Reviews

*Natural Disasters, Cultural Responses: Case Studies toward a Global Environmental History.* Edited by Christof Mauch and Christian Pfister (Lanham, Md., Lexington Books, 2009) 382 pp. $90.00 cloth $38.95 paper

What would a proper global environmental history be? It would probably be more than a series of case studies from disparate regions around the world. The editors of this collection valiantly suggest that one strategy for responding to the catastrophes that have afflicted humankind in times past and everywhere is to query the very meaning of the two terms *natural* and *disaster.* Much of the human race has certainly moved beyond thinking of such catastrophes as supernatural, the wages of sin, though this conviction dies hard. At any rate, the displacement of the supernatural by natural explanations in Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment societies has nonetheless left analysts with an inadequate understanding of disasters. Recent work of the sort in this collection suggests that naturalistic explanations of catastrophes almost always fail to take human beings’ degradation—or at least their radical manipulation of the environment, as well as their ineptitude in responding to the catastrophic events—sufficiently into account. Even studies in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s that gestured toward the human factor did so ham-fistedly, preferring to lay blame on bad capitalists and bad colonial masters than to delve deeply into the genuinely complex processes of disaster making.

A catastrophe like Hurricane Katrina, as the various essays never tire of pointing out, is not in itself a disaster. A disaster is more than a singular occurrence (high waters, high waves, high winds, earth tremors, no rain, or the like); it entails an impact on human populations directly and immediately by death, injury, disease, loss of homes, and reduction of food supply (leading to malnutrition and even starvation) and indirectly by changes in social habits—relocation of communities for recovery, adjustments in agricultural practices, and changes in the relationship between the territorial state and local jurisdictions, among others. To the extent that the various articles in this collection attempt to understand such events in this wide context, and to show that this is the proper context to understand such events, they constitute a truly global history.

The range of environments, physical and temporal, that are treated is impressive. Occasionally, the findings are revelatory. What preindustrial Finland endured whenever there was a significant summer frost is mindboggling. No single event (summer frost, flooding, or drought) and its consequences in Finland was as severe as the Great Irish Famine and its aftermath during the 1840s and 1850s, but the Baltic country suffered ninety-six crop failures from 1500 to 1899, exacerbated by oppressive political conditions and further compounded by poor to nonexistent networks of transportation and communication. To give another illustration, the failure of the last imperial dynasty in China to modify its policies in the face of “Heaven-sent disasters” was a fundamental factor in the eclipse of traditional rule and the transition to the republican experiment in the early twentieth century.
Occasionally, the findings are befuddling. Otfried Weintritt’s chapter about the cultural and technological responses to the floods of Baghdad throughout history reveals that the stereotype of Islamic fatalism (“Allah has commanded it”) had little or no effect on the population. The author hedges bets, however, intimating that the sources that he consulted may be of a type simply to ignore widespread supernatural explanations for the disasters. A footnote suggests, however, that Islamic fatalism’s practical impact is minor; Weintritt asserts that “even the numerous earthquakes of the Islamic world barely triggered any kind of theological reflections,” apocalyptic or otherwise, let alone affected behavior during the disasters (182, n. 69).

Surprisingly, the article that follows Weintritt’s, Anna Akasoy’s interpretation of earthquakes in medieval Islamic texts, concludes with almost polar-opposite words: These seismic events were, are, and “will always be interpreted according to the Koranic paradigms of divine punishment or warning and as omens of the Day of Judgment” (192). These authors, the former working in Germany and the latter in England, should talk to each other. The result would be modest step in the cause of globalization.

William Chester Jordan
Princeton University

_Orgasm and the West: A History of Pleasure from the Sixteenth Century to the Present._ By Robert Muchembled (trans. David Fernbach) (Boston, Polity Press, 2008) 224 pp. $64.95 cloth $24.95 paper

This is an English translation—and an elegant one indeed—of the French original published in 2005. Muchembled wrote it after spending a sabbatical year at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, from which lofty perch he peered dismally at the American consumer scene and longed for the refinement of Europe. (At collegial lunches, there would be “39 pairs of eyes,” 39 glasses of water, and his sole glass of wine.)

The problem with this book is not that it is based on little in the way of evidence or wide reading in the sources but that every twist and turn in the argument is utterly predictable. Imagine a distillation of everything that Max Weber, Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, and Sigmund Freud had ever written about the relationship between religion, capitalism, and sexual repression. Repression makes us work hard, and libertinism causes us to take our eye off the ball. You will find these pronouncements pressed down, shaken together, and yet running over in these pages.

The book is written at such a high level of abstraction that one misses the pleasure even of relishing the evidence that might have been chosen for such a juicy theme—the anecdotes from the great libertines;
the novelists and diarists; the salty collections of letters of Lady This or That, Samuel Pepys, the Marquis de Sade, and the rest of the captivating sexual canon of the past. None of it is in this book. Instead, Muchembled’s scholarship extends across the secondary literature, which he raids for anecdotes. The pages are a harvest of the fruit of obscure doctoral dissertations plus the apothegms of the aforementioned Greats. Thus, the first question in assessing a book of this nature is, Does the author know the evidence? The answer seems to be, no, not really, unless you consider books on The Making of Victorian Sexuality multiplied by ten to be an adequate evidence base.

The unfolding of the argument, which contrasts France and Britain and latterly the United States, is long familiar: Throughout the five centuries covered by the author, not much happens. Essentially, capitalism rushes on stage and converts the free and easy peasants into obedient robots. The sixteenth century begins the story with a blast of sexual repression: “Pleasure could be conceived of only in pain, sorrow or rebellion.” Nascent capitalism demanded more personal discipline: “The prohibitions linked pleasure closely to sin.” This is not an unfamiliar argument. The years 1700 to 1960 embodied a great cycle of eighteenth-century moral laxity followed by nineteenth-century Victorianism. Since 1960, “the old rigorist model has persisted in the US, but in Europe hedonism rules” (5). Female orgasm and homosexuality erupted into the public realm, and everyone began consuming wildly as a way of circumnavigating their repression. The players ended in an empty preoccupation with the Self.

Familiar and predictable though the argument may be, the second question is, Is the argument right? Is Muchembled correct that past Western culture has offered a largely unrelieved tableau of sexual repression? The problem with depending on the secondary literature is that Muchembled has only the evidence offered on a platter, by authors who have the same kind of vaguely marxo-femino-leftish perspective as he does. Yet, the primary sources of the years 1850 to 1920 or so offer a corrective to this official history-department common-room version. Muchembled characterizes the long haul from 1600 to 1960 as a kind of uniform steel plate of repression, lifted only by the libertinism of the eighteenth century and closed again by the prudery of the Victorians with their draping of table legs and corseting of women. An alternative view (articulated by me in a book similar to Muchembled’s) is that the great breakout from an admittedly repressive earlier epoch began in the middle of the nineteenth century rather than the middle of the twentieth.¹ But so deep is the pool of evidence for either of these characterizations that it is difficult to say which of them is right.

The third question, therefore, is to what extent have students of sexuality, particularly authors of sweeping versions such as Muchembled’s (and my own), been able to grasp the central tendency of a time

on the basis of the kind of anecdotal evidence on which historians have always leaned. A sample of Muchembled’s prose suggests an answer: “Unlike the United States, where the dimension of sin is often indispensable in order to progress beyond the dreary joys experienced by satiated consumers, the new European recipe combats the same risk by refusing anxiety and by increasing the impression of personal fulfillment through the lifting of many taboos” (39). That sentence has a footnote, a reference, in some secondary work, to a television advertisement from 2000. This is unconvincing stuff, more like cocktail chatter than scholarship. There was a period when a number of major figures in the Parisian social-science history scene spent sabbaticals at Princeton. They might well have entertained one another with sentences such as this one at their reunions.

Many readers—particularly those who relish the contributions of Freud, Norbert Elias, and the other repression writers—will enjoy Muchembled’s pensées as a confirmation of wisdom that has been with us for more than a century. Others, particularly those who spy a biological moment in the history of sexuality that transcends unconscious repression, will wonder why anyone bothered to translate it from French.

Edward Shorter
University of Toronto


Historians of nineteenth-century Britain and twentieth-century France and the United States should be provoked, positively, by this thoroughly interdisciplinary treatment of Oscar Wilde’s time, French political corruption, Watergate, and Monica Lewinsky. Adut’s employment of “scandal” as a window onto these and other formative public events is innovative, and plausibly heuristic.

Adut employs several converging definitions of scandal. He writes that “scandal underlies all kinds of events and processes in public that have to do with actual, alleged, or apparent transgressions.” A “catastrophe that instigates recriminations” is an example. So is “a heretical act in the open,” a “witch-hunt,” or even a congressional hearing (23). His sociological point seems to be that scandals are more than they ostensibly seem to be. There are unintended effects on first, second, and third parties. Individuals, groups, organizations, and society as a whole often push back to modify or magnify incidents that caused or formed the ostensible (or actual) bases of the scandal in question. For Adut, scandals are phenomena, obeying peculiar sets of rules and providing unexpected entry into the scandal for participants other than those immediately involved.

These are instructive definitions, but when the author attempts to dissect the American presidency, with its propensity to scandal, he vacil-
lates. On the one hand, scandals stemmed from moral lapses—a mistress in the White House, alleged influence peddling, and a vicuna coat. But, on the other hand, they also flowed out of disagreements between the executive and the legislature—President Tyler’s alleged prevarications and President Andrew Johnson’s vetoes and his attempt to appoint his own secretary of war. Adut implies that President Kennedy’s Bay of Pigs fiasco should have been a scandal, but his popularity and prestige—his charisma—enabled him and his presidency to avoid lapsing into scandal.

As these representative examples suggest, the author believes in broad, indeed muddy, assertions of scandal—or perhaps “imprecise” might be the better adjective. Nevertheless, his contextualization of “scandal” is well-developed and worth pondering. In the case of the American presidency, he argues that the weakness of the nineteenth-century American executive vis à vis the legislature somewhat protected presidents of that era. In the twentieth century, with the rise of a stronger executive branch and of presidents with greater charisma, scandal became more pronounced and central even though a few revelations occurred after a president had left office. Adut’s proposition is that “the accretion of its functions granted a real and symbolic centrality to the presidency.” Thus, “normative attacks . . . [had] . . . collective costs” (94).

Toward the end of the book, in discussing President Clinton’s scandalous escapade, Adut suggests that the high frequency of sex scandals in American political life results from more than a deep-seated puritanical streak in the national psyche or from moral activism. The French, he reports, are no less straitlaced about sex and, especially, the reporting of adultery. They are no less prurient. Paradoxically, Adut argues persuasively that the basic enabling factor that led to sex scandals was the sexual liberation of the 1960s. Sex scandals “luxuriate” when citizens are less modest than before (181). In other words, because the thresholds of shame have been lowered, scandals come easier to Americans (and others) than ever before.

The sex-scandal sections of the book are racier than the others, but the most enriching section focuses on the outbreak of corruption in France. It had always been there; the financing of political parties and other governmental “fishy financial practices” at all levels had always skirted the finer points of legality (135). But in the 1980s and 1990s, what had always been covered up was now investigated and publicized. Adut explains that a primary reason was cohabitation and the strengthening of the power of parlement. The liberalization of the French economy, privatization, and the weakening of pampered monopolies all reduced the power of the center, boosted competition, and increased the costs and profits of “scandalmongering” (139).

Scandals are “profane” and “contagious” (289); they risk polluting the public sphere and magnifying issues that distract leaders and publics from attention to more significant or pressing issues. More tellingly, Adut draws our attention to the phenomenon of scandal and many of its possible permutations and consequences, both unwitting and witting.

The rise of electrification and global financial innovation occurred almost simultaneously, and to an important degree, in a mutually reinforcing manner. The first electric utilities that emerged in the late nineteenth-century United States and Europe required innovative approaches for raising the considerable funds necessary to sustain them within changing social and political contexts.

The novelties of multinational finance that accompanied—and made possible—the electrification process throughout the world constitute the focus of this ambitious book. Global Electrification provides a useful complement to a growing historiography dealing with the embrace of electric power in society, such as Thomas Hughes’ seminal Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880–1930 (Baltimore, 1983) and David Nye’s Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology, 1880–1940 (Cambridge, Mass., 1990). Most originally, it helps to explain how nations—those with and without industrial traditions—found the means to construct a “modern” electrical infrastructure, enabling citizens to enjoy the productivity-enhancing benefits that electricity appeared to offer.

Those means were not, as the authors point out, uniform. Rather, investors and financiers created a host of multinational institutions influenced by national traditions, politics, and legal practices: satellite companies of manufacturers, eager to sell equipment locally and internationally; “enclave” companies that needed electric power at their distant plantations, mines, or oil fields; holding companies that provided capital and management expertise to operating utilities in foreign countries; and “free-standing” companies that drew from multinational investment but did not have much control from abroad. All of these organizations had further ties to a multitude of actors within “clusters,” “networks,” and “business groups” that involved banks, insurance companies, trusts, brokers, and promoters as financial intermediaries. The description of these stakeholders could make one’s head swirl, but it demonstrates that establishing electric-power networks required financial innovation within rapidly shifting social and political environments.

Though the book’s core theme deals with the globalization of financial arrangements for developing the infrastructure of electrification, the authors also note that nationalization (a form of “domestica-
tion”) of utility systems became the norm immediately after World War II. They highlight the factors that contributed to the end of globalization, most notably the growing view that national governments could better ensure oversight of their power networks than could foreign companies, which had primary interests elsewhere. Meanwhile, the book appropriately deals with the recent changes in electricity systems that have contributed to the return of investment by multinational players. Hence, it explains that poorly perceived government regulation spurred a movement beginning in the 1980s to restructure power systems. Deployment of certain free-market principles and the end of restrictive rules on foreign financial participation meant, for example, that during the last two decades, a Scottish company could purchase an American utility, a German firm could hold utility interests in several European countries, and an American business could control power plants in South America. The authors argue that managers of such multinational enterprises would do well to learn from history that forces could push back the pendulum to the other side of the swing—in other words, to nationalization.

Although this book enriches the understanding of how electric-power systems evolved, it differs from the easily read Electrifying America, which contains captivating descriptions of culture to explain the social integration of a new energy commodity. Global Electrification contains heavy, dry, academic prose that makes for tough slogging at times, especially for those unschooled in economic or business history. The authors devote one long chapter (out of seven) to the analytical tools necessary for reading the rest of the tome, and they provide extensive detail concerning the financing arrangements of electric companies in far-flung parts of the world. This detail highlights the notion that electric-power enterprises constituted complex, multifaceted systems comprising technological, political, and financial elements, all of which evolved together.

Richard F. Hirsh
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University


Although Contagion and Chaos is not an advanced quantitative treatment of the subject matter, it bears the marks of a methodology based on variable research, hypothesis testing, and the explication of a formal model. Specifically, Price-Smith outlines a model of how infectious-disease pathogens affect the state, directly as well as indirectly through the intermediary of society.

Price-Smith contends that to understand how (re)emergent patho-
gens act as stressors on the state requires a realist position within political science (the view that international relations are the exclusive result of states interacting “rationally” in an anarchical setting), combined with various aspects of a republican model that emphasizes such nonpolitical challenges as environmental conditions and disease. This approach, he contends, gains further strength through the incorporation of certain elements of political psychology (stigmatization, panic, etc.). To make the argument for such a reorientation, Price-Smith demonstrates how various pandemics, both historical and contemporary (involving typhus, plague, smallpox, cholera, yellow fever, and the Spanish flu), impaired the ability of the state to respond to certain crises. For example, one chapter deals with the extent to which HIV/AIDS influenced Zimbabwe’s governing capacity and national security. Price-Smith also discusses how infectious disease may affect relationships between states, devoting chapters to the regulatory procedures enacted by Britain and other European nation-states during the crises that attended the outbreaks of mad cow disease and SARS and to the changing role of the World Health Organization.

One particularly interesting and intriguing, albeit underdeveloped, dimension of the overall analysis involves the role that chaos/complexity theory may play in understanding the relationships delineated in the model. As Price-Smith notes, aspects of this theory—such as nonlinearity, emergence, feedback loops, tipping points, and punctuated equilibrium—suggest that both biophysical and sociopolitical conditions must be taken into account in any analysis of the relationship between infectious disease and the polity. Although the utility of such a perspective is mentioned throughout the book, Price-Smith might have employed its applications and insights more systematically (especially given the book title) to explicate the countervailing forces of complexity and security. Complexity intimates a lack of certainty and the unanticipated consequences of phenomena like epidemics, whereas security is a socially informed construction based on conventionally positivistic assumptions of prediction and control. By neglecting the problem of how to reconcile these divergent tendencies, Price-Smith misses the opportunity to delve further into the ethics and politics of surveillance and social control, which surely have implications for the actions and capacity of the state.

Price-Smith would probably agree that the complexity/chaos approach has great potential for interdisciplinary research because it requires a tight integration of the social and natural sciences (and not just interdisciplinary social science) to achieve its full explanatory power. Although the promise of the chaos/complexity approach to historical problems has yet to be fulfilled, Price-Smith has made a well-intentioned start with his treatment of the relationship between infectious disease and the state.

S. Harris Ali
York University
This important, sophisticated, well-planned, and intelligent book contains no wild theses or claims. The author has provided a major contribution to late Byzantine (post-1204) history and historical thought, as well as to Byzantine language and the history of ideas.

Ethnicity is now a heavily investigated topic. Page explains his methodology and premises with the declaration that he is “employing a model of ethnicity as an aspect of interaction between social groups” (6). He develops his own conceptual model. Not everyone will agree with him; his is a controversial topic that other scholars are investigating with much more interest than heretofore. There is only limited epigraphic evidence, although Page attempts to probe visual evidence as well. He asserts that ethnicity is a group identity (14). He concentrates on secular “high-style” historical prose sources, making special use of well-chosen Greek historical texts/narratives—Niketas Choniates, George Akropolites, George Pachymeres, John VI Cantakouzenos, Niketas Gregoras, and the anonymous Chronicle of the Morea—with all of the related pitfalls associated with archaic vocabulary and rules of stylistic composition. He draws on perceptions from Constantinople and its vicinity, as well as from northern and southern sections of mainland Greece. He does not analyze outlooks in Anatolia, Italy, and Sicily, all of which had slipped from imperial control.

Page interprets ethnicity as arising from a nexus of (1) individual subjective belief that membership in a named group derives from ancestry (13); (2) possession, expression, or favoring of certain social and cultural traits or ethnic markers (19); and (3) awareness of a boundary and contrasts. He argues that ethnicity cannot be perceived or expressed without other contrasting groups (21).

But Being Byzantine also is a contribution to the broader investigations of Greek identity and its construction. Page devises the important concept of “Byzantine Roman,” which not everyone will find acceptable (I do) (6). Medieval identities were complex. An investigation of being Byzantine in the middle Byzantine period (600–1000) would have encountered different complexities; more time and space would have to be allotted to overlaps and conflicts with identities in the Caucasus, including Armenian, Lazic, and Georgian. The author has read the relevant modern Byzantine historical scholarship as well as the broader theoretical scholarly literature on ethnicity.

Page understands the important background of ethnicity from the early Byzantine and late antique periods, for which scholarly investigation has recently intensified. He is aware of many aspects of identity in the Middle Byzantine Period. In discussing Graikos, Page omits a reference to the use of Graikoi by Procopius of Caesarea (a sixth-century Byzantine historian), in a pejorative sense (63–66). However, he could also have consulted more journal publications, for example, of Vryonis
on Byzantino-Armenian identity in the Middle Period. Most of Kaldellis’ important and wide-ranging publications on Byzantine identity appeared too late for Page to consult.

Page strongly rejects the notion of ethnic irreconciliability. He investigates boundaries. He believes relations between the Latins and Greeks were not driven exclusively by ethnic hostility. He dissects terms such as *genos* and *ethnos* (41), as well as *Rhomaioi* (47). He interprets the twelfth-century Byzantine historian Niketas Choniates’ conception of Rhomaic identity as overwhelmingly political and fundamental with regard to self-definition (74–79, 84–85, and 92–93), and he explores political and ethnic identity within the context of Rhomaic terminology (49–51). He develops a sophisticated analysis of Choniates’ pattern of usage, “to reinforce the non-political aspects of being Roman as certainly being of greater affective force, but the power of the political model is shown in the acceptance of the Latin empire which he recounts and exemplifies, as it were against his will.” He concludes that there was a disjunction between the political and cultural aspects of identity, due to “political power passing out of the hands of ethnic Romans, and a consequent emphasis on the ethnic element of identity.” Page speaks of “the continuing strength of the political imperial aspect of Roman identity” and concludes that by the fourteenth century, the term *barbarian* had become a religious one (270, 280–281).

Page reexamines the role of the Nicene Empire, 1204–1261, and its culture in the matter of ethnic identity, revisiting questions raised previously by Vakalopoulos. However, he makes little use of sources in Latin or vernacular Western European languages for understanding Byzantine identities. Page investigates ideas of Byzantine ethnicity immediately prior to 1204, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but he might have paid additional attention to ethnic identity between late antiquity, the early Byzantine period, and the seventh through tenth centuries, though to do so would certainly have been a formidable task. Ethnic consciousness did not emerge ex nihilo in the century and a half that preceded 1204. Some Byzantinists are wary of trying to measure and track change in the period under study by itself.

Many topics need more research. Page does not explore the different Western conceptions of history or the Western European familiarity with the issue of ethnicity among Byzantines. He implies that the victory of westerners over Byzantines in 1204 affected group identities within Byzantium.

*Being Byzantine* is a significant contribution to understanding ne-

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The Politics of Jewish Commerce is an important and stimulating contribution to at least three areas of study—Jewish history, modern economic thought, and the Enlightenment. Its value lies in the originality of its perspectives, which flow from the author’s excellent decision to adopt an intellectual-historical approach to European economic thought in the period 1650 to 1850 insofar as it relates to the political debate about the place of Jews in modern society. It is a study of how economic debates, and innovations in economic thought, shifted paradigms relating to the Jews, thus affecting both the status of the Jews in European life and the long process of Jewish emancipation.

With regard to the materials on which his discussion is based, the author gives particularly detailed attention to a number of discussions about Jews from the period: Simone Luzzatto’s Discourse on the Jews of Venice (1638), perhaps the first work to discuss the Jews primarily in terms of their role in commerce; John Toland’s Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland (1714); the pamphlets written by Josiah Tucker (1713–1799); Christian Wilhelm von Dohm’s On the Civic Improvement of the Jews (1781); the debate about the Jews within the French Revolution; Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s hostile discussion of Jewish emancipation; and the stance regarding Jewish commerce in the early Karl Marx. Most of this is familiar material but it is assembled within a frame of reference different from that with which we are familiar. The discussion of the work of Dohm (1751–1820), for instance, is more judiciously nuanced than usual. Karp is entirely right to say that “by portraying Jewish economic life as profoundly distorted, while laying the blame on oppressive conditions imposed on Jews rather than their own natures or religion,” Dohm introduced a new paradigm. He clearly shows how this point relates to Enlightenment concerns more generally and why this text dominated debate about Jewish commerce and the question of Jewish emancipation for several decades.

The book is subject to two main criticisms. First, there is something wrong with the balance. Karp pays a lot of attention to economic debates in Britain and Germany, but the equally important economic debates in France are largely ignored (except for those of the Revolution). Denis Diderot inclined to a generally philosemitic stance while also pro-
moting laissez-faire and physiocratic economic doctrines in the *Encyclopédie*. The status of commerce in the eighteenth century and notions about the way in which governments should regulate commerce were profoundly influenced by the work of the French économistes as well as by Jacques Turgot, Guillaume Thomas Raynal, and Condorcet (Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat), all of whom go largely unmentioned in this book. These writers might have had relatively little to say directly about Jews, but the same is true (to a remarkable extent) of Adam Smith who does, however, figure prominently in Karp’s discussion.

The second criticism concerns the way in which Karp contrasts the thought of Dohm with that of such conservative German Enlightenment thinkers as Justus Moser and August Wilhelm Rehberg. Karp sees clearly that Dohm not only takes a position on the Jewish question that is fundamentally different from theirs but also that this disagreement is anchored in divergent conceptions of Enlightenment. But owing to his failure to take account of the Enlightenment’s own internal splits—especially the broad primary division between conservative and radical Enlightenment—Karp fails to make the crucial connection between Dohm and the radical Enlightenment tradition. If he had examined Dohm’s other writings in addition to *On the Civic Improvement* and taken account of his links with Mirabeau (Honoré Gabriel Riqueti), Friedrich Christian Diez, and Johann Friedrich Struensee, he would have brought Dohm into his proper intellectual context.

Jonathan Israel
Institute for Advanced Study

*Worlds Before Adam: The Reconstruction of Geohistory in the Age of Reform.*
By Martin J. S. Rudwick (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008)
614 pp. $49.00

Rudwick’s *The Meaning of Fossils: Episodes in the History of Paleontology* (New York, 1972), despite its relative brevity, was a landmark book in the history of science for its scientific accuracy and its interpretive sophistication. Three decades later, Rudwick published two much longer volumes on a closely related theme, the discovery of time—the first being, *Bursting the Limits of Time* (Chicago, 2005). *Worlds before Adam* is the second. Like *Meaning of Fossils*, these two new volumes are significant for general historians as well as for historians of science. Paleontology was the science that allowed geologists to construct a new timeline for life on earth, thereby allowing historians to reposition human history.

Rudwick’s training as a paleontologist is an enormous asset to his books; he discusses the minutiae of the fossil world with relish and confidence. Chapter 2 (“Monsters from Deep Time”) has, for example, five early nineteenth-century illustrations of the ichthyosaur and plesio-
saur. Further along in the book, he also reproduces an 1821 German illustration of the reconstructed skeleton of the megatherium, an extinct giant sloth, on display since the 1790s in the royal museum in Madrid. These fossil remains convinced experts, and a great many others, that some animals had indeed become extinct—an important first step in establishing a new interpretation of the history of life on earth.

Rudwick’s two volumes span the period from the 1780s to the mid-1840s, when, as he shows, the “discovery of time” took place. Rudwick’s research cast a wide net. A simplified version of the story could have been told from primarily French and British sources, the French taking the lead in the earlier decades and the British in the later. However, Rudwick pulled in material from the Germanies, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, the Mediterranean countries, and the New World. Rudwick’s geographical breadth does a great service to his readers, who will have access to few of the journals that he cites.

Rudwick glances beyond the 1840s. His terminus is John Phillips’ *Life on Earth* (London, 1860), which partitioned the history of life into three eras (Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic). At the close of *Worlds Before Adam*, Rudwick discusses his own methodological approach in a “Concluding (Un) Scientific Postscript.” Among a variety of interesting points, he takes up the question of the relation of traditional religion to the “discovery of time.” He suggests that “the Judeo-Christian cultural tradition had a profound and strongly positive role in the shaping of the new practice of geohistory. What was transposed from human history into geohistory, from culture into nature, was not only a fertile set of metaphors and analogies but also an underlying belief in the *historical* and therefore profoundly *contingent* character of the world, both human and non–human” (565).

Sandra Herbert
University of Maryland, Baltimore County


Although this book is hardly a page turner, it presents a cogent and learned argument in support of its premise—that “law was much more deeply ingrained into everyday life than has until recently been recognized by most historians” (307). Brooks does not explain his scheme in an explicit fashion, but the book divides into two sections, or two different approaches to the theme of the ongoing dialectic between law and socio–political change. In the first eight chapters, Brooks traces the parallel (or the more–or–less parallel) course between the traditional political history of Tudor and Stuart England—from late Henry VIII to the outbreak of the Civil War—and the many contemporary avenues of legal development and legal thinking. In the remaining five chapters, he
investigates legal input and the debates among the lawyers regarding such contested and long-lived issues as land tenure, debt, and obligation; the role and power of the patriarchal family (and its relationship to women’s freedom); and the grip of guilds upon economic “freedom.”

In the first section, Brooks moves chronologically through such issues as royal succession and the nature of monarchy, the role of ecclesiastical courts, and—eventually—the limits of Stuart autocracy as they would be tested by the Bill of Rights, the Five Knights’ case, the right of “free speech” in the House of Commons, and, most famously, the controversy about the king’s right to raise ship money. Much of the discussion of these critical and contested issues rests on an extensive use of manuscript materials (spelled out in ten pages of bibliography). Brooks’ ability to weave familiar materials, like the writings of Edward Coke and William Lambarde, with such lesser-known contributions as the papers of Attorney General John Banks (Bodleian manuscripts) or the Petyt manuscripts (Inner Temple, London) is a genuine tour de force. In the second section, he relies more on modern scholarship, discussing a number of topics that remain relevant for historiographical, as well as social, discourse even today.

Historians generally shy away from questions that involve knowledge of legal or economic history. This monograph may not convince readers to become as versed in the first field as the author is, but it will certainly make them aware of how much legal history has to offer to the familiar tale of political confrontation and social change. Although they were not often invoked by name during the years under discussion, Aristotle and Cicero—along with the home-grown Magna Carta—loom over Brooks’ account of the debate about liberty, property, community, etc. as lawyers came to the fore. William Perkins, the influential Elizabethan clergyman, lamented the extent to which many of the “best and brightest” men of his day were turning from the pulpit to the courtroom. Brooks follows this line of development as he explores local and manorial courts, as well as the higher and more familiar ones. He reveals how these men of law opposed each other, opposed old interests, and (in considerable part) opposed the rulers whose very existence supposedly gave them legitimacy in the eyes of the law with which they sought to re-define the role of the state and the status and “rights” of its more privileged citizens.

Joel T. Rosenthal
State University of New York, Stony Brook


In The Victorian Eye, Otter provides a new political history of light and vision in nineteenth-century Britain, challenging the validity of both the
Foucauldian panopticon and the Baudelairean/Benjaminian flâneur as a means for understanding the relations of vision and power during the period.¹ Combining political history with cultural geography and the history of science, technology, and medicine, Otter argues that although light was indeed used for discipline and display, a full politics of vision comes into view only when we also attend to the physical and technological elements of eyesight and illumination. The resulting account privileges thick local descriptions over broad, theoretical generalizations, but it nonetheless has a broad cultural narrative to offer: The story of the Victorian eye is a tale of the liberal subject, self-governing rather than scrutinized or spectacular.

In his opening chapter, Otter sketches a historical overview of nineteenth-century perception, arguing that urban environments gave rise to new visual practices and visual needs. Modern civilization and the modern city, contemporaries felt, were causing an upsurge in myopia. Ophthalmology developed in earnest, inventing devices for studying the eye and measuring vision and offering injunctions about appropriate postures and light levels for reading, whether at home or in schools. The visual traits of the self-governing liberal subject—attentive, observant, introspective, discerning, and literate—overlapped with, and reinforced, these practical, physical concerns.

Chapters 2 and 3 examine case studies relevant to public vision and inspection, respectively. Otter sees in the regulation of sunlight for buildings and in projects for street widening, smoke abatement, window glazing, and pavement soundproofing what he calls “oligoptic engineering”—the shaping of urban space to create networks of inspection and to encourage public self-observation, while also preserving appropriate, nonpanoptical levels of privacy. Such efforts never succeeded fully in achieving their aims, and sometimes were disastrous failures. But the attempt to balance visibility and privacy, Otter argues, was always prominent. Particularly striking is Otter’s discussion of the systems of governmental inspection—of sanitation, food, lodging houses, and various domestic and industrial “nuisances.” These systems were designed to be accessible at key points but preferably out of sight. Meters for measuring gas or electricity usage by individual houses were positioned outside the home, readable by inspector and owner alike. When inspectors had to enter private homes or businesses, protocols required them to be deferential and unobtrusive.

The next three chapters focus on the introduction of gas and then electric lighting to British cities, giving particular attention to the practical challenges and the networks of people and technology necessary to implement and sustain them. Turning light into a commodity was any-

thing but straightforward. Even measuring light was deeply problematic: What was to be the unit of measure? How could it be reliably standardized, particularly when measurements depended on the subjective impressions of the notoriously varying and inefficient human eye?

Addressing the transition from electric to gas lighting, Otter argues that electric light’s triumph was not inevitable, eventuated in different ways in different places, and occurred only after an extended period in which multiple forms of illumination coexisted. Electricity networks, like those for gas, were dirty, smoky, and often unreliable, but they carried the added element of invisible danger: Gas was smelly, but it signaled its presence, whereas shock or even electrocution occurred without warning. The whiteness of electric light, moreover, unsettled Victorian eyes and had to be shaped for different locations—parlors, public streets, offices, and factories. Whether gas or electric, however, light never flooded Victorian cities for the purpose of surveillance, Otter stresses; illumination was seen principally as a tool for sanitary engineering, though introduced in the cautious, piecemeal fashion consistent with British suspicion of governmental intrusion into personal privacy and autonomy.

By examining the ways in which light was actually produced, distributed, measured, inspected, controlled, and used—by individuals, businesses, and governments—Otter offers a corrective to views of nineteenth-century political vision that look to the power of the individual or the state rather than the dynamic relationship between them. His is an illuminating account.

Jonathan Smith
University of Michigan, Dearborn

The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War. By Adrian Gregory (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008) 354 pp. $90.00 cloth $34.99 paper

This fascinating, deeply revisionist study sets quite a few received opinions on their heads with its imagination, verve, and extensive use of sources, most of which come, by dint of availability, from the middle class—correspondence, diaries, newspapers, and local records. Though not always totally convincing, Gregory’s revisions achieve that primary historical task of making readers reconsider how the past has been interpreted before. Gregory moves the enterprise forward through his discussion of different ways of understanding Britain’s part in World War I. He even revises himself, remarking in an endnote about his The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919–1946 (Oxford, 1994): “I always assumed someone would legitimately challenge some of my arguments. It might as well be me” (334).

Gregory begins by questioning, as others have done, the standard
view that great enthusiasm greeted the outbreak of the war. People gathered in London and elsewhere but more to observe a significant event than to greet it with overwhelming and riotous approval. Once the war started, there was a sense of commitment to see it through to a successful conclusion. Young men flocked to the colors, more from the middle class than the working class, but not in a jingoist way—many of them, in fact, betraying a sense of reluctance. With the intelligent use of a variety of sources, Gregory also refutes the generally held belief of a great divide between the war front and the home front. There was considerable awareness of what the soldiers were experiencing in France.

Despite the brilliance of Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York, 1975), its emphasis on the great writers of the war does not necessarily lead to an accurate historical picture. Again, contrary to received opinion, Gregory demonstrates that most people realized that the war was not likely to end quickly. He describes recruitment as being more limited than usually thought; tribunals excused many men from service on the basis of their employment or family situations. The tribunals are generally known not for such leniency but for their brutal treatment of conscientious objectors, a small proportion of their cases. Gregory points out that, even after acknowledging the exaggerations, the Germans undoubtedly behaved badly in Belgium, presenting, in his view, a more legitimate *casus belli* than the instigations in Poland before World War II. He discusses war profiteers but points out that farmers profited far more from the war than merchants and manufacturers did. He even argues convincingly that the poor were likely to have a better quality of life in the army than in the slums; those from the coal-mining communities might even have been in less mortal danger in the army. Though he is not the first to make these observations, Gregory reports that food controls during the war improved the poor’s diet, contributing to a significant decline in infant mortality.

In his conclusion, rather than summing up the book, Gregory argues that the Treaty of Versailles might well have prevented World War II if it had been enforced and that Germany was treated much more brutally after World War II than after World War I. He reminds us, in the tradition of A. J. P. Taylor, that Britain went to war a second time for traditional reasons and not because of the murderous activities of the Nazis, which were not fully known until late in the war. He refutes the standard notion that World War I was unnecessary: German aggression was real and dangerous.

This is an important and exciting book, though powerful arguments can certainly be made to modify or refute the views that Gregory advances in it. Thus does the debate continue, allowing us better to understand the past.

Peter Stansky
Stanford University
In writing the history of food, more specifically of French haute cuisine, scholars have often turned to the study of early culinary texts. The sudden surge in published cookbooks from 1650 through the 1800s has provided researchers with richly detailed sources of the historic shift from heavily spiced, medieval cookery to what we now know as modern, nouvelle cuisine with buttery sauces and simpler preparations. Until recently, food historians focused their attention primarily on the recipes themselves (and to what little we know of the cook-authors). Culinary history, in the tradition of hagiography, had become a fetishistic study of less religious than delicious objects; authors pursued food from manor farms to banquet tables like a moveable feast. Readers may always have an appetite for these works, but what do they teach us about the people of the past who invented new tastes and the social and economic conditions that fostered new dietary habits?

Pinkard’s contribution to our understanding of this historical turn brings a synthetic approach. She depicts the rise and fall of markets and food surpluses in France, as well as the scientific knowledge and cultural beliefs that contributed to what might have been the most significant transformation in French cooking (and the greatest contribution to gastronomy in the West before the advent of modern food preservation and fast food). Rather than seeing the popularity of medicine and dietetics as the primary cause for the decline of spicy cuisine and the rise of delicate cooking, Pinkard affirms the widely held Braudelian interpretation, namely, that nouvelle cuisine first appeared in the 1740s and later gained a strong following throughout the eighteenth century with the greater availability and variety of vegetables and the lesser demand for spices.¹ Her analysis of this shift offers little original research, but it does provide greater nuance than the rise and fall thesis. As she argues, one culinary tradition did not simply supplant another but more often co-existed in the French diet throughout the eighteenth and even into the nineteenth centuries.

Pinkard describes the inherent contradictions of nouvelle cuisine, deemed simple and natural, which, with its numerous steps and ingredients, was hardly simple to prepare. She briefly addresses the far-reaching debates about nutrition and dietary health among doctors and physiologists, focusing her attention on the published food therapies that prescribed much of eighteenth-century dietetics. To chart the change in food habits, she focuses on evidence from court memoirs, banquet menus and the publication record of leading cookbooks.

Pinkard performs careful analytical work with culinary texts familiar to many food historians, offering critical readings and counter-evidence

(particularly about the nature of kitchen work) to demonstrate how social practices and cultural beliefs influenced changes in taste. Her book may finally put to rest many culinary myths that have persisted in the popular mind. One example is the unfounded belief that modern French cooking arrived in Paris in the early sixteenth century with Catherine de Medici and her cooks from Italy. Without ignoring the key contributions of published food writers of the period that helped to shape this “revolution,” Pinkard’s work goes further to situate their lives and their ideas about the natural taste of foods within the larger conversations held forth by Rousseau and other Enlightenment thinkers. The refinement of taste went hand in hand with the refinement of manners and consumer habits.

Sydney Watts
University of Richmond


Weil’s book, deftly translated by Catherine Porter, constitutes not only the definitive work on the history of French nationality laws but also a study that by any standards ranks as an outstanding piece of scholarship. Built on extensive archival work and encyclopedic knowledge of its subject matter, the book combines an often gripping history of French nationality laws with revealing comparative analyses referencing other Western states and a wealth of information in its appendixes that offers ready access to virtually every aspect of the subject.

Although the details of nationality laws tend to be dry reading, their impact on individual human beings can be immense—opening rights of citizenship or raising threats of deportation and, in extreme cases, representing the difference between life and death. Weil succeeds in covering both the technical and the deeply human aspects by illustrating the effects of nationality laws through judiciously chosen case histories that provide revealing insights into key issues and trends. He is also exemplary in his handling of the explosive ideological charge that sometimes attaches to the politics of nationality laws, most notably during the occupation period, when the Vichy regime stripped thousands of Jews of French nationality, preparing the way for their deportation to Nazi death camps. Weil recounts these and more recent events relating to Muslims with remarkable restraint, allowing such civil servants and politicians as Georges Mauco and Valéry Giscard d’Estaing to hang themselves, in effect, with their own racist or quasiracist words, which he quotes from public and archival records to devastating effect.

The book is divided into three main parts, of which the first two trace the evolution of French nationality laws from the end of the ancien régime to the present time. Part 3 is framed in more thematic terms: In Chapter 7, Weil provides a valuable corrective to stereotypical images opposing France’s so-called “republican” tradition to an “ethnic” model associated with Germany. In Chapter 8, he reviews the ways in which certain groups—women, colonial subjects, and naturalized persons—have been denied full citizenship while holding the formal status of French nationals. In Chapter 9, he offers a synthesis of current nationality laws and their administrative operation. Although the book might have benefited from a more extended theoretical discussion of the relationship between nationality and citizenship—drawing on such notions as Hammar’s concept of denizenship and Bauböck’s distinction between nominal membership and substantial citizenship to help more clearly grade and categorize the forms of discrimination discussed in Chapter 8—this invaluable study is certain to remain the standard work on the subject for many years to come.¹

Alec G. Hargreaves
Florida State University


Fuchs, whose previous work focused on female poverty, pregnancy, and child welfare in nineteenth-century France, turns her attention in this book to the issue of paternity as a means of exploring changing attitudes toward the family in France. At the center of her study are contested definitions of paternity and those who fell outside the confines of the traditional family in legislative and legal debates. Through an analysis primarily of court cases and legislative debates, she illuminates changing attitudes toward parental responsibility, the family, the rights of children, and female agency from the end of the eighteenth century to the present.

The starting point for this book is an attempt to understand the 1804 Code Napoléon’s ban on paternity searches (recherché de paternité), which remained in place until 1912, when the law was altered significantly. She is as much interested in legal history as she is in how the law functioned and how legal suits ultimately changed the law. Drawing from an impressive array of judicial archives, legislative debates, popular literature, and the press, Fuchs explores the origins of new ideas concerning paternity and the family throughout a 200-year period. Paternity was long considered to be a biological category, even though medical

¹ Tomas Hammar, Denizen to Kokumin-kokka (Tokyo, 1999); Rainer Bauböck, Transnational Citizenship: Membership and Rights in International Migration (Aldershot, 1994).
science did not have the tools to determine propinquity by blood type or genetics until the mid- to late twentieth century. Indeed, in 1883, one legislator declared that “paternity is as mysterious as the source of the Nile” (2). In the absence of verifiable proof, Fuchs shows how French men and women navigated the difficulties that questions regarding the issue presented, while seeking to understand why paternity was such a heated issue for the period that she surveys.

Fuchs clearly shows that family law as embodied in the Civil Code of 1804, and more specifically its ban on paternity suits, was motivated by an attempt to shore up paternal authority in the legally established family. The framers of the Code believed that paternity searches would result in discord in the social and legal order. Chapter 1 analyzes the establishment of this new order from the Old Regime to the beginning of the First Empire. Chapter 2 explores the continued attempts by women to seek child support and reparations from men who had allegedly seduced and abandoned them. Chapters 3 and 4 chart the growing intervention by the state and justice systems in private family matters, a trend that was, in part, encouraged by growing fears of depopulation. This trend culminated in the law of 1912, which once again permitted paternity searches and shored up children’s rights.

The remaining two chapters of the book explore how the new law was played out in courtrooms and in public debate during the twentieth century, with particular attention to the kinds of proof that were required in courts, as well as how families were defined and reconstituted. Fuchs describes in poignant terms the difficulties that women faced in bringing their cases to court and traces the vagaries of the legal system. Her discussion of paternity and family life during the German occupation of France in World War II is particularly compelling. For example, the family drama surrounding the Kahan and Ponelle families, which involved a custody battle after the divorce of Léon Kahan, who was Jewish, and Arlette Ponelle, who was Catholic, revealed the effect of the occupation and antisemitism on the way in which the law was applied.

The cases that Fuchs presents are fascinating, leading to the conclusion that men in France were increasingly called upon to be good fathers. At the same time, male authority, after a brief recrudescence, declined after World War I. Furthermore, in spite of all the legal hurdles that they faced, women continued to press their claims in court. Although the law, as Fuchs suggests, lagged behind social and cultural change, by the end of the twentieth century, conceptions of the family had changed substantially to encompass consensual unions, single parenthood, reconstituted families, and same-sex unions.

Caroline Ford
University of California, Los Angeles
Fogg analyzes the much-discussed topic of Vichy France and its treatment of outsiders through a new lens. Most studies employ political and legal history to determine Vichy’s attitudes toward the “other” or have looked at the treatment of Jews, especially foreigners, and Gypsies from a top-down perspective. Fogg persuasively utilizes a bottom-up view of social history by focusing on everyday interactions, primarily around food, housing, and other shortages, to provide a multifaceted portrait of social relationships in France from 1939 to 1944.

By examining the challenges that all French residents faced when confronted by the government’s failure to provide adequate material goods in both the occupied and unoccupied zones, Fogg illuminates major motivations in human relationships in times of crisis. She posits that rather than representing a monolithic response by French people to outsiders, relationships shifted according to material circumstances more than ideological conviction. By examining a rural community, the Limousin—with particular reference to the interactions between locals and Alsatian refugees, Jews, adults and children, Gypsies, and French urban dwellers desperately in need of provisions that they could not secure legally—Fogg has probably arrived at a much truer and richer depiction of Vichy France and its dynamics than her predecessors. Her perspective and methodology provide a fine model for probing other societies and their subsets in times of stress and social breakdown. Her sociological and anthropological way of looking at historical events and source materials, which also incorporates economic history, has created a study that is authentic to everyday experience. This book is grounded in extensive archival research in the best tradition of good social history, while weaving it together with the most recent findings of other scholars from multiple historical perspectives to produce a whole cloth.

Fogg’s thinking and methodology may best be illustrated by looking at her comparison of the treatment of Jews and Gypsies. Although both were targets for extermination by the Nazis, Fogg discovers that their ultimate destinies were markedly different: 76,000 Jews living in France died during the Holocaust, whereas 145 French Gypsies were deported—none of them from France but from a Belgian internment camp. Yet French attitudes toward Gypsy and Jewish families and children were distinctly dissimilar, revealing the complexities of both French attitudes and Vichy policies. Without understanding the real and perceived dynamics of Jewish and Gypsy family life, views of the experiences of the two groups remain static and two-dimensional. Although Jews were blamed by government propagandists for shortages, ordinary citizens often knew better and quietly held the government accountable, hoping to avoid calling attention to their own illegal coping strategies. As a result of that view, as well as sympathy for Jewish children and a
more positive view of Jewish family life, people of the Limousin frequently aided Jews, but they almost never interceded for Gypsy families who were viewed as dirty, antisocial thieves. By applying a sociological perspective to French perceptions of Jewish and Gypsy families, especially around issues of material shortage, Fogg presents a motion picture of wartime dynamics rather than a snapshot of the treatment of each group. By combining original archival research with a synthesis of the most recent scholarship on Vichy, Fogg sets a new benchmark in local and social history.

Donna F. Ryan
Gallaudet University

Honor and Violence in Golden Age Spain. By Scott K. Taylor (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008) 307 pp. $55.00

Since the publication of the classic anthropological studies of Mediterranean culture by such luminaries as Pitt-Rivers and Peristiany, many scholars have examined the multiple ways that honor can structure, and be structured by, societies well beyond the scope of this region. Taylor brings the analysis of honor back to its roots in Spain. Many scholars have pinpointed Golden Age Spain as the apotheosis of honor systems, especially because playwrights like Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca celebrated this code of honor during this period. The question at the core of Taylor’s monograph is whether these plays mirrored what the writers saw around them or whether Spaniards followed different codes.

Taylor uses two series of criminal documents to paint a picture of the daily decisions that Spaniards made when confronted with challenges to their honor. The sources were not plentiful for this period; in fact, Taylor was able to find only two series that were complete enough to be useful—criminal cases from a town called Yébenes and the Good Friday pardons. Taylor quotes from the plays and uses the criminal documents and a few moral treatises in order to debunk the notion that these plays in any way reflected the day-to-day realities lived by Spaniards. His argument is useful but not particularly new, since other authors have already made this claim. Nevertheless, Taylor adds to the honor canon by making a case for a rhetoric instead of a code of honor. This distinction may seem subtle but it points in the direction of less rigid definitions and reactions. What Taylor shows in the criminal cases is that Spaniards responded to challenges to their honor in many ways.

2 See, for example, Felix Lope de Vega’s play, El maestro de danzar (1594), or Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s play, La vida es sueño (1635 or 1636).
People led complex lives and behaved in ways that were not particularly formulaic.

The richness of this book lies in Taylor’s detailed discussion of the interactions, petty quarrels, and the jockeying for position in which people engaged regularly; through this discussion, Taylor successfully conveys everyday life in Golden Age Spain. He revels in the abundance of documentation that he consulted. He provides specialists in honor and violence studies with many details about customs—how Spaniards, say, expressed their disapproval (for example, by burning doors) or how they signaled the beginning of a fight (by removing their capes and touching their swords). The book is disappointing only in its failure to engage with the literature of other disciplines and other regions, which would have deepened the analysis. Yet, it deserves to be read not only by specialists of Iberia and Latin America but also by those interested in studies of criminality and violence and in criminal documents as a window onto plebeian culture.

Sonya Lipsett-Rivera
Carleton University


The three closely related essays in this lovely volume combine graceful erudition with a potentially compelling feast of images created by, or portraying, the very friends we come to know in the written text. Kent dedicates the volume to “all my friends,” a fitting tribute to the legion of people with whom she has worked over the years, none of whom, presumably, and to the best of my knowledge, have behaved in the troubling ways explored in her third essay, which features murder and shocking duplicity.

The opening essay explores the contours of friendship and its meanings for fifteenth-century Florentine humanists, who invariably started from, and ultimately returned to, the complexities raised in Cicero’s De Amicitia, which had come to overshadow the earlier centrality of Aristotle’s Politics and Ethics in such discourses. Among the many characters presented are architect Leon Battista Alberti, Cosimo de’ Medici, and his son Piero, together with herald Anselmo Calderoni and banker Giovanni Rucellai. A brief appendix of dramatis personae contains eighty-four names, more than sometimes encountered in the survey samples done for research studies on friendship (or peer groups) that pour forth from sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and life coaches in our own day. Kent elegantly introduces her wide sample of characters but make no mistake about method. Hers is a leisurely, absolutely nonquantitative stroll through the curiosities, the unique expressions, the quodlibets, and even the absurdly illogical musings of her highly literate, elite
population—comprised almost entirely of men, since humanists uniformly deemed women to be incapable of true friendship, notwithstanding the notable exception of Vittoria Colonna.

The second essay, equally delightful, makes the widely useful generalization that friends met with each other eye to eye, or rather more intimately and illicitly, and that they did so in specific places in and around Florence. As with the first essay, Kent eschews the language of social science on the loci of meetings (church, piazza, tavern, theater, dining room, or bedroom), and the theoretical probing of Jürgen Habermas on public space, to offer instead an expertly guided tour of the city’s hot night spots, its picnic retreats, and its cool dark church corners, where male friends might do as they desired.

The third essay absolutely blows out of the water both the initial essay’s rhetoric on the meaning of friendship and the next chapter’s survey of behavior when amici met. As Kent aptly puts the matter, “Could friends be trusted? The answer was no, or hardly ever” (157). As any exploration of Renaissance Florentine friendship surely must do, this essay recounts the assassination of Giuliano de’ Medici on Sunday, April 26, 1478, in the cathedral church of Santa Maria del Fiore no less. His killers included members of the illustrious Pazzi family, who had been bound for many decades by marriage and, above all, by male friendship with the Medici clan. But friendship based on patronage cannot be true, and the lure of a papal-backed power grab proved irresistible. The conspirators also killed one of Giuliano’s defenders, and they certainly meant to kill his brother Lorenzo as well. But Lorenzo slowly recovered from his multiple wounds, eventually to become Lorenzo the Magnificent, a benign ruler who eventually forgave even the surviving Pazzi family men.

Forty illustrations enrich the text, but on this score, I wish to enter a quibble. In their black-and-white format, often so condensed as to mar appreciation of the details, the visuals serve at best as pointers to proper representations of the brilliant originals. Might it be better for publishers that cannot afford proper reproductions to include instead a DVD, or a password-protected link to some entry page on the publishers’ own website, or even a list of public URLs so that readers can actually see more of what needs to be seen?

Rudolph M. Bell
Rutgers University, New Brunswick.


Ferraro’s Nefarious Crimes, Contested Justice examines cases of incest, infanticide, infant abandonment, rape, and abortions in Venice and the Veneto between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. By looking at
sexual relationships that occurred outside marriage as reported in Venetian criminal courts, Ferraro explores how both secular and religious institutions monitored sexual behavior and disciplined sexual deviance.

Ferraro has unearthed some shocking stories. The trials tell of fathers who raped their daughters repeatedly over many years, often responsible for multiple pregnancies, miscarriages, births, and children subsequently killed or removed to foundling hospitals, and priests who seduced young girls and transported them far from home to give birth secretly or to take medicinal powders for aborting their pregnancies. The most dramatic case—that of Bianca Capello (1778)—involved a patrician family imprisoning a young noblewoman within their home where she was (possibly) poisoned, sexually abused, and raped by family members, resulting in several miscarriages and births over many years. These cases as a group illustrate how unmarried women and the men who slept with them managed both their socially forbidden sexual relationships and their unwanted pregnancies.

By examining these cases closely, Ferraro deftly demonstrates the uneven and unpredictable nature of justice in the early modern world. Popular networks of neighborhood and community often had the power to determine which sexual behaviors were forbidden and whether and how people were to be punished for them. Although formal, secular authority, or “the law,” may have represented the primary force of justice in these cases, the documents from these court cases show that the influence of nonprofessional and lower-class individuals and their communities rivaled that which radiated from the halls of state and courtroom.

Much of Ferraro’s analysis, however, represents well-tread ground. For instance, she and other scholars of early modern Italy have already explored both the shame that sexual deviance, rape, or illegitimate sexual relationships could bring to families and the extent to which patriarchal power and family honor could subsume justice for women. In addition, as gripping as these stories may be, in terms of historical methodology, they nevertheless raise the persistent, nagging question of the value of microhistory. Ferraro herself is the first to note that as a methodology, “close microhistorical study does not necessarily produce patterns” and that “a few stories do not constitute a master narrative” (10, 36, 200). Nonetheless, she claims that these trials are informative about “how early modern women and men and their neighborhood communities understood unwanted pregnancies” or about how families grappled with “rifts over inheritance and authority” (117, 114). Her conclusion suggests that the details of these trials demonstrate that abortion and infanticide were men’s crimes as much as women’s, that the private sphere and the home were by no means safe havens for women, and that the Catholic Reformation was as concerned about the sexual practices of unmarried people as it was about charity and pastoral care.

These interpretations are logical and intelligent, but like even the best microhistories (by the best microhistorians), Ferraro’s study to some
degree remains in search of a larger argument and bigger meanings. Scholars have raised the same issue with regard to such great works of microhistory as Carlo Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore, 1980) and Natalie Zemon Davis’ *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York, 2006). Ferraro is a top-notch scholar; her archival and analytical skills are beyond criticism. Yet no matter how compelling her work, it still leaves us questioning the significance of this handful of stories—plucked from two centuries, we must add—in the bigger picture. Either microhistory has seen its day, or Ferraro and other scholars of her ilk and talent need to continue to push at its boundaries to give it more a point and purpose.

Liz Horodowich  
New Mexico State University

*The Scourge of Demons: Possession, Lust and Witchcraft in a Seventeenth-Century Italian Convent.* By Jeffrey R. Watt

With this solid monograph, the first English-language study of an outbreak of demonic possession in an early modern Italian convent, Watt joins a select group of early modern scholars who have moved south in mid-career from Protestant Switzerland into Catholic Mediterranean Europe (I know of none who has gone in the other direction). His work enriches current knowledge about episodes of demonic possession in seventeenth-century female convents and illustrates the a priori skepticism of the Roman Inquisition about charges of witchcraft stemming from exorcisms, but without significantly altering our general picture of either.

In brief, this is a tale of less-than-irresistible force—spectacular misbehavior by a dozen Franciscan nuns, fanned by a retired duke turned monk—eventually being stifled by an immovable object, the Roman Holy Office. The outbreak occurred at Carpi in the late 1630s at a large and prestigious Franciscan convent in the Duchy of Modena just after the widely reported possessions at the French Ursuline convent of Loudun had finally dwindled. Loudun was a tragedy; Italian-style possession came closer to farce. Instead of being judicially murdered, Carpi’s principal suspect was never arrested. Loudun’s possessed nuns produced spectacular obscenities; those at Carpi performed their acrobatics demurely. Loudun produced three written pacts with the Devil; Carpi, only a few rumors. The one major similarity was that both were finally ended by Jesuit troubleshooters, who gradually managed to quiet these scandalous disturbances after quarantining the most energetic demoniacs.

Watt follows the fashion of establishing agency among Carpi’s possessed nuns, but he does not delve deeply into the most interesting problem emerging from his careful reconstruction—the collective (and
largely successful) vigilante justice practiced by the principal “possessed” nuns against Dealta Martinelli, a nonconformist colleague whom they held responsible for their sufferings. There were actually two attacks on Martinelli—the first being at a major festival in April 1638, when between four and eight of them physically attacked her and no one came to her defense (61–63). Local authorities promptly isolated Sister Dealta from her community, but Rome prevented them from arresting her. From the viewpoint of the possessed, this at least partly successful action foreshadowed the most psychologically and culturally significant episode in Watt’s story, which occurred only two days after Dealta’s release in October 1638 (149–156).

Although male clergy watched constantly, and the remaining nuns made few efforts to intervene, five of the most determined demonically possessed nuns carried out a day-long kidnapping of sister Dealta. Eyewitnesses reported that all five went thirty-seven hours without eating or drinking and that four of them remained standing for twenty-three hours, while at one point their hostage ate two hard-boiled eggs. This extreme and relentless harassment ultimately overcame the resistance of a woman who had shown no sign of guilt during their previous attack; Deata finally made a public confession. Since the Roman Inquisition never contemplated charging her with witchcraft, it could ensure her physical safety only by transferring her to another convent in a different city.

Carpi experienced no aftershocks. Between 1649 and 1657, two of the five exorcists involved in this affair became confessors at Santa Chaira; between 1665 and 1681, four formerly “possessed” nuns became its abbesses (212, 213). Seven Clarisses still live there today.

William Monter
Northwestern University


The place on which Storey’s book on prostitution in the early modern era focuses is significant. As the capital of Catholic Christianity, Rome held political, religious, and symbolical importance. The city’s dynamic population created a unique opportunity for women: Its male-to-female ratio of at least 150 to 100 presented a gender “imbalance” that “encouraged” prostitution (60).

Using multidisciplinary theory and approaches, including archival work (involving, for example, the randomly selected wills of 124 prostitutes), literary analysis, art, music, gender history, economics, and the study of material culture, Storey argues that post-Tridentine attempts by popes to control prostitution met little success. Before the Reformation, Rome had been famous for its prostitutes. Making the obligatory trip to
Rome, Martin Luther, while still a monk and prior to his conversion, remarked with distaste about Rome’s sexual mores (a point not mentioned by the author), knowing that “the district of ill fame was frequented by ecclesiastics.”¹

To control behavior and, coincidentally, strengthen “patriarchal control over women” by devising “ways in which men could reassert their dominance and power” (5, 52–53), both texts and popes sought dramatic reform. The rhetoric of the Catholic Reformation suggests that, as a result of heroic effort, “prostitutes had been largely banished from Rome” (93). But as was often the case with attempts at Catholic reform, those charged with cleaning up the mess were among those who most benefited from the status quo. As the Venetian ambassador noted, expelling prostitutes could cost the city 20,000 ducats annually. Papal attempts at a political solution ran up against the opposition of the Popolo Romano, dominated by Roman aristocrats. In addition, prostitution provided an outlet for male sexuality and was thought to reduce male–male sex. Thus, Tridentine attempts to stop prostitution—whether aimed at poor streetwalkers or at courtesans—failed.

Demonstrating how a young woman could earn money for a dowry through prostitution and later be (sequentially) a wife and a nun, Storey depicts the fluidity of female categories. She offers fascinating insight into the ways in which prostitutes, often with the support of their clients, thwarted outside attempts to control their lives. They conspired with their wealthy lovers to evade the prohibition against riding in carriages; when one prostitute was arrested and brought to the Roman governor, her powerful lover forced the governor to apologize in writing. If regulations prohibited their throwing parties, courtesans bribed the police and had parties anyway. Scholars who study the marginalized in early modern Europe will not be surprised at the assertion that prostitution played a role in “the family economy of many Romans” or that it was part of a financial strategy for poor non-Roman women, who faced “extreme economic vulnerability” in the city (139, 127).

Some accused women, admitting that they charged a fee for sex with men, denied that they were prostitutes, claiming that they were “free” persons exercising their own free will—an interesting use of spiritual rhetoric (227). Storey argues persuasively that successful prostitution typically depended on a regular client (“amico fermo,” 165). Her work on material culture as well as on the investment opportunities open to these women is important, but her assertion that prostitutes were “fashion leaders” is not as convincing (194).

Storey discusses relationships among women involved in prostitution but is unable to find much evidence for the roles of fathers or husbands. Her use of anecdotes is unavoidable in this type of work. The narratives in her chapter on “Becoming a Prostitute” will capture any reader, though not without a frisson of prurient voyeurism: Storey de-

¹ Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York, 1950), 50.
scribes men prostituting underage girls or their own wives, stabbings, jealousy, mental illness, perjury, official corruption, claims of rape vs. consent, an allegedly duped father (it turns out he was in on the caper), parental complicity, and murder. Since the author does not often provide the original text, accepting translations of testimony about “me and my old man” requires trust (153).

The last chapter’s discussion of Lutheran and Catholic views of prostitution seems at odds with the book’s theme, which was not about this issue. But the assertion, following Hufton, that understanding prostitution in early modern Rome depends on seeing both continuity and change over time is important, and lies at the core of this good book.²

Carol M. Bresnahan
The College of New Jersey


Although patronage is a topic that scholars have studied from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, social-science treatments have tended to predominate the literature and thus to color the most recent studies. Many historians tend to view patronage as a static and strictly hierarchical arrangement of networks. But in early modern Europe, patronage (and its correlate, clientage) was inextricably interwoven with all aspects of both public and private life, making the static construct increasingly problematic. In this study of the patronage network of William Frederick of Nassau-Dietz, Janssen offers a case study of patronage to counterbalance the many studies that portrayed patronage/clientage as a one-dimensional arrangement.

Janssen makes use of a variety of sources to present this case study, but the letters and extensive diaries of William Frederick are clearly his most important and richest sources. To counter the self-promoting bias of his autobiographical evidence, Janssen makes it a point to ask what function the texts filled for William Frederick when he wrote them rather than to accept them as a “mere record of his life” (9). For Janssen, the diaries contain a “detailed record of favours, services and courtesies exchanged” throughout William Frederick’s adult life (11). Coupled with thousands of letters to and from William Frederick, these diaries provide a full picture of his patronage relationships.

Janssen focuses on revealing the dual roles that William Frederick played as patron on one hand and client on the other. The multifaceted nature of patronage relationships is even more clearly illustrated in the case of William Frederick because of the additional aspects of public and

private patronage networks. Though not necessarily unique to the Dutch experience, the roles that William Frederick played as Stadholder in the province of Friesland (public) and as Count of Nassau-Dietz (private) meant that he needed to cultivate distinct patronage/clientage relationships. The result was a complex and dynamic social and political milieu that William Frederick was forced to negotiate throughout his life.

The organization of the book reflects these diverse roles. Janssen first presents William Frederick as patron establishing relationships and bestowing favors by virtue of both his political office and his hereditary county. As Stadholder, William Frederick was under certain constraints as a patron due to his office and the expectations and requirements set by the Frisian provincial states. As Count of Nassau-Dietz, he had no such constraints and could be much more flexible in granting favors. Later in the book, Janssen presents William Frederick as the client of William II, the prince of Orange, his wealthier and more powerful relative. Janssen deftly illustrates the switch that William Frederick made from patron to client when in his cousin’s court in The Hague.

Janssen’s argument that “clientage was not a matter of fixed relationships, but a process of continual adaptation to change and to different social environments” is convincing (185). In William Frederick, he found a compelling example to demonstrate the dynamic nature of patronage relationships.

Donald J. Harreld
Brigham Young University


This work treats inequality and reproduction among Swedish landholding peasants, bönder, a category including both landowning and tenant peasants but excluding crofters, cottagers, and other landless people. Lindström sees his study area, the Central-Swedish lowland parish of Björskog, in the light of previous international studies, initiating the foreign reader into Swedish demography and rural history in a highly readable way. Having on hand one of the oldest parish registrations in the country, Lindström performs a family-reconstitution study covering the period 1620 to 1820, which he links to other sources such as income and property taxations, showing the economic situation of households at different points of time. Lindström investigates the causes of economic stratification and its manifestations among the landholding peasantry with regard to life course, inheritance, officeholding, and god-parentage, as well as gender differences.

In about 1640, the parish was comprised mainly of comparatively large-scale landholding-peasant households, which as a rule included
life-cycle servants. The economic differences within the community of bönder were considerable. Although many of them were able to retain only the bare necessities for simple reproduction and sometimes less, others were in control of a surplus. An important cause for these differences was the unevenness in the burden of taxes and rents.

By 1790, the number of peasant farms had increased by 80 percent, entailing a decrease in both arable acreage and household members per farm. The landholding peasants compensated for a decrease in the proportion of living-in servants with a more systematic use of the labor power from the growing number of crofters and other landless workers. The level of economic stratification among the bönder remained broadly unchanged, although land tax and rents were lower in real terms than they had been 150 years earlier. The proportion of landowners among them had increased, as had that of transfers of headship within a family. From 1790 to 1820, farms again became fewer and, on average, larger.

Lindström does not consider Chayanov’s model, in which peasant surplus plays only a minor role, applicable in the Swedish case. He is also skeptical about the notion, strong in Swedish historiography during the last forty years, that surplus re-investment done by landholding peasants increased differences within the rural population and thereby became an important factor behind the transition from feudalism to rural capitalism. Lindström asserts that even though many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century peasants accumulated a surplus, they used any land that they bought to preserve the status quo rather than to increase the level of stratification. The basic pattern, according to Lindström, was the principle of fission: Landed properties big enough to create several viable farms were split in order to make more than one heir a landholder. This strategy seems to have been successful insofar as the wealthiest bönder had substantially more descendants in the parish after 100 years than had their poorer peers.

There is no reason to question Lindström’s contentions that the economic differences among the landholding peasants did not increase and that the tendency to split the larger holdings was an important cause behind this relative lack of structural change. However, Lindström’s observations apply to conditions among the landholding peasantry only. Although the number of people within this stratum remained largely unchanged from 1750 to 1850, rural landless households quadrupled, largely because of the downward social mobility of landholding-peasant children not being able to take over a farm. One of the main factors behind the increasing differences between the landed and the landless was the price of land, which multiplied during the eighteenth century following a decrease in the real value of the land tax. Given the increasing

2 In a West-Swedish area the price in terms of rye of a freehold homestead increased eightfold between 1713 and 1813. Lars Herlitz, *Jordegendom och ränta: Omfördelningen av jordbrukets merprodukt i Skaraborgs län under frihetstiden* (Göteborg, 1974), 282, 352–366.
land values in the hands of landowning peasants, we can infer that a pro-
cess of accumulation took place.

Difficulties with regard to the conclusions of this study stem from
individuals dropping from observation when they left the parish, as is of-
ten the case with studies based on parish registration. What is more,
Björskog belonged to a region where population turnover rates were
high. Since Lindström’s conclusions depend solely on those individuals
who stayed within the parish borders, their validity is questionable to
some extent. Nevertheless this thesis throws much new light on repro-
duction among early modern peasants in northwestern Europe, offering
a close-up of a society about which little has been published in English.

Carl-Johan Gadd
University of Gothenburg

Jews in the Russian Army, 1827–1917: Drafted into Modernity. By Yohanan
Petrovsky-Shtern (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009)
307 pp. $90.00

Unlike other European states, Russia began drafting Jews into the mili-
tary almost a century before formally emancipating them. Ask most
American Jews (90 percent of whom trace their roots to Russia and
Eastern Europe) why their ancestors fled the Old Country, and you are
likely to hear two things: pogroms and the dreaded twenty-five-year
mandatory service in the Russian army (for males). Never mind that the
twenty-five-year service had been abolished well before the massive
waves of Jewish emigration. Petrovsky-Shtern’s book, based on pioneer-
ing research in Russian military archives, reconstructs the experience of
Jewish soldiers and the role of the Russian army as a “modernizing” in-
stitution. Blending social and political history, Petrovsky-Shtern writes
against the grain of received wisdom, arguing that military service was
typically not a traumatic experience and that, in fact, it successfully inte-
grated, acculturated, and “Russified” (though rarely Christianized)
masses of Jews.

But did it make them “modern,” or more modern than they already
were? Modernity and modernization remain amorphous concepts in this
book. They are often invoked but usually remain off-stage, removed
from scrutiny. The closest that Petrovsky-Shtern comes to a definition
of modernity is buried in the middle of the book: “By the 1880s, Jewish
soldiers were thoroughly integrated into the Russian military and repre-
sented everything we call today modern: they firmly established them-
selves as dual-identity Russian Jews; they were patriots and loyalists;
they believed in Mother Russia, and were ready to spill their Jewish
blood for her” (166). This is an odd list of qualities to group under the
rubric of “modern”; to begin with, dual identities pre-date modernity.
What Petrovsky-Shtern might have in mind is the post-emancipation
tendency of Jews in the diaspora to identify themselves simultaneously as
Jews and as citizens of a (non-Jewish) nation-state. If so, however, Russia—as a multinational, estate-based empire—would seem to require a different analytical framework. Nor does “believing in Mother Russia” leap out as distinctly modern. Petrovsky-Shtern offers a more productive characterization of modernity when he writes that “Judaism became for Jewish soldiers a religion rather than a way of life” (166, 270). But it is not clear that his sources actually substantiate it without the a priori assumption that being a soldier was incompatible with “Judaism as a way of life.”

*Jews in the Russian Army* draws on an immense range of published and unpublished sources in multiple languages. It is not, and does not pretend to be, an interdisciplinary study. The much longer Russian version of the book, which appeared in 2003, includes an excellent final chapter on representations of Jewish soldiers in Russian and Russian-Jewish literature. Although largely unintegrated into the historical investigation that precedes it, this chapter sheds much new light on the paradoxical misperceptions of the Jewish soldier in the late imperial era. It is a pity that it does not appear in the English version of Petrovsky-Shtern’s impressive book.

Benjamin Nathans
University of Pennsylvania


Retish’s regional study of peasants in Russia during the tumultuous years of World War I, the 1917 revolutions, and Civil War complicates our understanding of rural communities. By concentrating on a peripheral area, in this case the northeastern province of Viatka, which had an ethnically diverse population (including Udmurts and Maris), he follows in the footsteps of Figes and more recently, Babcock.1 At the same time, Retish expands the temporal gaze beyond 1917, or the longer revolutionary period from 1917 to 1921 to reveal the ways in which peasants (whom he defines broadly to include ethnic minorities as well as soldiers and their wives) reacted to state policies and national events and helped to shape the changing political landscape.

Combining political with social and cultural history and using a wealth of previously untapped archival materials and newspaper reports, Retish challenges the stereotypical picture of peasants, crafted largely on the basis of the central Russian provinces, as engaging in drunken violence in 1917 and subsequently carving out an autonomous existence.

The absence of serfdom from Viatka province—as well as ecological differences that made forests rather than land most valuable to peasants, coupled with the feminization and politicization of the countryside between 1914 and 1918—produced divergent responses. Empowered by assuming a double burden during the war years, peasant women in the province, unlike their counterparts in other areas of Russia, participated in democratic elections in larger numbers than men. However, the peaceful transition from the tsarist regime to the provisional government and peasants’ growing national consciousness were all but squandered by the latter’s forced requisitioning of grain. Such seizures not only foreshadowed Bolshevik policy during the Civil War and resulted in peasant resistance but also, Retish reminds us, expanded the tsarist government’s 1916 grain procurements.

Like the Bolsheviks, the provisional government was determined to educate “backward” peasants and mold them into its own model of citizenship, only to find the peasants making their own choices. Nevertheless, according to Retish, the Bolsheviks were more pragmatic in their approach to the countryside once the violence of the Civil War dissipated. That appeasement included the provision of aid, a dialogue with peasants outside party lines, and an extension of cultural and educational projects focusing on literacy and agriculture. Simultaneously, peasants turned to the state to mediate in local disputes over land divisions as they attempted to marginalize widows, returning refugees, and migrant workers further as well as to battle prosperous peasants, including the Stolypin separators, and clergymen. Their dependence on the state was best reflected in peasants’ demands that the socialist regime bore a responsibility to save them from famine. Retish also enlightens us about the responses of ethnic minorities who resisted grain requisitions by distilling illegal spirits and held conflicting opinions of Bolshevik nationality policies. The survival strategy of peasant migration to Siberia and Asiatic Russia led by women from 1914 through 1919 illuminates the demographic consequences of war and upheaval.

Ultimately, readers will find a great deal to applaud in Retish’s interdisciplinary study, if not his sometimes wooden prose.

Christine D. Worobec
Northern Illinois University


The Body Soviet places Soviet efforts to promote hygiene and public health at the center of the Bolshevik revolutionary transformations of the 1920s. Exploring written and visual propaganda aimed at improving, rationalizing, and modernizing the health and fitness of the Russian
population, Starks argues that the Bolshevik leadership used “the language of hygiene as a symbolic system to create and define the revolutionary state and citizen” (22). As she moves her focus from broad (the state) to narrow (the individual), Starks examines the importance that Soviet public-health officials placed on hygiene, setting their efforts within a broader pan-European context of the modernizing and interventionist post-World War I state. She also highlights the unique nature of the Soviet experiment in its attempt to create a “politically conscious population capable of leading the world revolution and creating the socialist utopia” (39).

Starks begins her analysis with a discussion of dirt and cleanliness, emphasizing the ways in which hygiene entered politics in the Soviet context. For the Bolsheviks, dirt represented a defiance of communist order whereas cleanliness reflected purity. In this symbolic universe, the pollutants of the old way of life needed to be removed to create the new socialist order. Particularly when it came to the home, Bolshevik propaganda emphasized the importance of cleanliness as a foundation for Soviet citizenship and political consciousness. In their efforts, health professionals often focused on women as guardians of the home; they were thus responsible for its transformation. Nevertheless, Soviet health professionals did not trust women to implement Soviet hygienic principles properly. They stressed instead the importance of such Soviet institutions as Houses of Leisure, Workers’ Clubs, sanatoriums, nurseries, kindergartens, and maternity homes, among others, to instill a proper understanding of cleanliness, hygiene, and order among the population, and to assert the authority of the state over daily activities.

Soviet institutions and health professionals also sought to rationalize behavior as part of their hygiene regimen. They attempted to regulate rest and leisure to make the most productive use of every hour and thus speed up the transformation of Russian society. Discouraging such polluting behaviors as drinking, smoking, and sexual pleasure, Soviet hygiene propaganda advocated attendance at meetings, reading, and physical exercise as appropriate uses of leisure time. As Starks concludes, “By cleansing one’s body, maintaining a strict schedule, abstaining from polluting activities, and engaging in physical culture, citizens could triumph over biology and resist the temptations and pitfalls of modern, urban life as well as the enticements of the flesh. They could transcend the untidy political and social environment of the 1920s and advance directly to utopia” (201). These efforts, however, often failed to achieve their intended results.

Starks has produced a meticulous examination of written and visual propaganda, published sources, and archival holdings on public health and hygiene that assesses the goals and achievements of Soviet health policy as well as popular resistance to them. The volume provides a welcome contribution to the growing historical scholarship on everyday life in the early Soviet period, complementing recent works by, for instance, Frances Lee Bernstein, The Dictatorship of Sex: Lifestyle Advice for the So-
viet Masses (DeKalb, 2007), and Dan Healey, Bolshevik Sexual Forensics: Diagnosing Disorder in the Clinic and Courtroom, 1917–1939 (DeKalb, 2009). Well written and richly illustrated with reproductions of hygiene posters, it should find a wide audience among scholars interested in issues of public health, hygiene, sexuality, modernization, state intervention, and women’s issues.

Sharon A. Kowalsky
Texas A&M University, Commerce


Wheeler’s well-written and well-documented study narrates the history of the Shekomeko and Stockbridge Mohican (Mahican) mission communities of the Housatonic region in the eighteenth century, a period when the politics of conversion dominated both their own and outsiders’ commentaries. Wheeler compares the two communities vis-à-vis the influence of their different types of missionary experience: The Protestant missionaries advocated a hierarchical, transformative conversion for the Stockbridge Mohicans, whereas the Moravian missionaries had customs and practices that were compatible with the traditional native beliefs of the Shekomeko Mohicans. In addition, Wheeler also contrasts what she sees as the differing motives of native community leaders—those of Stockbridge seeking protection through the acquisition of a secure land base, education, and alliance and those of Shekomeko looking to reconcile Christianity with native beliefs and practices and to ward off the evil effects of alcohol and despair.

Wheeler joins other historians who question the “revisionism” of 1970’s era scholarship, which, she argues, has overemphasized the cataclysmic nature of culture contact. Instead, these new revisionists focus on the adaptive nature of native conversion within the colonial regime. For Wheeler, this is a story of the “inner, subjective experiences” of native people as they “constructed new spiritual lives” in response to the negative effects of colonialism (64).

As Wheeler notes, a comparative study of these two communities is not without difficulties. Although founded within five years of one another, the sources available are different, making equal treatment difficult. For the Stockbridge, they are lengthy but general; for the Shekomeko, they are personal and detailed. Wheeler’s decision to address the difference in sources as problematical is one of the strengths of her study. Also praiseworthy is her focus, where possible, on individuals, such as Umpachenee—Stockbridge’s first leader—and Shekomeko’s Tschoop (Johannes), as well as such missionaries as John Sargeant, Jona-
than Edwards, and Christian Rauch, whose voices give color and depth to the narrative.

The volume is divided into four parts with a brief concluding section. Part I, entitled “Hope,” which includes the introduction, describes the Mohicans of the Housatonic and other members of the “River Indian Confederacy” and the founding of the Stockbridge community. Part II, “Renewal,” reviews the origins of the Moravian mission to Shekomeko. The third and fourth parts, “Preservation” and “Persecution,” respectively, contrast the two communities and their fates.

Particularly interesting is Chapter 6, in which Wheeler discusses native accounts that include references to both Christian and native beliefs. Although necessarily speculative, Wheeler offers plausible explanations for the new meanings that Shekomekoans attached to such Moravian rituals as the lovefeast. Equally interesting are the personal stories of Mohican women converts, whose lives Wheeler places in the larger context of native women’s experiences within mission communities.

Whereas in the earliest chapters, Wheeler focuses on the distinctions between the Stockbridge and Shekomeko communities, in Part IV, she emphasizes their similarities. The Great Awakening, imperial conflicts, and the growing influence of native revitalization movements throughout the Northeast also played a role in the history of these communities, although the surviving sources make their influence difficult to evaluate. The Stockbridge community welcomed an alliance with the Mohawks (as did their English advisors), but increasing pressure from English settlers made their ultimate emigration inevitable. The Shekomeko community’s lack of reserved land and its association with the increasingly unpopular Moravians made it even more vulnerable than the Stockbridges. Many from that community eventually either migrated to the south and west with the exiled missionaries or joined other Native groups.

In her conclusions, Wheeler returns to a biographical approach, focusing on the Mohican leader Hendrick Aupaumet and the Shekomeko native Joshua. Wheeler suggests that the writings of Aupaumet, a widely respected spokesman for the Stockbridge community, aptly reflect the new “Stockbridge” identity that began to emerge during the eighteenth century. For Wheeler, the Mohicans of Stockbridge shared a sense of history as members of a self-selected mission community, united in their opposition to discrimination. Joshua, born in 1741, was buffeted by the combined forces of war, disease, and the declining fortunes of the Moravians, surviving these calamities only to be executed by followers of the Prophet Tenskwatawa as a witch in 1806. Joshua’s dramatic life story, Wheeler argues, was due, in part, to the ambiguous nature of his dual identity as a Mohican and a Christian.

This solid study provides useful information about the Stockbridge and Shekomeko communities, including the contrasts between them. However, Wheeler’s narrative is somewhat marred by her failure to maintain a consistent argumentative focus. Topics of great interest—
such as identity formation and the origin and spread of racist colonial policies and their effects on American Indians—although introduced early, are either not addressed in depth until far into the book or reappear only intermittently throughout; other topics, such as “the processes of cultural interaction that took place in missions,” highlighted in the introduction, are never again explicitly mentioned (13). Furthermore, Wheeler ignores much of the recent writing on these topics by scholars working in numerous disciplines, and she often unfairly caricatures or dismisses important earlier scholarly work, thus missing the opportunity to put the case of the Stockbridge and Shekomeko into a wider comparative or theoretical framework. Nevertheless, this worthy book will become a useful reference for those who would learn more about Native American communities and Native Christianity during the colonial period.

Kathleen Bragdon
The College of William and Mary

*Defying Empire: Trading with the Enemy in Colonial New York.* By Thomas M. Truxes (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008) 288 pp. $30.00

Truxes, a distinguished historian of Irish American trade during the colonial era, has written a riveting account of the conflict between the merchants of New York and imperial officials during the Seven Years’ War, weaving political, economic, and business history into a compelling narrative. By the time hostilities began between the English and French in North America during the mid-1750s, the economies of the two empires in America had become closely interconnected. American merchants in the major cities exchanged British manufactured goods with New France for furs and fish, as well as provisions with the French Caribbean for sugar and molasses. Although such transactions were illegal, lax enforcement of the Navigation Laws and corrupt customs officials allowed those trades to flourish.

Imperial officials expected things to change when George II declared war against the French in May 1756. Giving “aid and comfort to the King’s enemies” and maintaining “correspondence or communication with the French King or his subjects” was now strictly forbidden (5). However, various conditions encouraged trade between belligerents—“the possibility of high returns, the connivance of government officials, lax enforcement of customs regulation, and a distinction between the rights of civilians and those of combatants” (2). Distance also played a role, as did “a legacy of lawlessness handed down from the formative period of the Atlantic economy” (2). As a result, trade between British Americans and French colonists flourished throughout the War.

The merchants of New York City were especially active in this
trade, infuriating imperial officials, especially military commanders, who claimed that without American provisions, the French would have found it impossible to supply their troops or keep their fleets in American waters. British military men, particularly Sir Jeffery Amherst, did what they could to stop the trade, but their efforts were frustrated by colonial officials dragging their feet, a corrupt customs service, and mobs that intimidated witnesses and informers. The war brought imperial officials face to face with the “bankruptcy of the regulations that had governed British commerce through much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (191). This realization led to the determined effort on the part of imperial officials to tighten up the Empire in the War’s aftermath, a strategy that eventually led to the American Revolution.

Truxes’ account is thoroughly researched, engagingly written, and marked by rich detail. Although he is unable to measure the volume of trade with the enemy, he makes a strong case for its magnitude and convincingly describes how the illegal trade transpired. Altogether, this remarkable book makes an important contribution to early American economic and political history.

Russell R. Menard
University of Minnesota

The People and Their Peace: Legal Culture and the Transformation of Inequality in the Post-Revolutionary South. By Laura P. Edwards (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2009) 430 pp. $39.95 cloth $24.95 paper

This brilliant, provocative, sometimes quirky, but consistently engaging book is filled with striking insights about, and careful readings of, courthouse documents and appellate opinions from post-Revolutionary North and South Carolina, but its significance ranges far beyond that period and those locales.

Edwards distinguishes between localized law and state law. The former was implemented and experienced in the towns and courthouses of several counties in the Carolinas. The latter was articulated in statutes and textbooks and applied by appellate courts in the states’ capitols. Edwards’ central argument is that localized law was markedly different from state law for much of the antebellum period, and that the region’s elites engaged in an incompletely successful project to create state law that would displace localized law. “Even as state law acquired institutional mass over time in the form of statutes and appellate rulings, the people who tended localized law kept to their own paths, absorbed by what they encountered there and largely oblivious to events at the state level, despite efforts to attract their attention” (4).

The value of Edwards’ approach is most clearly evident in her discussion of the role of “credit”—credibility—in localized law. Edwards
shows how neighbors deployed their considerable knowledge about each other to judge the extent to which their actions preserved or disrupted the localized peace, a term that sometimes encompassed more than violations of state law. In drawing those conclusions, localized law allowed people to give more credit to testimony by women, free blacks, and slaves than state law appeared to allow. Edwards’ achievement in bringing localized law to the foreground helps to explain why “the social constraints” on slave owners—as well as the notorious case of State v. Mann—that served as a substitute for legal constraints on them in North Carolina, should be understood as the constraints imposed by localized law. She also shows how congregations in churches responded to breaches of the peace in ways similar to the responses in localized law.

When Edwards turns to the elite project of constructing state law, her argument sometimes seems forced. She argues that state law sought to displace localized law by offering a vision of rights lodged in abstract individuals who lacked the person-specific characteristics producing the credibility on which localized law turned. She presents creative readings of the invocation of rights in the nullification controversy, but the connection that she sees between those discussions and the displacement of localized law seems too thin.

*The People and Their Peace* may well transform the study of antebellum law, and not merely that dealing with the South. Edwards unobtrusively consults a wide range of interdisciplinary theory, from legal sociology’s emphasis on the law in action to semi-autonomous legal fields and modern critical legal theory. Scholars interested in legal and Southern history will profit enormously from engaging with its arguments.

Mark Tushnet
Harvard Law School


Buder, professor emeritus of history at Baruch College and the graduate center of City University, has written a paean to U.S. values that push forward innovation. He emphasizes the “historic continuous dialectic between the bottom-line materialism of the capitalist system and the civic and ethical values of the United States, between the economic forces propelling change and the national vision of social justice and a good life” (2–3).

Buder’s approach is chronological, from the seventeenth century to the present. The 169 years of the colonial era are traversed with sweeping generalizations. During these years, Buder sees “the American emerging . . . an individual less inclined to defer to superiors . . . in embryo a pragmatic modern man or woman striving to rationally pursue his
or her self interest” (39). The revolution, the framing of the constitution, the John Marshall court are all portrayed as defining American institutions, which emerge in a way that favored economic growth and development. Business expansion, from 1790 to 1860, is traced in a manner familiar to most U.S. historians. Buder also covers colorfully the increase in millionaires—from fewer than 100 in 1860 to more than 4,000 in 1890. He retells the well-known stories of John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J. P. Morgan, stressing their “individual creativity and strength of will” (148). Next, he turns to the advent of big business, the “national” firms with their new technologies and new marketing structures. “Shopping by brand was to be the quintessential modern experience” (161). Buder documents the extraordinary change in late nineteenth–century to early twentieth–century America, although he fails to recognize that most of the national enterprises rapidly became multinational and that U.S. big business was much involved in the global economy.

In the 1920s, “mass advertising created new wants . . . working to undermine traditional habits of thrift” (234). The result was a consumer culture that contrasted sharply with Benjamin Franklin’s “humble homily: ‘Waste not, want not’” (236). “The automobile showcased the new consumer society” (245). Then the stock market crash came, followed by the Great Depression, which “set in motion the interventionist economic and social policies that have ever since characterized the federal government” (272). Not until World War II with massive government spending did the economy recover.

After the war, “confounding the pessimists, the United States experienced a long and sustained period of economic growth” (297). The baby-boom generation provided a new market for U.S. business. The South and West flourished, filling defense contracts. Air conditioning transformed the South. Buder includes in this discussion the “Whiz Kids” at Ford in the 1950s, the age of the conglomerates in the 1960s, the growth of U.S. multinational enterprise in the 1950s and 1960s, and the new U.S. affluence. But the seeds of the economic reversals of the 1970s lay in the late 1960s.

The discouraging 1970s were soon replaced by the Reaganomics of the 1980s, with its market fervor, its mergers and acquisitions, the attention to Japanese business (accompanied by fears of U.S. decline), and, once again, a new American consumerism. The 1980s, 1990s, and early twenty-first century featured the AT&T breakup settlement in 1982, the ascent of Jack Welch at General Electric, the transformation of Citigroup into a financial supermarket, the internet boom, the growth and collapse (in 2001) of Enron, and the new (as of 2005) role of sovereign wealth funds. At the start of the twenty-first century, the “eight biggest high-technology companies” were all based in the United States (411)—so much for U.S. “decline.” During the 1980s and 1990s, many companies cut back their workforce, creating new efficiencies. The 1990s also witnessed the emergence of the institutional investor.

In the penultimate chapter, “Thinking Small,” which concerns the
revived importance of small businesses in America in the 1990s, Buder expresses his wariness that competitive advantage lies with firms of reduced size, noting that in many services, from Wal-Mart to those in banking, scale has its advantages. Yet he sees key small businesses as part of what is “quintessentially American” (418). Cisco Systems, Apple Computer, Oracle, Sun Microsystems, and Google were all created “in the past two or three decades out of virtually nothing” (424). In Silicon Valley, the average size of employment at a software company in 2003 was twenty-six, and Nike, Reebok, Calvin Klein, Benetton, and Tommy Hilfiger were essentially marketing enterprises that contracted out manufacturing activities (427). In the category of small business, Buder includes licensed “franchisees.” By 2001, most of the 28,000 McDonalds in about 115 countries on six continents were franchisees (431).

Remarkably, Buder writes, “Americans first became aware of the global economy in the 1970s and 1980s” (409). There is a sad, but strange, element of misrepresentation and truth in such a statement. Buder’s book clearly reflects a parochial characteristic of American history. Why the 1970s and 1980s? Because of the Japanese challenge. Buder devotes considerable space to the rise and fall of Japan, concluding that “the American business system, focused as it was on capital return to increase shareholder value, apparently had [by the mid-1990s] proven superior to the Japanese model of stakeholder capitalism” (404). “The key to America’s regaining competitive effectiveness in the global economy of the 1990s was market-driven discipline” (405). Buder adds, however, that as George W. Bush concluded his presidency, “certainly the view of America’s unchallengeable economic and military primacy that emerged after the Cold War was no longer tenable” (406).

The book ends with the injunction that “the free market and capitalism are not moral ideals. And they do not possess internal moral compasses” (464). “American emphasis on materialism is both a consequence and a cause of our long national prosperity” (466).

Mira Wilkins
Florida International University


Cohn presents an incisive examination of the causes and consequences of antebellum U.S. immigration from the perspective of two disciplines and both sides of the Atlantic. He has synthesized a broad swath of research by economists and historians, combining it with his own sampling of nearly 600,000 passengers listed on 2,643 ships arriving in the United States between 1820 and 1860, and his tabulations from the IPUMS U.S. census samples. Specialists will be familiar with much of the
material from Cohn’s earlier articles, but like non-specialists, they will benefit from having all of this work in one place with its interrelations explored.

Cohn finds a high positive selectivity of emigration at the outset, declining over time with falling costs of transportation. More surprising is his conclusion that German immigrants were more highly qualified than British immigrants (98). The predominance of five leading ports (Liverpool, Le Havre, Bremen, Hamburg, and London, in that order) was largely determined by freight trade. In contrast to anecdotal reports of horrendous mortality rates, Cohn finds overall losses to be under 1 percent (1.5 including deaths soon after arrival), and even that figure was highly concentrated in a few ships experiencing epidemics. Neither push nor pull factors explain all of the swings in immigrant volume, but the unprecedented impact of immigration relative to the size of the receiving population between 1845 and 1854 explains much of the nativist movement in the United States, which in turn triggered the precipitous immigration downturn in 1855. The aggregate occupational profile confirms that “immigrants experienced success in the U.S. labor market” (176).

The author is always scrupulous in exploring the limitations and possible biases in his data. He discusses the tradeoffs involved in using only “good” passenger lists or including also those which recorded an occupation such as “farmer” or laborer” for the initial passenger and dittoed it for pages on end. As someone who has compared many passenger list entries with those in German emigration permits, I place less faith even in the “good” lists than Cohn does. The “farmer” category doubtless includes many farm laborers and tenants along with a minority of landowners, at least among northwest Germans. With southwest Germans, there is the pervasive problem of artisanship combined with agriculture that makes it difficult to distinguish main occupation from sideline. Although Cohn proposes among his suggestions for further research a full computerization of all passenger lists, it is not clear how it would overcome the weaknesses of the underlying data. Another rough method of approximating immigrant selectivity or “quality” (more practicable since the advent of the IPUMS) would be to compare the degree of age heaping among immigrants with that in the census source populations, but Cohn has not attempted to do so.

Although Cohn gets most of the local details right, he erroneously allocated the (Bavarian) Palatinate to Prussia (32, 44). Southwest Germany was not “almost entirely Protestant” (86); Baden was two-thirds Catholic. These errors, and a few other minor ones, notwithstanding, Mass Migration under Sail represents the definitive account of the economics of antebellum immigration.

Walter D. Kamphoefner
Texas A&M University
Redeeming the Southern Family: Evangelical Women & Domestic Devotion in the Antebellum South. By Scott Stephan (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2009) 304 pp. $44.95

Stephan’s book is an intriguing study of southern evangelical women and their unrelenting efforts to ensure that faith and grace defined their own and their families’ lives. He focuses on several case studies, primarily those of privileged, well-educated antebellum women throughout the South to portray their vital role in the home.

That southern white women comprised a significant proportion of church members is well known, but less understood is their responsibility as family redeemers. As Stephan argues, within the confines of their homes, evangelical women enjoyed a good deal of latitude as they encouraged family faith and wielded moral and spiritual authority over husbands and children. Piety defined their lives, and in many white southern homes, domestic devotion became another important means to absorb God’s word.

In five lengthy chapters, Stephan examines women’s worship patterns and domestic acts and rituals, including those involved in courtship, marriage, child birth, child rearing, and mourning. Evangelical ministers and laity alike celebrated these roles, sensing that women could transform and uplift their families at home just as the clergy tried to do in church. Women’s exhaustive efforts could generate positive results but also could leave them with deep disappointment and a profound sense of failure. Husbands might behave uncharitably or dishonestly, and children might fail to pursue “the path to eternal salvation” through conversion (148). Typically, dutiful women welcomed their responsibility and sense of self-importance, though Stephan also cautions that they “often shouldered the blame for their entire families’ shortcomings and sins” (207). Not surprisingly, women’s efforts tended to focus on their own families; slaves fell outside their definition of household.

In a world that often disappointed or saddened them, evangelical women struggled to make sense of God’s ultimate plan. When a child died, mothers often blamed themselves for loving a youngster too much or resigned themselves someday to joining that child in heaven. They tended to define illness and personal tragedy as God’s “most potent corrective” for rectifying wayward behavior (185). Women transformed a diseased state “from a curse to a blessing,” believing that illness held religious significance by reinvigorating an individual (185). Their daily efforts sought to eradicate a host of sinful temptations in the home and in the public world. Sins to avoid included alcohol, dancing, novel reading, Sunday frivolity, and dueling; predictably, slavery was absent from the list. Stephan’s monograph can leave readers in a guilt-ridden, exhausted state unless they are as devout and self-flagellating as the majority of women cited within. Despite what seems to be a joyless existence for these ardently self-scrutinizing individuals, evangelical women embraced their responsibilities.
Stephan has produced a thoughtful, informative examination of a group of southern wives and mothers who yearned to lead lives free of sin and to ensure, albeit with mixed results, that their husbands and children did the same. In *Redeeming the Southern Family*, Stephan adds a fresh new voice to the many historians who sense the profound contribution of white women to a religious South.

Sally G. McMillen
Davidson College

*Lincoln and His Admirals.* By Craig L. Symonds (New York, Oxford University Press, 2008) 430 pp. $27.95

This book is part of the deluge of publications timed to coincide with the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln’s birth. The deluge has conformed to the famously pungent law discovered by Theodore Sturgeon, a science fiction writer: “Ninety percent of everything is crap.” *Lincoln and His Admirals* belongs in the worthy 10 percent. It received the 2009 Lincoln Prize, which it shared equally with James M. McPherson’s *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief* (New York, 2008). The linkage is appropriate: The two may be regarded as companion volumes.

Previous studies of Lincoln as commander in chief have focused overwhelmingly on his involvement with the Union army. *Tried by War* substantially follows this tradition, perhaps because McPherson knew that Symonds was at work on *Lincoln and His Admirals* (in their acknowledgments, each praises the assistance of the other). Symonds’ title suggests a reprise of the formula used in T. Harry Williams’ *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York, 1952), each chapter of which focused on the relationship between Lincoln and a specific senior commander. But the book is really an account of Lincoln’s relationship with the Navy Department. Admirals figure prominently, but the central figure, and rightly so, is Secretary of the Navy Gideon J. Welles, an acerbic New England Democrat whom Lincoln affectionately addressed as “Neptune.” Welles took a tiny, ramshackle Navy and transformed it into a big, ramshackle Navy—a bewildering blend of wooden warships, converted merchantmen, and newfangled ironclads that at its height numbered some 600 vessels manned by 51,000 seamen, several thousand of them African American. Welles deserves immense credit for this achievement.

But Lincoln, Symonds makes clear, deserves immense credit for his role in the Union’s naval strategy, which consisted of blockading the Confederate coast, supporting the army in its riverine operations (especially on the Mississippi River), assisting in the eventual capture of every Confederate port, and destroying the few Confederate ironclads and commerce raiders whenever opportunity offered. Lincoln also intervened to ensure the creation of the U.S.S. *Monitor*, whose revolutionary
design became the model for the most successful class of Union ironclads. He also dealt adroitly with the Trent Affair, a diplomatic crisis provoked by the rash action of a Navy captain (who nonetheless went on to become an admiral).

That part of the story is familiar, though rarely told so well. *Lincoln and His Admirals* abounds with flashes of insight and telling vignettes that imply or reveal much larger issues. It also does more than any previous work to examine the Navy’s role in emancipation, a theme hitherto almost entirely overlooked. The Navy had African Americans in service long before the Union Army (they had served in the prewar Navy as well), and Symonds masterfully explores their lives aboard ship and the race relations involved. He notes that the coastal enclaves necessitated by the need for naval coaling stations became magnets for escaping slaves and that Port Royal, one of the first of them, laid the basis for the crucial Sea Island experiments in post-emancipation labor.

*Lincoln and His Admirals* is not interdisciplinary in any significant way, nor does it place its story in comparative or longitudinal perspective. But as a narrative it is first rate, and a useful guide for anyone interested in exploring an important chapter in American civil–military relations.

Mark Grimsley
Ohio State University


As Haverty-Stacke notes in *America’s Forgotten Holiday,* most Americans associate May Day with Cold War Soviet military might parading on Red Square. Yet its origins as a modern holiday were American, dating from 1886, when the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions called a nationwide strike for an eight-hour day. Haverty-Stacke contributes the first detailed history of the holiday’s evolution, contested meanings, and ultimate demise in the United States, seeking the contours of its malleable form along a spectrum ranging from vernacular to official, local to global, and practical to dogmatic. She also argues for May Day’s broader significance and interpretive value in limning the dimensions of “American identity.” It offered an “alternative to the martial, masculine, assimilationist, and, sometimes, reactionary definition of American nationalism forged between the late 1880s and the mid-twentieth century” and helped to make clear “the limits of acceptable political expression” (5, 3). By 1960, a “new Cold War Americanism” had erased May Day from the American calendar, removing a counterpoint to the “anti-communist consensus” and the “free market” (223).

The broad lines of this story are not surprising. However, the evi-
dence mined from radical political and union archives at Cornell and New York Universities, the New York Historical Society, and the Chicago History Museum illuminates fascinating corners in the history of American radicalism. Haverty-Stacke demonstrates how “alternative” visions of May Day emerged from ideological rivalries and strategic debates between and within worker and radical political organizations as each vied to control the holiday’s symbolic meaning on a landscape of narrowing possibility. Samuel Gompers relocated the American Federation of Labor’s marching celebration to Labor Day, symbolically separating his organization from more radical visions. Even the Communist Party, as it traded a revolutionary public face for the “Americanism” of the Popular Front, went so far as to suspend its May Day parade during World War II. The author’s thorough tracking of the ways in which ideology, political realities, internecine battles, and national culture shaped the holiday, and ultimately silenced it, comprise the most useful and revealing aspect of this study.

Haverty-Stacke’s wider claim, however, that May Day’s “expression of radical Americanism” helped to shape “national identity” never snaps into focus. It implies a measure of dialectical equality with the mainstream that much of her narrative argues against (7). For example, her focus on May Day events in New York and Chicago, especially useful because of the richness of available sources and the presence of vibrant radical cultures, leaves one wondering about May Day’s influence on the heartland. She also draws a political lesson from May Day’s history, that “to be both a patriotic and a dissenting American has remained a formidable challenge” (231). These broad lessons seem unwarranted by her fine-grained examination and distract from Haverty-Stacke’s otherwise valuable rescue of a largely forgotten but significant celebration.

Penne Restad
University of Texas, Austin

By Kyle G. Wilkison (College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 2008) 297 pp $40.00

Although historians generally agree that the transition to industrial capitalism brought fundamental change to American farmers, they are less certain about the effects of those changes and the intensity of farmers’ reactions to them. A recent, award-winning study of Populism, for example, took issue with the notion that small farmers were fundamentally at odds with the values of the emerging industrial capitalist system, concluding that Populists consciously attempted to conform to industrial capitalism by making their organization more “business-like.” This interpretation presumes that the small farmers who represented the core constituency of the Farmers Alliance believed that hard work and “busi-
nesslike efficiency” could move them up the agricultural ladder and earn them a share of the wealth created by industrialization. Wilkison’s *Yeomen, Sharecroppers, and Socialists* represents an effective rejoinder to such an interpretation. Through an intensive analysis of life in the agrarian communities in east Texas from 1870 through the beginning of World War I, Wilkison demonstrates convincingly that the clear majority of farmers in this community were heading *down* the agricultural ladder toward tenancy and that, far from embracing the new business interests of industrial capitalism, these farmers recognized that their interests were fundamentally at odds with those of the businessmen with whom they interacted.

Wilkison makes these arguments through a masterful blending of traditional historical sources with statistical methodology, employing the strengths of each approach to balance the other’s limitations. The book provides poignant documentation of the human cost of industrialization by telling the stories of those who suffered most profoundly. Through a sophisticated statistical analysis of tax rolls and manuscript census records for Hunt County, Texas, Wilkison demonstrates conclusively that these negative effects were widely shared in the county, which experienced a steep rise in tenancy and an astonishing sixfold increase in the absolute poverty rate between 1870 and 1910.

In the process of making this central point, *Yeomen, Sharecroppers, and Socialists* explores important issues related to class solidarity and conflict. Although Wilkison does not go so far as to argue that tenants and yeomen were united by a sense of class consciousness, he finds considerable evidence of “sympathetic solidarity” and “plain folk cohesion” caused by the “overwhelming, undeniable, omnipresent, physical fact of undifferentiated work and worry” shared by all who worked the land (85, 90, 208). The real division in this equation was not whether farmers owned or rented the land that they worked but whether they worked it at all. Thus, townspeople and absentee landlords were seen as a common enemy by both tenants and yeomen.

This sense of cohesion provided fertile soil for social movements among farmers; Wilkison discusses in some detail the organizations that emerged. As his title indicates, most of his attention is given to the Texas Socialist Party. Unfortunately, this organization, like those that preceded it, was poisoned by white supremacy, a cultural force too powerful for it to transcend. Even so, the book portrays Texas socialists as sophisticated social activists who understood that religion could be a powerful part of their ideological arsenal and who opposed the national socialist movement on the crucial issue of land ownership, arguing persuasively, though unsuccessfully, that the Marxist aversion to the ownership of private property ought not to apply to small farmers.

*Yeomen, Sharecroppers, and Socialists* is well worth reading. In clear, thoughtful terms, it employs an impressive variety of evidence to offer

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sophisticated analysis about crucial issues related to the agricultural crisis in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America.

Jim Bissett
Elon University


Truth in advertising: It is difficult for a reviewer to be fair in reviewing a book that so brazenly ignores his or her own work, especially when that work seems as if it should be central to the issues at hand.

Haydu’s Citizen Employers is about an important subject—the relation between employers and workers in the era that witnessed the birth of corporate capitalism. Labor historians do not much approve of studying bosses, and business historians generally worry only about strikes that impede productivity. Haydu is right in arguing that the nexus between employer and employee is a neglected subject.

Moreover, Haydu has developed an extremely useful analytical angle to this question. He has found two American cities where the relationship between labor and capital substantially differed. In Cincinnati, an early labor/artisanal republicanism and mutuality of interest turned into a hard-edged conflict between workers and employers, whereas in San Francisco business and labor engaged, to a remarkable degree, in cooperative behavior. This distinction occurred despite the fact that proprietary capitalists controlled the economy of both cities.

Haydu asks two general questions about these issues: First, how do we best study the relationship between labor and capital? Second, how do we explain the differences between Cincinnati and San Francisco?

The standard answer to the first question would be “follow the money,” or, rather, “explore the material interests of both sides of the equation and try to discern the economic incentives for cooperation or (mainly) conflict.” Haydu’s attempt to counter this materialist approach is compelling. He powerfully argues that the collective identities, and the organization, of employers—particularly in the realm of politics—are more important than economics in explaining the interaction between business communities and labor. The visions of a good civic life developed by businessmen, Haydu effectively contends, are not mere rationalizations of economic selfishness but serious and legitimate ideologies crucial to explaining the general hegemony of business in American life.

This point leads directly to the second question. The best way to distinguish Cincinnati’s business leaders from those in San Francisco is to note the differences in the civic identities developed by each city’s business leaders. In Cincinnati, employers took their earlier republican-
ism in the direction of upholding the ideal of the virtuous citizen who worked for the interest of the community in a selfless, nonpartisan way. Unions—selfish, partial to their own cause, and contentious—undermined a united community. The logic of employers’ sense of identity (in combination, to be sure, with their economic interest) impelled them into a vigorous open-shop campaign. In contrast, a combination of economic and political forces, as well as a shared sense of racial privilege against Chinese “coolies,” produced a “practical corporatism” in San Francisco. This ideology allowed for—even honored—the role of unions in a competitive, interest-based civic life, at least until a constellation of events after 1911 put an end to such “San Francisco exceptionalism.”

Haydu’s arguments make a certain amount of sense, although they are not as distinctive or powerful as he would suppose. Enter the scorned author. My book, *The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland, Oregon* (Princeton, 2003), offers a dramatically different reading of the social, economic, and political roles of small employers. While agreeing that politics and economics must be integrated into any analysis of what we might call “the question of the petite bourgeoisie,” I find in early twentieth-century Portland a strong strain of class fluidity and democratic radicalism along the border between small employers and unionists—one not at all dependent on racial identity. For example, printer Will Daly, who nearly became mayor in 1917, was a powerful labor leader—even at times a Socialist—who maintained his anticapitalist radicalism even after becoming a successful small employer.

As the result of completely ignoring my book (notwithstanding an inconsequential mention at 230, n.32), Haydu has no ability to conceptualize such lower middle-class democratic radicalism, much less the way that class identities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often did not follow the assumed divide between wage laborers and employers. Nor is my book the only one neglected. Michael Kazin’s *Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era* (Urbana, 1988), which is more directly related to Haydu’s specific topic and which also contains a significantly different perspective on the politics of labor-capital relations, receives short shrift and no direct analytical engagement. Such neglect of critical scholarship means that, at the very least, Haydu has developed his sociological theories without truly testing them against other competing arguments.

Finally, this book is not easy to read. In an age that expects scholars to write in a reader-friendly manner, there is no reason why social-science historians should be excused.

Robert D. Johnston
University of Illinois, Chicago

Lewis’ thoughtful and meticulous case history of manufacturing in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chicago rests on the claim that the city was structured “through the building of industrial locational assets” (273). Class coalitions of business owners, developers, governments, booster organizations, financiers, transportation companies, and land speculators created “magnets of urban growth” that attracted labor and additional capital investment (273). Locational assets, in short, were not natural phenomena to be discovered but opportunities that had to be created. The industrial complex that anchored the Chicago metropolitan area evolved through collective action.

In developing his story, Lewis emphasizes suburban industrial development. First present in the late eighteenth century, manufacturing firms on the city’s periphery became even more prevalent in the late nineteenth century. In fact, their growth paralleled and even exceeded that in the urban core. Suburban industrialization, moreover, often involved “careful planning” by civic boosters, developers, and business groups (65). In addition, large firms were not located only in the center and small firms on the periphery; in both places, industrial development was diverse in terms of firm size and sectoral specialization.

Most important to Lewis are the myriad ways in which firms were linked through production chains, financial arrangements, business associations, marketing and distribution channels, ties to transportation nodes, and geographical proximity. Anchoring his history is a detailed examination of the linkages between Chicago firms from 1872 to 1878, from 1898 to 1901, as well as in 1920, and 1928. Utilizing the bankruptcy records for 97 firms and their listings of 7,196 creditors, Lewis was able to analyze the concentration and dispersal of linkages and investigate industry clusters. The findings are presented in numerous maps and descriptive tables. The overall impression is that the firms were deeply embedded in a variety of networks that centered on metropolitan Chicago but extended throughout the country’s manufacturing belt.

Lewis tells the history of Chicago’s industrial network nonchronologically using different, analytical points of view. Giving primacy to a geographical lens, he provides case studies of factory areas and planned industrial districts. Utilizing a sector approach, he explores the furniture, automotive, wholesaling, and steel industries. Focusing on linkages, he investigates inter-firm relations and production chains. Lewis even has a chapter on firm starts, expansions, and moves, thereby providing a glimpse into intra-firm conditions. His point of view shifts from one chapter to the next, enabling him to elaborate and clarify the complexity of Chicago’s industrial network. Within each chapter, he attends to individual agents.

Through a layering of different perspectives, attention to descriptive detail, and the use of a variety of primary sources—from business di-
rectories and industry newsletters to company reports—Lewis conveys an intricate understanding of how this major manufacturing center evolved and prospered. *Chicago Made* is a richly documented, well-written, and ambitious book that deserves wide recognition among labor, business, and urban historians as well as historical geographers.

Robert Beauregard
Columbia University


In the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, in a place called Ludlow, a tent city populated by striking coal miners and their families was raked with gunfire and torched by Colorado state militiamen on April 20, 1914. Eleven children were among the dead in the infamous “Ludlow Massacre.” So was the leader of the strikers’ camp, a Greek immigrant named Louis Tikas, who was captured alive, beaten, and then murdered in cold blood by the militiamen. The events of that horrific day outraged the nation and focused attention of Progressives on the “labor question” like no other event of the time. But the sensational brutality of the Ludlow Massacre both in its time and afterward has tended to obscure the context that produced it: “Few major events in American history seem so shrouded in misconception, harbored not only by the general public but even by esteemed scholars” (271). In this book, Andrews seeks to dispel those misconceptions by restoring the Ludlow massacre to its proper context, which Andrews extends well beyond the smoldering ruins of the strikers’ tent city.

Andrews’ book is notable for the three ways in which it contextualizes bloody Ludlow. First, he places the events of 1914 within a protracted pattern of conflict in Colorado that dated back to the earliest coal camps established in the state. The 1914 conflagration had precursors, most notably in 1894, when thousands of colliers marched from one mine camp to another in a failed attempt to force mine operators to accept their union. What happened in Ludlow grew out of a long history of struggle.

Second, Andrews portrays the miners not merely as victims caught up in violent repression but as people who brought their own resources with them into this conflict. The colliers of southern Colorado were an extraordinarily diverse lot who were drawn there across great geographical and cultural distances—and not empty-handed. “Those who came brought a tradition of conflict, a volatile mix of trade unionism and rural resistance, radicalism and conservatism—and held fast to memories of ancient struggles against oppressive landlords and of recent strikes” (89).

Finally, Andrews relates the Ludlow struggle to the developing fossil-fuel economy that was transforming the American West, where the
“calculus of energy proved inescapable” (108). This point is both the book’s most interesting and its least satisfying contribution. Although Andrews illuminates the environmental history of coal mining, he has little to say about the vicissitudes of the coal market and thus about why mine operators were determined to keep their workers unorganized.

Yet the book on the whole succeeds in bringing the Ludlow story to life for a new generation of readers who will find the environmental history that it presents particularly interesting. Examining the Ludlow massacre from a fresh perspective, and recounting the miners’ story in ways that connect with urgent contemporary concerns, is no mean feat. Indeed, the book should be widely read.

Joseph A. McCartin
Georgetown University

Native American Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty. By Daniel M. Cobb (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2008) 306 pp. $34.95

Unlike previous works by Johnson and by Chaat Smith and Warrior that have a late 1960s and 1970s focus, Cobb traces the history of American Indian activism before the founding of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in 1968.1 His book starts with the termination era and ends with the Poor Peoples’ Campaign in the spring of 1968. Strangely, the end date of this study seems arbitrary. The Mohawk sit-down protest on the International Bridge in December 1968, the founding of Akwesasne Notes in the spring of 1969, and the takeover of Alcatraz Island in November 1969, which were not the result of AIM activists, shaped the movement even more than the tear gassing of Resurrection City during the Poor Peoples’ Campaign, an incident that Cobb thoroughly describes.

Cobb enlightens the reader with helpful portraits of key Native Americans who have never received sufficient historical attention before. Other scholars, such as Thomas Clarkin in Federal Indian Policy in the Kennedy and Johnson Years, 1961–1969 (Albuquerque, 2001) and George Castile in To Show Heart: Native American Self-Determination and Federal Policy, 1960–1975 (Tucson, 1998), have provided Washington–based studies of the Indian policies of Presidents Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, but they neglect much of the prodding by Native Americans in this era. Unlike these earlier policy studies, Cobb focuses on lesser-known but significant individuals—John Belindo (Kiowa–Navajo), Robert Dumont (Assiniboine), Tillie Walker (Mandan–Hidatsa), Jim Wilson (Oglala Lakota), and many others. His book also

effectively adds to our knowledge about better-known Native Americans, including Hank Adams, LaDonna Harris, Mel Thom, and Clyde Warrior. He reveals the early involvement and influence of Vine Deloria, Jr., and other remarkable Native American intellectuals, such as Robert Thomas and D’Arcy McNickle—as well as such non-Indian anthropologists as Sol Tax and Nancy Lurie—on the growing movement.

Cobb makes valuable contributions to the scholarly literature in three areas: first, describing the important role of the National Indian Youth Council in the 1960s; second, analyzing how certain key individuals—Indian and non-Indian alike—helped to ensure that programs for Native Americans were included under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964; and third, documenting Native American participation in the Poor Peoples’ Campaign in 1968. He points to certain key moments in the awakening of the movement: the appointment of Jim Wilson (Lakota) to head the Federal Office of Economic Opportunity Indian Division; the Scottsdale National Conference of the National Congress of American Indians in 1965, where Sargent Shriver established a network of Indian advisors that included the youthful Deloria, as well as such powerful tribal chairmen as Wendell Chino (Mescalero Apache) and Roger Jourdain (Red Lake Ojibwe); and President Lyndon B. Johnson’s speech entitled “The Forgotten Americans,” delivered on March 6, 1968.

Cobb makes use of the Doris Duke Oral History Collections at the University of Oklahoma and University of Utah, and he personally conducted fifteen interviews with Native American participants (among them, Deloria, just before his death, and Dorothy Davids, a Stockbridge historian), as well as others with a few non-Indian policymakers and anthropologists. His sample appears to be limited to Native Americans west of the Mississippi and their causes, leaving more than 20 percent of the Native American population outside his scope.

Cobb has drawn much of his findings from excellent collections: the National Congress of American Indians (National Museum of the American Indian), the American Association on American Indians, the American Civil Liberties Union (Princeton), the American Chicago Conference (National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian), the Newberry Library, The Stewart Udall Papers (University of Arizona), and the William Zimmerman Papers (University of New Mexico). Although Cobb cites the Nixon Library in his bibliography, he did not examine key materials in four other presidential libraries—the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Libraries. By not visiting the Truman Library, Cobb missed looking at the papers of Philleo Nash, President Kennedy’s commissioner of Indian affairs. By not visiting the Johnson Library, Cobb missed, among other things, an extensive oral history conducted by Joe Franz with Commissioner of Indian affairs Robert L. Bennett (Wisconsin Oneida), which focuses on the period that Cobb covers in this book. Cobb cites research at the National Anthropological Archives, but he never consulted an interview with
Bennett conducted by Thomas Cowger there. Nor did he search out articles written by Bennett, the first commissioner of tribal descent since Reconstruction, relying instead on Bennett’s critics to judge him.

Although the book contains valuable information about the period in a standard chronological way, Cobb’s methodology shows little innovation. He focuses largely on Native American pressures to seek legislative reforms in Washington, which he considers “activism.” This narrow definition of activism, however, does not take into account the more militant protests that occurred in the 1950s and early 1960s. He never mentions that in 1958 Lumbee Indians at Maxton, North Carolina, disrupted a rally by the Ku Klux Klan and beat up the assembled racists. He discusses the Tuscarora activist William Rickard but fails to connect him with protests on his reservation from 1959 to 1961 against the New York State Power Authority for taking tribal lands—pulling out the surveyors’ stakes, sabotaging equipment, and shooting out the lights needed for night construction. This confrontation and growing dissatisfaction with the conservative leadership of the National Congress of American Indians were factors in the founding of the National Indian Youth Council in which Karen Rickard, William’s sister, was involved. Cobb also never mentions the Lakota plan to seize Alcatraz Island in 1964. The author mistakenly states that New York State flooded Seneca lands in the construction of the Kinzua Dam, which happens to be in Pennsylvania (48). This project was sponsored by the Army Corps of Engineers and promoted by twenty-nine of thirty congressmen from Pennsylvania and two United States presidents—Eisenhower and Kennedy.

Laurence M. Hauptman
State University of New York, New Paltz

*Reinventing Richard Nixon: A Cultural History of an American Obsession.* By Daniel Frick (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2008) 331 pp. $34.95

Whatever they may achieve in office, presidents are powerful symbols. Theodore Roosevelt once observed that crowds turned out to hear him because they believed that “the president was their man and symbolized their government, and that they had a proprietary interest in him.”1 No president has surpassed Richard Nixon in the hold that he has maintained on the public psyche. A master of concealment, Nixon in his long career offered up a procession of façades to the public, a series of masks. But the relentlessness of his image craft only renewed the speculation about his true self. As a result, Nixon became a site of contest, a battleground, in which Americans played out grand themes about truth, trust, and democracy—from the Alger Hiss case to the White House and beyond.

In *Reinventing Richard Nixon*, Frick tries to probe deeper than the familiar empirical questions about what Nixon did in office and gain some insight into his enduring meaning. Examining a few political and journalistic sources, but many more artistic depictions—the president in film, literature, television, song, and so on—Frick concludes that Nixon represented nothing less than the American Dream, in both its idealized and corrupted forms. He ties Nixon’s political success to the tendency among his supporters to view him, not inaccurately, as a classic American middle-class striver, who through hard work and perseverance, rose from obscurity to the pinnacle of politics. He ascribes the phenomenon of Nixon hatred—never has a president been more reviled by such a large and influential swath of the public—to the deep (and again, not inaccurate) suspicion that Nixon was a fraudulent avatar of the values that he purported to embody. The inevitable tension between these divergent interpretations of Nixon—organized around a set of issues central to Americans’ sense of national identity—has ensured that Nixon, as Frick writes, “gets reinvented to explore key ideological pressure points in the American myth of self-reliant individualism” (102).

The trove of cultural products—high and low, famous and obscure—that feature Nixon is so rich that even a book devoted to the president’s cultural meanings is unable to treat them all adequately. (Thomas Monsell, an admirably monomaniacal bibliographer, assembled a mind-bogglingly thorough, if not exhaustive, list of Nixon’s cultural appearances; that book, weighing in at 239 pages, is already eleven years out of date.) Frick tames this monstrous haul of Nixoniana by having it both ways: Each chapter centers on just three or four major works of literature, film, or other art form, using them to spotlight a recurrent and important question that pervades other writings about Nixon as well. These readings are largely successful, offering insights into such works as Gore Vidal’s *Best Man* (Boston, 1960) and Oliver Stone’s 1989 film *Born on the Fourth of July*, based on Ron Kovic’s autobiography of the same title (New York, 1976). Frick cannot resist salting his pages with short, sometimes sentence-long references to Nixon’s appearance in children’s cartoons, sitcoms, obscure poems, potboilers, and pop songs. If these mentions sometimes feel a tad excessive, Nixon buffs will delight in them. Indeed, *Reinventing Richard Nixon* is valuable merely for the cartoons, photographs, movie posters, and other visual depictions of Nixon that Frick includes—as well as for the bibliography, in which the section “Nixon on Television” runs to more than eight hilarious pages.

More literary than political or historical in its approach, *Reinventing Richard Nixon* has a loose chronological structure, ending with brief readings of how Nixon figured in debates about President Clinton’s impeachment and the civil-liberties controversies of George W. Bush’s administration. Pointing to baby gear for sale at the Nixon Library (now an official part of the National Archives), Frick predicts that the battle over Nixon will continue. Although Nixon probably will never rehabilitate his image—his poll numbers are about as low now as they were when he
resigned—he has, as Frick shows, insinuated himself deeply into the fabric of our politics and our culture in a thousand wonderful and unforeseen ways.

David Greenberg
Rutgers University


In this well-researched and clearly written study, Guy assesses female philanthropy and feminism principally with regard to mothers and children, and the treatment of orphans in Argentina; further, she analyzes how such issues affected the rise of the welfare state from 1943 to 1952, the era of Juan and Eva Perón. Other authors have addressed these subjects, but none with Guy’s range and authority. The book cannot be described as interdisciplinary, although as a historical monograph, it utilizes a large archive of case studies dealing with family social issues and orphanages. Guy’s sources include material from local and national philanthropic associations and from state agencies. Her endnotes utilize a preponderance of sources written by female authors, but her bibliography of secondary works mainly lists male authors—a discrepancy illustrating the diligence and success of her quest for originality.

The six chapters of the book include discussions of female volunteerism, child welfare, and juvenile delinquency, along with surveys of social legislation in the 1930s and the transition to the welfare state in the 1940s. The author distinguishes between female philanthropists and feminists, the latter being defined as people who asserted the rights of women, including that of equal authority over children. The welfare state, examined with respect to children, mothers, and families, is defined in conventional terms as a system of state control and benefits.

Guy raises some controversial issues and makes debatable arguments, although objections will probably relate mainly to her omissions. In historically Catholic Argentina, all forms of charity and philanthropy retained a strong connection with the Church, as well as with state-founded and funded institutions. Despite its importance and centrality, the clerical angle is missing from this book. Guy reproduces a photograph of the large Irish orphanage in Buenos Aires run by nuns, but she does not analyze either this institution or any similar ones. In most countries, attempts to assimilate or redefine the traditional charity spheres of the clergy, as well as those of the lay philanthropic associations, usually accompanied the creation of the welfare state.

At times, the argument about the relationship between philanthropy, feminism, and the welfare state appears incomplete or limited, particularly with regard to feminism. On one hand, the feminists ac-
cused the philanthropists of subscribing to women’s inferiority when they endorsed taking children away from mothers and placing them in orphanages. On the other hand, the feminists had an ambiguous view of the welfare state. They liked the idea of career opportunities opened up by the expansion of the state but disliked having to share any authority with a part-male bureaucracy. This argument, however, reduces the feminists to one-sided liberal types occupying the intermediate ground between the paternalists and the welfare state, but as illustrated by one of Guy’s own examples, they were more heterogeneous and complex. At one point, she mentions a Uruguayan feminist proponent of both eugenics and abortion rights, who mingled progressive women’s rights with Social Darwinism and proto-fascism (69).

At times, the book’s arguments betray excessive narrowing and simplifying, some of it resulting from its unilateral gender emphasis. The rise of the welfare state in Argentina incorporated many issues relating to women, children, and institutions like orphanages, but it cannot be analyzed in these terms alone. At the heart of the nascent welfare state in Argentina stood the movement led by Perón, along with its project of social containment. The multifaceted components of peronista welfare politics, even during its earlier stages, embraced far more than indigenous philanthropy. They included diverse and interwoven exogenous elements: the Carta del Lavoro adopted by the Italian Fascists, aspects of the New Deal and the Four Freedoms, and Clement Atlee’s Labour Party.

David Rock
University of California, Santa Barbara


Over the past two generations, few questions relating to slavery in the Western Hemisphere have attracted more attention than the degree of agency exercised by those enslaved. As economic questions relating to slavery and slaves receded into the background, study after study appeared on one or another manifestation of agency—power to act, instrumentality, etc.—among African American (and to a lesser extent Native American) bondmen and bondwomen. One highly specific, but extremely interesting—and revealing—case of the agency question concerned the degree to which rice technology in the Americas, and, in the more muscular version of the argument, the entire early American rice industry qua industry was based on agricultural “knowledge systems” developed originally in rice-growing regions in West Africa and transferred to the Western Hemisphere by slave laborers as part of what might be styled the Columbian technological exchange. In most inter-
mediated versions of what has become known as the “Black rice” argument, said transfer is interpreted as something akin to intellectual piracy—yet another act of imperial exploitation.

The earliest proponents of the argument were Wood and Littlefield, but the “Black rice” thesis is associated today first and foremost with Carney, a geographer specializing in West Africa, who has advanced it in its most comprehensive and aggressive form.\(^1\) Simply put, according to Carney, the transfer of West African “knowledge systems”—a broad category that includes agricultural “technology” ranging from tools and implements to earth works, in addition to cultivation and milling practices, gender roles, and methods of labor organization—created the basic platform for rice production throughout the Americas, leaving relatively little role, except that of expropriation, for Europeans and European Americans.

In *Deep Roots*, Fields-Black offers further insight into, and perspective on, the “Black rice” argument by exploring the agricultural “knowledge system” in one little-studied rice-growing part of West Africa—the Rio Nunez region along the coast of what is now Guinea (formerly French Guinea)—beginning more than a millennium before the onset of the colonial era of West African history. Rio Nunez, long considered a backwater of little historical interest by most scholars, was, according to Fields-Black, actually a dynamic agricultural zone marked by constant ecological adaptation, relatively sophisticated technology, and impressive acts of agricultural innovation. Although rice (*O. glaberrima*) was not introduced into this particular part of West Africa until the eleventh century C.E., its successful cultivation in Rio Nunez was based upon the agricultural knowledge system created by natives of, and migrants into, this estuarial region during the more than 1,000 years beforehand. In the absence of either written or archaeological sources, Fields-Black is perforce compelled to make her case via botanical and biological evidence and, more problematically, via tools from historical linguistics, particularly glottochronology.

Despite such indirect evidence, her principal findings regarding rice cultivation in Rio Nunez are not merely plausible; they are largely persuasive. But when she attempts to extend her claims to the Western Hemisphere, her argument runs into greater difficulty, not so much because her version of the “Black rice” hypothesis, which is nuanced and moderate, is completely off base but because she demonstrates little familiarity with the history of either rice-cultivation practices in the Americas or the history of the societies wherein rice cultivation took

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place. For example, she claims that enslaved laborers were cultivating rice in coastal South Carolina “by the early seventeenth century,” whereas the Carolina colony was not established until 1670 (157); she talks of “freshnets” rather than freshet (sudden overflows of streams due to storm flooding) in eighteenth-century South Carolina and erroneously suggests that planters in South Carolina and Georgia “had access to a seemingly inexhaustible supply of laborers” (157, 179, 180). In fine, *Deep Roots* represents an important contribution to the literature on risiculture in West Africa, but the author’s perfunctory attempt to extend her argument to the Americas is unnecessary and, at the end of the day, unconvincing.

Peter A. Coclanis
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill


Price, a distinguished specialist on the social history of Great Britain, has now voyaged across the seas to study the making of an imperial society in nineteenth-century South Africa. His endeavor is both a welcome expansion of British history beyond its insular and national moorings and a corrective to differing tendencies in the literature on European colonialism. He finds nothing like the “liberal empire” celebrated by some historians or the “colonial modernity” that postcolonial theorists like to denounce. He brings to a small part of a large empire the best characteristics of British social history—meticulous reading of sources, attention to language, and sensitivity to the perspectives of all sides in a complex encounter.

Price’s goal is to elucidate what he calls a “culture of imperial rule” on the ground. Between 1779 and 1879, the Xhosa people of South Africa’s eastern Cape fought nine wars against, first, the Dutch and then the British, but only near the end of that period was anything like “colonial” rule established. As settlers came to the region, the British tried to keep Xhosa at a distance, but for the most part left de facto power in the hands of chiefs. In the beginning, the most intense British–Xhosa interactions came through missionary activity, which depended on the consent and support of chiefs but which threatened to introduce fissures in structures and ideologies of power. Over time, British interventions intensified, but Price emphasizes “how fragile” British power actually was (6). In 1847, the Cape government tried to define a territory that it could control—British Kaffraria—but the project failed, and a decade later, officials were not even sure whether Xhosa were British “subjects.”

One of the virtues of Price’s book is that his characters, on all sides
of the encounter, are far from faceless. His missionaries emerge from diaries and letters as men impelled by a “profound otherworldliness” (25)—a deep conviction of their calling—but with a curiosity about Xhosa culture and a belief in “universal humanity” (31). Their sense of possibility gradually eroded as Xhosa culture proved resilient to the Word, and by the 1840s, missionaries’ engagement was giving way to criticism of backwardness and duplicity. British officials—some of them bullying personalities (George Grey, John Cox Gawler) bred on the ground in South Africa or elsewhere in the empire—moved from trying to harness chiefly power to state purposes to trying to humiliate and destroy chiefs. Several chiefs (Hintsa, Maqoma, and Mhala) emerge as strong personalities, maneuvering through their own cultural codes and understanding the limits of what the British could do. The story ends in tragedy—deepening fissures in Xhosa society, a millenarian movement that may or may not have had the support of chiefs, and an episode of destroying cattle that did not produce the expected supernatural intervention.

Price did not allow the endpoint of his story or preset views of colonialism to get in the way of a careful reading of sources. The result is a rewarding narrative and nuanced analysis of nineteenth-century colonization. Yet, there is much that a study of imperial culture in a specific place cannot do. Empires featured wide repertoires of power. To London, the eastern Cape was of no great importance in itself; part of what made a culture imperial was understanding where to deploy different strategies and where not to push too hard. Price’s view of growing missionary racism and official destructiveness is consistent with trends documented in the West Indies but at variance with the pattern of trading relationships that prevailed in West Africa until later. But Price’s accomplishment is not only to put together one piece of a bigger puzzle but also to make clear the value of his interactive perspective on imperial encounters wherever they occurred.

Frederick Cooper
New York University

Charity in Islamic Societies. By Amy Singer (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008) 264 pp. $90.00 cloth $32.99 paper

Singer attempts to offer an all-encompassing view of a mammoth topic. Charity is encouraged throughout Islamic literatures and implemented in myriad social practices; Islamic legal traditions also elaborate an obligatory charity based on a portion of wealth/property. Consequently, charity in Islamic societies includes many genres of Islamic writings and every period and place in Islamic history. Singer recognizes that her text is introductory for both scholars of Islam and scholars specializing in charity (27). In addition to an introduction and conclusion, the book is divided into five chapters—each engaging a particular theme or facet of
charitable giving. For example, part of Chapter 2 outlines a “calendar of charity,” noting that charity is common on Fridays (after the communal prayer), during holidays, and during significant life events (birth of a child, circumcision, marriage, and sickness) (72–90). Chapter 3 examines biographical accounts of the charitable activities of a few significant figures in Islamic history; Chapter 4 emphasizes the often under-studied agency of charity recipients. The author’s objectives are admirable: integrating Islamic societies into general scholarship on charity (223); countering recent negative representations of Muslim charity (3); filling a perceived gap in Islamic studies (25); and, perhaps secondarily, blurring a conceptual line between charity and patronage (22).

Despite these laudable intentions, Singer’s implementation lacks historical precision. She anticipates the historian’s critique, noting, “some readers may protest that I did not provide a thick enough historical description, an extensive enough historical analysis, or a sufficient exploration of a theoretical idea” (27). The problem, however, is more consequential: Although the text contains many details, the data lack an interpretive framework or a narrative of historical change. By way of illustration, the first chapter—“Pray and Pay Alms,” echoing Qur’anic verses—opens with an anthropological report of a contemporary Moroccan family’s charitable giving. The remainder of the chapter cites or discusses al-Ghazālī (tenth/eleventh-century philosopher and jurist), Nasir-i Khusrav (eleventh–century Shi‘i intellectual), Fazlur Rahman (1911–1988), Ebu’s-Su‘ud Efendi (sixteenth-century Ottoman jurist), contemporary Muslim charitable organizations and websites, Uthmān (seventh-century caliph), Sultan Akbar (of Mughal India, 1556–1605), an eighteenth-century judge in Damascus, a twentieth–century survey of rural Egypt, and much more. Without a temporal (late antique, medieval, early modern, or modern) or a spatial (Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, or Indonesia) focus, the text’s center is a philological construct—the sluggishly changing, homogenous “Islam” unaffected by different economic, social, and political circumstances.

In the absence of cohesive explanations for why the selected sources were used, Singer appears to have “cherry-picked” through a multitude of distinct historical sources without a focused research agenda. The result is a compilation of references to ideas and practices of charity in Islamic societies as found in a vast and jumbled array of primary and secondary literature, with supplementary references to material evidence. Explanations of various aspects of Islamic charity are not grounded in clearly defined textual traditions, social practices, or periods. For instance, despite numerous references to Qur’anic verses pertaining to charity, Singer ignores the exegetical tradition entirely; hence, the understanding of these verses is isolated from concrete, historically attested, interpretive communities.

Charity—as a practice and a belief—is a historically contingent, situational occurrence. Singer could have illustrated this point by rigorously investigating a cohesive set of sources related to a particular
component of charity in the Ottoman period (her area of expertise). Nonetheless, readers may benefit from her wide-ranging bibliography.

Lena Salaymeh
University of California, Berkeley

The People’s Peking Man: Popular Science and Human Identity in Twentieth-Century China. By Sigrid Schmalzer (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008) 346 pp. $85.00 cloth $26.00 paper

You probably know the outlines of the Peking Man saga—how a unique series of early human (Homo erectus) remains was unearthed at a site near Beijing between 1926 and 1937; how these fossils were studied briefly, mainly by foreign scientists; and, finally, how they were lost during their evacuation as the Japanese invaded in 1941. You will not know much more about these Chinese icons when you finish reading Schmalzer’s book, which is much better described by its subtitle. The Peking Man fossils float occasionally to the surface in a variety of contexts, but this significant work is much more importantly a wide-ranging exploration of how Chinese paleoanthropology and paleontology have been tossed around on the stormy seas of political change over the last century or so.

It is hard for American scientists to imagine, far less to comprehend, the capricious and intimidating ideological and social pressures that their Chinese colleagues have faced throughout this long period. I remember my own feelings of astonishment back in the late 1960s when I read a distinguished Chinese colleague’s recently published monograph on the extinct giant ape Gigantopithecus. In it he dilated at length on this fossil primate’s alleged relevance to Engels’ dictum of “labor created man,” before finally getting down to business in the last couple of pages. Soon after, it became clear why. During the Cultural Revolution of 1966 to 1976, Beijing’s Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleanthropology (the lineal descendant of the Cenozoic Research Laboratory that was set up to excavate and study the Peking Man fossils) was taken over by workers of the Number One National Cotton Factory. The newcomers marginalized, humiliated, and sometimes physically abused the scientists in residence. Schmalzer does an excellent job of evoking the highly complex working relationships that eventually developed.

Yet, as Schmalzer remarks, even while placing the workers in charge, the Maoist political authorities never managed to reconcile the simultaneous and deeply held beliefs that the masses were both the fount of wisdom and the refuge of “superstition and ignorance.” For paleontology, this uncomfortable contradiction was compounded by the facts that most fossil sites were actually discovered by local peasants (who had

been collecting “dragon bones” for medicinal purposes from time immemorial) and that expert excavators could also fairly claim to be “laborers.” Nonetheless, despite severe official suspicion of expert knowledge, throughout the vicissitudes of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, Chinese science somehow managed to maintain its identity.

Schmalzer shows a particular fascination with the yerén, the local equivalent of Bigfoot, as part of a wide-ranging quest both to understand the place of fossils in popular Chinese views of human identity and to recount the multifarious government attempts to shape that understanding. She also devotes considerable space to current Chinese interpretations of the human fossil record, most of which favor the idea that Homo sapiens, or at least its eastern Asian expression, evolved in China. Although her book is not the place to turn if you are looking for closely reasoned scientific arguments in support (or contradiction) of such notions, it is an incomparable resource if you are seeking to understand the highly complex and nuanced historical and intellectual place our Chinese colleagues are coming from.

Ian Tattersall
American Museum of Natural History

Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India. By Ritu Birla (Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 2009) 346 pp. $84.95 cloth $23.95 paper

Rarely have historians endeavored to include studies of indigenous mercantile capitalism in their accounts of colonial India. In this ambitious, excitingly original work, the kin-based mercantile firm, embedded in the undivided Hindu joint family, takes center stage in the creation of a modern India. Basing her study upon the Marwaris, a Rajasthani community that rose to prominence in Calcutta from the 1890s, Birla deftly shows how the British, baffled by its mixture of public and private elements, of kinship and the market, sought to confine the family firm within the purview of the personal law that governed succession and inheritance, and to deny it standing in the arena of contracts and capital. Not surprisingly, this decision, implemented in the commercial and financial legislation of the Raj, posed immense difficulties for both government and merchant.

In several suggestive chapters, Birla discusses the implications of this decision for the family firm, most notably in the assessment of how income taxation affected charitable trusts and philanthropy. To put an end to the use of charitable gifts for profit-making purposes, the British were, for instance, driven to defining the “idol,” or Hindu deity, as a legal person able to hold property, thereby allowing the government to regulate bequests to shrines. Thus, gifting was “mapped along the axis of
public and private” and transformed into a contractual relationship compatible with the modern sovereign state (99, 105).

In similar fashion, Marwari indulgence in speculative wagers, not only in the commodities futures market but also in such seemingly innocent pastimes as betting on the amount of monsoon rainfall, drew British suspicion. Unless accompanied by contracts for delivery of goods, speculation—in the British view—made public that which “ought to have been private pecadillos” (171). The British took care, however, in their suppression of gaming to exclude any prohibition of betting upon horses!

Eventually, the Marwaris themselves came to acknowledge a distinction between kinship and commerce. Seeking respectability within the modern state, they “presented the family separately from the commercial mechanism of the firm” (212). Hence, they accepted the family as existing within a “private” sphere and claimed the right to regulate its practices themselves. Turning to their own advantage the enduring British belief in the existence of a “timeless” India, Marwaris now imagined the joint family as an “ancient religio-cultural institution” to be protected for its own sake (204, 210). Marriage, above all, was to be kept outside the civil law of contract. In the end, Birla concludes, “those who, like Marwaris, claimed to be legitimate agents of Capital became, at the same time, subjects of Culture” (231).

Since this book is a case study of only one community, though admittedly a very influential one, it is difficult to assess how far Birla’s conclusions may apply to other mercantile groups. Furthermore, given that Birla utilized mainly government records and published materials, one could question how fully she presents the Marwari perspective. Still, this book brings together economics, law, and history in a powerful vision that shapes afresh our understanding of capitalism and colonialism.

Thomas R. Metcalf
University of California, Berkeley