Reviews


Interest in the interaction of humans and their environment has spawned a number of books on the environmental history of the world. Radkau’s *Nature and Power* represents a valuable addition to this literature. Radkau’s ultimate objective is to determine the sustainability of the world’s past societies in an ecological, an economic, and a cultural context. Admittedly, this is an ambitious goal that requires a familiarity with a number of disparate disciplines. Radkau starts with an examination of the subsistence hunting and agricultural societies of the prehistoric period. He then moves to the wood- and hydraulic- or irrigation-based societies of the classical period, the expansive European societies of the colonial era, and the more complex societies of the Industrial Revolution and the era of globalization. His grasp of the ecology, the institutions, and the cultural traditions of different regions and periods makes this book a solid and exhaustive interdisciplinary contribution to the literature on the topic.

Radkau argues that ecology must join with social and political processes as an explanation for historical events. All of them are important. Radkau is well known for his study of the eighteenth-century wood crisis in central Europe.\(^1\) He stated that the wood crisis was more apparent than real; local German principalities used it to expand their regulatory power and income. Power (*macht*) trumped nature as the major explanatory variable. On the positive side, he noted that the wood crisis gave rise to the first forestry schools in the world and ultimately to modern sustainable forestry.

Most environmental narratives fall into one of two categories: Society either destroys its environment or manages to survive by transforming its environment. Although Radkau has strong opinions on certain topics, he always presents both sides of the issue of whether a particular practice was sustainable. His conclusions, however, are often tentative, filled with caveats, or limited to a specific time or place. Readers with a bias toward one side of an issue or a predilection for a simple storyline will be disappointed. Radkau notes that solutions to resource-related issues often generated new, unexpected environmental problems—for example, the use of coal and nuclear power as energy sources and the use of inorganic chemicals as fertilizers. The book takes many unexpected twists and turns. It is not easy to read.

An ecologist (like me) might prefer that more attention had been given to the pitfalls and the reliability of the scientific methodology. To what degree, for instance, can one determine the factors responsible for the fall of the classical Maya civilization on the basis of paleoecological

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\(^1\) Radkau, “Wood and Forestry in German History: In Quest of an Environmental Approach,” *Environment and History,* II(1996), 63–76.
or pollen evidence? A few references are given in the footnotes, but they are not discussed in any detail.

Radkau believes that value judgments have no place in environmental history. His attempt to bring more precision and objectivity to concepts like degraded soil and forest ecosystems mirrors the struggles of scientists to devise reliable indicators of rangeland and forest health. Many readers may well agree with Radkau’s finding that, in the end, we have a checkered history on the sustainable use of our environment.

Gordon Whitney
Allegheny College

Global Environmental History. By I. G. Simmons (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008) 271 pp. $49.00

Global Environmental History, which is aimed at general readers and students, emphasizes the empirical evidence for climatic change during the past 10,000 to 12,000 years. Simmons is as concerned with humans’ ideas about the planet and their place within it as he is with climatic shifts— “the interaction of the genetically determined and the culturally learned” (3).

An introductory chapter lays out some basic assumptions and summarizes the constraints and opportunities of his multidisciplinary approach. This discussion leads into a narrative account of hunter-gatherers, which ranges widely over ancient and living forager societies, exploring such issues as fire and energy relationships. Simmons shows a strong bias toward cultural ecology in this context; he places foraging societies within ecosystems that are hybrid systems of culture and nature.

From hunting and gathering, Simmons plunges into pre-industrial agriculture, again treading over familiar ground, covering everything from the earliest southwest Asian farmers to the pre-industrial world on the threshold of the Industrial Revolution in 105 breathtakingly compressed pages. Unfortunately, Simmons does not offer an extended discussion of one or two societies—for example, the Egyptians or the Maya—which would reinforce many of the important points made in this section.

At Chapter 4, Simmons changes pace, relinquishing the overwhelming details and examples of the previous chapters for a fast-moving examination of what he calls “The Second Iron Age” between 1750 and 1950. This discussion encompasses not only the growing power of the industrial state and colonial regimes but also population growth, fossil fuels, and much wider access to technology.

Chapter 5 treats the postindustrial era, exploring the cultural ecology of the world after 1950, the collapse of colonialism, the growth of world markets and globalization, and the burgeoning of environmental law—among other topics. A final chapter is concerned with “emerging
themes,” a rapid survey of current environmental trends, new ways of sharing information, and changing senses of identity.

Global Environmental History is clearly intended to be a textbook, but it is hardly a volume for beginners or general readers. Densely written and argued, the book presents an enormous panoply of facts, theoretical concepts, and trends, all of which speak well to the author’s erudition. However, those who read it must have some knowledge of climatology, archaeology, and history. A beginner will flounder rapidly in these pages. This history will probably be most useful as a source book; its comprehensive bibliography is worth the price of admission. As a quickfire compendium of concepts, theories, and a wide range of basic information, this book could be invaluable. As an undergraduate textbook, it is a non-starter. Nonetheless, Simmons’ courage in tackling a near-impossible synthesis in a mere 271 pages is admirable. This is one of those occasions when author and publisher might have treated themselves to greater length. The result might have been a remarkable book.

Brian Fagan
University of California, Santa Barbara


Sustained economic growth began with the Industrial Revolution. As late as 1800, the average standard of living in the world was little higher than in the Stone Age. But according to most estimates, it is now more than eight times higher than in 1800. Understanding the Industrial Revolution is thus a major preoccupation of macroeconomists and economic historians. Clark’s book provides a layman’s account of the subject, based on his extensive collection of data on the English economy from 1200 to 1870.

Clark accepts the widely held view that prior to the Industrial Revolution the world was in a Malthusian trap, in which advances in living standards that were brought about by technological progress were always dissipated by increased population growth, eventually resulting in more people instead of richer people. But in the late eighteenth century, the pace of technological progress accelerated to the extent that it was able to generate sustained increases in living standards despite attendant increases in population.

The major question with which every student of the Industrial Revolution must wrestle is what caused this technological acceleration. Clark proposes a simple answer, namely, that England’s culture promoted the development of the requisite middle-class virtues and skills—such as thrift, prudence, industry, truthfulness, literacy, and numeracy—to enable a society to realize the potential for major technological change.
Broadly speaking, Clark’s thesis is neither new nor controversial. Scholars such as Crosby, Jacob, Landes, and Mokyr have previously arrived at similar conclusions, each with his own special emphasis.\(^1\) The controversial element in Clark’s argument is an evolutionary twist. Specifically, he argues that the principal mechanism underlying the spread of middle-class virtues was the strong relationship between wealth and reproductive success in England, which allowed the genes and inherited attitudes of the economically successful to constitute an ever-increasing proportion of the population. The argument is similar to that of the theorists Galor and Moav, who focused not on middle-class values but on attitudes toward child rearing and education.\(^2\)

Clark supports this Darwinian explanation with compelling evidence that correlates wealth and reproductive success. He shows no evidence, however that the children of the rich in the settled agrarian society of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England carried the genes and attitudes that were needed to enact the greatest economic transformation that the world has known. The early ancestors of the landed aristocracy had become wealthy not by virtue of their middle-class values but by virtue of their military prowess and capacity for violence, and their descendants had become wealthy by birth.

Despite the importance that Clark seems to place on a debatable evolutionary argument, his central thesis, which he argues convincingly with well-chosen evidence, does not depend critically on it. The notion that the Industrial Revolution depended on culture remains compelling even without a definitive explanation for the evolution of culture. Overall, Clark has provided a sensible and readable account of important frontier research in economic history.

Peter Howitt
Brown University

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The editors’ summary of the issues and chapters in this book adopts an interdisciplinary approach and discusses a wide variety of authors, but it omits one important discipline, economics. A few of the chapters, particularly those by Stanley Engerman and Walter Scheidel, compensate for this omission to some extent, but the book as a whole reveals a common limitation of interdisciplinary history.


The scholars in this volume are well-known historians of both the ancient and modern worlds, but the book seems to emphasize apparent differences between ancient and modern slavery. For all of the detailed distinctions made between various ancient societies and various modern tribes and countries, slavery in any particular era seems remarkably homogeneous compared to its change over time. It is a pity that the books by Steinfeld were not known to these authors.\(^1\) He widens the concept of slavery to analyze various forms of bound labor. Only Stephen Hodkinson breaks down the dichotomous view of the other essays and discusses Spartan helots in the context of “diverse examples of servile exploitation (290).”

Orlando Patterson, a student of modern slavery whose earlier work is cited in most of these essays, opens the volume with a statistical analysis of slavery in primitive, largely nonliterate societies. He represents the difference between them as an equilibrium position dictated by the sex ratio and other aspects of the societies. Joseph C. Miller, another modern historian, discusses slavery as a dynamic process, assuming that slave systems were not in equilibrium but rather waxing and waning as historical conditions changed. Appearing in separate essays, this fundamental question of how to regard slave systems is not confronted directly.

Scheidel uses economic models from Fenoaltea and Temin, who started the discussion with simple models that illuminated one or another aspect of slavery, to analyze ancient slavery, but he argues for a more nuanced view than either of these authors.\(^2\) Scheidel’s synthetic approach tries to combine a variety of insights into a single schema. Tracey Rihil offers a detailed look at Roman baking, discussing the interaction of slavery and technical change: “I believe that mass urban supplies of grain [in Rome] encouraged mechanization of its processing and the mass production of bread. . . . Slavery was perhaps the main agent of technology transfer and innovation in any society in which physical mobility amongst the free was unusual” (141, 147). Michael Zeuske follows with a description of early modern Atlantic slavery largely through the eyes of a nineteenth-century observer.

Two essays examine the ideology of slave holding. The volume’s editors contribute a chapter analyzing mostly ancient manuals for slave owners, and Rafael de Bevar Marquese and Fábio Duarte Joly look mostly at modern writing. The common theme is that because slaves were expensive property, they needed to be maintained and fed well. Two essays examine exits from slavery, Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau focusing on individuals and Engerman on the emancipation of groups. It

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appears that slaves everywhere had to pay for their freedom, whether individually by purchase or collectively by paying taxes to reimburse their former owners for the loss of slave property. Hodkinson’s analysis of Spartan helots, which closes the volume, returns to the intent of the volume by recognizing the variety of instances throughout history in which workers have been at a severe disadvantage in bargaining with their masters and employers.

This volume will interest students of slavery in both the ancient and modern world, although the chapters offer less insight about the differences between ancient and modern slavery than might be hoped. The chapters by Hodkinson and Scheidel are the standouts.

Peter Temin
MIT

The Fall of the Roman Household. By Kate Cooper (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007) 319 pp. $99.00

The theme of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, after a long eclipse, recently has returned to the forefront in the study of late antiquity. In her new book, however, Cooper does not take sides with the partisans of the decline view. Her title seems to be a reference to Gibbon’s theory that the fall of the Roman Empire was due in large part to Christianity and to the ascetic ideal that ruined the Roman household—the predilection of Roman youth for “the penance of the monastic life.” Cooper challenges this view, which, curiously, has not been fully revisited until now. Her book is about the late Roman household in the western, Latin-speaking part of the Empire, from the reign of Honorius (395–425) to that of Theodoric the Great (493–526), a crucial period of change that saw emerging independent kingdoms replace the Roman Empire as the administrative unit of the western territories.

Her main documents are little-known texts—Latin conduct manuals and letters written in the fifth and sixth century. Although the names of the authors and addressees cannot be established in most cases, Cooper finds enough textual clues to date the documents and to identify their authors as clerics (by their pastoral concerns) and their audience as aristocratic laypersons, especially women. An English translation of one of these texts, the Ad Gregoriam in palatio, is included as an appendix.

In the ideal Christian household that these texts promote, wives are depicted as mistresses of slaves with all of the attendant obligations. With hindsight gained from the historiography of nineteenth-century planta-


2 Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (London, 1776).
tion mistresses, which showed that the image of the helpless mistress served to de-emphasize mastery, Cooper suggests that the concern for moral responsibility toward slaves expressed in these texts promoted a senatorial, paternalistic model of the household, based on slave labor, as opposed to one based on the wage labor that characterized the households of absentee landowners.

The major transformations described by Cooper, however, pertain to marriage and the status of wives. In the context of the political instability of the period, men tended to marry down in order to escape the patronage of powerful fathers-in-law. In this context, Cooper gained hindsight from ethnographical literature about the relationship of young men to the traditions of elders within changing social structures. She argues that this trend during the Roman Empire made wives more dependent on their husbands. The writers of conduct manuals for married Christians made clear that wives were under the authority of their husbands, not their fathers, as was the case in traditional Roman marriage, but that the Christian ban of divorce tended toward their protection. The “Christianization” of marriage was more than an invention of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Cooper’s *Fall of the Roman Household* is a challenging book that offers much new material and innovative approaches to the scholarship of late antiquity and other historical periods.

Eric Rebillard
Cornell University


Since the 1960s, medievalists have researched and written about medieval childhood to counter the views that Ariès expressed in his book on childhood. Ariès argued that childhood was not viewed in the Middle Ages as a distinct phase of life that required special attention and that people in the Middle Ages did not have the sentimental attitude toward children and childhood that those in the modern Western world have. A number of excellent books, articles, and essays have attacked his use of evidence and his conclusions. The current collection of essays adds little new information to the old debate.

The groundbreaking essay is Francine Michaud’s “Apprentice to Waged-Earner: Child Labour before and after the Black Death.” Michaud investigates a particularly long run of service and apprenticeship contracts from the medieval notarial records of Marseilles covering the late thirteenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century, a large portion of which involves children and adolescents. She finds that in the pe-

period prior to 1348, most young people did not directly enter the labor market but served first as apprentices to their masters. Contracts for girls were rare. But following the plague, the pattern changed. Children were contracted at a younger age than previously (girls for room and board but not wages), and they were not apprenticed as frequently to learn a craft. The evidence is dramatic. It points to economic problems that forced parents to place daughters in domestic service positions and sons into maritime positions at a young age. The demand for labor following the depopulation of the plague years did not open up new opportunities for most children. Michaud’s argument runs counter to one that posits a “golden age” for women during the period after the plague, which suggests that women could enter into more prestigious jobs left vacant by men. Southern France suffered extreme economic contraction because of war as well as plague, and children had to enter the labor market to survive.

Other essays deal with the effect that partisan battles in thirteenth-century England had on the lives of combatants’ children and the games that they played (Claire Valente), a discussion of rape and patriarchal honor in an interpretation of Geoffrey Chaucer’s fourteenth-century Physician’s Tale (Daniel T. Klein), and the representations of infants and toddlers in the late medieval Danse Macabre (Sophie Oosterwijk). Oosterwijk’s essay is illustrated with pictures from English, German, and French sources. The methodologies employed in the essays range from quantitative and art-historical analysis to textual interpretation. Although the essays add to the knowledge of medieval childhood, they also underscore the basic point that the modern sentimental glorification of childhood is different from the love and concern for children in the Middle Ages.

Barbara A. Hanawalt
Ohio State University


The literature on craft guilds is dominated by a mixture of local or regional case studies interspersed with attempts to look at particular crafts across larger geographical areas. Few historians have risked a synthesis on the matter of guilds, and for good reason. Understanding multifunctional corporate institutions like guilds is fiendishly complicated, not least because across Europe they were embedded in distinct political, cultural, market, and social settings. Nor has the literature been helped by the fact that historical economists from Adam Smith onward gave guilds a bad reputation, at least in economic terms. Guilds were “a conspiracy against the public” (1).
For about a decade, a number of economic historians, including Epstein and Prak, editors of this volume, have argued that guilds occupied a crucial role in the cultural, social, and sometimes political world of the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries. The central point of this volume is to make the revisionist case that guilds had a positive economic impact as agents of technological progress and its diffusion in late medieval and early modern Europe. The volume features an interesting mixture of theoretical survey chapters (introduction and Chapters 1–4) and broad case studies (Chapters 5–11) covering the German and Italian territories, the Netherlands, France, and England and such crafts as cloth spinning, painting, glass blowing, working in gold and pewter, book-selling, and clock making.

Guild revisionism has not gone uncontested. In a heated exchange in the *Journal of Economic History* (2008), which at times went beyond the professional, Ogilvie, a leading critic of revision, restated the traditional economic case against guilds. She argues that guilds institutionalized the exclusion of women and minorities from many trades, that long apprenticeships were in most activities unnecessary to acquire skills, and that guilds’ conservatism reduced the rate of innovation. Their only purpose was rent seeking, a simple redistribution of income in favor of their members at the expense of society at large. Epstein’s untimely death prevented him from picking up the gauntlet, but in some ways, his co-editor and the other contributors to this volume, which was finished after his death, stepped into the ring to continue the debate.

The central issues of the debate are laid out in Epstein and Prak’s introduction, Prak’s chapter on Dutch painting and Chapter 2, a reprint of Epstein’s 1998 article on craft guilds, apprenticeships, and innovation, which arguably provided the initial push for the re-evaluation of the economic role of guilds. If guilds were primarily rent-seeking, Epstein asked ten years ago, then why did they have to enforce membership since everyone should have wanted to join? His answer was that guilds were cost-sharing rather than rent-seeking institutions. They matched masters and apprentices through monitored learning, which controlled opportunistic behavior. Given that much of premodern crafts combined tacit and experience-based knowledge with a certain amount of propositional know-how, Epstein and Prak maintain that the acquisition of skills took years of face-to-face training in apprenticeships.

Guilds overcame information asymmetries through quality control and branding. They did not oppose technological change but pushed it into a skill-intensive direction. The clustering and encouragement for migration that guilds entailed fostered innovation as an unintended but crucial side effect. One of the most successful high-skill trades was Dutch painting. Its guild structure qualifies the traditional assumption

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that northern Netherlandish crafts were only lightly regulated—and thus that less guild power was associated with more innovation. More importantly, Prak also shows that creating a mass market in painting was possible only through clustering, guilds’ training activities, branding, and the quality assurances given to buyers. Even the most successful painters acted accordingly and abided by their guilds. Rent seeking was a real problem only in low-skill crafts that maintained privileges thanks to strong political representation. In sum, the authors argue for “the often beneficial, and at times indeed crucial, positive effects of craft guilds on Europe’s preindustrial economy and its innovative capacities” (24).

What were guilds? Ulrich Pfister looks at crafts guilds through the lens of the theory of the firm, arguing that guilds were a functional substitute for firms in a world where the centralization of large workforces in one place would have created insurmountable costs. Theory suggests that monitoring of workers was the crucial issue, easier to control in guilds than in proto-industrial production. This situation allowed for increasing specialization by facilitating the exchange of semifinished goods along the production chain.

The most important point is not made explicitly: Guilds mattered not only because they could foster and shape innovation but also because they constituted an ongoing organizational innovation, as shown by guilds’ use of subcontracting (the chapter by Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly) and skilled labor migration (the chapter by Reinhold Reith). The notable stratification within guilds challenges the idea of guild egalitarianism. In many cases, entrepreneurial initiatives, including product innovation and differentiation, were not introduced by merchants from the outside but by wealthy masters within guilds. Journeyman tramping (die Walz) was probably mainly an answer to economic necessities driven sometimes by seasonality—for example, in the building trades—or by thin markets for highly specialized services such as bookbinding. But omnipresent guilds allowed the tramping journeyman to find an institutional setting that gave him access to work. Where guilds tried to stop migration, and thus the diffusion of tacit knowledge, they were largely unsuccessful. They were actually more likely to encourage it.

Historical economists generally argue that patenting was more efficient in rewarding inventors than guild privileges were. In Venice, both systems co-existed from the beginning. Francesca Trivellato shows that outsiders sometimes used patents to bypass guild privileges. But guilds had no systematic objection to patenting. Individual propositional knowledge that could be patented seems to have been complementary to the collective, often tacit, knowledge transferred and maintained in guild training rather than competitive with it. In Murano, attitudes toward new developments in the ill-understood, nonpatentable chemical processes involved in glassmaking were shaped by inter- and intraguild competition and conflict, not by guild structure as such. This complementarity is also obvious in the case of silk making at Lyon (the chapter by Liliane Pérez), though individual inventors were rewarded by boun-
ties paid within an integrated guild structure, which connected local government with the central government. Clockmakers in England and elsewhere also often rejected patenting precisely because individual rights to innovation restricted trade (the chapter by Anthony Turner).

Several chapters address, at least indirectly, the link between political structures and guilds. The adoption of the engine loom in European silk ribbon industries (see Pfister’s chapter) illustrates that political context mattered. In German-speaking territories, guild power in imperial towns and small territories made rent-seeking activities like those observed by Ogilvie more likely. In large territorial states, artisan protest could be oppressed through the state at the behest of wealthy masters. Historians have traditionally argued that English guilds were unusual because they became obsolete early—that is, by the end of the seventeenth century. Ian Anders Gadd’s and Patrick Wallis’ chapter suggests instead that their unusual feature was that there were guilds that enjoyed national privileges as late as the late seventeenth century. English opposition to national guilds, but not local guilds, surely suggests that questions of market and political integration need to be addressed more clearly in the guild literature (as suggested in Michael Berlin’s chapter).

This volume will not end the discussion about guilds’ impact on innovation specifically or economic development generally. Yet, its broad approach goes a long way to support the basic revisionist thesis and refine it at crucial points. Exclusion of women and minorities was a generalized social, religious, and cultural phenomenon, which guilds employed for their own benefits. But the absence of guilds did not automatically improve a minority’s lot. In Castile, where guilds were weak, the exclusion of converted Jews was enforced by town councils instead. Guilds (outside England) had limited geographical control and competed with other regions and towns in ways that made a simple rejection of technological change impossible most of the time. That they could shift production into more skill-intensive directions reflected their comparative advantage. They could also outsource to proto-industry, subcontract within the guild, employ “cheap” female and immigrant labor, or improve their branding and sales techniques.

The largely unintentional side effect was that guilds created clusters of knowledge and organizational structures, such as apprenticeships and tramping, that favored innovation and diffusion of shared knowledge. Allocating returns to innovation was equally imperfect in early modern patents, prizes, and guilds. Indeed, the fundamental problem with some of the debates is that in imperfect markets, profit maximization almost always contained an element of rent seeking. The charge of rent seeking is sound economics but poor history; rents might actually have been needed to overcome the information asymmetries that often restricted the expansion of early modern markets.

Where can the debate move now? Epstein and Prak mention the possible role of guilds in explaining the great divergence between East (mainly China) and West. Global historians have wondered for a long
time what role innovation played in divergence. There appears to be little evidence that inventiveness was lacking in the East. But Asian historians point to many examples of the “re-invention of wheels,” knowledge that was lost and had to be invented again. By contrast, Europe rarely forgot its stock of tacit knowledge. We might never have a satisfying answer to the question whether all, or many, or at least a few European guilds actively favored innovation. But it is conceivable that their single largest contribution to growth in Europe was their adaptability to social, political, and cultural settings across Europe, which turned them into Europe’s remarkably flexible collective store of knowledge.

Regina Grafe
Northwestern University

Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought. By Margaret Meserve (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2008) 359 pp. $49.95

In this carefully researched and well-written book, Meserve makes a rich contribution to a growing body of Renaissance history that focuses on Western Europe’s relationship with the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic world more generally. It is a timely work with a contemporary resonance that goes beyond the chronological boundaries and themes of Renaissance historical thought. Whether in the ongoing negotiations about the entry of Turkey into the European Union or the national debates regarding European military involvement in the current Middle Eastern wars, the question of Europe’s relationship with the Islamic world, and most especially with the Mediterranean Islamic world, is one of the central international-relations issues of our time; this work provides essential historical foundations for understanding it.

First and foremost a work of intellectual history, this book takes as its main focus the sizeable number of Renaissance humanist texts that were devoted to the growing threat of the Ottoman Turks in the Mediterranean world during the fifteenth century, especially after their conquest of Constantinople in 1453—specifically, the “letters, historical treatises, political commentaries, biographies, geographical tracts, and even epic and elegiac verse” of a largely Italian group of fifteenth-century scholars (3). The basic interpretive assumptions that inform the analysis are summed up in Meserve’s claims that “this is primarily a book about history writing” and that “Renaissance humanist history writing was a political act” (6).

Meserve’s point is that authors like Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (the future pope Pius II), Theodore Gaza, Francesco Filelfo, and Giorgio Merula researched and wrote about the Turks “for political and polemical reasons, not scholarly ones” (117), particularly when these humanists linked the ancient history of the Turks to the ancient Trojans. Although this motif, the subject of Chapter 1, had some attraction for classicizing humanists, the majority of them argued against it, constructing instead
an often obscure ancient history of the Turks that was rooted in Sythia and the Caucasus. Notwithstanding a few references in ancient texts (Strabo’s Geography, for one) to the Tourkoi or Turcae in antiquity, evidence for the history of the Turks before the eleventh century was extremely meager.

But the literary story that Meserve tells reveals, in Chapter 2, how the Renaissance humanists, responding to accounts of the sacking of Constantinople (the new Rome), preferred to create an ancient history of the Turks that depicted them as savage barbarians, uncivilized people without a real history. The humanists neglected earlier medieval European chronicles that included a good deal of historical material about the rise of the Seljuks, the real ancestors of the Ottomans, in the eleventh century. Meserve, however, does not make this mistake. She interrogates such medieval authors about Islam as William of Tyre, Hugh of Fleury, and Sigebert of Gembloux, among others. She also looks at early humanists—for example, Andrea Biglia and Flavio Biondo—who were more sympathetic to the medieval view of the Turks as the heirs to a long, Islamic tradition of competition for empire.

The dominant humanist literary tradition presented in this fine book, however, is political. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the largely imagined portrait of the Ottomans as a barbarian people without civilization and history, distant and separate from the grand imperial traditions of Europe and even Persia, is still alive and well today.

Thomas J. Dandelet
University of California, Berkeley


This book makes a major contribution to a major aspect of music history: It shows when and where music that might be called popular first appeared in the Western world. Scott demonstrates that such a cultural revolution took place during the 1840s, most significantly in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna. The book brings discussion of the term to a new sophisticated level, explaining how popular music sprang variously from differences between social classes and between (purportedly) high and low culture. Scott encourages thinking outside the conventional box. Might the nineteenth-century nobility have wanted to hear lighter kinds of music? Did the educated middling classes take strong leadership in promoting classical music? Did singers and entrepreneurs bring such groups together in some venues? The first part of the book tackles a set of big, tough problems extremely well: commercial practices, new markets, musical morals, and the “rift between art and entertainment.” The second part looks in detail into the Viennese waltz, blackface minstrels, music-hall Cockneys, and Montmartre cabarets.
Discussion of high and popular culture generally has been plagued by “mapping it directly onto high- and low-class consumers,” as Scott puts it (9). He instead draws on the thinking of Bourdieu to define “fractional interests” that cut across boundaries of social classes and thereby opened up fascinating interactions between groups of diverse kinds.\(^1\) His narrative of how the word *popular* evolved in musical culture is itself a major contribution to our understanding of musical life. We cannot identify entertainment music (or *Unterhaltungsmusik*, in German) entirely with the middle class, since nobles went to concerts by Joseph Lanner and Johann Strauss, and the more well-to-do members of the working classes appeared in some of these contexts as well, though not in great numbers. Yet Scott also recognizes that class divisions did come into play in specific circumstances, for example, in the riots outside the Astor Place opera house in New York in 1849.

Another accomplishment of the book is its balanced and historically accurate re-definition of the aesthetic issues involved in the terms *high* and *low*, or *light* and *serious*. Scott offers a dispassionate critique of the notion of “triviality” in music, which Carl Dahlhaus, an influential musicologist, saw leading to a “trivialized listening” that degenerated taste as a whole. Looking at Viennese taste of the 1830s, Scott argues that “serious music might be simple in style, and it might be fun (scherzando), but it was regarded as music that ought always to be listened to” (87). His opinion is welcome, since English commentators tended to condemn less-learned musical taste to a special extent—for example, Arthur Bedford in 1710, John Hawkins in 1776, and George Bernard Shaw in the 1880s. For this very reason, music halls did not obtain the aesthetic legitimacy that French commentators accorded the cafés-concerts by the 1870s.

The book provides both broad and specific discussion of the four areas of popular music. Scott does not buy the conventional wisdom that semiformal “promenade” concerts offered a considerable amount of classical music, since he sees that dance pieces and opera medleys framed the repertory. Readers will benefit particularly from his comparison of movements found in the waltz, the *Ländler*, and the *Dreher* in reference to the kinds of contexts in which they were danced. The chapter on minstrelsy shows that “blackface” (white) singers set up expectations that black performers following them more or less had to follow. Yet, minstrelsy made room for new cultural attitudes, since “the mask provided, metaphorically as well as literally, a cover” (169). Cockney acts, Scott argues, were much indebted to Charles Dickens’ *Pickwick Papers* (London, 1836–1837) and remained fundamentally middle class in perspective. The cafés-concerts in Montmartre developed a link with the artistic avant-garde that foreshadowed progressive rock and role.

The boundaries of the world of popular music were—and still are—hard to gauge. But they may be more restrictive than some would have

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it, since so much of musical life continued to revolve around opera, a world that remained distinct from both orchestras playing classical works and venues offering popular songs. During the 1850s, concerts that offered overtures and other selections exclusively from opera productions began appearing all over Europe, and a canon began to emerge among such works. Neither music halls, cafés-concerts, nor German-Austrian Variété acquired an identifiable canonic framework until the turn of the twentieth century. Though massive in scale and revolutionary in impact, the world of popular music possessed limited cultural stature in important respects for at least a generation.

William Weber
California State University, Long Beach

The Discourse of Legitimacy in Early Modern England. By Robert Zaller (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007), 832 pp. $65.00

Zaller’s previous work focused on early Stuart Parliaments and, more recently, seventeenth-century radicals. His new book develops themes present in these earlier books but also ventures back into the sixteenth century to offer a survey of the period between the Reformation and the civil war. In particular, the book aims to examine the “political languages as expressed in sacred, legal, constitutional and dramatic discourse,” which he sees as centering on the “crisis of legitimacy” that shook the early modern state and shaped the civil war (2–3).

The ambition is for a wide-ranging interpretation of how legitimacy was constructed and challenged. In Zaller’s words, the “discourse of legitimacy will be understood, in its broadest sense, as the sum total of articulated statements from, to or about power and its instruments. Such statements may be intentional (a command, a petition), ritualised (bowing, kneeling and other forms of ceremonial address; the wearing and doffing of certain articles of clothing; the taking of oaths and the recitation of prescribed texts), representational (the likeness of a ruler on his coinage; his personification in pageantry; the depiction of his predecessors on the stage) or expressive (toasts and jest; lighting bonfires; ringing bells)” (2–3). The “sum [of these statements] is the currency of legitimacy, the form in which the daily transaction of power occurs and the shape in which it is ultimately constituted.”

These modes of discourse, he argues, were “in flux, not to say turmoil,” because early modern England was itself a society in transition. By the early seventeenth century, consensus had “effectively broken down” and the terms of obedience had become uncertain (3). Indeed, for many contemporaries, “political breakdown and religious disorder were entwined in the vision of a conspiracy to deprive English men and women of their civil and spiritual liberty. This was the crisis of legitimacy.”

This, indeed, is an appetizing agenda. It promises a history of the
cultural and ideological construction of authority at both the level of the Westminster and Whitehall elite and the modes of constructing and contesting legitimacy far beyond that world, through gestures, genres, signs, and languages. The book does contain discussions about ceremony. Zaller writes, for example, that Elizabeth refused to open Parliament in person to show her displeasure (or at least to feign it) about its treatment of Mary Queen of Scots. He also tells about the personification of monarchs on the stage (the section of the book that is most likely to appeal to readers of this journal), about royal commands recited through proclamations (specifically the debate about the constitutional role of proclamations), and about a petition (the petition of right).

But, as this summary implies, Zaller does relatively little to flesh out the wider significance of the interesting themes raised in his introduction. Focusing almost entirely on Westminster and Whitehall, Zaller seems relatively uninterested in how legitimacy was more widely constructed and disputed. The oaths that he mentions are never systematically explored for their mobilization of the nation—though they have featured in recent work as key means of constructing legitimacy; the petitions outside Parliament are rarely mentioned; the ceremonies and pageants of the boroughs and the rural parishes are absent.

If “legitimacy” is thus treated in a rather narrow way, so is “discourse.” The book’s title suggests a Pocockian analysis of the overlapping languages of legitimacy, and the early chapter headings seem to confirm it: “The Discourse of Monarchy,” “Scared Discourse,” “The Discourse of the Law,” “The Discourse of the Stage,” and “The Discourse of Parliament.” Yet, by discourse Zaller does not mean the idioms and variety of languages in which the debates about legitimacy were spoken. Rather, Zaller usually means the discourse in and about an institution—what was said by and about the monarchy, the church, the law, the theatre, and Parliament. Readers will look mostly in vain for analysis that maps the different ways of talking.

The book’s principal strength is a series of often illuminating case studies of particular texts. Each one is a beautifully detailed and informed discussion of the text and its meanings. One can imagine turning to this book for insights into a series of key texts, themes, and authors: Richard Hooker’s via media, Robert Persons and the “catholic dilemma,” Henry Jacob and separatism, the family of love, Thomas Brightman’s and Joseph Mede’s millenarianism, Sir Thomas Smith’s and William Harrison’s commonwealth, Raphael Holinshed on rebellions, Christopher St. German and Sir Edward Coke on the “defence of the common law,” John Selden on history (though the index does not help in this case), and vignettes about how monarchy was represented and conscience dramatized on stage. As strong as these treatments are individually, however, they are not fused into a larger argument, despite the broader narrative running through the book, about the shift of power from the Crown to Parliament. The connections across the close readings are sufficiently clear, leaving their contribution to the overall argument seldom stated and sometimes difficult to discern. Nor does Zaller provide much of an
idea of what contemporary readers thought about the texts, or how the
ideas that they raised related to everyday struggles in the state.

The fact that the book is only partly successful is due, to some ex-
tent, to its organization. The book begins with a disclaimer that it “be-
gan life under another title and with a different subject” and that “books
write themselves as they wish.” At longer than 800 pages, this one seems
more like several books under a single title: One is a series of case studies
of key ideological texts; another explores key institutions such as the
monarchy, Parliament, the church and the theater, to examine how they
disseminated and constructed authority; and a third, filling the last part
of the volume, offers a narrative of Elizabethan and Jacobean Parlia-
ments. The last theme seems to contribute to a debate about revisionism
that has spent most of its force, and might have been omitted or short-
ened. The first two parts, however, are at times intriguing and at their
best when they supply master classes in textual analysis.

The topic that Zaller identifies is a hugely important one and cer-
tainly worth more thought. The crisis of legitimacy that he pinpoints
certainly needs further exploration (and, taking the story deeper into the
seventeenth century, it is central to Braddick’s recent book on the civil
war, and to work on the later seventeenth-century revolution). We also
need to know more about the mechanisms through which legitimacy
was articulated, constructed, deconstructed, disseminated, and con-
tested. It is precisely the type of agenda set out at the start of Zaller’s
book that will be able to convey the shared and disputed discourses of
eyearly modern England. That agenda nevertheless requires a wider range
of sources and locales of legitimization. It should be linked more to par-
ish and household communities, revealing the links within the state and
the ways in which the state was constituted from the bottom up as much
as from the top down. Much remains to be written about the inclusive
and exclusive ways of talking; the interactions of the “languages” avail-
able to contemporaries; the genres through which, and the sites at
which, the discourse of legitimation occurred; the role of gesture and
theater in conveying and subverting authority; and so on. Zaller’s book
raises interesting questions even if it does not always fully answer them.

Mark Knights
University of Warwick

The Family in Early Modern England. Edited by Helen Berry and Eliza-
$105.00

Billed as a fresh overview of the most important recent work on the his-
tory of the English family, this book is, in fact, a festschrift for the Eng-
lish historian Anthony Fletcher, complete with photograph and memoir

1 Michael Braddick, God’s Fury, England’s Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars (Lon-
don, 2008).
of the honoree. The book also reappraises the work of Lawrence Stone, three decades after the publication of his controversial opus, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (London, 1977). Though acknowledging its flaws, Berry and Foyster call Stone’s book a “landmark,” “seminal,” and “good to think with,” and praise its “dynamic sense of historical change” (1, 3, 8).

The contributors appear to have been charged to comment upon Stone. Their perfunctory remarks about *The Family, Sex and Marriage* at the outset force them to backpedal uncomfortably later in an attempt to dissociate themselves from Stone’s errors, misconceptions, false assumptions, misplaced emphases, condescension, social bias, distorted evidence, and failure of imagination. As Steve Hindle observes, “Stone’s views on the family lives of the poor provoked dismay and embarrassment among his critics and apologists alike” (127), Thompson going so far as to say that Stone’s book should be pulped.¹ Stone’s bleak view of family relationships, his patrician stance, and his fanciful narrative of family typologies have been so completely discredited that there is little to be gained from flogging this dead horse again.

Fortunately, the contributors have fresh ideas to present and new material to report. They draw more from English archives than interdisciplinary social theory. Tim Stretton uses manuscripts from the Court of Requests to demonstrate how humble people could extricate themselves from failed marriages, centuries before the availability of divorce. Between 1540 and 1660 the secular law proved to be remarkably flexible, assisting friends, neighbors, kin, and colleagues in resolving difficulties between husbands and wives. Bernard Capp uses the London Metropolitan Archives to explore sexual and behavioral disorders in the 1650s. He shows how marriage partners and magistrates used the Adultery Act of 1650 on behalf of the reformation of manners, and how some families weathered the moral turbulence of the Interregnum.

Garthine Walker uses criminal court files and the records of Star Chamber to explore female criminality and the limitations of the concept of *feme covert*. She discovers that crime was sometimes a family business, with varying consequences for wives and husbands, servants, and children. John Walter reminds us that participants in crowds were also members of families, whose roles and rhetoric were strongly gendered. He too exploits Star Chamber records from the reign of James I to illuminate the masculine sociability of collective action, the presence of women and children in agrarian protests, and the uncertainties of the law in imposing punishment. Hindle finds narratives of family distress and records of estrangement and solidarity in petitions for poor relief. A microhistorical analysis of the plight of one northern family reveals the interplay of credit, makeshift, and relief at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Berry and Foyster collaborate on a chapter on childless men. Ranging through medical knowledge and gendered notions of honor, mostly from printed sources, they demonstrate the importance of paternity to early modern notions of masculinity. Ingrid Teague’s territory overlaps with Stone’s, addressing aristocratic families in the early eighteenth century. The unpublished letters of Lady Isabella Wentworth reveal an elite family in action, with anxieties and accomplishments that defy categorization. Also in the eighteenth century, Joanne Bailey draws on the records of ecclesiastical courts, Doctors’ Commons, and King’s Bench to explore gendered representations of paternity and maternity in matrimonial litigation. Hers is a rich, detailed and revealing account of violence and politeness, as well as domesticity and its disruption, among the Hanoverian elite.

Each of these essays is rewarding. Most are sophisticated and well written. They demonstrate the vitality and fecundity of the field. Though not a new history of the early modern family, this volume indicates the myriad intersections of family experience with gender, culture, biology, and law.

David Cressy
Ohio State University


In the spring and summer of 1642, as England teetered on the brink of civil war, a number of attacks took place upon deer parks and forests across southern England. Coalitions of local gentlemen and commoners slaughtered deer, felled timber, and thereby accomplished a “radical disafforestation” which destroyed the “traditional forest polity” of early modern England” (3). In this short, but deeply researched and intensely argued, study, Beaver employs a series of microhistories to explore the culture and politics of the forests and thus make sense of the nature and significance of these tumultuous events.

Beaver begins by examining the hunt as one of the “highest ritual expressions of royalty and nobility” in early modern society (2). In a discussion informed by the insights of cultural anthropology, he shows how the ritual violence of hunting was “a fertile medium for symbols of honor, nobility and authority” (10–11). It was not only a “school of honor and gentility,” but also constitutive of both, and participation in the hunt, and in the distribution of venison that followed it, further created “powerful social networks instrumental in the constitution of power” (11, 17).

Having established the significance of the hunt in the aristocratic culture of the time, Beaver proceeds to illuminate the politics of hunting
in four of the chases and forests that provided “a landscape for this theatre of honor” (11). Collectively, these studies bring out three points in satisfying detail. First, Beaver reveals how the traditional regime of forest law defined orderly relations between the Crown, the nobility, and the commons of the forest areas. It regulated the competition for honor among gentlemen by controlling and licensing participation in the hunt, restrained serious infractions of forest law by presumptuous gentry or commercial poachers, and adjudicated the claims of the Crown, local gentlemen, and the commoners of the forest areas to the use of their resources. Forest politics involved both a gentry politics focused on access to honor, and a popular politics focused on access to material resources. Both versions were perennially contentious, but they were conducted within a framework that for the most part contained their potential for violent confrontation.

Second, Beaver shows how the fiscally driven extension of forest law under Charles I destabilized this situation during the 1630s. These policies appeared to pit the honor and rights of the Crown against those of whole local societies. They intensified the elements of conflict always present in the forests, alienating gentlemen humiliated by exemplary prosecutions and commoners to whom the Crown, or its favored supporters, appeared to be elevating the protection of deer above the maintenance of the human economy of the forests.

Third, Beaver investigates local grievances as articulated in the language of general principle that animated national political resistance to the policies of Charles I. The outcome, once the king had been forced into reversing his policies in 1641, was the “practical disafforestation” by direct action witnessed in 1642 (121).

Beaver makes his points confidently and convincingly. Like Walter and Wood, he demonstrates how closely contextualized studies of the political dynamics of particular local societies can enhance awareness of the many elements that went into “the formation of an informed, activist, political society in early modern England” (1, 3).1

Specifically, he establishes the presence of a “politics of honor” alongside, but distinct from, the more familiar politics of religious anxiety, constitutional principle, and economic interest (7). He is reluctant, however, to draw any simple lines between the allegiances in the conflicts that he anatomizes and those later during the civil war. They were not predictive in that sense. Nevertheless, he powerfully depicts the tension, volatility, and capacity for violent action that still lay just beneath the surface in early modern England, and of the extent to which the much-studied “state formation” of the Tudor and Stuart Crown remained a fragile achievement.

Keith Wrightson
Yale University

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Burnette challenges the emphasis on gender discrimination in the labor market prominent in the work of many historians of women and industrialization. Instead, she applies economic models to argue that unrestricted markets efficiently sorted women and men into different jobs and paid them according to their productivity. Where male workers or professionals successfully barred women (based on economic interest more than gender ideology), men benefited at women’s expense.

As Burnette notes, gender differences in wages and occupations during industrialization “are well known and easy to document” (136). To account for these patterns, she offers models that show that markets responded to differences in strength to sort men and women into occupations that “raised women’s productivity” and “were to their comparative advantage” (145). Analysis of work roles in agriculture using cross-price elasticity and wage correlations shows that these labor markets did substitute women for men when conditions made such a choice rational. Thus, she concludes, employers did not exclude women from these segments of the labor market by custom or discrimination.

In other cases, she largely agrees with established scholarship that male workers or professionals excluded women, departing from conventional wisdom primarily in her argument that freer markets benefited women workers. Burnette also makes significant arguments about wages, suggesting that differences between men’s and women’s wages reflected a productivity gap rather than discrimination. She argues that many occupations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries required significant strength, and men’s advantage in this area accounts for much of the wage differential.

Burnette brings an impressive range of sources to this discussion. Her arguments are carefully constructed, and she acknowledges exceptions to the trends that she cites (such as laundry work, which required great strength and was carried out chiefly by women). She makes a convincing case that market forces and differences in productivity were important factors; cultural determinists will be hard-pressed to dismiss her claims. However, Burnette’s argument that, in competitive sectors of the economy, wage differences can be explained entirely through men’s higher productivity remains subject to question. She does admirable work in estimating the difference in wages earned by men and women. Yet her estimates of the size of the wage gap—“women’s wages were closer to one-half to two-thirds of male wages” (98)—remain approximate. She develops estimates for productivity differences from research ranging across time and geography, from nineteenth-century America to twentieth-century China. These data show that women were often less

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productive than men in manual tasks; they do not, ultimately, prove that productivity differences during industrialization were the sole cause of the wage gap.

Similarly, Burnette argues convincingly that male and female labor markets were less distinct than many historians have suggested. However, she denies even the possibility of employer preferences excluding women against market forces. Applying Becker’s economic assumptions, she argues that employers in competitive markets who discriminate “should fail” (242). Yet employers may have accepted some sacrifice of profit in order to enforce restrictions on women. Rose has shown, for example, that the marriage bar was routinely enforced in a number of industries and regions, though “it was not the product of an economic calculus.”

Burnette’s book contributes a great deal to debates about women workers and industrialization. Her arguments stand on impressive empirical foundations, and she is systematic and clear in presenting them. Even readers who remain skeptical that productivity explains the entire wage gap or that discriminatory employers could not survive would do well to take its arguments seriously.

Andrew August
Penn State University


Ambitiously broad titles, chosen to enhance a book’s narrowly defined contents, are a current publishing fad. In this case, however, the title is apt. Luddy’s carefully researched work covers a wide territory and provides rich material for further analysis of Irish women and gender, sexuality and health, colonialism and nationalism, and their varied intersections. Luddy’s extensive empirical evidence reflects years of archival research and challenges some central myths in Irish historiography.

Prostitution has long been a sensitive issue in Ireland. Since the early twentieth century, when nationalists convinced the population that British occupation was the main source of prostitution and venereal disease, even scholars have promoted the idea of Irish sexual purity. Luddy gently but firmly challenges this myth with reams of evidence about Ireland’s bawdy houses, brothels, Magdalen asylums, and the memorable “Wrens of Curragh” (women who lived like birds in bushes outside of the Curragh army camp in County Kildare). In six dense chapters, Luddy explores prostitutes’ lives and communities; the varieties of secular and religious rescue work; attitudes toward, and treatment of, venereal disease; and the politicization of women’s sexuality among turn-of-

2 Gary S. Becker, The Economics of Discrimination (Chicago, 1971; orig. pub. 1957), 44.
3 Rose, Limited Livelihoods, 46.
the-century feminists and nationalists. Luddy concludes with a fascinating chapter on prostitution in the Irish Republic, when the debates and approaches to sexual immorality abruptly changed: “Once independence was achieved the focus on women, and their moral regenerative powers, became central to the idea of the Irish nation” (197).

Drawing on an exceptionally wide range of sources—including court records, newspaper articles, and charity reports, Luddy finds an unexpected variety in women’s situations. Prostitutes were married, single, and widowed, as young as fourteen and as old as seventy. Some were high-class madams of the Elliot Spitzer variety; others lived in ditches. They plied their trade in industrialized cities like Belfast, where prostitution appeared more attractive than factory labor, and rural regions like Roscommon. Predictably, many congregated around military posts. Luddy’s sensitivity toward geographical diversity is helpful, although the sheer mass of data that she presents begs for additional maps and tables.

Official reactions to prostitution in the nineteenth century ranged from complacency to containment to zealous defense of public safety. Prostitution was not officially prohibited, but police found any number of pretexts to arrest suspicious women for vagrancy or loitering. Clergy joined the fray and occasionally pushed women around on the streets. Military officials, not surprisingly, tended to remain silent. Sporadic concerns about public health created “moments of panic,” spurring slum clearance and neighborhood sweeps, but, overall, the official record was one of benign neglect. Many believed private and religious-based rescue efforts to be the best approach; between 1765 and 1914, at least forty refuges or Magdalen asylums were established to rescue fallen women, many of which survived until the 1990s. These asylums, Luddy argues, were more flexible and accommodating than previously thought, and sought more to protect women than punish them.

Luddy’s effort to analyze prostitution within the context of Ireland’s shifting political culture is a strength, but some will find her empirical approach unsatisfying. Future studies might build on her achievement by employing comparative approaches and delving further into discursive analyses of gender. Only then will we fully understand the impact of British colonialism on Ireland’s sexual subcultures.

Jacqueline R. deVries
Augsburg College


In Growing Up in France, Heywood proposes to draw upon the insights of psychology, folklore, and literary analysis to delve more deeply into
the historically changing experiences of children. Part I of the book begins with a useful if scattered summary of some of the literature about the use of autobiography and other “ego documents” (such as memoirs, diaries, and life histories) as historical sources. Next follows an informed and thoughtful summary of some of the Enlightenment-era debates among pedagogues and other theorists about the nature of childhood. This part ends with Heywood’s exploration of models from psychology and folklore that address or theorize the stages of life. He does not offer any new material in this context, but he does appear to set up an interdisciplinary approach to the history of childhood.

However, in the empirical sections that follow, focusing on growing up among close family and friends (Part II) and moving into the wider world (Part III), Heywood’s interdisciplinary leanings prove to be of little consequence. The actual analysis of children’s changing experience most often consists of generalizations gleaned from social-historical and institutional studies; the evidence from the ego documents provides random anecdotal illustration or empirical substantiation of the general claims. The sources are rarely discussed in the kind of nuanced fashion that the introductory framework leads the reader to expect. They are culled for snippets of empirical evidence rather than analyzed as documents of self-construction rooted in particular temporal, cultural, literary, social, and political contexts.

The book also calls into question its own focus on “France” as its national purview. It seems to take the nation-state framework for granted, even while presenting arguments that suggest that the historical developments under discussion were not particular to France. For example, in discussing the topic of motherhood, Heywood notes that “circumstances in nineteenth-century French society, as elsewhere in the West, favoured this cult of motherhood” (120). The book provides no developed argument about the “Frenchness” of the historical claims being made.

Heywood’s sources about the history of childhood in France occasion a few keen insights; his cross-class comparisons are useful, although not pushed as far as they might be (the memoirs that Heywood cites could stand alone as documents of the history of class consciousness, among other things!). However, most of Heywood’s claims about family and childhood seem unsurprising; they come across as re-statements of the social-historical findings of recent decades (Heywood’s own earlier work included).¹

The history of childhood seems to be re-emerging as a field of interdisciplinary study. “Childhood Studies” has become a viable academic discipline, and the Society for the History of Childhood and Youth has launched an interdisciplinary journal. Despite the existing historical work on childhood, however, much remains to be done. The

field of child-development psychology still awaits adequate historical grounding, to name just one enormous project. Heywood’s work is noteworthy for its sensitivity to how class differences can affect children’s lives and its appreciation for the “adaptability and resilience” of those children who manage to survive, and even thrive, despite the absence of parents (142). But the full development of such insights will require a more fully developed method for using ego documents in conjunction with other sources, as well as a more theoretically alert deployment of the evidence as a whole.

Mary Jo Maynes  
University of Minnesota


Harison’s task is a daunting one—to explain the history of an important and singular migrant group with a rebellious reputation in Paris, while embedding it in the history of this revolutionary city, the labor history of building workers, and this group’s history of migration. The current readers of history do not incline to such topics. Indeed, Hanson notes that historians have turned to other questions in recent decades, but “this shift happened before some of the unanswered and important questions about rebellion had been adequately addressed—among these, taking into account the group arguably more involved or affected than any other: the migrant stonemasons” (16). Even Sewell, a longstanding proponent of the cultural turn in historical studies, agrees that “plenty of significant problems from within the social history research program still remained to be solved in the 1980s—or for that matter, remain to be solved today,” while recognizing Traugott and Gould’s excellent quantitative studies of Paris uprisings.1

Harison’s answer to the central question of rebellion—why these stonemasons suffered such disproportionate repression (arrests and casualties) from the uprisings of 1830 through the Commune—draws from such well-developed material about Paris workers and rebellions as the databases that Charles Tilly compiled at the University of Michigan with Lynn Lees about the pivotal year 1848 and with David K. Jordan about the years 1830 to 1960, as well as French analyses of workers arrested in the Commune by Maitron and the Appert Report of 1875—the report submitted to the National Assembly by the French army.2 In the end,


2 Some of Jean Maitron’s extensive research can be found in idem, Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France (Paris, 1975), 2v.
Harison agrees with Alain Corbin that the masons were under suspicion because police assumed they had participated in the rebellions (201). Urban space is important in this case: Harison makes the case for the garnis (boarding houses) of central Paris, and especially the Place de Grève, as sites of police attention and repression because they were the key gathering spots for hiring fairs. A longstanding literature about crowds in Paris undergirds this argument.

The labor history of the stonemasons, the second dimension of the book, relies on the classic archival sources provided by French state archival documents. Harison makes the case for the centrality of marchandage—a pernicious form of subcontracting—for much of the suffering of stonemasons and traces the long history of the battle against this practice, which was not definitively resolved until 1911, although the practice had been outlawed decades before.

Migration history provides the third strand of this study—recognizing the evolution from travel, largely on foot, to rail travel and from seasonal to permanent settlement in Paris. By the Third Republic, Harison concludes, the stonemasons of the Creuse were settling in Paris with their wives, though he might have provided the nuance afforded by Farcy and Faure whose 2003 study demonstrates that men from the Creuse were more likely to return home than any other migrants to Paris between 1880 and 1906.³

This complex history has a central character who appears throughout the triple story of the rebellions, the labor, and the migration of the stonemasons—Martin Nadaud, who began his life as a migrant worker at age fifteen, left for Paris in 1830, and lived a life of labor and politics in Paris, and exile in England, before his retirement and return to the Creuse in 1889. Nadaud’s well-known life provides a much-needed thread through Harison’s multifaceted history.

Leslie Page Moch
Michigan State University

All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World. By Stuart B. Schwartz (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008), 352 pp., $40.00

Schwartz’s new study asks a simple question, but one with significant ramifications: To what degree did tolerance exist in the Iberian world during the centuries when the Inquisition operated? Historians have long grappled with this issue, but only recently have their (often negative) answers not been clouded by shadows of the Black Legend. As one of the most respected historians of the early modern Iberian world, and in particular Brazil, Schwartz is above reproach on this matter, and his

The fundamental argument that he makes in *All Can Be Saved* is that a constant, widely shared attitude of toleration of religious difference existed among a significant minority of the peoples in the kingdoms of Iberia and in Spanish and Portuguese America. Although it is not possible for Schwartz to gauge the precise extent to which the opinion, pithily formulated in the medieval proverb “all can be saved in their law,” was shared, he offers copious evidence to prove that many commoners held a pragmatic view of salvation for those outside the Roman Church (especially Jews and Muslims). Whence, therefore, came the famed intolerance of the Spaniards and Portuguese? From the institutions of church and state, Schwartz implicitly argues, and not from popular quarters. As such, he concludes, the foundations for the rise of toleration in the modern world had been laid long before the Enlightenment era, greatly facilitating the spread of such ideas in the late eighteenth century.

How does Schwartz prove his case for popular tolerance in a social environment of deep-rooted prejudice, such as that of Spain and Portugal? Because sources produced by royal or ecclesiastical officials are of little help, he focuses on a close reading of Inquisition trials that recorded the persecution of “propositions.” This legal term indicated a variety of crimes of opinion, from the condoning of sexual license to the defense of the notion that *cada uno se puede salvar en su ley* (each one can be saved in his law), with which Schwartz is especially concerned. He considers it the fundamental expression of a current of thought among plebeian Spaniards and Portuguese. Indeed, it is surprising that the same formulation is repeated throughout the course of three centuries in trial records deriving from tribunals in Spain, Peru, Mexico, Portugal, Colombia, and Brazil. The common refrain about the possibility for salvation outside of the Church, Schwartz contends, was widespread precisely because it mirrored the simple logic of the semi-educated or uneducated peoples who voiced it—and who were prosecuted for expressing it. That the records of the Inquisition should be the primary historical testament to this current of thought is a fitting historical irony.

Schwartz’s argument will surely draw both praise and criticism, since it will overturn many claims about the intolerant attitudes supposedly pervasive in early modern Iberia and the Iberian world. He is nevertheless to be commended for contesting the Black Legend so frontally. *All Can Be Saved* is the work of a master historian who does not just pay lip service to the importance of the Portuguese in the Iberian Atlantic and who is deeply sensitive to early modern theology and ethnography. This book should spark a larger re-assessment of popular attitudes toward religion, not only in the Iberian Atlantic, but also in the other corners of the early modern world.

Liam Matthew Brockey
Princeton University
Crime and Justice in Late Medieval Italy. By Trevor Dean (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007) 226 pp. $110.00

One of the principal interdisciplinary aims of this excellent book is to investigate criminal law from the perspectives of legal and social history. Dean is also not happy with the usual focus on Venice and Florence. He takes pains to sample widely among the archival treasures concerning late medieval Italian justice. The fresh approach that Dean takes emphasizes social and legal attitudes, representations, and constructions of crimes against people. In order to make his case about the period from roughly 1300 to 1500, Dean divides his book into two parts. The first concerns the sources, and the second takes up the most important categories of crime—insult and revenge, sex crimes, potions and poisons, violence, and theft.

Dean has read widely in the sources and is at his best in surveying their strengths and weaknesses. Fragmentary trial records provide different styles of coerced speech, as do legal fictions created by judges, plaintiffs, and defendants. Courts were public spaces where certain rituals of justice occurred. Chronicles memorialized spectacular crimes and punishments but also provide clues about the motives and causes of crime. Contemporary accounts reveal ambiguous attitudes toward the forces of the law. Dean uses late medieval Italian fiction to illuminate how literature criticizes and represents the law and judicial processes. These modest goals and the absence of Dante, the most familiar artist of crime, depreciate an interdisciplinary opportunity to use these perspectives to test conclusions from other sources. Statutory law, however, partly compensates for this slighting of literature because so much of it was a type of sedimentary fiction. Nonetheless, statutes provide an image of criminal justice from the point of view of the rule makers. Finally, though less than 10 percent of Dean’s big sample of *consilia*, or legal opinions, concern criminal justice, they are a marvelous window on the intersection of advocacy, legal reasoning, and social realities.

In the second part of the book, Dean uses these multiple perspectives to pose and analyze fundamental questions about criminal justice. States began to punish certain types of insult and blasphemy more strongly by 1500 because of heightened concerns about public order. The finding that many states also criminalized vendettas undercuts the broad assumption of an Italian “culture of vengeance” deriving from the Florentine experience. Likewise, modern constructions of the concept of sex crimes and the ways that they have been read into Venetian records should not substitute for a wider look at Italy beyond its ports and ghettos.

Illegitimate violence remains the great subject of the criminal law. Dean is alert to abuse of women and slaves as social phenomena, so-called “rights of chastisement” often sanctioned by the law. His reading across the sources brings to light an important theme of violent acts committed by mercenaries and foreigners, often overlapping categories.
Soldiers knew weapons and committed more than their share of crimes. Dean is sure that the percentage of Italian civilians carrying weapons has been exaggerated. Strict and exemplary punishment of violence against persons may have made late fifteenth-century Italy a safer place. Less reliance on foreign mercenaries may have contributed to this result, and people perceived as “foreign” were more likely to be caught and punished.

Steven A. Epstein
University of Kansas

Florence and Beyond: Culture, Society and Politics in Renaissance Italy: Essays in Honour of John M. Najemy. Edited by David S. Peterson with Daniel E. Bornstein (Toronto, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2008) 518 pp. $37.00

This wide-ranging collection of twenty-five essays celebrates Najemy’s career in Florentine and Italian Renaissance history. Co-editors Peterson and Bornstein outline Najemy’s scholarly insights and interventions in a biobibliographical introduction that highlights his mastery of the Florentine archives; his close reading of texts influenced by his engagement with critical theory; and his grand overview of the cultural, social, and political history of Florence. The other chapters pay homage to Najemy’s articles and books that extend Florentine history back to the thirteenth-century commune; analyze the genre of epistolary exchange; explicate Niccolò Machiavelli’s thought; and provide a multidimensional, magisterial synthesis of Florentine history from 1200 to 1575. Two “orientation” chapters honor the Florentine historiographical tradition. In a personal memoir, Gene Brucker recalls the studi and riches in the old sala di studio of “The Uffizi Archives, 1952–1987.” Anthony Molho presents new archival documentation about the loss of Hans Baron’s German position in 1933 to the genesis of his thesis on civic humanism in 1942, in order to trace the changes in conceptions of Baron’s project to the idea of “crisis.” Seven chapters on culture follow Baron’s unpublished study, discussing how Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca) inserted civic humanist ideas into Thomas Aquinas’ treatise about kingship (James Blythe and John La Salle); the debate about late medieval Camaldolese spirituality between Ambrogio Traversari and John-Jerome of Prague (William Hyland); Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini’s discussion of the fall of Constantinople in 1453, especially the letters exchanged with the bishop of Krakow (Nancy Bisaha); artists and corporate patronage—Lorenzo Ghiberti and the Arte di Calimala (Amy Bloch), and supervisors, artists, projects, and the governing board of Florence’s cathedral (Margaret Haines); the Codex Rustici on Florence’s religious devotion to the Holy...
Sepulchre (Saundra Weddle); and signatures in the 1427 Catasto to confirm Florence’s male literacy rate at 69.3 percent (Robert Black).

Six chapters on society explore issues and writings that involve gender and politics: fathers and sons (Chara Armon); the letters of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s private secretary on the Medici household (Alison Brown); a dowry dispute about a surviving husband’s citizenship (Julius Kirshner); how the exclusion of women from the public sphere made them objects of exchange between patrilines in order to cement community trust (Edward Muir); Colonna family masculinities in the court society of papal Rome (Renée Baernstein); and the unimportance of age among the Venetian Doges (Alison Williams Lewin).

Ten chapters examining politics—five of them about networks and the other five about Machiavelli—conclude the volume: institutions vs. individuals in the analysis of virtue and corruption in civic life from Dino Compagni’s Chronicle and the Ordinances of Justice (Teresa Pugh Rupp); Alberti kinship and conspiracy to reveal the dynamics of individual and family relationships (Susannah Baxendale); the letters of Cosimo de’ Medici’s personal assistant on Cosimo’s household (Dale Kent); Cosimo and four friends in his inner circle (Margery Ganz); language and metaphor in Nofri Tornabuoni’s letters about “shared agency” among the many participants in Lorenzo de’ Medici’s networks (Melissa Bullard); Machiavelli as a co-author of Paolo Vettori’s 1512 Ricordi (Micael Hörnquist); Hannibal in Machiavelli’s thought (Robert Fredona); Machiavelli and the Petrine succession (David Peterson); history and literature as rhetoric in Machiavelli’s Clizia (Albert Russell Ascoli); and the relationship between humanism, political theory, and the origins of the social sciences from the age of Machiavelli to the Enlightenment (Humfrey Butters).

The sparkling essays in this festschrift are a fitting tribute to the breadth and depth of Najemy’s scholarly contributions in their modeling of his empirical grounding, innovative methodological inspiration, nuanced textual readings, and panoramic interdisciplinary perspective. From late medieval theological texts to family letters, from artists and patrons to individuals and institutions, from gender and law to kinship and friendship networks, and from language and rhetoric to social trust and the social sciences, the Florentine Renaissance continues to share its riches in social theory, literary criticism, and political thought.

John A. Marino
University of California, San Diego


In a fascinating conclusion that finally makes clear the purpose of all of the specifics in the preceding chapters, Choate suggests that the “Emi-
grant Nation” that Italy nurtured in the early twentieth century is a progenitor of the emigrant states of the twenty-first century—India, Russia, China, Korea, Pakistan, and Mexico. His introductory remarks reject the obvious comparisons of massive Italian migration with the Jewish diaspora, or even with the African diaspora, by effectively pointing out that the Italian state actively supported its emigrants, first with soldiers in Somalia and Eritrea and after 1901 with a vigorous program of consular and commercial influence in host countries, especially in the New World.

Choate is less concerned with offering a sweeping hypothesis to explain the creation of “Italy abroad” than he is with exploring the details of how an “Emigrant Nation” emerged, at least in the hearts and minds of Italians themselves. In the process of unification, after securing their triumph over foreign and papal control, government leaders initially acted upon the assumption that the new country would be able to provide for its people, making them into one Italian nation. By the 1880s, however, rapidly increasing numbers of northern Italians began to migrate, and the government turned its attention to colonizing what little land was left in East Africa. The effort failed, hampered when Ethiopian fighters massacred 422 Italian soldiers near Dogali in 1888 and doomed when Italian forces met defeat at Adwa in 1896, a debacle so total that it brought into question the claim of nineteenth-century Europe to global supremacy.

For a time thereafter, inspired by the economic analyses of Luigi Einaudi, Italy’s peoples and their government abandoned the hopeless quest for empire in Africa and embarked instead on a conscious effort toward planned international migration that would build on human capital to generate national economic growth. Money earned in high-wage economies abroad would return to Italy, in official remittances as well as pants pockets, to fuel rising land prices and home building. Italian products would be marketed on a global scale, their virtues loudly proclaimed by immigrant colonies nestled in major cities where family-based small businesses would thrive.

The Einaudi vision moved forward on several fronts, including pride in a common language. The Dante Alighieri Society tried to turn the poet’s immortal words into a unifying symbol for money-seeking Italians, an endeavor that in retrospect seems laughable, hardly worthy of the American National Education Association’s concerted plan to overcome such resistance to Americanization by converting the nation’s schoolhouses into nodes of flag-saluting assimilation. After all, how could Neapolitans, Sicilians, Piedmontese, and Venetians have been expected to understand a Tuscan dialect no less strange to them than, say, Romanian or Spanish? More understandably, the Milan Exposition of 1906 featured an exhibition hall dedicated to the 472 Italian periodicals produced outside Italy, 60 of which were daily newspapers composed largely or entirely in Italian.

One chapter explores how the Catholic Church, which was hostile
to the Italian state, actively sought to preserve Italian identity among emigrants. Another one traces how emigration contributed to a new nationalism and renewed colonial efforts in Libya.

The chapter before the unexpectedly present-minded conclusion discusses events ranging from an earthquake in Messina to outbreaks of cholera in Argentina and Uruguay and the paid return of more than 300,000 men to fight in the army that Italy fielded when World War I began. Overall, the book treats matters of economy, religion, politics, language theory, and more—all within a traditional historical narrative framework.

Rudolph M. Bell
Rutgers University

Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany from the Reformation to World War I. By Larry Frohman (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008) 259 pp. $85.00

Frohman’s Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany is remarkable in several respects—for one, its enormous chronological scope. Although the focus of the book is on the nineteenth century, the first chapters reach well back into the early modern era, and the closing chapters treat World War I, which Frohman sees as the decisive catalyst for the shift in “assistential regimes” that he examines. Frohman is able to do justice to this grand chronological framework because he has undertaken a massive work of synthesis, drawing with discrimination and intelligence from the voluminous literature about poor relief, charity, welfare, and social insurance in Germany (and wherever else is conceptually useful), as well as more selectively on the literature about political economy, class formation and culture, social history, and economic history. Particularly (but not exclusively) for the period after about 1870, this impressive command of the literature is matched by an equally impressive knowledge of the primary sources. Given the scope of the book, Frohman relies primarily on published material, but he consults the archives when discussing particular details of policy and policy debates. The book is a tour de force of synthesis and interpretation, but it also makes a substantial empirical contribution.

Displaying a masterful strategic sense, Frohman refers to the key articulations of multiple groups (Protestants, Catholics, socialists, liberals, men, and women in multiple regions of Germany), underlining or challenging the findings of other scholars and presenting his own distinctive interpretive perspective incisively and cogently. Frohman’s account evinces a sophisticated understanding of the dynamic relationship between context (social, economic, and political) and institutional development. Though critically engaged with social theory, Frohman steers clear of teleology and over-theorization, offering neither a dark vision of the frightful logic of social discipline nor a Whiggish account of prog-
ress; his subjects are neither manipulative villains nor idealistic heroes. His narrative is coherent without discounting contingency.

The strong linkage in this book between broader patterns in political economy and the specifics of institutional development seems likely to become an influential model for future work on the rise of the welfare state. The book’s chronological sweep also foregrounds the radical shift in “assistential regimes” that had taken place by the end of World War I. Frohman’s rooting of his story in the early modern period highlights not only continuities but also the transformations at the turn of the century that lie at the heart of the study. This book will help to shape the agenda of historians working not only in the history of German social assistance but also in the history of European welfare systems generally.

Edward Ross Dickinson
University of California, Davis


Within the lively historiography of Central European liberalism and its alleged deviance from broader international patterns, the story of Austrian liberalism has usually been sung in an especially tragic key. The most influential version has been that of Schorske, who argued that Austrian liberalism arose as a manifestation of public reason only to implode a generation later with the bourgeoisie’s flight into skepticism and the cultivation of the intimate sphere.¹ Schorske’s account of liberalism hinged on a specific conception of rationality, in which uncertainty and doubt were held at bay, and the private sphere hovered as a perilous challenge. Coen’s outstanding book shows a much different notion of rationality at play in the heart of Austrian liberalism, thereby mounting a fundamental challenge to the entire Schorskean vision of Austrian liberalism’s fate.

Coen’s story revolves around the Exner family, the great scientific dynasty, which from the 1840s to World War I shaped the educational system of the Habsburg Empire through service as advisers to the education Ministry and the Upper House of Parliament and as university professors and administrators. The Exners produced ten professors in Austrian universities, nearly all of whom made important contributions in physics, physiology, law, and medicine (including one Nobel Prize winner, the insect biologist Karl Frisch, an Exner on his mother’s side). As teachers, colleagues, or intimate friends of a great many Austrian scientists and thinkers, the Exners’ point of view left its mark on many notable works of fin de siècle science and culture. Students included Erwin Schroedinger and Sigmund Freud; colleagues included Ludwig Boltz-

man and Ernst Mach; close friends included Joseph Breuer and Marie Ebner von Eschenbach.

To posit the existence of an “Exner point of view” might wrinkle an eyebrow, but Coen convincingly shows the remarkable coherence of what contemporaries dubbed Exnerei. She examines how the Exners carefully constructed a new kind of moral authority on their personal capacities to confront and manage uncertainty in a world where religion no longer guaranteed truth. The Exner saga began with family patriarch Franz Exner, a professor of philosophy and principal architect of the curriculum reforms in the Austrian Gymnasium after 1848. Exner insisted that it was possible to teach students to be free autonomous citizens through mastery of the faculty of attention and new forms of probabilistic reason to avoid error and tame uncertainty in judgment.

At the heart of his conception was a campaign against determinist causality, viewed as a holdover from a clerical and aristocratic authoritarian age, which Franz Exner dubbed the “pigtail of the 19th century” (in analogy to the pigtail that some Austrian aristocrats still wore.).

Unlike those who simply imagined a liberal state built by citizens trained in the humanistic Gymnasium, the Exners believed that public education could not succeed without a foundation in family life. The Exners’ own family life revolved around their summer retreat at Brunnwinkl, in the foothills of the Austrian Alps, where they built an emblematic liberal learning environment in which the virtues of freedom and contingency were celebrated in readings, lectures, and discussions for relatives, friends, colleagues, and students.

Coen weaves a graceful and brilliant narrative that moves back and forth between the Exner’s family life in Brunnwinkl and their ambitious public endeavors in Viennese science and politics.

Coen portrays the Exner outlook as a highly optimistic and forward-looking approach to the world. Yet by the late nineteenth-century, the Exners became repeatedly embroiled in political, ideological, and philosophical struggles against socialists, pan-German nationalists, and Christian Socials. Although each of these opponents demanded different kinds of response, Coen demonstrates a common thread in the Exners’ constant insistence on freedom as an embrace of contingency and rejection of dogmatism, with probability as the methodological expression of that freedom. When the German chemist Wilhelm Ostwald argued that the curriculum of Austrian gymnasia eroded the Kausalitätsempfindung (causal sense) of young people, a committee of Exners—Serafin, Sigmund, and Emilie—drew up a sophisticated defense arguing that causal reasoning was only one narrow function of a well-trained mind. Ostwald’s determinist and technocratic viewpoint, they argued, enshrined a rigid and destructive form of relativism, as opposed to the universal character of probabilistic reason.

Although the Exner’s notion of probability formed a crucial strain of liberal self-definition and governance, it was in the sciences that it truly flourished. Probability in the Exner’s circle took various forms—epistemological standard, a tool for quantifying the bounds of physical
variability, and a model of mental function. Coen lucidly recounts many of the Exner’s ingenious explorations of probability in different phenomena—from Sigmund’s and Seraphin’s investigations in color perception (and their influence in Austrian art and aesthetics), to Adolf’s legal historicism, to Felix’s statistical meteorology, and to Karl Frisch’s experiments in the communication of bees.

Coen largely restricts her compass to the Exner family and the already large reach of its immediate circles. But she provides ample indications of how her story might illuminate the work of the wider pantheon of great scientists and intellectuals trained in Austrian gymnasia after Franz Exner’s reforms. Philosophers like Mach, Franz Brentano, Richard von Mises, Wittgenstein, and Rudolph Carnap probed probability’s conceptual foundations (strikingly, for example, in Wittgenstein’s notion of “family resemblance,” which philosopher James Conant has shown to have arisen out of Wittgenstein’s reflections on a Francis Galton statistical photograph of his own family). Economists of the “Austrian liberal school,” like Menger, Schumpeter, and von Hayek, reinterpreted the concept and origin of laws to accommodate the uncertainty of a science of highly complex phenomena.

Physicists like Boltzmann, Marian von Smoluchowski, Paul Ehrenfest, Schrödinger, and Franz Seraphin Exner, extended probability’s reach in the physical sciences: Schrödinger, who is usually seen as the key figure in extending probability theory to quantum physics, credited Franz Seraphin Exner as the first to show that probability could be more than a placeholder for causes of which one was ignorant. In physics as elsewhere, the Exner’s probabilities were not second-best descriptions but the only possible form of physical knowledge about microscopic events, namely, their relative frequencies. With this argument Coen poses a serious challenge to the famous thesis of Paul Forman that the


probabilistic turn of quantum mechanics came about as a “capitulation to hostile forces” in Weimar Germany.

Rare is a book that manages to revise political history, cultural history, and the history of quantum mechanics substantially at the same time. Coen has achieved this distinction with an acuity and charm worthy of the Exners themselves.

Robert M. Brain
University of British Columbia


Van Rahden’s book is many things. By focusing on the German city of Breslau, it falls into the category of urban history. By investigating the differences between male and female marriage patterns, it touches on gender history. With many individuals in its cast of characters largely forgotten today, it has roots in microhistory and the history of everyday. The sources that van Rahden consults and the methodologies that he employs are numerous and varied, ranging from the examination of diaries for hints of self-reproach to the application of statistical analysis to tax data to provide a picture of the class structure of Breslau’s Jews. Likewise, the three big questions that he seeks to answer are just as diverse. The first is one of the major questions of the twentieth century: How did the relations between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans deteriorate and lead to Auschwitz? The second is one that certainly pertains to Breslau’s mixed population in the nineteenth century and is sure to be one of the major questions of the twenty-first century: How do varied groups form a cohesive society while allowing for diversity?

Yet, the main question that van Rahden attempts to answer is the extent to which Jews were integrated into Breslau society, making the book a significant addition to the fields of both German and Jewish history. Though the book’s analysis extends until 1925, the bulk of the research deals with the second half of the long nineteenth century, ending with World War I. Van Rahden begins his examination of the relationship between Jews, Catholics, and Protestants in Breslau with three heavily statistical chapters on social structure, associational life, and marriage patterns. In these chapters, the tremendous amount of research underpinning his analysis becomes evident. Van Rahden uses this numerical data to correct many misconceptions about nineteenth-century Jews, at least those who lived in Breslau. For example, although contemporaries often portrayed Jews as overwhelmingly bourgeois, and scholars have perpetuated this view, van Rahden’s statistics show a different economic reality. Moreover, he also demonstrates that most Breslau Catholics and
Protestants who wedded Jews were not recent converts from Judaism but lifelong Christians.

The second half of the book includes two mainly narrative chapters. One chapter examines the inclusion of Breslau’s Jews in the educational realm. In episodes such as the conflict about what the religious character of the Johannes-Gymnasium should be, van Rahden shows the notable degree of Jewish integration in Breslau. The other chapter focuses on three different topics—the fate of political antisemitism, local and state attitudes to foreign Jews, and the city’s efforts to honor notable Jews.

Throughout the text, van Rahden gives ample evidence of the many opportunities that Breslau offered for Jewish integration. Yet, although the book tends toward this perspective, van Rahden is also careful to indicate the limits to Jewish inclusion in Breslau society. He shows that opposition to it came from both non-Jewish and Jewish groups. No book about the long nineteenth century can possibly expect to have the last word about how Jews ended up in Auschwitz. But the fact that van Rahden’s detailed descriptions of how Jews and non-Jews interacted in imperial Germany strongly diverge from the tenor of life during the Third Reich firmly supports his assertion that the path to Auschwitz did not begin in imperial Germany. Concerning the question of, as van Rahden terms it, multiculturalism, Jews could achieve considerable integration without necessarily giving up their faith and culture. Future research, however, might be able to offer a clearer picture of the extent to which this multiculturalism was connected to the remaining constraints on Jewish integration in Breslau and elsewhere.

Rebecca Ayako Bennette
Middlebury College


“All politics is local,” House Speaker Tip O’Neill is reputed to have claimed. Following this caveat, Steege looks to the streets of Berlin rather than the corridors of power in Washington and Moscow in an effort to recast our understanding of a city that became an increasingly important site of international tensions in the aftermath of World War II. To restore a measure of agency to ordinary Berliners, Steege focuses on seemingly mundane conflicts about scarce consumer goods and the political competition for Berlin’s municipal institutions. By firmly embedding international crises—such as Joseph Stalin’s 1948–1949 attempt to evict the Western Allies from Berlin by blockading it—in local events, he successfully demonstrates that “the Cold War was not just imposed from above” (5).

As its title suggests, Black Market, Cold War is partly about the im-
promptu efforts of ordinary Berliners to “organize” food and shelter in a city marked by scarcity and the occupation powers’ attempt to ration it. But the book’s main focus is the intensely local contest between German social democrats and communists in Berlin—a rivalry that had its roots in World War I, played an important role in Adolf Hitler’s rise to power, and erupted with renewed vigor after 1945. Steege is particularly adept at showing how this local venue in a European conflict contributed to international tensions. After its stunning loss in the 1946 Berlin municipal elections, the Socialist Unity Party (SED) sought to bolster its position through extraparliamentary tactics. As Steege demonstrates, however, the party’s machinations, such as its attempt to stack the municipal police force with communist officers, ultimately contributed to the division of the city—in this case by provoking the social democrats into establishing a separate force in the western sectors.

The book’s attention to local detail yields some of its best passages, at times transporting the reader back to a postwar Berlin where bombed-out buildings overshadowed bustling black markets and darkened many people’s hopes for rebuilding their lives and their city. Too often, however, the book’s thick description fails to make Steege’s city come alive. The fact that the empirical information about the black market, for example, is not assembled in one place but strewn throughout the book diminishes the impact of Steege’s considerable research. Too often, moreover, the book’s detailed accounts crowd out its analysis.

Not only does thickness of description make the book a challenge to read; Steege’s choice of what to describe can also be puzzling. The wealth of information that he provides about the SED is revealing about communist policy, but it comes at the expense of similar attention to social-democratic strategy. Stranger still is his failure to address the legacy of Nazi rule, which hampers his ability to explain a wide range of municipal events. In his view, the SED’s lack of popularity stemmed from its inept attempts to solve the existential crisis that Berliners faced. Although the party’s strategy for dealing with Berlin’s shortages certainly did not help its cause, the main source of the SED’s disfavor with the public lay in its association with its Russian patrons, who had been demonized by Joseph Goebbels’ propaganda and discredited by the Soviets’ own behavior.

These reservations should not obscure the book’s two main contributions, however. First, Steege’s research has unearthed a gold mine of empirical information about Berlin, from municipal politics to everyday life. Second, he does an excellent job of showing how the Berlin Blockade was motivated partly by the Soviet need to reduce black-market activity in the city. The addition of this local dimension to the international story serves as a salutary reminder of the messiness of the immediate postwar period, of the Allies’ incomplete control of Berlin, and of Tip O’Neill’s caveat.

Jonathan R. Zatlin
Boston University
Savage Barbecue: Race, Culture, and the Invention of America’s First Food. By Andrew Warnes (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2008) 206 pp. $59.95 cloth $19.95 paper

Savage Barbecue contemplates the rhetorical strategies surrounding “America’s first food,” the open-air cooked mounds of flesh, the huge slabs of pork or beef, prepared publicly on outdoor pits, dripping with grease and sauce. That food, thoroughly associated with the South, seems on face value to be utterly iconic of American culture, given the collaborative nature of its preparation, the prodigious amounts ingested by those who relish it, the informality of its consumption, and the lack of high-end etiquette attendant with eating it. Americans often associate barbeque with family gatherings, community rituals, and manifestations of local pride lauding their own state or city for the best variant on this culinary theme.

Any reader expecting a systematic history of barbecue, a chronologically driven exploration of how regional variations evolved, or a step-by-step analysis of the changing traditions of consuming barbecue around the United States will find little of interest in Warnes’ book. He attempts instead to show how “barbecue” as a term, a concept, and a reality cannot be disassociated from the colonial experience, whereby Europeans—first Spaniards and then the British—used this food word and this mode of food preparation in the project of demonizing native peoples and later African Americans. To Warnes, the linguistic similarity between “barbecue” and “barbaric” spoke volumes for the ways in which Europeans developed a rhetorical strategy to accomplish several ends.

First, in their quest to subject and colonize the Americas, European colonizers needed to show that the people who lived there ought to be considered savages, outside the scope of civilization, with its ideas of rights and mutual obligation. Second, they needed to prove that all “natives” resembled each other, regardless of any ostensible differences between them. The Europeans created a literature that speculated, sometimes humorously but always derisively, on the barbarians of the “new world” and their inherently crude food practices.

But Europeans and Europeans in America developed a taste for this food, with its pungent odors of the out-of-doors and its smells redolent of fire and burnt flesh. The consumption of barbecue by “civilized” white men may on one level have merely involved the nearly universal phenomenon of people learning to eat each other’s foods, but not in this case, according to Warnes. When white people, be they in Britain or the United States, engaged in the act of eating barbecue, they performed a cultural act. Through their ingesting of meat from a barbecue, they both announced their desire temporarily to loosen the restraints of civilization and to re-enact, repeatedly, the violent narrative of conquest and subjugation.

Warnes uses a variety of methodological strategies, most prominently the tools of cultural studies. He has taken individual texts, ranging widely over time, and meticulously unpacks them to uncover what lies
at the heart of this book, his goal of proving that barbecue cannot be dis-associated from the violence of conquest and the evils of racial subjugation. Europeans invented barbecue to further their hegemonic project and in the process invented America.

Hasia R. Diner
New York University


Calloway borrows his title from Georgia’s founder James Oglethorpe, who raised a motley army of “White people[,] Indians, and highlanders” to fight against Spanish Floridians (xi). In Oglethorpe’s time, many Britons categorized Highland Scots and Indians as savage non-whites, pointing out that both held land communally, used kinship to structure their societies, and maintained warrior traditions. Highlanders and Indians, Calloway argues, did have much in common, but he emphasizes their parallel and sometimes convergent historical experiences rather than their seemingly similar cultures. Living at the borders of an expanding English empire, Highlanders and Indians confronted colonialism with all its variegated assaults on their autonomy, land, and culture. Calloway, the son of a Highland Scot and a renowned scholar of Native American history, is well poised to explore the tangled histories of these two groups.

The English saw Highlanders and Indians as fierce warriors because the two groups often had to protect their homelands from invasion. Highlanders had repelled imperial armies since Roman times, but they suffered a devastating loss at the 1746 Battle of Culloden, which facilitated colonization. After Culloden, Highlanders served on the front lines of the British army and poured into Indian lands on the North American frontier. Like Highlanders, Indians fought to retain their homelands and, though they did so for their own reasons, some also joined European and American armies. Outside of warfare, Highlanders and Indians met one another in a variety of colonial contexts; they often traded and many intermarried. Such intimacy seemed to confirm the English belief that Highlanders and Indians were similar, and although Britons welcomed their enlistment in the army, they generally discouraged other aspects of both peoples’ supposedly savage character.

Drawing upon the stadial theory of social evolution developed by Lowland Scottish intellectuals, who placed Indians and Highlanders below “civilized” Britons, reformers sought to transform both groups by teaching them English, converting them to Protestant Christianity, breaking their clan systems, and overhauling their economies. Such reforms, at their worst, resulted in the Scottish Clearances and Indian Removal, policies that “separated people from their homelands in the name
of progress” (175). Indians and Highlanders became absorbed into others’ empires, but carved out separate spaces for themselves. Both peoples also became romantic heroes who featured prominently in their empires’ imagined pasts; Scott and Cooper depicted them as tragically doomed but noble races. Although Calloway argues that the trials of Native Americans were “more severe, more devastating, and more enduring” (13), the occupation, dispossession, and oppression wrought by colonialism profoundly affected both peoples.

Readers of the JIH will appreciate how Calloway incorporates postcolonial theory, cultural anthropology, and literary analysis. However, in some chapters, especially those dealing with shared historical experiences in North America, Calloway might have offered more analysis of issues like Scottish–Indian métis culture and the gendered dimensions of colonial encounters. Nonetheless, Calloway succeeds in the challenging task of distilling centuries of Scottish and Native American history into concise, topically oriented chapters, and scrutinizing the ways in which those histories met and departed. His final chapter and epilogue, in particular, stand out as brilliant and sometimes personal meditations on empire, heritage, and identity.

Christina Snyder
University of Pennsylvania

For the People: American Populist Movements from the Revolution to the 1850s. By Ronald P. Formisano (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2008) 315 pp. $35.00

American populism has remained an important field of inquiry for historians, political theorists, and cultural critics for more than 100 years. One reason is that populism is not only enshrined in the formal name of a well-known nineteenth-century political party, but it is also a uniquely American form of political rhetoric, used in both language, iconography, and ideology by scores of candidates up to the present day. Formisano’s book takes its place in a long line of works in several disciplines that have explored this strain of American political thought. Although his thesis is not unique, the material that he examines certainly is. The long heritage of American populist actions and ideas before the Civil War needs far more attention than it has received; several of Formisano’s chapters provide significant new material and insights.

Formisano’s fundamental argument is that American populism cannot be categorized strictly as progressive or reactionary, left or right of the political center. To the contrary, he contends that populist leaders and populist movements throughout the American past blended both systems of thought into a stew of allegiances and ideals that defied easy categorization. To his credit, Formisano acknowledges that he is hardly

the first historian or political theorist to say that populism is more politically complex, even contradictory, than often realized. In his introduction, for example, he references many of the most important scholars whose views preceded his, including Brinkley, Lasch, Kazin, McMath, and Sanders.¹ He also acknowledges how difficult it is for scholars with his orientation to maintain an objective view of populism in our recent political climate, in which populist rhetoric is much easier to associate with racism, sexism, and militarism than it is with anything progressive.

Formisano’s journey into the early American past, however, helps to clarify and contextualize the heritage of populism, leading to a better understanding of why its political legacy is indeed mixed. In his early chapters, he contends with popular uprisings that have been discussed in this context before, including Shay’s Rebellion in the Connecticut River Valley in the aftermath of the Revolution, and the Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania a decade later. He argues that many of these mini-revolutions took place to ensure that the promise of the Revolution—rule by the people—become a reality.

Formisano’s most important and innovative material is in the three chapters that recount the rise of anti-masonry, which he names “a new kind of populist movement (91).” In the 1830s and 1840s, a groundswell of anger and hostility toward the elite and ultrasecretive Masonic organizations rocked much of the United States; unlike previous uprisings, it was not limited to rural communities. Anti-masonry led to other political movements on both the right and the left. As Formisano puts it, “Anti-masonry’s major legacy to the political culture generally . . . was its impact on shifting the rhetoric of most spokesmen for the major political parties, and particularly the Whigs, to full-blown egalitarianism—at least in style (158).” Formisano makes a strong claim that a little-studied movement impacted American politics for years.

In today’s political world, we would be well-armed to understand populism’s two-sided heritage. All of the political candidates in the 2008 presidential campaign sought to appeal to the “people,” and none as boldly as Alaska governor, self-proclaimed “hockey mom,” and surprise vice-presidential nominee, Sarah Palin. Yet to the consternation of the right, the popularity of such appeals fell as fast as the stock market. For three decades, the Republican Party monopolized populist rhetoric, but as 2009 begins, President Barack Obama is poised to reclaim and redefine that legacy for the Democrats once again.

Catherine McNicol Stock
Connecticut College


Virtually every nineteenth-century local history of a New England town begins with a chapter about the last “red man” to have lived there. The tone is generally somber but optimistic—marking the sad but inevitable passing away of a noble race, thus allowing for the rise of true civilization. Scholarship of the last decade or so has been chipping away at this trope, but none has done so as comprehensively as Mandell. Studies of New England Indian history are rich, though heavily weighted to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the larger field of Indian history, the Old Northwest garners most attention in the era of the early Republic, before shifting to the Southeast in the era of Removal, and the West in the latter half of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Mandell’s book is part of what might be termed “the new new Indian history.” Ethnohistorians in the 1970s and 1980s began to challenge the older, triumphalist version of American history that, like those local New England histories, championed the spread of Anglo civilization and the extinction of Indian savagery. Two major themes dominated the New Indian History—resistance to white domination and communal survival. Although these topics were clearly important, this approach suffered from several blind spots, ironically perpetuating the invisibility of native peoples who lived interspersed among white or African-American populations, resisting in quieter ways than did Indians further west. The new new Indian history casts aside the poles of accommodation and resistance, studying Indians as they lived, in the nearly infinite blends of native, African-American, and Euro-American material and religious cultures.

Tribe, Race, History is a comprehensive survey of the social, communal, and work lives of native peoples in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island during the first century of the American republic. It rests on a truly impressive foundation of archival research. A chart representing Indian populations and land holdings encapsulates the extent of Mandell’s research, making a renewed case for the sort of number-crunching social history that has gone out of fashion (4–5). Mandell’s book is organized thematically within a larger chronological framework. The first three chapters focus on the first half-century and the next three on the latter half-century. Chapter 1 details the variety of economic strategies practiced by both individuals and communities, showing how Indians participated in the emerging marketplace while native reserves often functioned as “reservoirs of anti-market forces” (36).

Chapter 2, “Community and Family,” explores the fascinating dynamics of race, effectively challenging the bichromatic focus (black and white or Indian and white) of much of the existing literature. Much of the chapter is devoted to examining interracial marriage and its implications for community definition. Mandell argues that during the early
years, outsiders (mostly African-American) were incorporated into native communities relatively seamlessly but that as pressures on Indian lands increased and questions about allotment of resources emerged, tensions surfaced regarding community boundaries and gender dynamics.

A chapter about “Reform and Renascence” focuses on external and internal reform movements, revealing how their agendas sometimes overlapped and sometimes conflicted. This chapter suggests the importance of the Indian Church as a locus of inner-directed reform, but it leaves the reader wanting to know more about the style and content of Native Christianity. A final chapter offers a fascinating discussion of the conflicts that surrounded “Citizenship and Termination,” demonstrating that the prospect of citizenship meant different things depending on one’s race and gender and suggesting that the debates in New England foreshadowed national debates.

Mandell’s superb book on a long-neglected subject should affect the way the larger narrative of this era of American history is written. Its scope of does not allow him to pause for long on any single individual, but he provides enough snippets of fascinating lives that scholars will want to know more. Mandell has provided a terrific essay on sources that should facilitate many a new study about these people who have remained invisible for too long.

Rachel Wheeler
Indiana University–Purdue University, Indianapolis


“Like any tool,” the author writes, “a national debt can be used for good, ill, or anything in between.” Wright’s goal is to examine the history of the national debt in the United States and “to give both sides of the story, the good and bad, the beautiful and the ugly, an equal hearing.” He adds, “Ambivalence here is more than a virtue; it is a necessity” (vii–viii).

Wright, however, is not at all ambivalent about the role of the national debt during the early national period, which is the main focus of his book. The management of the debt under the leadership of Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton played a central role, Wright argues, in launching the new nation on a path of vigorous economic growth. In his introductory chapter, he posits a “historical model of economic growth,” dubbed a “development diamond” model (7). Within it, to reach first base, a country must have both a government that protects life, liberty, and property (home plate) and a modern financial sector (first base). (Second base is entrepreneurship and third base is modern management.) Wright argues that the way in which Hamilton managed
(and even created, in a way) public debt helped get the new United States to first base.

Wright’s is not a novel assessment of either Hamilton’s financial program, broadly defined, or his approach to the national debt, but Wright provides fresh details. He argues persuasively that Hamilton used his new sinking fund to blunt the effects of the Panic of 1792 and, in 1797, the Baltimore branch of the Bank of the United States, inspired by Hamilton’s proactive approach, mitigated the effects of another liquidity crisis. In addition, Wright mobilizes a new sample of federal bondholders to reinforce the view that Hamilton’s program resulted in a widely held federal debt that lubricated economic life in the early republic. On this issue, Wright also breaks new ground by offering a biographical survey of federal bondholders who registered their bonds in Virginia. He illustrates how investors of widely diverse sizes and occupations used the bonds to advance a broad range of financial interests. By the 1820s, Wright proposes, “the public debt served as the bridge between the nation’s non-predatory government and its emerging financial system” and “in turn, spurred the crystallization of the rest of American’s development diamond, its entrepreneurs, managers, and the business firms they ran” (238).

Wright’s ambivalence emerges in his concluding chapter, in which he evaluates the history that unfolded following the completion of President Andrew Jackson’s program to extinguish the debt of the early republic. At this juncture, Wright invokes Thomas Jefferson. He was “prescient,” Wright says, in considering the national debt as “a monstrous fraud on posterity.” Wright suggests that, in the twentieth century (and perhaps even earlier), pandering politicians and self-interested bureaucrats borrowed money excessively to pay for projects less worthy than what the first national debt bought—“the nation’s independence and people’s liberty” (282). However, Wright’s history of the debt since Andrew Jackson’s presidency is too cursory to explain either how the nation fell from Hamiltonian grace, or how it might return there in the future. Nonetheless, Wright’s innovative history of financing the early republic provides one of the best foundations available for exploring the sources and dynamics of what some scholars now refer to as the “debt state” of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

W. Elliot Brownlee
University of California, Santa Barbara

Women, Work, and Family in the Antebellum Mountain South. By Wilma Dunaway (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008) 301 pp. $80.00

Dunaway continues her explorations of Appalachia in Women, Work, and Family in the Antebellum Mountain South. In this detailed work, she
considers how gender, race, and class shaped the lives of the region’s most marginal women—slaves, free blacks, poor whites, and natives.

In broad strokes, Dunaway argues that the separate-spheres ideology and “cult of domesticity” promulgated by antebellum writers bore little resemblance to the lives of mountain women. She maintains that poor and enslaved women could not—or would not—maintain the stark dichotomy between home and workplace that was fundamental to the separate-spheres ideology. Whether compelled by force or necessity, women labored in fields, engaged in domestic manufacturing, operated small businesses, and worked as wage laborers. Dunaway carries her argument against separate spheres a step further, concluding that “there was not a clear division between household labors and market commodity production” (192–193).

Women’s participation in the workforce carried a social price. Poor whites who performed stigmatized labor surrendered their racial prerogatives. As Dunaway notes, “poor white women were often ‘racialized’ as barbaric throwbacks because their work and family patterns were too similar to those of nonwhite females in the minds of affluent Appalachians” (127). Those who defied gender and racial norms confronted a legal system that empowered officials to regulate and disrupt the families of poor whites, free blacks, and the enslaved. For those on the bottom of the South’s social ladder, the bourgeois family idealized in the “cult of domesticity” proved an elusive dream.

Despite its many strengths, Dunaway’s study is not without flaws. Although she is sensitive to chronological change in her discussions of Cherokee women, her treatment of poor whites, free blacks, and slaves is often static. More bothersome is Dunaway’s use of secondary sources. On at least two occasions, Dunaway supports assertions about the mountain South with evidence from regions outside Appalachia. Similar problems plague her use of primary sources. Although Women, Work, and Family rests upon a vast body of research, certain citations are imprecise, and Dunaway’s handling of sources is questionable. She notes, for example, that “free born mulatto James Merrick was ‘taken in possession’ and sold as a slave when his western Maryland employer died”

1 For example, Dunaway notes that “Appalachian slaves frequented grog shops, restaurants . . . and other small businesses operated by poor whites, and they occasionally purchased the services of white prostitutes” (80). The sole citation offered to support this particular claim is Betty Wood’s study of the Georgia lowcountry—Women’s Work, Men’s Work: The Informal Slave Economics of Lowcountry Georgia (Athens, 1995), 71–79. Although the pages cited discuss the underground economy that developed among slaves and poor whites, the examples are all from Darien, Savannah, and other communities in coastal Georgia. Later in the paragraph, Dunaway cites Midori Takagi’s work on antebellum Richmond—“Rearing Wolves to Our Own Destruction”: Slavery in Richmond, Virginia, 1782–1865 (Charlottesville, 1999)—to support her claim that “[t]raveling peddlers and hucksters regularly traded goods to slaves, and poor whites often purchased items from slaves.” Thus, at least some of Dunaway’s claims about the mountain South are backed by studies that have nothing to do with the region.
(252). In support, Dunaway cites page 134 of Rose’s anthology *A Documentary History of Slavery in North America*, but this page contains no reference to Merrick or the enslavement of free blacks; it discusses Nat Turner.2

Likewise, Dunaway quotes a Virginia slaveholder who worried that “a death struggle must come between the two classes, on which one or the other w[ould] be extinguished forever” (123). Because the quotation is situated within a paragraph about tensions between planters and landless whites, the implication is that the anonymous master feared an *intraracial* class conflict. In actuality, the “death struggle” that this slaveholder feared was an *interracial* conflagration. Dunaway’s anonymous slaveholder was Henry Berry of Virginia, who was raising the specter of slave revolts in the aftermath of Nat Turner’s 1831 rebellion. Addressing the Virginia House of Delegates, Berry contended that harsher slave codes offered little protection against insurrections and that Virginia faced a “mighty avalanche” unless it abolished slavery.3 Whether these are isolated—even trifling—incidents or symptoms of larger, more systemic problems must remain for future reviewers to decide, but they do raise questions about the precision of Dunaway’s research.

Max Grivno
University of Southern Mississippi

*The Big Tent: The Traveling Circus in Georgia, 1820–1930.* By Gregory J. Renoff (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2008) 235 pp. $34.95

In this fine cultural study, Renoff explores the interaction between southern communities and the circus during the heyday of the traveling big top. Those with a general interest in popular culture or a specific interest in circus history will doubtless find much to appreciate in Renoff’s recounting of the traveling show’s theatrical evolution throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Yet this work delivers much more, constructing an innovative social, cultural, and economic analysis of a broad spectrum of Georgia’s diverse population. It accomplishes this feat by paying as much attention to the individuals who made up the communities that hosted the traveling circus as it does to the show itself.

Renoff’s work builds around the notion of “circus day” as a kind of secular holiday during which a collective representation of community

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3 Dunaway’s source for the quotation was John McKivigan (ed.), *The Roving Editor or Talks with Slaves in the Southern States* (University Park, 1996), 99. This reviewer, however, located the quotation in the original edition of the book. James Redpath, *The Roving Editor: or, Talks with Slaves in the Southern States* (New York, 1859), 100–102.
values collided with the foreign and modernistic amusements offered by the traveling show. As the author notes, “circuses in Georgia communities gave the state’s residents the chance to challenge the New South’s strictures of race, class, and religious belief and helped spur the social, cultural, and economic transformations that the state underwent between 1865 and 1930” (7). Although Renoff begins his narrative by examining the small, wagon-based shows of the antebellum South, the majority of this book focuses on the postbellum era when Georgians had to cope with the onslaught of social, cultural, and economic modernity. He traces the manner in which the traveling circus overcame considerable resistance from evangelical leaders and plantation bosses ultimately to find common cause with town merchants and civic boosters, who saw in the show an opportunity to promote commerce. The narrative concludes with the end of the circus’ golden age during the 1920s, which saw many of the shows fade in grandeur or succumb to new forms of popular entertainment. By the mid-1920s, notes Renoff, the circus had also become so nonthreatening to the prevailing customs in Georgia that it could be safely sponsored by a local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan.

Unlike Joy S. Kasson’s *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York, 2001), which deals almost exclusively with the content of the show and the intentions of its producers, Renoff tackles the arguably more difficult task of gauging the reaction of the circus’s audience. His analysis includes black sharecroppers, evangelical family men, backwoods rustics, children, single women, aspiring merchants, and town drunks. The resulting portrait of Georgia communities on circus day is a remarkable feat of social history.

Quibbles with this work are few. By arranging his material thematically and employing broadly overlapping chronologies, Renoff makes the narrative slightly repetitious. Furthermore, although he offers ample evidence of racial mixing in various aspects of circus day, he acknowledges that segregation remained a guiding force in the show’s more organized elements. Hence, the circus seems not to have challenged Georgia’s racial strictures so much as it accommodated them in a manner suitable for the occasion. To wit, the possibility of having “racial mixing” without transgressing important boundaries of social deference may well reveal much about the organic and cultural nature of segregation. Nevertheless, *The Big Tent* should find wide readership among students of popular culture and provide useful insights to those who seek innovative scholarship on the postbellum South.

Justin A. Nystrom
University of Mississippi
On September 11, 1857, about 120 men, women, and children on their way from Arkansas to California were massacred at Mountain Meadows, Utah, following a five-day siege by Paiute Indians and local Mormons. Seventeen children considered too young to testify about the event were spared. Bodies were buried in shallow graves that did not protect them from predators. In 1859, an Army detachment collected scattered bones, interred them more securely, and erected the first of several monuments. The history of what exactly happened and why has been contested ever since.

In August 1999, renovation of the site unearthed around 2,600 bones and fragments of at least twenty-eight separate individuals. Novak, a forensic anthropologist, with experience examining bones in contexts ranging from fifteenth-century battles to mass graves in twentieth-century Croatia, was asked to examine the remains from Mountain Meadows to see how they might offer “bounds [to] the process, preventing an endless proliferation of competing accounts” (xiv). Unfortunately, she had only a month to work before the remains were to be re-interred.

Although Novak recognizes that “the bones cannot settle the matter of what really happened at Mountain Meadows, or who is to blame,” she also believes that such physical remains “appear to be beyond politics and thus capable of closing off debate” (xiv–xv). For example, skulls show individuals killed by gunshots and blunt-force trauma consistent with executions at close quarters. No wounds from arrows or knives, or evidence of scalping were found. Early Mormon efforts to portray the victims as wild, undisciplined, and provocative men from Missouri are undercut by many remains of women and children. Novak also uses census and genealogical works to show that about 70 percent of the party was comprised of two extended “core” families; another thirty individuals were their friends and neighbors. Claims that the women were prostitutes are challenged by the absence of bone lesions associated with venereal diseases. Many bones had been chewed by animals.

Novak notes that histories of the massacre rarely discuss the victims before they reached Utah, and not much even at that point. She devotes a significant part of this book to humanizing and personalizing the victims by examining how they lived in Arkansas. She combines a variety of primary and secondary sources to describe their homesteads, family ties, occupations, and other social patterns. But she makes no mention of the possible involvement of Mormons from Missouri and Arkansas in prior deaths. The bones also speak in these cases, often telling of malnutrition and occupational injuries. Several teeth suggest that some of the migrants who died had Native American ancestry.
Novak’s book is engaging, despite the uneven and incomplete nature of her evidence. Familiarity with the basic outlines of the massacre and its historiography is necessary to appreciate fully some of her conclusions. This work will appeal more to specialists than to general readers. The value of Novak’s forensic anthropology, her most interesting innovation, is limited, since it focuses more on results than methods. “Biocultural” in the title presumably refers to biology, but, given the nature of the work, could easily mean biography.

Robert V. Wells
Union College

Frederick Douglass: Race and the Rebirth of American Liberalism. By Peter C. Myers (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2008) 265 pp. $34.95

This meticulous, postrevisionist interpretation of Frederick Douglass—the preeminent abolitionist, orator, diplomat, and federal government appointee—is, broadly speaking, concerned with examining and analyzing the “principles and problems of liberalism” and, specifically, with thed said principles and problems in reference to African Americans in the United States of America (1). Situating the Lockean idea of natural rights at the heart of Douglass’ political philosophy, Myers deftly opposes the purported “radical impulse” of members of the African-American, educated elite who are intent upon “displacing” the liberal mainstream” of American and African-American political thought (3). Hence, he attempts to rebut the works of scholars such as Blight, Moses, Martin, Harding, and Mills—historians and philosophers who reduce the gargantuan Douglass to human proportions by investigating and scrutinizing his tensions, inconsistencies, and contradictions.1 Myers excels in illuminating the continuities that he believes were Douglass’ “first principles of political life and of the American Republic” (13). His is truly an imbricated interdisciplinary work; the author ignores the boundaries separating cultural history, autobiography, biography, intellectual history, and political history, as well as academic philosophy and political theory. In most instances, Myers succeeds brilliantly in his endeavors.

Nevertheless, this thesis-driven gem is not perfect. As Myers himself and his critics have pointed out, Douglass was not a systematic thinker. As a consequence, Myers’ application of academic philosophy and political theory to attribute a natural-rights liberalism to him ignores the fallibility at the heart of Douglass’ effectiveness as an agitator who

confronted ideas and issues only in a pragmatic fashion. Douglass did not subject ideas to close scrutiny over long periods of time. Myers’ examination of Douglass’ speeches after the Civil War, which called for an anti-Madisonian “abolition of the independent chief executive and of major elements of the constitutional checks and balances,” exemplifies the problems with his book (131). Instead of criticizing Douglass, who resided for an extended period of his relatively long life in the “Burnt Over District” of upstate New York, a hot bed of utopianism and millennial perfectionism, Myers argues that Douglass’ “trust in simple, majoritarian democracy was not based on millennial or utopian faith. To the contrary, it was based on his deliberate, realist assessments of the protections and advantages inherent in the majoritarian principle and of the imperfections of the Madisonian model” (131–134). Notwithstanding this reservation, this book exhibits a mastery of numerous and varied primary and secondary sources in many disciplines and subfields. It is worthy of close attention.

Vernon J. Williams, Jr.
Indiana University, Bloomington

*Intensely Human: The Health of the Black Soldier in the American Civil War.*
By Margaret Humphreys (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008) 197 pp. $40.00

Though they faced battle less often than white soldiers, African-American soldiers in the U.S. Civil War died from disease at much higher rates than did whites. In this new volume, Humphreys explores the health of black soldiers and, not surprisingly, uncovers a story of racism, ignorance, neglect, and abuse. Her short work is a valuable companion to Shaffer’s treatment of the health of black veterans following the war.¹

Humphreys compiles an impressive array of archival evidence about the experiences of black soldiers. Particularly impressive is her use of detailed records from the Medical Committee of the U.S. Sanitary Commission. She also skilfully weaves into her study personal narratives, letters, and other anecdotes that supplement the military record, thereby humanizing her account of the black recruits, whose treatment often tended toward the impersonal and degrading.

A central focus of the book concerns how white conceptions of the black body negatively influenced the treatment of black recruits. As one Iowa physician charged with examining black recruits noted, the black man “has some capacity, physically considered, for military service, there cannot be a doubt; neither is there a doubt about the usefulness of the horse when subject to intelligent training” (147). Such attitudes led to

¹ Donald Shaffer, *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (Lawrence, 2004).
understaffed hospitals, poorly trained medical personnel, and low-quality care.

Humphreys’ central claims are neither easily contestable nor controversial. However, they could have been buttressed by systematic analysis of the available microdata, which are missing, unfortunately, in Humphreys’ analysis. For instance, the Center for Population Economics (CPE) at the University of Chicago has created detailed medical, military, and other records about 40,000 white recruits and 6,000 black recruits. Humphreys’ epidemiological analysis is based solely on aggregate numbers and administrative documents from the Sanitary Commission. The widely used CPE data would have allowed more explicit comparisons of black and white experiences during the war and an exploration of the variables, including but not limited to race, that accounted for these differences.

Given that Humphreys is a physician and historian, it is odd that this monograph contains relatively little medical history that could help to place the conditions of white and black recruits in context. Although the medical staff could ensure rest, provide adequate diet, change dressings, and clean soiled beds (all of which would improve survival, but none of which requires much medical training), Humphreys underemphasizes the complete inability of even the best-trained staff to fight the infectious and parasitic diseases that killed many recruits. Indeed, soldiers were sometimes fortunate to have escaped the medical remedies of the day. That black soldiers suffered from racism and neglect is clear, but it is not certain how much of this neglect was due to poor medical training.

In spite of its methodological limitations, Humphrey’s readable work casts considerable light on a neglected aspect of American history. Scholars interested in studying racial disparities in health will find this book a valuable starting point.

Sven Wilson
Brigham Young University


Sparks’ Capital Intentions, the first monograph to be published about businesswomen in a single location in the United States, makes an important contribution to women’s history, labor history, and urban history. Using a set of uniquely rich sources, including personal papers (letters and diaries) and bankruptcy records, as well as such standard sources as city directories and credit records, Sparks covers many aspects of businesswomen’s careers. In addition to analyzing the types of women who went into business and the trades that they entered, she also discusses their motivations, business strategies, and the multiple reasons behind
their entrepreneurial failures. The book conveys a vivid sense of place, especially during the Gold Rush years when women enjoyed extraordinary business opportunities. Sparks makes a strong case for change over time, arguing that by the 1870s, business conditions on the West Coast had become similar to those in the rest of the nation, limiting prospects for female proprietors.

The opening of the book is particularly intriguing: Sparks’ imaginary walking tour of the city (complete with a map) in the first chapter, “Female Proprietors and the Businesses They Started,” provides an excellent overview of her topic. In Chapter 6, “When Women Went out of Business,” bankruptcy records provide a fascinating glimpse into cyclical financial depressions, fires, personal illness, and overextending, among other travails. Overall, the use of historical photographs, newspaper advertisements, receipts, and trade cards enhances the narrative.

No book is perfect. This one has two trouble spots. First, the decision to use the printed census reports rather than grappling with the manuscript census leaves Sparks’ statistics resting on slightly shaky assumptions, forcing her to speculate about the demographic profiles of individual businesswomen. As a case in point, she could not say for sure whether Mrs. Ann Hudson, a used-clothing merchant, was an immigrant or whether “she lived in a room or small apartment located above or behind her store” (23). Such questions could have been answered through the manuscript census. Second, Sparks sometimes has to rely on the findings of other scholars about women in locations other than San Francisco for certain details, hazarding the guess that businesswomen in San Francisco “must have” had similar experiences. Whether they did or not is impossible to know on the basis of the evidence presented.

Nonetheless, Capital Instincts offers fascinating glimpses of many female proprietors. Mary Ann Magnin, for one, went from a home-based lingerie business to opening a large department store named after her husband—Issac (or I.) Magnin—between 1876 and 1880. Sparks also introduces Antoinetta Alessandro, who managed “multiple theater businesses” between 1905 and 1914, while her husband Giuseppi ran a grocery stand, leaving all financial decisions and arrangements to her.

Such stories reinforce recent studies for other locations, demonstrating that women across the United States flourished in business enterprises long before the late twentieth century. Capital Instincts provides an important link in a chain of histories that is just beginning to emerge and will eventually enable scholars to discover how women proprietors’ opportunities and limitations varied across the nation and over time. The first chapter, in particular, can stand alone as a challenge to the still-pervasive stereotype that, until recently, business was a man’s world.

Susan Ingalls Lewis
State University of New York, New Paltz
The Dallas Myth: The Making and Unmaking of an American City. By Harvey J. Graff (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2008) 388 pp. $34.95

This is an ambitious but uneven book, drawing on “urban social and cultural history, historical geography . . . political economy,” and “cultural studies” both to deconstruct myths about Dallas’ past and to sketch a vision of Dallas future (xvii).

In Graff’s words, his project “outlines principles” that will “set an agenda” for future collaborative work (xxvii). But much of that agenda has already been set, or indeed met. Graff himself published a guide to the relevant sources back in 1979, and he served as adviser to Patricia E. Hill, author of another fine study, Dallas: The Making of a Modern City (Austin, 1996). Several recent “revisionist” studies, in fact, cover such previously neglected subjects as minorities, women, and social and spatial segregation. The myths discussed in Graff’s book—notably that Dallas is a self-made city without limits or history—have, in short, already been deconstructed. Moreover, whatever the version once offered by the chamber of commerce, it is scarcely “a long-neglected truth” that “views of history shift depending on who is included and excluded, and where the viewer stands” (96).

Graff’s major points are that (1) despite claims to uniqueness, the city should be fit into comparative models of development, such as Monkkonen’s, and (2) rather than aspiring to compete with “the Parises, the Rios, and the Tokyos” Dallas should think in terms of, say, Kansas City (249). The city differs from its peers only in the degree to which “The Dallas Way” was successful, through much of the twentieth century, in realizing a program championed by any number of local elites—that is, identifying the city with its business class, promoting private profit at public expense, and stifling minority dissent.

These are all sound points, made again and again. A onetime resident of the city, with a sharp eye for urban design and architecture, Graff is surely qualified to assess “A City at the Crossroads.” The final chapter offers an insightful look at how choices made in Dallas in the twentieth-century limited those available in the globalized twenty-first. But the journey to that point meanders repetitively, reading like a series of loosely linked magazine or journal articles, too much of it as fragmented as the city that it describes.

Roger Lane
Haverford College


This much-anticipated book offers a bold thesis about the patterns of inequality in twentieth-century America. The culmination of a series of papers and articles extending across more than a decade, it is a rare example of historical analysis applied to contemporary policy concerns. It also features an array of data and analyses that will surely fuel discussion and debate in a number of fields. In short, it is the type of book that promises to be widely influential, in one way or another, for some time.

Despite its title, throughout this study the authors focus more on the history of education than technology. At its core is an argument about the expansion of schooling and its impact on the U.S. economy. Goldin and Katz contend that certain unique features of American education—such “virtues” as local control and funding, coeducation, separation of church and state, and a general openness—led to rapid expansion of schooling, providing the country with a substantial human-capital advantage for most of the twentieth century. On the other side of the equation, they maintain that technological change demanded ever-higher levels of education in the workforce, even in manufacturing. Direct evidence for the latter point is sketchy, featuring a narrow range of industries, but the authors point to the advent of electrification and continuous and batch-process production techniques as prompting employers to seek educated workers. This combination of factors, they suggest, accounted for an extended period of relative equality within the labor force, which began to change when educational expansion slowed substantially during the 1970s and beyond.

Utilizing data from the 1915 Iowa and U.S. decennial censuses, Goldin and Katz construct econometric models that link educational levels to variation in wage inequality. In doing so, they make critical assumptions about the distribution of skills within levels of attainment and the relationship of skill-biased technology to demand for workers with different amounts of schooling. Though broadly persuasive, this analysis is conducted at a high level of abstraction, leaving many details unexplored, such as the actual pace and scope of technological change. This approach may be suitable to labor economists, but it doubtless will leave historians yearning for additional evidence. In the end, Goldin and Katz see the rate of educational expansion as the principal determinant of inequality, even more than immigration and demographic shifts or the declining influence of unions. Although these arguments are clearly supported by straightforward analyses of national data, they will likely be greeted with skepticism in many quarters, regardless of their conceptual elegance.

Apart from identifying American “virtues,” Goldin and Katz offer a barely explicit argument about educational growth, suggesting that individuals pursued higher levels of attainment in search of favorable eco-
Economic returns. It is more an assumption than a proposition, however, and they generally ignore the sizable literature on educational expansion, which offers alternative explanations. More importantly, this interpretative frame fails to account for the abrupt flattening of educational growth after 1970, even while demand for skilled workers apparently surged ahead. The discussion of possible explanations for this trend is the book’s least compelling chapter from the standpoint of data analysis. Puzzling over the failure of today’s youth to take advantage of high returns to college education, Goldin and Katz look to research on resource inequality and the isolation of urban minority youth for answers. They suggest that certain past virtues may represent impediments to growth today, such as local control and funding of public schools. But the tone is tentative and the policy suggestions echo those favored by mainstream educational researchers: lower class sizes, job training programs, and expanded college aid for disadvantaged youth. Reasonable as this conclusion may be, it begs the question of factors prompting educational expansion in the past and their relevance to current problems.

That said, there is much to recommend this book to a wide spectrum of readers. The basic argument is compelling, and historians, economists, and other scholars are sure to probe it further. The data sets that Goldin and Katz have compiled, as well as similar ones, ought to attract others who are interested in studying schooling and the labor force. The book offers a wealth of information, especially about the development of American education in the twentieth century. Time will tell if the overall argument holds up; in the shorter term, Goldin and Katz have certainly posed a wide range of questions to ponder, and some stimulating lessons about how to do so.

John L. Rury
University of Kansas

Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen. By Christopher Capozzola (New York, Oxford University Press, 2008) 334 pp. $34.95

Which of the following statements is true about the American home front during World War I? (1) The war brought the fulfillment of the progressive movement. (2) The war generated the repression of civil liberties. (3) The war built the foundation for the future advancement of civil liberties. If you answered “all of the above,” you already know the general story, but you will gain many fresh insights by reading Capozzola’s finely nuanced study about how the domestic impact of the war did and did not change the conception of what it meant to be an American citizen.

Scholars have long noted that the war-time experience created opportunities for all of the various shades of progressive opinion and striv-
ing: increased authority for professional experts in the war-time bureaucracy; new protections, including unionization, for many industrial workers; moral uplift for the proponents of national prohibition; voting rights for women; and heavier income taxation of the wealthy for old Populists. Short-lived, the war years generated an unprecedented penetration of official state power into the lives of the American people, but as Capozzola demonstrates, the state at the same time drew upon the traditional reservoirs of volunteerism that had long characterized the decentralized society of the nineteenth century.

Capozzola’s six chapters focus in depth on the machinery of the draft, the fate of conscientious objectors, women’s volunteerism, vigilance and vigilantism, critics and censors, and enemy aliens; each chapter thoughtfully examines the interplay and tension between the state and civil society in the process of organizing the nation for war often through various forms of coercion, some of them subtle and others not so subtle. This is a book about how a culture of obligation began to give way, albeit slowly, to a culture of rights, with individualism sometimes trumping group identity and solidarity.

The government of the United States, weak at the beginning of the war, drew initially upon citizen volunteers to staff its infant war machine, ultimately becoming stronger in response to a perceived lack of expertise and the inevitable forms of private repression unleashed by patriotic fervor. The national draft could not have functioned without citizen volunteers who manned the draft boards, making initial decisions based on local knowledge about who would be sent to fight in Europe. At the same time, a special federal board determined conscientious-objector status by scrutinizing as never before the religious beliefs and practices of individual inductees. Where government demands for conformity proved tardy or haphazard, private citizens ranging from journalists, housewives, club women, and clergymen often took matters into their own hands.

The voluntary cooperation favored by Herbert Hoover as food administrator exemplified the soft forms of state power practiced during the war, but when carried into the next decade by Hoover as president, this model proved far less efficacious in coping with the economic storm from 1929–1932.

It seems uncharitable to point out a few interpretive lapses in a book so subtle and elegant. President Wilson, for example, pardoned many convicted war critics and protestors, but he did not pardon Eugene Debs, who languished in prison until Warren Harding took office. *Gilbert v. Minnesota* (1920) is more notable for Justice Brandeis’ powerful dissent than for the majority opinion that affirmed the conviction of a pacifist defendant.

Michael E. Parrish
University of California, San Diego
The plethora of Indian images created by non-Indian photographers in the early twentieth century owes itself to the confluence of several factors: the rise of commercial photography, mass tourism, and the final conquest and colonization of Native Americans. The most famous photographer of Indians during this era was Edward Curtis. He intended his pictures to create a lasting record of presumably vanishing Indian lives. Other photographers, however, simply wanted to make a living and saw their efforts as a commercial endeavor. This volume, which displays and analyzes H. H. Bennett’s photographs of Ho-Chunk people in the Dells region of Wisconsin, presents Bennett as the latter type.

Hoelscher, relying upon a variety of historical, anthropological, and literary methods, concludes that Bennett’s Ho-Chunk subjects became objects of “the camera’s colonizing gaze” (12). His camera represented part of technology’s cultural domination of native people. Bennett, of course, did not consider such things. He simply wanted to sell his images to tourists visiting the Wisconsin Dells region; he played on his customers’ romantic and nostalgic impulses, freezing the Ho-Chunk in time and conveying the “vanishing Indian” motif that was common to the era. Some people posed in landscape settings, others in Bennett’s studio. All of the photographs ignored the devastating history of land loss and poverty.

Hoelscher argues that the Ho-Chunk were not mere victims. They found ways to survive, endure, and renew themselves through the photographic process. They earned badly needed cash by posing, although Ho-Chunk oral histories claim that Bennett offered only meager pay. Importantly, Bennett’s correspondence reveals that his control over process and product was never complete. Ho-Chunk subjects actively shaped some of the photographs, “controlling image production” by insisting, for example, on wearing certain items and posing certain ways (136). Bennett may have intended to turn Ho-Chunk people into tourist objects, but they were equally determined to use these photographs to pursue their own projects and goals. Chief among those goals was economic and cultural survival.

Hoelscher’s prose is accessible and his conclusions sound, even if familiar to scholars of Native American representations. He breaks no new theoretical ground. But there is freshness in his effort to incorporate contemporary Ho-Chunk views of Bennett’s images and to compare these earlier photographs to the portraits that Tom Jones, a contemporary Ho-Chunk artist, created. Also new is the Midwestern setting (most other books about Indian photography focus on the American West) and the opportunity to explain this historical dynamic to audiences who have not thought about Native Americans’ resistance to colonialism.

Hoelscher ends with the ultimate survival story. In the twenty-first
century, Ho-Chunk people are purchasing land along the Wisconsin River that they lost in the nineteenth century. The funding source for at least part of their real estate transactions is their casinos. In a twist that Bennett might understand and appreciate, the Ho-Chunk use his photographs to advertise their gaming operations. In this way, they have reclaimed the images and put them to work for themselves

Sherry L. Smith
Southern Methodist University

“Closer to the Truth Than Any Fact”: Memoir, Memory, and Jim Crow. By Jennifer Jensen Wallach (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2008) 176 pp. $34.95

Wallach’s book is both a comparative study of memoirs about life in the American South during the Jim Crow era and an argument for the value of autobiographical literature as a tool for historical understanding. The memoirs that Wallach discusses—by Richard Wright, Zora Neal Hurston, Henry Louis Gates, Willie Morris, Lillian Smith, and William Alexander Percy—are all well known, even “canonical,” texts. As Wallach shows, their authors depicted the segregation era in widely varying ways. Wright’s Black Boy, a Record of Childhood and Youth (New York, 1945) was an unrelenting indictment of southern racial prejudice, whereas Percy’s Lanterns on the Levee—Recollections of a Planter’s Son (New York, 1941) offered a romanticized portrayal of a patriarchal society in which benevolent whites protected a black population unable to care for itself.

Although the versions of southern life offered by these two authors support the stereotypical depictions of Jim Crow found in history textbooks, Wallach argues that other texts offer alternative perspectives that cannot simply be dismissed out of hand. Hurston’s Dust Tracks on a Road: An Autobiography (Philadelphia, 1942) and Gates’ Colored People: A Memoir (New York, 1994) depict vibrant black communities and individuals whose lives were shaped but not crushed by segregation. Morris’ North Toward Home (Boston, 1967) tells a story of a sensitive white man’s alienation from his native culture but nonetheless reveals his lasting emotional attachment to his native region. Smith’s scathing denunciation of racial injustice in Strange Fruit (New York, 1944) often coexisted with the perpetuation of clichés about blacks’ supposed inherited characteristics.

The variety of ways in which both black and white memoirists depict the segregated South illustrates Wallach’s broader arguments for the value of autobiographical writing, not merely as historical source material but as a means of historical insight in its own right. Her two introductory chapters, “Subjectivity and the Felt Experience of History” and “Literary Techniques and Historical Understanding,” are the most origi-
nal part of the book, offering insights for scholars in fields well outside
the history of race relations. Although Wallach concedes that memoirs
are inherently subjective, she argues that this fact does not invalidate
their historical value. Given that historians have had to acknowledge
that perfect objectivity is an unattainable goal, the perspectival vision of
autobiography is not completely alien to history. Autobiographers, un-
like fiction writers, share historians’ conviction that there is “a past ex-
ternal to the text” (22). Moreover, skillful autobiographical writers can
venture into the interior experience of people living in the past in ways
that historians cannot, and the literariness of autobiographies—their use
of such devices as metaphor, irony, and allegory—communicates truth
in a manner that can “form lasting impressions and inspire vivid mental
imagery” (40).

In order to benefit fully from autobiographical sources, however,
Wallach argues that historians must learn to read them appropriately, and
not simply mine them for illustrative citations: “Autobiographical texts
should be analyzed in their entirety” (138). Properly used, autobio-
graphical sources can help historians to “capture the ambivalence and
confusion that are often an inherent part of felt experience” and guard
against the profession’s “predilection toward certainty” (138). Wallach’s
lucidly written essay offers much food for thought, both for scholars of
history and life writing and for general readers trying to recapture the
flavor of the past.

Jeremy D. Popkin
University of Kentucky

Love Canal Revisited: Race, Class, and Gender in Environmental Activism.
By Elizabeth D. Blum (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2008) 194
pp. $34.95

Love Canal Revisited utilizes a “snapshot” method to interrogate the
rhetoric of “representative facets of the Love Canal saga” (3). In this
spare, but original, approach to understanding a contentious environ-
mental episode, Blum has three purposes: to expose how the activism of
the Love Canal area residents empowered “marginalized populations”—
women, African Americans, and the working class—to insert their ideas
and needs into public view; to demonstrate that environmental activism
surrounding Love Canal illuminates “different segments of the popula-
tion absorb[ing] the ideas, goals, and attitudes of other social move-
ments” (2); and to situate Love Canal into the context of twentieth-
century environmentalism. The book is organized into three central
chapters, focused, individually, on gender, race, and class and bracketed
by a chapter on the area’s history and a chapter on the historical implica-
tions of these social constructions for Love Canal.

The snapshot approach has strengths and weaknesses. This method
allows Blum to delve into the social consciousness of specific activists.
Combining archival sources and oral interviews that she conducted in 2001 and 2002, Blum masterfully allows the participants to speak for themselves, thereby uncovering the social perspectives of their arguments and actions. The working-class women of the Love Canal Homeowners Association (LCHA) were clearly influenced by the second-wave feminist movement. One among them, Lois Gibbs, divulged that she “supported what [feminists] wanted, in reference to equal pay for equal jobs,” though she claimed not to be a feminist because she and her compatriots were defending roles, as wives and mothers, that she believed to be devalued by feminism (48).

Similarly, racism and the civil rights movement influenced African-American responses. Predominantly renters, African Americans felt that an organization focused on “homeowners” marginalized them both in intent and actuality. Hence, they reached beyond the neighborhood for help from the NAACP. When middle-class, nonresident environmentalists entered the fray, their preferred tactic of working through the system clashed with the confrontational tactics of the LCHA.

Blum’s snapshot approach manages to isolate two gendered constants across the social divides. Women almost exclusively argued for the health of their children and families, whereas men stressed the economic losses that they suffered in the ecological disaster. But all groups based their arguments on their rights as citizens.

The snapshot approach, however, has shortcomings. It cannot delve deeply into the complications and potential contradictions of the activists themselves. Gibbs proclaimed that as wives and mothers, women were not subordinate to their husbands (48), but her husband’s resentment of her public activities led to their divorce. Moreover, given that Gibbs has remained engaged in environmental issues extending well beyond immediate concerns for her children’s health, expanded civic consciousness has apparently superseded the earlier maternalist rhetoric that Blum uses to characterize women’s activism. The snapshot method also reduces historical analysis almost to an afterthought, separated from the main body of material.

Despite these caveats, Blum’s book provides scholars of several disciplines not only with a novel way to reassess Love Canal itself but also a way to uncover the intersection of environmental activism with social perspectives.

Maureen A. Flanagan
Michigan State University

The Upper Country: French Enterprise in the Colonial Great Lakes. By Claiborne A. Skinner (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2008) 224 pp. $50.00 cloth $25.00 paper

Targeting a nonspecialist audience, Skinner’s The Upper Country is a broad and compelling synthesis of the history of New France. With the
exception of an introductory passage about the period of Native American dominance and contact, the work provides a linear picture of French colonialism in the Great Lakes region, spanning the mid-seventeenth through mid-eighteenth centuries. Drawing on a vast reserve of secondary sources from both American and Canadian scholars, Skinner deftly cultivates the history of French empire building into a concise, readable volume that provides a general overview of political and military maneuvers, diplomatic actions, economic drive, and social interaction between the French and British nations, as well as between the French and Indian nations. The result is an account that chronicles the evolution of exploration for trade through an imperialistic colonization that concludes with the costly, wanton fight to maintain an ineffective colony against English conquest.

From a creative standpoint, Skinner weaves primary documents into his recapitulation in the form of first-person accounts. Rather than using these sources to reveal new information, he extracts direct quotations from them to punctuate the synthesis and to add a sense of personal interaction with the historical characters. This technique, coupled with a few moments of subtle, wry humor, humanizes what is all too often relegated to academic description. For instance, Skinner relates a humorous story about Richard Pilette, a French trader who, attempting to take advantage of the chaos created at Fort Saint Louis by Joseph Antonine Le Febvre de LaBarre—the outgoing inept governor—posed as the new post commander. Immediately recognizing him as an imposter, Henri Tonti, the actual commander at the time, settled the issue by knocking out the trader’s front teeth with his famed iron fist. Pilette not only recovered; he also remained at the fort, marrying a Native American woman and propagating a large Indian family that reiterated the story for generations. Skinner uses this story to illustrate the survival of Indian alliances (in spite of LaBarre), giving credit, in part, to the “larger than life” actions of commanders such as Tonti, who were able immediately to re-gain the requisite command and respect of leadership (64–65).

Though this book certainly provides a good overview of French colonial history in the Great Lakes Region, it loses some of its efficacy to its brevity. Skinner introduces a vast amount of information in the first few chapters. Those unfamiliar with the regional history will have trouble keeping track of event locations and an ever-changing cast of characters. Similarly, Skinner’s emphasis on military actions comes at the expense of the social and diplomatic nuances of French and Indian relations, which receive only cursory consideration. Understandably, an in-depth analysis of these subjects are not his intent, but given the significance of diplomacy and mutual benefit, the lack of discourse either supporting or opposing the ideals of a middle ground, particularly in the Pays de Haute, is lamentable. Moreover, brevity leads to occasional all-encompassing language that can be misrepresentative. For instance, Skinner makes a broad, generalizing statement assigning excessive use of alcohol to all of the Great Lakes Indians. According to the author, be-
cause of the induction of hallucination “to communicate with the super-
natural . . . Indians drank hard, and would give all that they owned for 
liquor” (20). Such misleading generalizations occur sporadically in the 
text.

Rebecca Nutt
Michigan State University

Measuring the New World: Enlightenment Science and South America. By
Neil Safer (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008) 387 pp. $45.00

Safer’s book follows the celebrated voyage of the Charles Marie de La
Condamine (1701–1774) through South America and down the Amazon. The reason for his trip, which began in 1735, was to measure the 
length of the meridian at the equator to determine whose theory of the 
earth’s shape was correct, Isaac Newton’s or René Descartes’. The voyage marked the unfurling of scientific rationalism across the globe, with La Condamine—a member of the French Academy of Sciences, a friend 
of Voltaire, and a contributor to the Encyclopédie—as rationalism’s in-
trepid flag bearer. Or did it? Safer has little interest in creating a trium-
phant account of the voyage (much of what we know comes from La 
Condamine’s own account, published in 1751, six years after his return 
to Paris). His goal is to explore the ways in which information about the 
New World was constructed, collected, circulated, redacted, edited, 
published, discussed, absorbed, and rebutted by intellectuals on both 
sides of the Atlantic during the age of the Enlightenment.

The work stands as a model of interdisciplinary scholarship. Safer is 
particularly astute at investigating the range of what might be called “sig-
nifying practices”—including and beyond words on the page—that car-
ried meaning to an eighteenth-century public. Thus, he considers not 
only what La Condamine wrote about his own explorations but also 
how the physical traces left in his wake produced knowledge: ruined 
pyramids, drafts of maps, patterns of footnotes, and a pickled monkey (!).

The results are engaging and illuminating. For instance, Chapter 1 
centers on the soon-to-be-ruined pyramids that La Condamine built in 
Ecuador to anchor ground measurements. Safer argues that the pyra-
mids, along with other monuments bearing inscriptions, offered a kind 
of “credibility test” for European arbiters, who were half a world away 
and unable to witness or independently verify the measurements (39). 
Safer’s attention to the role that images played in this chapter and others 
shows a deft commingling of concerns that are usually divided between 
historians and art historians.

Likewise, Chapter 4 draws from the methods of cartographical his-
torians and textual scholars in its scrupulous examination of different 
editions of the “Carta de la Provincia de Quito” (1750), as well as anno-
tated printer’s proofs from the plates at different stages in the engraving
process. Given the meticulous documentation that precedes it, Safier’s conclusion, that “cartographic knowledge-in-the-making was as dependent upon social and material processes in the printing house as it was on on-site reconnaissance in the field,” rests on scholarly bedrock (165).

Safier shows his attention to the lessons of literary scholarship (a faint whiff of deconstruction is perceptible) in his discussion of El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega’s history of Inca rule as it was repackaged in eighteenth-century France. He examines what readers encountered on the page of a text that was “parse[d], deconstruct[ed] and reassemble[d]” by its editors, to argue that “a theory of natural historical progress was represented typographically within” (234, 232).

The book’s sole flaw stems from Safier’s essayistic impulse. His painstaking scrutiny of individual moments or objects coming out of La Condamine’s voyage does not always penetrate to the epistemological conditions that made certain kinds of New World knowledge possible in the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, the book is indispensable reading for anyone interested in fresh interdisciplinary approaches to the science and intellectual history of this era.

Barbara E. Mundy
Fordham University


One of the most remarkable success stories of the late modern era is the Ecuadorian indigenous movement. In this fascinating, slightly uneven, work comprised of eight chronologically ordered chapters, Becker brings a refreshing addition to a growing body of literature. What stands out is not only his employment of a variety of methods drawn from a multitude of social scientific disciplines—archival research, participant observation, interviews, and discourse analysis—but also his unwavering commitment to building an argument rather than unrolling a simple historical narrative.

Becker constructs his argument by characterizing the 1990 Ecuadorian indigenous uprising—details of which he provides in the final chapter—as “a tectonic shift with important consequences for the nature of popular organizing efforts across Latin America” (1). However significant this uprising may have been, it did not represent “the birth, but the culmination of years of organizing efforts that introduced innovative strategies and discourses to advance Indigenous rights and pre-

1 Garcilaso de la Vega, Primera parte de los Commentarios reales, que tratan del origen de los Yncas (Lisbon, 1609). The French version that Safier discusses is Histoire des Incas, Rois du Pérou (Paris, 1744)
serve ethnic identities” (3). These key organizational years did not start in 1964—the year often cited as the beginning of indigenous political organizing in Ecuador, when the lowland Shuar Federation was formed—but rather in 1944, when the Ecuadorian Indian Federation (FEI) became the first organization “for and by Indigenous peoples in Ecuador” (12). The FEI survived into the 1980s until it was replaced by the Confederation of Indigenous Ecuadorian Nations (CONAIE), the preeminent hub anchoring an ever-growing multiplicity of indigenous and allied organizations. Becker draws some of his insights from the CONAIE’s own historical narratives.

Through meticulous historical documentation and ethnographically grounded interviews, Becker discovers not only that Ecuadorian indigenous movements had a longer history than commonly supposed but also that the FEI’s original foci and ongoing platform centered squarely around issues of importance to Ecuador’s native peoples—labor reform, agrarian reform, and both redistributive and ethnic justice. Becker contests suggestions that the FEI was little more than a front for the Ecuadorian Communist Party” (PCE). Instead, he argues that leftist influences helped to bring indigenous concerns to a broader national and international stage and to “trigger a shift in Indigenous strategies from reacting to local and immediate forms of exploitation to addressing larger structural issues” (12). Becker’s feminist-oriented attention, throughout the book, to the role of women in forming these alliances and working on behalf of the FEI and subsequent indigenous movements is an additional strength of the work.

Becker makes the cogent suggestion that, in contrast to Peru, “out of a weak indigenista [non-Indian nationalist idealization of indigenousness] movement a strong Indigenous movement emerged in Ecuador” (86). His research and discussion of the indigenous protests that took place on state-owned haciendas in the Cayambe region in the early twentieth century is especially impressive. Yet, despite his deep historical and comparative insights, the work suffers from a few problems, the most serious being Becker’s overwhelmingly positive treatment of the PCE and FEI, which at times hints more of apology and straw-man construction than analysis. Moreover, Becker might have done well to examine Ecuador’s recent history—from 1990 to the present—in a separate volume rather than in a single, long chapter at the end of this book. The detailed chronology of Indigenous activism that opens the book, however, is worth the price alone, along with the final two sentences: “Indigenous organizations never made a clean break with their leftist past, nor have urban leftists discarded a long reliance on ethnic discourse. Nor would there be any clear purpose for doing so” (193).

Kathleen S. Fine-Dare
Fort Lewis College
This short but provocative book reads best as an extended interpretive essay on the domestic and international politics of U.S. intervention in Latin America during the Cold War, advancing an important, though inadequately theorized, argument about the nature of executive power and U.S. hegemony. Grow surveys U.S. covert or overt intervention in Guatemala (1954), Cuba (1961), British Guiana (1963), the Dominican Republic (1965), Chile (1973), Nicaragua (1981), Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989)—the outlier, given that Manuel Noriega was a right-wing dictator rather than the leader of a radical nationalist or Marxist movement. In each case, Grow argues, U.S. presidents from Dwight D. Eisenhower to George Herbert Walker Bush decided to intervene not primarily in response to economic or security imperatives but on the basis of domestic political calculations, concerns about the symbolic credibility of American power, and appeals by local and regional opponents of the targeted regimes.

Grow marches mechanically through each intervention. In similar fashion, he describes the regimes as they came to power, their growing economic and political radicalism, the concerns that they raised in Washington and among domestic and regional opponents, the symbolic threat that each posed to the domestic and international credibility of presidents at a moment of political vulnerability, and the short-term political payoff that the decision to intervene provided. In British Guiana, the site of one of the least known (at least in the United States) CIA covert operations, President Kennedy in 1963 authorized a destabilization program that forced the avowedly Marxist Cheddi Jagan and his People’s Progressive Party (PPP) from power the following year, despite British willingness to accommodate the regime. Although U.S. intelligence identified Jagan as a security threat and fretted that British Guiana might become a “second Cuba,” Grow argues that Kennedy viewed Guiana “almost exclusively as a domestic political problem” (69), especially in light of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, the neutralization of Laos, and Republican Party and media criticism that the young president was insufficiently tough on Communism. Similarly, he suggests, President Reagan ordered the invasion of Grenada and the overthrow of a radical faction of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) in part to restore his own political credibility in the wake of the disastrous October 1983 bombing of U.S. military barracks in Beirut, deflect public opposition to his Central America policies, and avoid a potentially damaging hostage crisis.

According to Grow, U.S. officials were generally correct in gauging the radical politics and goals of the regimes that they overthrew, but nearly always wrong in asserting Soviet control of—or even great interest in—local communist parties. He concludes that none of these regimes posed any national security threat to U.S. interests despite the
overblown assertions of policymakers. More important, he insists, was the symbolic importance of Jacobo Arbenz, Jagan, Fidel Castro, Salvadore Allende, the Sandinistas and others as alternative models of development or as manifestations of the imagined declining credibility of U.S. power in the eyes of Moscow and regional or European allies. In several cases (Guatemala, Guiana, Chile, Nicaragua, and Grenada), moreover, local elites and neighboring regimes pressed the case for U.S. intervention to serve their own purposes.

This book confirms the insights of scholars who have stressed the agency of local actors in shaping U.S. policy, ascribed foreign-policy shifts to the results of domestic political conflicts triggered by foreign crises, and emphasized the symbolic credibility of American power and the executive branch in shaping threat perceptions. Interventions on the periphery, in Grow’s rendering, represent less the policing of the unstable hegemonic realm than the periodic, symbolic, flexing of political and military power as itself a function of hegemony—as well as the by-product of America’s uniquely (for a democracy) militarized domestic politics.

Grow did no new original research for this book, but he took fruitful advantage of a generation of recent multilingual scholarship and waves of declassified U.S. documents to draw useful comparisons across interventions. Despite its interpretive utility, however, the book has its flaws. The author’s conception of national security, never fully explained, is excessively narrow and theoretically shallow, reflecting a default assumption that U.S. national security was endangered only by the real or threatened presence of Soviet troops or weapons, rather than being itself the result of political conflict by contending social forces or an expansion of the imagined symbolic role of the executive.

Grow also fails to place U.S. interventions during the Cold War in their longer twentieth-century trajectory, during which time interventions sometimes were the reflexive defense of narrow economic interests or the outgrowth of culturally based readings of the financial responsibility of Latin American states—a topic that Rosenberg has explored.1 Furthermore, how Grow’s argument fits into a fuller global context is not clear. Between 1961 and 1965, for example, the U.S. intervened in, among other places, Cuba, British Guiana, Brazil, Indonesia, Guatemala, the Congo, Ecuador, and Peru, not to mention Southeast Asia. This new shift toward broader covert warfare, counterinsurgency, and militarized development reflected ideological, bureaucratic, and organizational transformations in Washington, as well as political struggles on the local level. Between 1979 and 1981, the administrations of Presidents Carter and Reagan implemented counterinsurgency, guerilla, and low-intensity warfare programs in southern Africa, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Central Asia in addition to Nicaragua. Were these episodes driven

by the same constellation of forces, or does Grow make his interpretive claims only for Latin America? If the latter alternative is true, what symbolic or political function does regional intervention serve? If the former, how does the author avoid the slippery slope of a schematic framework that attempts to accommodate myriad forms and episodes of intervention at the expense of analytical depth?

Bradley R. Simpson
Princeton University


Focusing on the Shäwa province of Ethiopia, this book analyzes eighteenth- and nineteenth-century local leaders who developed broader regional ambitions and drew on historical images and ideas to legitimize and advance their evolving political ideology. Inspired by scholars in visual studies, anthropology, and other fields, Jenkins seeks to (1) explicate the relationships between patrons and painters, looking at art and leadership as shaped by internal political dynamics rather than non-African external influences; (2) rehabilitate “modern” period church art, which many scholars see as debased and uninteresting; and (3) analyze changing painting conventions in order to portray aspects of daily life among Shäwa’s leaders. Although this study is well written, interesting, and epistemologically important, the methodology is occasionally unclear. Furthermore, since two-thirds of the book deals with the reign of only one ruler—and much of that analysis is based on the few pictures that are included in a single prayer book—the findings may not be broadly applicable.

In the early stages of research, Jenkins combed several archives, investigating 769 rolls of film related to Shäwa and its secular and religious elites, especially the visual content. Ultimately, she focused on twenty-four illuminated manuscripts (containing 326 images), commissioned by four Shäwan rulers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Hence, royal patronage and similar geographical origins would seem to encompass logical grouping factors, and the temporal range would seem to facilitate the task of discerning change over time. However, some of the assumptions that Jenkins makes about her sources raise concerns. For example, she provides no justification for her treatment, in Chapter 2, of the “Miracles of Mary” manuscript—the only manuscript commissioned by King Amha Iyasus (r. 1745–1775) that is available on microfilm in the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library archives—as representative of the eighteenth-century art that the king patronized.

Four of the nine chapters focus on one of King Sahle Sellasse’s (r. 1813–1847) illuminated prayer books, selected because it contains
secular images from the monarch’s reign. In this case, and others, Jenkins’ methodology consists of describing one of the miniature paintings and then elaborating on a theme or issue depicted therein, such as the use of royal regalia, organized violence, and warfare; or the king’s skills as a warrior, hunter, judge, chess player, and reader. Jenkins’ use of theory, the secondary literature, and accounts penned by European travelers to analyze the content of each image is certainly competent. Oddly, however, other than to describe themes in general, Jenkins does not comment on the textual content of her manuscripts, as if the surrounding words are irrelevant to the images that she is analyzing.

This approach requires explanation, especially since she relies heavily on European traveler accounts. Do these sources offer a more authentic portrayal of Ethiopian court life than Ethiopian documents do? Substantively, Jenkins’ analyses add little knowledge about nineteenth-century Shàwan political culture, although she does make a convincing case that Ethiopian art from the modern period is just as worthy of serious study as older styles. Moreover, her argument that by the nineteenth century, Shàwan kings were influencing art styles and content as part of their efforts to legitimize their secular political authority is compelling.

Jenkins’ epistemological considerations are novel and deserve closer consideration in the field of Ethiopian art history. Her analyses and arguments are informed, interesting, sometimes provocative, and often fun to read. Future studies in this vein should nevertheless include more rigorous discussion of the available evidence, greater elaboration on how examples are selected, and specific discussion of the surrounding Ethiopian language texts themselves.

Tim Carmichael
College of Charleston


Brown’s highly original _The Reaper’s Garden_ disabuses readers once and for all of the cliché that death is the great social leveler. Locating his study in colonial Jamaica, Brown poses the question, “How have people made sense of death culturally and use of the dead politically (258)?” The answer is an innovative blend of political, social, and cultural analysis that reveals the cultural importance of death to struggles for power within an Atlantic slave society.

A methodological tour de force, _The Reaper’s Garden_ employs, in Brown’s words, “a bundle of interpretive approaches” ranging from anthropology and medical history to literature, social history, art, and architecture (255). For example, Brown draws on Verdery’s anthropologi-
cal work on the political reburial of state leaders in postsocialist Eastern Europe to show how slaveholders manipulated the mutilation and display of corpses as instruments of spiritual terror in repressing slave resistance. Describing his approach as a “materialist history of the supernatural imagination,” Brown creates a conversation between an array of primary sources, including wills, sermons, visual arts, songs, planter journals, colonial reports, traveler accounts, and graveyard monuments. Putting well-known evidence, such as William Blake’s engravings of slave death and torture, in dialogue with accounts of African obeah practitioners and eighteenth-century British graveyard poetry deepens the meanings and significance of colonial mortality, which has been primarily viewed by scholars through the lens of demographic history.

Although such an eclectic use of both primary and secondary literature risks superficiality of analysis, Brown deftly sidesteps this hazard with careful contextualization and honest engagement with the ambiguity of the sources. Thus does he join other scholars of the early modern Atlantic whose reconstruction of the lives of enslaved Africans from scraps of colonial evidence rejects, as Brown puts it, the “authority of the omniscient narrator’s voice” and instead exposes the contingency of the archive.

Furthermore, The Reaper’s Garden achieves a remarkable equivalence in its treatment of both European and African cosmologies. Existing historical sources often render Africans in anthropological and collective terms, while portraying Europeans in literary and individualistic terms. By structuring the book around political struggles, rather than static beliefs about death, Brown brings all of Jamaica’s inhabitants into a world where the dead actively shape the lives of the living. For example, African captives, arriving in Jamaica for the first time, saw the British state commit “human sacrifice” through the execution of several naval seamen. English ancestors “reach[ed] back from the grave” through their estates to shape the lives of their descendents. Freedpeople used “the rites of death” to celebrate emancipation by giving slavery a theatrical funeral. As the book progresses, Brown also demonstrates how processes of creolization gradually shifted the “mortuary politics” of both British and African descendents in the British Caribbean.

The Reaper’s Garden uses the tools of multidisciplinary analysis to transform the seemingly well-known fact of Caribbean colonial mortality into a profound exploration of the cultural politics of Atlantic slavery.

Sharla M. Fett
Occidental College

2 See Jennifer L. Morgan, Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery (Chapel Hill, 2004).
There is a myth that there is no such thing as mythology in traditional China. It says that, compared to the rich epics of ancient Greece, such as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or the extensive and often convoluted divine tales of traditional India, notably the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, ancient Chinese narratives of gods and culture heroes are sparse, fragmented, and incoherent. They lack complex symbolism, are not re-enacted in ritual or folk practices, and have little to do with the reality of a living, breathing populace, either then or now.

Baptandier’s new book goes a long way to dispel this notion. Following in the footsteps of such venerable scholars as Maspero, Karlgren, Granet, and Eberhard—pioneers of the early twentieth century—she presents an extensive and detailed study of an important female goddess, exploring her tales and cult on every possible level.¹ The book is historical in its exploration of the origin and development of the goddess myth and its symbolism; philological in its analysis of language and names; sociological in its detailed study of the stories’ impact on community life; and anthropological in its attention to the roles of different members of society (notably women and children) and to the activation of the myth in rituals and traditions.

The subject of the study—admittedly fairly recent, when compared with India or Greece—is the Lady of Linshui (Linshui furen), a woman of the eighth century called Chen Jinggu (d. 790), who lived a short life of twenty-four years in the town of Gutian in the southeastern province of Fuzhou. Exhibiting supernatural abilities from childhood, she underwent Daoist and shamanic training, married Liu Qi, became pregnant, and died while performing a rain-making ritual, but not before vowing to stay in touch with the world and serve as the protector of women and children. She later was adopted as twenty-first patriarch into the Daoist lineage of Mt. Lü, an offshoot of the Lingbao (Numinous Treasure) school with connections to the Zhengyi (Orthodox Unity), Shenxiao (Divine Empyrean), and Jingming (Purity and Clarity) lines. She also inspired various shamanic spirit-medium cults and is still actively involved in trance sessions at popular temples, mostly in southeast China and Taiwan.

The book contains ten chapters plus an introduction and conclusion. The introduction surveys and translates the main accounts of Chen Jinggu’s biography, culminating in a discussion of a lengthy popular

written piece—the Linshui pingyao (Linshui Pacifies the Demons), a partially revealed, partially human-authored account from the seventeenth century, which became a television series in Taiwan and, until recently, was outlawed as “superstition” in the Peoples’ Republic.

The ten chapters can be divided into three major parts: The first two present a detailed analysis of the myth as represented in the Linshui pingyao; Chapters three through six deal with related themes and divine figures; and Chapters seven through ten are based on fieldwork in Fujian and Taiwan, focusing on the myth’s relevance in Chinese society, its importance for women and children, and its representation in Daoist ritual and spirit-mediumship.

The conclusion reinforces the book as a powerful, brilliantly presented, and immensely rich exploration of the myth of the goddess, combined with an effective examination of roles, practices, and symbolic connections in traditional China. The Lady of Linshui is a worthy heir to the myth studies of the great pioneers. It makes a major contribution to the study of East Asian divinity and may well lead to a new scholarship about Chinese mythology as an ongoing process that is as rich and varied as its counterparts in other countries.

Livia Kohn
Boston University


This book is one of the most brilliant and nuanced of the many works about the Partition of South Asia that have emerged in recent years. Its greatest strength is its fine meshing of ethnographical material and sensitivity to the stories of the people involved. It focuses on South Asian Muslim communities, particularly in Delhi and Karachi, and their experience of Partition—the construction of new borders for the sovereign states of India and Pakistan in 1947—which was intended to create a South Asian homeland for Muslims but in reality fractured this community across two countries. By taking these communities as her ethnographic subject, Zamindar places a potentially marginalized history at the centre of her text and at the heart of the narrative of nation-state creation, complicating any automatic or easy assumptions about Indian or Pakistani citizenship.

Zamindar gives real meaning and subtlety to suggestive arguments about the protracted and contested nature of partition in general, the challenges of defining citizenship, and the division of communities, showing them to be far from peripheral but constitutive of it. Personal loss, upheaval, and fluctuating identity, often thought to be incidental to the more visible traumas of violence and refugee migration in Punjab,
were actually devastating within the community. After 1947, North Indian Muslims “saw themselves as part of a shared landscape, albeit an uncertain and shifting one” (76).

As Zamindar suggests, our understanding of the violence that can accompany nation-state creation has to be stretched beyond the literal murders of the Punjabi fratricide (which have understandably taken precedence in the South Asian case in earlier histories because of the sheer magnitude of death and destruction in the summer months of 1947). Her book shows that “partition violence” must “include the bureaucratic violence of drawing political boundaries and nationalizing identities that became, in some lives, interminable” (8).

Zamindar’s finely crafted book has much to offer about how histories of decolonization and the postcolonial can be written in the twenty-first century: She does not shy away from constructing her own categories and from interjecting her subjective observations into the narrative while also utilizing empirical material to build and support her arguments—individual stories, Urdu newspapers, and visual material ranging from cartoons to the evocative passports and permits of South Asian Muslims caught in the border wars of the late 1940s and 1950s.

Yasmin Khan
Royal Holloway University of London