sad alcoholic and his wife, 'Du bon yvrogne Janicot, et de Jeannette sa femme,' also featured a husband who used his wife's money for drink. Janicot gave up his job as a tailor because he became so drunk he could not see to thread the needle and then had to rely on his wife's income to support his considerable drinking habit. Then he pawned his possessions and those of his wife; he even pawned his own wife to anyone who would give him something to drink.[51] French farces likewise illustrated the effects that a drinking husband could have on the economic situation of the family. In a sixteenth-century farce about two husbands and their two wives, one of the wives bitterly complained about her husband drinking wine at the tavern in the morning:

> And his poor little children
> With me, more often than not
> We have only the wind to eat,
> Dying of hunger and thirst.[52]

In a farce performed in front of Henry IV in 1607 the wife complained that the husband was spending on drink the money that was supposed to go to the tax collectors and cursed him for ruining the family. The husband replied that, rather than the king get the money, he would prefer to spend it on drink. The family was saved, not by the reform of the husband, but by the timely appearance of three demons who escorted the tax collectors to the nether world.[53]

The complaints of these fictional wives had parallels in complaints made by authorities. In 1576 the authorities of several French villages expressed concern about the economic effects of the taverns. According to one complaint, 'Men spend on Sunday at the tavern what they have earned during the week, and their abandoned wives and children die of hunger.'[54] Other examples, such as the complaint of the police bureau of Nantes in 1581 about the artisans and craftsmen spending time and money in taverns, and another about wives and children starving as a result of men dissipating their earnings on drink, have been cited in previous chapters. Popular songs from mid-sixteenth-century France portrayed wives celebrating the news that Henry II prohibited their husbands from drinking in taverns.[55] Just as the farces could reflect the irresponsible behavior of real husbands, the songs could reflect the real relief of suffering women and their children.

Adultery

Another recurrent theme in the contemporary sources is the sexual promiscuity that resulted from drinking. Single women were seduced while under the influence of alcohol, prostitutes sought customers at alehouses and taverns, and drinking men and women of all conditions engaged in illicit sex. While the sources did not usually implicate married women in wasting their time and money by drinking, they did implicate them in adultery. As noted by G. R. Quaife, one of the main constraints on the sexual activity of single women was the fear of pregnancy. Pregnancy for a single woman was not so much a moral and a religious problem but an economic and a social problem. Marriage could remove this constraint on sexual activity and thus be a liberating influence, although not to the same extent as the modern contraceptive pill.[56] According to contemporary sources, the effects of drinking on the sexual relations between husband and wife could have many variations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, drink could make husbands impotent and wives promiscuous. The impotence of the husband could lead to the promiscuity of the wife, and the sexual failure

indicated by one or the other or both could result in the deeply shameful insult of cuckold.[57]

An accompaniment to the good fellows' sexual fantasies was the lusty wife of the tavern or alehouse keeper. An engraving by Jacques Lagniet (1620–72), entitled *He is quite wise, he puts water in his wine*, poked fun at a cheating tavern keeper who was the one putting the water in the wine. Included in the engraving was the statement, 'While he's downstairs "doing his laundry" and mixing water with his wine, the baker upstairs with his lecherous wife are taking other pleasures than those of the wine shop.'[58] Other wives claimed that their husbands' drunkenness was the cause of their adultery. For example, Niccolò di Francesco of San Severino faced charges of adultery in Florence because he persuaded a married woman to abandon her husband and children and run away with him. She did not require much persuading because her husband was a drunkard, and she would like 'to be taken somewhere for a thousand years where he would never hear from her again.'[59]

Other wives took advantage of their husbands' drunkenness to commit adultery. In 1664 at an alehouse in Clayton-le-Moors, Lancashire, the husband of Mary Darwin passed out on the floor in a drunken stupor. A customer reported that he had seen Mary use the occasion to go with another man into another room where he heard 'much puffing and blowing.'[60] The comic possibilities of such a situation made similar scenarios a frequent device in literature. In one of the stories in Boccaccio's *Decameron* Monna Ghita discovered that the best way to spend time with her lover was to get her jealous husband drunk, so she plied him with wine, and when he became 'blind drunk, she put him to bed and forgathered with her lover.'[61] One of the stories in *The Heptameron* by Marguerite de Navarre put a different twist on this scenario. The beautiful young wife of a wealthy farmer was having an affair with the local parish priest when the husband came home unexpectedly. She hid the priest and then plied the husband with wine so that when he fell asleep the priest could escape.[62] Scheming husbands as well as scheming wives could use drink to achieve their ends. Samuel Rowlands' *Knave of Clubbs* (1611) described a knave who married a 'widow four-score winters old.' The widow loved her sack, so her husband kindly supplied her with it every night until she fell into a drunken sleep. This would then be the opportunity for him to make love to the servant.[63]

Another frequent theme in the sources is the drinking situation that resulted in the husband's jealousy. In his version of Arthurian

Chronicles Layamon told of a banquet at London where King Uther toasted the fair wife of Gorlois, the Earl of Cornwall. Gorlois, perhaps mindful of what happened when the fair Rowena wassailed King Vortiger, was not honored but left the banquet and returned to Cornwall with his wife.[64] When the Calabrian Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri visited Venice during carnival in the late seventeenth century he witnessed a husband attempt to murder his wife who had entered a tavern in disguise.[65] In February 1625 Thomas Case of Chester filed for a separation from his wife, Elizabeth, on the grounds of her drunkenness as well as her misbehavior with young men. The witnesses in the case presented conflicting testimony, and much of the testimony was hearsay. For example, Thomas Cowper said that Thomas Jones said that John Crewe said that Thomas Myles' son had committed adultery with Elizabeth! Other witnesses reported that Thomas Myles (the son) had bragged that he had 'occupied her twice.' Much of the testimony focused on one night of merrymaking when Elizabeth met three young men at a tavern and followed them to two other drinking establishments, albeit hiding the fact by entering one tavern after the young men had already arrived. Some of the witnesses mentioned instances of her dissolute behavior and frequent drunkenness; she vomited all over a room while staying there overnight, she was so drunk she fell and hurt her face, she spent two hours playing shovelboard at a tavern, she was out late at night after curfew, she and Peter Taylor were in a dark kitchen together, and she was often drunk. Widow Isecca on one occasion told her, 'Ah! you whore that put your husband's shirt on while your smock was washing!' Elizabeth's husband, Thomas, was not entirely blameless for he locked her out of the house, and they fought and beat each other. Thomas got his separation.[66]

Domestic violence

In Pietro Aretino's play, *La cortigiana*, Togna complained of the drunken behavior of her husband: 'Oh God, why wasn't I born a man? … To be beaten and insulted every day, and by whom? By a big drunkard and a lazy dolt like this old sport of mine.' She told herself that she should 'give him something' in return, but it remained an empty threat.[67] Although the evidence is lacking, many wives no doubt felt like Togna and wanted to repay their husbands' brutality but lacked the courage. Just as drinking men were the wastrels they were also the brutes. A fifteenth-century drinking song that was far from

merry recounted the bad effects of drinking ale, which could eventually lead to the stocks and the gallows:

> Ale make many a man to draw his knife;
> Ale make many a man to make great strife;
> Ale make many a man to beat his wife.[68]

Aside from the literary depictions of drinking unruly women, few ballads, stories, and plays featured the violent behavior of drunk wives. One of the few that did was a ballad entitled *A Warning to Wives* (1629) which described a couple who fought continually until the wife killed the husband in the midst of a drunken quarrel.[69] In Dancourt's play entitled *La Baguette* (1693) the affections of Lucas, a prosperous peasant, were divided between the bottle and his wife. Although his wife loved him, she beat him whenever he was drunk, which was often. The play ended with Lucas promising to give up wine for his wife.[70] When drink was the cause of the wife inflicting violence on her husband, as in Dancourt's play, the husband was usually the one doing the drinking. For example, at Wetherden, Suffolk, in 1604 a couple was the object of a skimmington, the English equivalent of a *charivari*, when the wife beat her husband after he came home drunk one night. The husband returned to the alehouse and there sought consolation in a drink.[71] Pierre Ignace Chavatte of Lille noted in his diary in 1669 that a wife attacked her husband with a knife because he drank too much and spent all of their money; she escaped and he recovered.[72] When the Yorkshire yeoman Adam Eyre came home late from the alehouse one night in 1647, his wife locked him out and asserted that 'she would be master of the house for that night,' but Adam avoided her blows.[73]

In 1613 at Stanton Bernard, Wiltshire, a drunk Richard Hutchins mounted the preacher's pulpit to deliver a 'sermon': 'The twenty-first chapter of Maud Butcher and the seventh verse. Man love thy wife and thy wife will love thee, and if she will not do as thou will have her, take a staff and break her arms and her legs and she will forgive thee.'[74] An actual sermon from the late Middle Ages told the story of a man who came home from a tavern and was so drunk that he saw double, four children instead of two. He angrily accused his wife of adultery, killed her and his two sons, and then hanged himself when he realized what had happened. In a more agreeable version of the story the husband insisted that his wife undergo a trial by ordeal with a red-hot plowshare, but she easily outwitted her drunk husband and he was burned.[75] Unlike Richard Hutchins' drunken sermon, the late medieval

sermon in both its versions condemned the drunk. Other depictions of drunken men who beat and murdered their wives were likewise sympathetic to the victims. For example, in a ballad from the 1660s written by Abraham Miles a man killed his wife in a drunken rage; he in turn was killed by the devil, and a messenger from God presented him with a list of his crimes:

> Thy full delight was drunkenness,
> And lewd women, O cursed sin.[76]

Probably just as many depictions of domestic violence, however, were sympathetic to the male perpetrators rather than to the female victims. Samuel Rowlands' *Knave of Clubbs* turned from descriptions of knaves to a depiction of a shrewish wife. Her husband was a blacksmith who quite naturally liked to slake his thirst with a pot of ale at the alehouse. Whenever he went there his wife would immediately appear and harangue him mercilessly until he left. She called him 'rogue, rascal, villain, thief,' and said the devil should break his neck and hanging was too good for him.

> Get thee to work; out, villain, out,
> Thou drink not one drop more.

So one morning the blacksmith took an iron bar and broke her arm, much to the admiration of the neighbors.[77] A song performed for Queen Anne of England in 1617 described a tinker whose brains became muddied with liquor; as a result of the drink he called his wife a whore and threatened to kick her out the door.[78] In John Heywood's play entitled *Johan the Husband* (1533) the main character proclaimed that he would rather beat his wife than drink.[79] Such depictions helped contribute to a culture of domestic violence in traditional Europe. They promoted the view that drunk or sober a husband could beat his wife. Studies of modern domestic violence demonstrate a correlation between the consumption of alcohol and domestic violence, especially if both the husband and wife have been drinking.[80] Hence, in traditional Europe a culture of domestic violence when combined with a culture of heavy drinking could result in a high incidence of battered wives. Domestic violence in modern societies often is underreported, as it probably was in the past. Hence, the available evidence probably does not indicate the full extent of the situation, but it is substantial nonetheless.[81]

The evidence from court records reveals that men were expected to use reason in the exercise of domestic discipline, that is, wife beating, and the prescriptive literature added that they must have good cause, such as disobedience, for doing so.[82] In other words, a reasonable beating of a disobedient wife was not likely to leave evidence from legal cases. Some cases demonstrated unreasonable violence with no apparent cause other than alcohol. In 1630 Thomas Hough of Runcorn beat his wife, Anna, so severely after returning from a day of drinking that 'her arms, legs, and thighs were black and blue.'[83] Early in the seventeenth century Richard Sheepheard of West Winch, Norfolk, faced charges of coming home drunk and beating his wife and children.[84] In 1678 the elders of the Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol expelled Thomas Jacob for drunkenness and for giving 'his wife some blows.'[85] Jeanne Bourdon claimed that her husband was usually drunk when he came home and that whenever he was drunk he was violent toward not only her but also their children and servants, even driving them from the house and threatening to break her arms and legs.[86]

Two cases from Dorchester in the 1630s illustrated that men could insist on the obedience due to a patriarch even when drunk. When the wife of the blacksmith Methuselah Notting begged him to stop drinking, he beat her for questioning his authority. The wife of William Miller was so concerned about his drinking that she sent for the constables. William told them, 'in spite of their teeth he would go to the alehouse … and have his cup and a pot of sack and a whore, and that his wife should stand by and see it, and that if she would dare to speak he would beat her to pieces.'[87] John Bennet of Backford, Cheshire, justified the drunken brutal beating he gave to his wife in 1638 by claiming that she had committed adultery and contracted the French pox.[88] In 1663 at St Giles, Middlesex, John Bradley used force to remove his wife's clothes while they were drinking in an alehouse, claiming that she was a whore. The other customers gathered around, shouted 'shame,' and chased him when he ran from the alehouse with cries to stop him for 'he had killed his wife!'[89] A few cases were notable for their viciousness. Robert Story of Northumberland confessed in 1688 that he beat his wife, Margaret, for no reason when he was drunk, but he justified beating her at other times for faults such as refusing to leave her bed after giving birth to go to her brother's place, a distance of several miles, to ask for a loan of £6.[90] In 1652 John Barnes faced a charge of murder at Ely. When he came home drunk, his wife called him a rogue and claimed he deserved to be hung; Barnes gave her such a severe beating and a kicking that she died.[91]

Domestic harmony

Anglo-Saxon ceremony required a wife to greet her husband in the mead hall by immediately presenting him with a cup.[92] The ritual underlined female subservience, but it also meant that the wife would not offer a cup to another man and the husband would not accept a cup from another woman. In other words, the ceremony prevented drink from becoming a source of friction and tension between husband and wife, as it often was in many cases. The cost of drinking, the wasting of time in taverns and alehouses, and the incapacity to work as a result of drunkenness could combine with the possibility of adultery and the likelihood of domestic violence to sour many relationships. On a few occasions literary sources portrayed the opposite, that is, drink helped couples resolve marital difficulties. For example, in the ballad entitled *The Lancashire Cuckold* the husband accepted an offer of money from his wife's lover to repair his wounded honor, and the money also served to reconcile the husband with his wife. All three then went to an alehouse to cement the reconciliation over drinks.[93] Jacques de Vitry (died about 1240) told the story of a couple who had vowed to give up wine except for feast days or when they had concluded a bargain. After several days of water, the husband proposed to his wife that he sell his donkey to her. She agreed, and they celebrated the bargain with wine. On the following day, she sold it back to him, and so it went.[94] A late fifteenth-century drinking song whose refrain began, 'Back and side go bare, go bare,' celebrated Kit the wife, who loved good ale, drank until the tears ran down her cheek, and then passed the bowl back to her husband,

> And say, 'Sweetheart,
> I have taken my part,
> Of jolly good ale and old.'[95]

Even rarer than literary depictions of a husband and wife enjoying each other's company while drinking together were actual cases of it. According to Richard Gough's *History of Myddle*, William Crosse and his wife 'were both overmuch addicted to drunkenness' and went daily to the alehouse together. The marital togetherness had its disadvantages, for they sold all their stock to pay for their drink, then sold the lease to their property, and ended in poverty.[96] Drinking was normally a social rather than an antisocial activity, so a safe surmise would be that, hidden from the historian's view, was the marital bonding that could come from sharing a pot of ale or a glass of wine.

The role of alcohol in marital and extramarital relations provided several comic permutations in works of fiction. Drink in moderation could stimulate a husband's sexual ardor, but too much could ruin a night of lovemaking by putting him to sleep. A wife could ply her husband with enough drink to make him fall asleep so she could meet her lover and then ply the lover with drink, usually her husband's, to stimulate his sexual ardor. A wife could beat her drunken husband, especially after he squandered his money on drink and his time in an alehouse or tavern, and a husband could beat his wife for complaining about his drinking. The evidence indicates that most of these permutations had parallels in court cases. Those involved in such cases did not appreciate the comic possibilities deriving from the role of alcohol. In short, in traditional Europe drink did not always function as an important ingredient in social jollification. Worse would follow as a result of the heavy consumption of spirits and the social dislocation that accompanied the industrial revolution, but the battered wives and the suffering children were indications of the dark side of alcohol consumption in the preindustrial period. The evidence implicates men much more than it does women. Drinking wives could be adulterous wives, but women seldom committed acts of violence while under the influence of alcohol, and they seldom wasted time and money at drinking establishments. Drinking men, on the other hand, could be adulterers, brutes, and wastrels.

8
Conclusion

Traditional Europe had a sexual double standard and a drinking double standard. Just as women were expected to maintain their chastity so also were they expected to maintain their sobriety. The two double standards were linked because of the widespread opinion that a sober woman was chaste while a drunk woman was promiscuous. Not only did men have greater freedom than women in matters sexual, but men also had the right to consume vast amounts of alcoholic beverages, not just the right but also the duty if they were to maintain their honor and status. The sexual double standard was more absolute than the drinking double standard, because women of all ages and conditions consumed alcohol as a matter of course in their daily diets, as a medicine and as a drug, and during their participation in ceremonies and rituals.

Scholars have attempted to explain differential drinking patterns among men and women with provocative theories that are not capable of empirical verification. Isabelle Bianquis-Gasser, for example, links the differences to the quest for immortality. In her article, 'Wine and Men in Alsace, France,' Bianquis-Gasser argues that the cycle of life and death associated with the vine and wine symbolizes regeneration and immortality. To become immortal men must drink wine to the point of unconsciousness so that they lose touch with 'their mundane awareness.' What about women? Women do not discover their immortality in wine; they find it in bearing children.[1] To put it bluntly, the men get drunk, and the women produce babies! The authors of a cross-cultural study of drinking argue that the differences result from traditional gender roles. Women cared for babies while men cared for crops; the crops would not suffer if the men were incapacitated by drink for several days, but the babies would. As a result 'most societies would limit

drinking and drunkenness in women.'[2] What the authors fail to consider is the protective role normally ascribed to men; a drunk man, like the defenders of Parma who became intoxicated during a wedding celebration, would be a feeble fighter and a poor protector. Not just the crops and the babies but the entire social group would suffer if men were incapacitated through drink.

Theories based on psychological factors are just as unsuccessful in explaining differential drinking patterns. One group of authors suggests that the answer lies in the role of alcohol in reducing stress. Because women are better able than men to handle stress they are less likely than men to seek relief from intolerable situations by turning to drink.[3] Even if this might explain why men periodically seek relief from intolerable situations by turning to the bottle, it fails to explain why men drink more than do women day after day, week after week. Another possible explanation relates to the use of alcohol as an escape valve for people who are socially frustrated or abused.[4] Given the privileged position of men in traditional Europe socially frustrated and abused women would have more need of this escape valve than would men. None of these theories, in short, is successful in explaining why women drank less than men in traditional Europe, indeed, at any time or in any place.

Sometimes the simplest explanation is the most effective. Men eat more than women eat because they are bigger; men also drink more for the same reason. Modern medicine recommends a safe drinking level of four standard drinks a day for men but only two for women. True, men are not twice the size of women, but alcohol's greater impact on women is not just a function of size but also of such factors as the menstrual cycle and the proportion of liquid in the body.[5] Patriarchal constraints placed obvious limits on the consumption of alcohol by women, but not as obvious are the precise effects of these constraints. The constraints operated more effectively in placing restrictions on time and place rather than in restricting the amount consumed. The restrictions on time focused on festive drinking occasions, and the restrictions on place focused on alehouses and taverns. Time and place produced other variables. Both the clock and the calendar created variables of time. Women were more likely to enter the male space of alehouses and taverns during the day than at night, when their presence was an admission of questionable morality or at least considered as such by men. At least in England alehouses and taverns were less exclusively male space in the seventeenth century than earlier, but more historical research would help determine the extent of this development

and if the situation was similar on the continent. On the whole, French and Italian taverns remained almost exclusively male space with some variations over time and space.

Given the connection between drink and sexual activity and a similar connection between drink and unruly behavior, the patriarchal constraints on the consumption of alcohol by women seem weak. Men believed that a drinking woman was more likely than a sober woman to engage in illicit sex; they feared the sexuality of sober women, and the fears increased with each cup of wine or jug of beer. Nonetheless, women had their cups and their jugs. Some historians have failed to recognise the strong connection between drink and sexual activity in traditional Europe and have as a consequence attributed certain phenomena, such as the association between drinking establishments and prostitution, to other developments. Other historians have argued that the beliefs regarding alcohol were gender specific, that is, men were immune from the erotic effects of drink. True, misogyny or at least fear of female sexuality inspired some of the authors who condemned drinking women, but misogyny and the fear of female sexuality also led some authors to warn men to observe moderation in drink and thereby to preserve their chastity. Some of the warnings addressed women, but just as often the warnings were gender neutral or addressed to men. In other words, beliefs about the erotic effects of drink demonstrated a single standard rather than a double standard.

Men also feared insubordinate women and their tendency to become disorderly. As in sex, so in disorder, men believed that alcohol increased these tendencies. As noted in the Introduction, Natalie Zemon Davis argues that disorderly women could undermine patriarchal authority by demonstrating that subordination and obedience were not the only behavioral options open to women; the cultural pattern of the disorderly woman sanctioned sedition and riot. Unruly women could challenge patriarchal authority merely by drinking with their gossips in the male space of taverns and alehouses. Drinking women who were sexually promiscuous likewise challenged patriarchal authority. According to one theory drink in modern societies empowers men but it makes women more feminine, less assertive and aggressive, and less concerned with power. Drink, in other words, disempowers women according to this argument. However, according to the male construction of female drinking behavior in traditional Europe, drink empowered women, and the potential existed for such a construction to provide cultural models for women. Joy Wiltenburg has similarly argued that the male construction of a disorderly or unruly woman might have provided

women with a strategy to help them cope with patriarchal authority.[6] One such strategy would be to challenge patriarchal authority by drinking. In short, the consumption of alcoholic beverages could empower women.

The disorder and violence attributed to drinking women in both works of fiction and legal cases were minimal in comparison with the disorderly and violent comportment of drinking men. In her book on gender relations in early modern London Laura Gowing argues that drunkenness did not characterize marital violence.[7] However, both works of fiction and legal cases portray drink as a factor in the violent comportment of men. Just as the violence perpetrated by men against other men while under the influence of alcohol often had precipitants, so did the drunken violence perpetrated against wives. The most frequent precipitant was the wife complaining about her husband's drinking. The evidence indicates that the wife had good reason to complain. Despite the male construction of unruly drinking women as wasting money on drink, men were the wastrels in taverns and alehouses, spending their money, wasting their time, and drinking until incapable of productive labor, while the women and children suffered at home. Such was the picture that emerged from popular literature, legal cases, and the complaints of the godly and the authorities; another way of putting it, such was the male construction of male drinking behavior. The male construction of drinking behavior indicted men more often than women, except for sexual activity, with perhaps an equal number of indictments.

Patriarchal attitudes posed challenges to the drinking male. He was supposed to exercise his authority over his household, and a certain amount of force was permissible in the exercise of that authority. He was also expected to provide for his family. Failure to exert his control and to be a good provider would diminish his honor. Drink could diminish his ability to be a good provider, and the excessive force that often accompanied drink could result in the diminution of his moral authority even if his physical authority increased. Drink could also challenge his sexual authority. Even if he came home from the tavern too drunk to satisfy his wife on only one occasion, the potential for gossiping women to spread the story of his impotence could likewise erode his honor. If his wife challenged his authority by joining her gossips for drinks at taverns or alehouses, if her drinking comportment was chaste but nonetheless a topic of rumour, and if she demonstrated either verbal or physical aggression when she returned home, then his honor and authority could almost disappear. According to Anthony

Fletcher, masculinity 'always seemed threatened and provisional' in early modern England;[8] drinking increased these tendencies.

In 1606 the English Parliament enacted a statute against drunkenness. The preamble to the Act stated, 'Whereas the loathsome and odious sin of drunkenness is of late grown into common use within this realm, being the root and foundation of many other enormous sins, as bloodshed, stabbing, murder, swearing, fornication, adultery, and such like, to the great dishonor of God, and of our nation, the overthrow of many good arts and manual trades, the disabling of diverse workmen, and the general impoverishing of many good subjects, abusively wasting the good creatures of God; be it therefore enacted…'[9] The preamble seems a fair summary, with some exaggeration, of parts of this book. In the case of the preamble the identity of those expressing the sentiments were members of the English Parliament. On many occasion I have cited authors with similar sentiments, but on other occasions in this book the identity of those people with similar sentiments has been somewhat vague, including Puritans, the godly, the middling and better sort, authorities – sometimes religious and/or political, officials, reforming bishops, and the elites. I have used these terms to signify that portion of the population opposed to different manifestations of drinking behavior and drunken comportment. The vagueness of their identity results to a certain extent from the vagueness of the sources, but the point remains that throughout the period covered by this book, during both the Middle Ages and the early modern period, and in England before and after the Protestant Reformation, as well as in France and Italy, a minority of the population were opposed to popular drinking culture and the tendencies for drinkers to engage in erotic and disorderly behavior.

On occasion the sentiments and the opposition resulted, as in the case of the English statute of 1606, in laws against drunkenness, regulations on drinking behavior, and controls on drinking establishments. The anthropological approach to drink is often one of problem deflation. The consumption of alcohol according to this approach is a fundamental part of diet and a natural accompaniment to ritual. In the words of Mac Marshall, 'alcohol usually is not a problem in society unless and until it is defined as such.'[10] The people who define it as a problem are usually the elites, those whom I have called the middling and better sort and their ilk. According to Joseph R. Gusfield, 'Elites institute drinking controls that benefit themselves and do so in the name of helping others.'[11] To a certain extent Gusfield's statement fits the situation in traditional Europe. The most obvious example of this is

the attempt to control the sexuality of single women in England. The elites would benefit from this control because the parish poor rates would have to support any illegitimate children conceived when women were too drunk to identify their sexual partners. On the other hand, some of the drinking controls instituted by the elite had popular support. French women rejoiced when they heard of Henry II's statutes against taverns, and women sought assistance from authorities in dealing with husbands who wasted their money in drinking establishments. While drinking could promote social cohesion and integration and foster communal solidarity, much of the material in this book demonstrates antisocial drinking that could have the opposite effect.

The laws, regulations, and controls were one means of controlling female behavior. Drinking women faced time in the stocks, excommunication from the Christian community, imprisonment, whipping, and, in the case of the drunken daughter seduced by her father, even burning at the stake. On the other hand, most of the same laws, regulations, and controls applied to male behavior, and whenever quantification is possible it reveals that men faced prosecution and punishment more than did women. A good example is the male monopoly on indictments for drunkenness at Banbury, Oxford, in the seventeenth century. Only a few of the regulations and controls were gender specific. The preamble to the English statute of 1606 specified *workmen*, but the specificity was at times female and usually focused on female tavern and alehouse keepers, such as the order by the Mayor of Chester forbidding female alehouse keepers between the ages of fourteen and forty. To a certain extent the gender specificity or otherwise of the regulations did not matter, nor did the differential rates in prosecution and punishment. The purpose of many of the laws, controls, and regulations and the enforcement of them was to support the family, that fundamental foundation of patriarchal society. Both the sexual allurements of a female keeper and the economic ruin of a drunken father threatened the family and ultimately patriarchal authority.

In an article entitled 'The Churches and Alcohol' the eminent scholar of the Reformation, Roland H. Bainton, asks 'whether Protestant rigorism [is] directed to drink and Catholic rigorism to sex.' Bainton goes on to speculate, 'if this be true, the explanation might be that Catholicism is prevalent among southern peoples more prone to sexual excess, and Protestantism in northern climes more disposed to intemperance in drink.' Bainton dismisses this theory as too simple, with the example of Ireland among many others revealing its inadequacy.[12] When I began to study attitudes toward drinking and drinking behavior

I believed that I would discover a similar divide between the north and the south, between beer-drinking areas and wine-producing areas, between Protestantism and Catholicism. Some differences did exist, but on the connection between alcohol and sex England, France, and Italy shared a unanimity of opinion. Leon Battista Alberti, Pietro Aretino, Giovanni Boccaccio, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, Marguerite de Navarre, Michel de Montaigne, Christine de Pizan, François Rabelais, Pierre de Ronsard, and William Shakespeare, to name some of the more notable authors cited above, would have understood Ogden Nash's witticism.

Notes

1 Introduction

1 *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage* (1591), in Leonard R. N. Ashley, ed., *Elizabethan Popular Culture* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988), p. 44. Here and elsewhere I have modernized the spelling.
2 Craig MacAndrew and Robert B. Edgerton, *Drunken Comportment: A Social Explanation* (London: Nelson, 1970); see also the comments by Thomas Brennan, 'Towards the Cultural History of Alcohol in France,' *Journal of Social History*, XXIII (1989), p. 83.
3 Brennan, 'Towards the Cultural History,' p. 85.
4 See Edmond Faral, *La vie quotidienne au temps de Saint Louis* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1938), pp. 72–3, for an example.
5 Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1936), III, pp. 436–7.
6 Robert C. Davis, *Shipbuilders of the Venetian Arsenal: Workers and Workplace in the Preindustrial City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 24.
7 Lorenzo de' Medici, *Selected Poems and Prose*, Jon Thiem, trans. and ed. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), p. 40.
8 John Leland, *John Leland's Itinerary: Travels in Tudor England*, John Chandler, ed. (Phoenix Mill: Alan Sutton, 1993), p. 514.
9 Katherine L. French, 'Parochial Fund-Raising in Late Medieval Somerset,' in Katherine L. French, *et al.*, eds, *The Parish in English Life, 1400–1600* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 129.
10 Wendy Gibson, *Women in Seventeenth-Century France* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 8, citing Thiers, *Traité des superstitions*.
11 Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato, Francesco di Marco Datini* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 48.
12 Henry Machyn, *The Dairy of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, From A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, John Gough Nichols, ed. (London: The Camden Society, 1848), p. 32.
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> Rospo: *Ah, botte del vin greco, ti fuss'appresso!*
> Fausto: *Potess'io questi occhi de' toui bei sguardi e della tua serena luce appagar.*
> Rospo: *Potess'io ber un tratto a mio senno, so ch'io mi caverei questa gran sete.*

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> *Par ce peché la vie acourse,*
> *Et si en vient la mort à course.*

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> *Femme safre et yvroigneresse*
> *de son corps n'est pas maistresse.*

For other examples see M. Santucci, 'Nourritures et symboles dans le *Banquet du Faisan* et dans *Jean de Saintré*,' in *Manger et boire au Moyen Age: Actes du Colloque de Nice (15–17 octobre 1982)*, Vol. I, *Aliments et société* (Nice: Les Belles Lettres, 1984), p. 433; *Dialogue between Thomas and John in the Praise and Dispraise of Women and Wine* (about 1665), in *The Roxburghe Ballads*, VII, p. 150.

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93 *Le mystère de la résurrection: Angers (1456)*, Pierre Servet, ed. (Geneva: Librairie Droz SA, 1993), II, p. 718:

> *Femme qui trop boit…*
> *Soit veusve ou mariee,*
> *Et pert souvent son bon renon.*

94 Christine de Pizan, *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor*, pp. 76, 203.
95 Guillaume de La Taysonnière (about 1530–about 1585–87), *L'attiffet des damoizelles; L'épithalame*, Nerina Clerici Balmas, ed. (Geneva: Librairie Droz SA, 1992), p. 57; *les flambeaux de Venus*.
96 Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, p. 215; Clément Marot, *Les epigrammes*, C. A. Mayer, ed. (London: The Athlone Press, 1970), p. 118; Rabelais, *The Complete Works*, p. 352.
97 Pernette Du Guillet, *Rymes*, Victor E. Graham, ed. (Geneva: Librairie Droz SA, 1968), p. 30; *Venus sera froide encor ces deux hyverz*.
98 *Du jour des bacchanales*, in Joachim Du Bellay (1522–60), *Oeuvres poétiques*, Henri Chamard, ed. (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1908–31), III, p. 32.
99 *Description des vandanges*, in Richard Aldington, trans., *Fifty Romance Lyric Poems* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931), p. 171.
100 *When Scortching Phoebus* (1620–50), in Farmer, *Merry Songs and Ballads*, IV, p. 40.
101 *Wine and Venus*, in Symonds, *Wine, Women, and Song*, p. 164.
102 *The Craven Churn-Supper Song*, in James Henry Dixon, ed., *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England* (London: Printed for the Percy Society, 1846), in *Early English Poetry, Ballads, and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages*, Vol. XVII (London: The Percy Society, 1846), p. 183.
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111 Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, p. 183.
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113 Rabelais, *The Complete Works*, pp. 351–2.
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65 Quoted from Soriga, 'La vite e il vino,' p. 156:

> *Il fumo del vino*
> *va su per le tempie*
> *el corpo s'empie de luxuria*
> *con si gran furia de le carne umane*
> *che fin alla dimane*
> *colle marcie pultane stanno in berta.*

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86 Lottin, *Chavatte, ouvrier lillois*, p. 363.
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90 Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 209.
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93 Karras, *Common Women*, pp. 15–16, 72.
94 Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, p. 116, citing *Coventry Leet Book*.
95 Laughton, 'The Alewives of Later Medieval Chester,' p. 200.
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108 Bresc, '"Fondaco" et taverne de la Sicile médiévale,' pp. 98, 100.
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114 Sue Wright, '"Churmaids, Huswyfes and Hucksters:" The Employment of Women in Tudor and Stuart Salisbury,' in Lindsey Charles and Lorna Duffin, eds, *Women and Work in Pre-Industrial England* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 110.
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175 Hoffman, *Church and Community in the Diocese of Lyon*, p. 142.
176 Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 207.
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5 Sexual Encounters

1 Sébastien Michaëlis, *Histoire admirable de la possession* (1613), quoted from Montague Summers, *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology* (Secaucus: The Citadel Press, 1974), pp. 144–5.
2 *Atti del Esecutore*, 7 June 1427, in Brucker, *The Society of Renaissance Florence*, pp. 270–1.
3 Wace [*Roman de Brut*] and Layamon [*Brut*], *Arthurian Chronicles*, Eugene Mason, trans. (London: Dent, 1961), pp. 9–10, 131–2.
4 'Goat-Face,' Basile, *The Pentameron*, p. 73.
5 Aldington, *Fifty Romance Lyric Poems*, pp. 58–9.
6 Ronsard, *Oeuvres complètes*, XVII, p. 312:

> *Ma Dame beut à moy: puis me baillant sa tasse,*
> *Buvez, dit-ell', ce reste où mon coeur j'ay versé:*
> *Et alors le vaisseau des lévres je pressay,*
> *Qui comme un Batelier son coeur dans le mien passe.*

7 *The Lisle Letters*, Muriel St. Clare Byrne, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), *passim* and especially II, pp. 365–8.
8 Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, p. 108.
9 *The Milkmaid's Resolution*, dated about 1665, in *The Roxburghe Ballads*, VI, p. 529.
10 Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, p. 133.
11 Sharpe, *Crime in Seventeenth-Century England*, p. 49, citing *The Autobiography of Sir John Bramston K. B.*; the suitor was Sir Anthony Browne.
12 *A Fairing for Young Men and Maids*, by Tobias Browne, dated 1685–88, in *The Roxburghe Ballads*, VII, p. 111.
13 *La venexiana*, Ludovico Zorzi, ed. and trans. (Turin: Giulio Einaudi editore, 1969), p. 52:

> Angela: *Bevi un goccio, e riposiamo.*
> Iulio: *… Di bere, ho bevuto un poco; non ne ho piú bisogno.*

Angela: *Questo poco, per amor mio.*
Iulio: *Per amor di voi, se fosse risagallo [sic] e arsenico, lo berrei.*

Risigallo is Italian for realgar, an arsenic sulfide.

14 Cited in Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, pp. 183–4.
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20 Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, p. 184, citing Jean Bodel's *Boivin de Provins*.
21 McCall, *The Medieval Underworld*, p. 185.
22 Farr, *Authority and Sexuality in Early Modern Burgundy*, p. 152.
23 Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture in Paris*, p. 150.
24 Ashley, *Elizabethan Popular Culture*, p. 41.
25 *The Merchant's Son and the Beggar-Wench of Hull* in *The Roxburghe Ballads*, VII, p. 379.
26 *The London Taylor's Misfortune* (1685–88), *Poor Tom the Taylor, His Lamentation* (1684), and *The Taylor's Lamentation* (1684) in *The Roxburghe Ballads*, VII, pp. 470–4.
27 McMullan, *The Canting Crew*, p. 118, citing *The Wandering Whore*.
28 Hanawalt, *'Of Good and Ill Repute,'* p. 113, citing the *Calendar of Coroners' Inquests*.
29 *The Long Vocation, or, A New Touch of the Times* (about 1707) in Farmer, *Merry Songs and Ballads*, IV, pp. 142–3.
30 Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, pp. 173–4.
31 'La fiancée du roi de Garbe,' in Jean de La Fontaine, *Oeuvres*, Henri Regnier, ed. (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1883–97), IV, pp. 428–9.
32 Maxwell S. Luria and Richard L. Hoffman, eds, *Middle English Lyrics* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1974), pp. 87–8.
33 Cited by Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World*, p. 160.
34 Thompson, *Wives, Widows, Witches and Bitches*, p. 58.
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38 Rossiaud, 'Prostitution, Youth, and Society,' p. 7.
39 James J. Collins and Pamela M. Messerschmidt, 'Epidemiology of Alcohol-Related Violence,' *Alcohol Health and Research World*, XVII (1993), p. 96. On the other hand, one study demonstrates that higher beer taxes reduced the incidence of rape as well as robberies; Philip J. Cook and Michael J. Moore, 'Violence Reduction through Restrictions on Alcohol Availability,' *Alcohol Health and Research World*, XVII (1993), pp. 155–6.

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43 G. R. Quaife, 'The Consenting Spinster in a Peasant Society,' p. 233; *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives*, pp. 65, 149.
44 Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, p. 252.
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49 Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, p. 301.
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52 Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, p. 166.
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98 Farmer, *Merry Songs and Ballads*, II, pp. 65–7.
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6 Unruly Women and Violent Men

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19 Lydgate, *The Minor Poems*, II, p. 676.

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23 Paul Hair, ed., *Before the Bawdy Court: Selections from Church Court and Other Records Relating to the Correction of Moral Offences in England, Scotland and New England, 1300–1800* (London: Elek, 1970), p. 77.
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27 *Ibid.*, p. 484.
28 *Ibid.*, p. 494.
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41 *Ibid*., pp. 182–3.
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51 Des Périers, *Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis*, pp. 272–6.
52 *Les deux maris et leurs deux femmes, dont l'une a male tête et l'autre est tendre du cul*, 1532–50, in André Tissier, ed., *Recueil de farces (1450–1550)* (Geneva: Librairie Droz SA, 1986–95), I, p. 445:

> *Et ses pouvres petis enfans,*
> *Et moy avec, le plus souvent*
> *Nous convient desjeuner de vent,*
> *En mourant de fain et de soif.*

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8 Conclusion

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