Belich argues that the expansion of modern Europe took three basic forms—the establishment of networks (“ongoing systems of long-range interaction, usually for trade”); empire (“the control of other peoples, usually through conquest”); and settlement (“the reproduction of one’s own society through long-range migration”) (22). Belich acknowledges straight away that these three forms of interaction “overlapped in practice and blurred in theory,” but he maintains nonetheless that it is necessary to distinguish among them (22).

Scholars have tended to focus their intellectual efforts on empire and on the development of European-led networks of one kind or another. Belich laments the fact that much less work has been done on settlement because this form of expansion was the most widespread, had the most staying power, and was ultimately the most important. With Replenishing the Earth, his massive new book on the rise of the Anglo/Anglophone world over the course of the long nineteenth century, Belich attempts to fill this research gap, and, in fact, he does so with a vengeance.

More specifically, Belich seeks to explain how and why Great Britain and its Anglophone cultural offshoots—the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa—came to dominate the world economically, geopolitically, and culturally. Seldom have the roots of this preeminence been subjected to close scrutiny—according to Belich, in large part because the historical trajectories of the various constituent parts of the Anglo-World have generally been examined piecemeal rather than as part of a complex, variegated, but nonetheless unified process.

A number of technological innovations in manufacturing, transportation, and communications, and one key ideological shift, proved crucial to the process by which “Greater Britain” distanced itself from its erstwhile competitors. Although these developments had deeper causes, not until about 1815, in Belich’s view, did they begin to gather steam and to concatenate in ways conducive to the relative expansion and amplification of Anglophone power. Around that time, significant productivity gains in the manufacturing and transportation/communications sectors, along with shifting attitudes in the Anglo-World regarding migration, led in relatively short order to explosive population growth, urbanization, economic power, and cultural influence in areas of Anglophone settlement across the globe.

One of the most interesting—and likely controversial—parts of the above argument relates to Belich’s contention that there was a sea change in Anglophone attitudes toward migration in the decades after 1815. To Belich, such attitudes not only changed profoundly, but they
also matured quickly into a coherent ideology—an optimistic, sometimes Utopian, ideology that he calls “settlerism”—which “ranked in historical importance with the other great Anglo ‘isms’ of its day, such as socialism, evangelism, and racism” (153).

Even if Belich overstates this point to some extent, one cannot gainsay the fact that *Replenishing the Earth* is a relatively comprehensive, highly original, largely convincing, and always fascinating account of Greater Britain’s will to power, with which account scholars perforce will grapple for years to come.

Peter A. Coclanis
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*Natural Experiments of History*. Edited by Jared Diamond and James A. Robinson (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2010) 278 pp. $29.95

In recent years, historical studies have veered sharply away from quantification and economics. Economic historians are a rare breed in American history departments, and most historians shy away from numbers. This collection of essays, edited by two well-known non-historians whose work has evinced a strong interest in history, makes a strong case that historians should not abandon their training in the social sciences in favor of the now seemingly dominant trend of narrative history.

The book’s title, *Natural Experiments in History*, is likely to be unfamiliar to most historians. What the editors and contributing authors intend by these words is a form of comparative history. More often than many realize, history offers opportunities to compare “different systems that are similar in many respects but that differ with respect to the factors whose influence one wishes to study” (2). Moreover, in their opinion, comparative history can provide answers to crucial historical questions that many historians have concluded are likely to prove unanswerable given available methods and source materials. These essays tackle such compelling issues as why some countries grow rich and others do not; whether the slave trade from Africa raised insuperable barriers to the economic progress of the continent; and why Haiti, once the richest colony in the Caribbean, is now the poorest country in the Americas while its next-door neighbor, the Dominican Republic has been spared much of this deep poverty. Although some of the essays fall short of the mark and will comfort those historians inclined to view their discipline as a humanistic enterprise rather than a branch of the social sciences, three of the chapters succeed admirably.

Among the chapters likely to be of most interest to historians, the best is the essay by Diamond, well known for *Gods, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York, 2005), his Pulitzer Prize winning book. Here, Diamond assumes the fascinating challenge of why two countries sharing the same island, which the Spanish called
Hispaniola—Haiti (originally Saint Domingue) and the Dominican Republic—have experienced such different histories. Inviting his readers to accompany him on an airplane flight above the island, he identifies the border between the two countries and notes the stark differences between them. Haiti, the poorer country, is an ecological ruin, deeply deforested and lacking abundant roads and rich agricultural estates. In glaring contrast, its neighbor has rich forestation, many roads, lush agricultural estates, obvious signs of a productive agricultural economy, and an average per capita income six times that of Haiti.

What explains the enormous present-day differences of these two countries? Those who know Diamond’s early work will not be surprised that location and climate play a major role in his explanation. The eastern side of the island—the Dominican Republic—receives more rainfall than Haiti and, as a consequence, was not endangered as severely with deforestation. But this is only part of the story. Far more influential were the different eighteenth-century colonial experiences. Haiti became France’s lucrative sugar colony, one of the wealthiest areas in the entire Caribbean. The French imported massive numbers of African slaves to the colony, half a million by the end of the eighteenth century, thereby creating subsequent problems with population density and accelerating deforestation. In contrast, the colony of Santo Domingo was unimportant to the Spanish. More interested in extracting precious metals from Peru and Mexico, the Spanish colonial officials neglected the Caribbean.

In the twentieth century, both countries had nasty dictators. But the Dominican Republic’s ruler, Rafael Trujillo, encouraged plantation and export agriculture, mainly for his own enrichment, whereas François Duvalier, his Haitian counterpart, worried only about his political base at the expense of the country’s economy. The result was Haitian impoverishment and Dominican development—a superb example of the comparative method in action.

Less successful but stimulating and provocative nonetheless is the quantitative essay by Nathan Nunn, who sets himself the task of investigating the causes and consequences of Africa’s slave trade. Nunn begins with the question that has intrigued historians of Africa—what impact did the African slave trade have on the long-term history of the continent? Did it impoverish Africa during its heyday and especially after abolition, as some argue, or was its impact only slight, as others contend? By means of statistical analyses, Nunn demonstrates that the very countries where the slave trade was the most intensive are today’s most impoverished African states. He also employs statistical methods to discount other explanations for present-day poverty, such as differing colonial experiences, climate, and natural-resource endowment.

Yet, a deeper, more extensive probing of the connection between the slave trade and Africa’s present-day impoverishment would have been helpful in Nunn’s study. That the regions north of the Sahara and southern Africa—both of which were slave-receiving, not slave-supplying, territories—have stronger economies than the rest of Africa is
clear. Not so clear is whether their advantage is due to the matter of slavery or to other factors, such as location, soils, disease history, and the like. Many readers are likely to question Nunn’s contention that involvement in the slave trade was a decisive factor in Africa’s recent lack of economic development.

The third noteworthy chapter is a study of the impact of the French Revolution on the development of capitalism in Europe by Daron Acemoglu, Davide Cantoni, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. Employing the simplifying but acceptable proposition that high levels of urbanization can stand for high levels of economic development, they argue that those parts of Europe where Napoleon’s armies introduced the Code Napoleon and swept aside ancien régime practices enjoyed significantly higher levels of economic progress during the nineteenth century than did those territories where the French influence was less strenuous and where ancien régime values and customs were not challenged.

Robert L. Tignor
Princeton University

The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians. Edited by Andrew Feldherr (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009) 484 pp. $40.00 paper $110.00 cloth

An impressive list of scholars contributed to this volume. It is refreshing that the chapters are not devoted to individual historians (with the exceptions of a chapter on Josephus and another one on the late antique historian Ammianus Marcellinus—two exceptional figures, the first one for writing a history of the Jews and the second one for being the object of renewed attention in recent scholarship) but arranged to present a survey of the whole field. The chronological list at the end of the volume runs from the mid-fourth century B.C.E. to the late fourth century C.E. and, in the preface, Roman historiography is defined as “continuous prose narratives, intended to be read as ‘fact,’ and organized around the experiences of the Roman community rather than those of an individual” (3).

As Feldherr sketches it in the introduction, the study of Roman historians has changed considerably since the end of the 1970s, when, partly under the influence of Hayden White and more generally of the “linguistic turn,” and partly through internal development with the “Wiseman–Woodman revolution,” Roman historiography ceased to be the reserved province of ancient historians and started to be studied as literature. Although this shift was positive in many respects, some scholars claim that the texts of the Roman historians should still be read as
history. Given the interdisciplinary perspective of this journal, it seems appropriate to focus on the chapters that address this shift in scholarship.

William W. Batstone (“Postmodern Historiographical Theory and the Roman Historians”) posits that Roman historians are “no more modernist historians . . . than they are postmodern historians” (30), and that therefore it is legitimate to read them from a postmodern perspective. In one of his examples of such a reading, he suggests that Sallust’s text concerns the subjectivity of his readers, who discover that history cannot “conform to or confirm any moral imperative.” The following chapter, by J. E. Lendon—“Historians without History: Against Roman Historiography”—is polemical in its tone and claims. Contrary to a near consensus in recent scholarship, Lendon contends that concern for truth was foremost for the Roman historians and that to present history as a sub-genre of rhetoric is simply wrong. The upshot is that modern historians can look for facts in the narratives of the ancient historians, not just for fiction about the past. The chapter of Emma Dench (“The Roman Historians and Twentieth-Century Approaches to Roman History”) suggests that both camps caricature the other and that a number of recent studies transcend the divide artificially created between historiography and history.

To the credit of this Companion, it presents numerous case studies that concretely show how the opposition between historical evidence and literary constructs falls short of adequately describing the complexity of the texts written by the Roman historians.

Eric Rebillard
Cornell University


This wide-ranging, detail-packed book covers a large array of information in a lucid and effective narrative. It brings together an enormous fund of information about the way in which Europe has been represented in imagery and maps from ancient times to the present, whether in manuscripts, paintings, public sculpture, or other media. The result is a virtual encyclopedia, arranged in rough chronological order, of the different purposes that depictions of the continent have served.

As a source of information, therefore, The Image of Europe is a com-

1 In 1979, Timothy P. Wiseman in Clio’s Cosmetics (Lanham, Md., 1979) suggested that Roman historians used their rhetorical training to generate the content of historical narratives. In 1988, Anthony J. Woodman in Rhetoric in Classical Historiography (New York, 1988) examined ancient claims about truth and concluded that they were not central to ancient historiography.
pendious and invaluable publication. It presents itself, however, as “un-
usual and innovative” for historians in its use of visual sources, but, on
this score, one has to raise doubts. This journal, for example, has been
promoting interdisciplinary exchanges between historians and art histo-
rians for nearly forty years, and has published conference papers, articles,
and review essays to that end.¹ The one reference to the journal, how-
ever, suggests that its attitude is one of “cautious skepticism.” It is only
by ignoring the large and growing literature through which art now
informs history that claims of innovation can be made. It is telling, for
instance, that Hale, one of the pioneers in this area, is described as an art
historian—a misidentification that removes from Wintle’s antecedents a
scholar who saw himself as a historian, and who pioneered the use of
images in historical research.² Equally telling is the failure to mention
Brown and Elliott, two of the most important early explorers of the
genre, let alone the extensive recent literature on ceremonial and cere-
mony.³

A more fundamental question has to do with the opportunities that
visual materials offer historians to attain insights into the past not other-
wise available—an important instance of the concern that lies at the
heart of the interdisciplinary enterprise. Despite a lengthy discussion of
the theories and concepts that lie behind such ambition, however,
Wintle is able to bring it to bear only occasionally. His central thesis is
that “Europe,” both as a reality and as an ideal, did not take hold until
the Renaissance. Elements of the conception had been put into place in
earlier centuries—notably the depiction of Europa and the bull—but its
full realization had to await the artists and writers of the fifteenth century
and thereafter. This indeed is a convincing analysis, but it is far from
new. First fully elaborated in the magisterial opening chapter of Hale’s
The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance in 1993—some of whose il-
lustrations are repeated in Wintle’s book, and whose emphasis on both
art and cartography is echoed in Wintle’s pages—the argument has en-
countered no opposition, and now seems an accepted element of the
field.

That the achievement of The Image of Europe is, essentially, to pro-
vide detailed documentation of recognized shifts in geographical ideas
and concepts of territorial allegiance is not to give faint praise. An enor-
mous body of research is presented, and there are detailed descriptions
of obscure as well as well-known exemplifications of the themes. One
might disagree with specific choices—arguably, Andrea Mantegna’s
“Adoration of the Magi” deserves far more attention than it gets—but
there is no denying the weight of the evidence that is on display. It is re-

¹ See, for example, my review essays on “The Historian and the Art Historian” in Journal of
³ Jonathan Brown and John H. Elliott, A Palace for a King: The Buen Retiro and the Court of
Philip IV (New Haven, 2003; orig. pub. 1980).
vealing, for instance, to see schematized maps that demonstrate the widely different definitions, in successive periods, of Europe’s eastern boundary. The close descriptions of the way in which continents are represented in public sculptures will make one look more attentively at figures that are usually ignored in passing. In general, Wintle provides a wealth of explication of images both familiar and unfamiliar, a sensible balancing of the conflicting demands of nationalism and Europeanism, a serious effort not to read the present into the past, and a resort to a multitude of forms of art (only the color plates are poorly reproduced).

Given the range of the coverage, it is not surprising that the individual reader might want additions—various online sources, for example, such as the Mappamundi Project at Princeton University, or the bound and defeated Turk in Titian’s “Lepanto,” which long predates the examples that Wintle gives. But these are cavils. As long as Wintle’s claims to novelty are taken with a grain of salt, one has to welcome a work of exhaustive research that will remain a mine of information for many years to come.

T.K.R.

Alcohol, Violence, and Disorder in Traditional Europe. By A. Lynn Martin (Kirksville, Truman State University, 2009) 269 pp. $48.00

Martin’s book questions the assumption that alcohol was a cause of violence in traditional Europe (1300 to 1700), or at least in England, France, and Italy, which comprise his primary focus. Although difficult to measure exactly, violence and alcohol consumption seem to have been more pronounced in traditional Europe than in the modern Western world. Despite modern studies that strongly suggest otherwise, however, Martin argues that alcohol and violence had no intrinsic correlation during the period in question.

Martin’s fundamental assumption, drawn from anthropological literature, is that drunken behavior is learned behavior and that alcohol does not trigger a pharmacological effect that naturally produces aggression in humans. Traditional Europe associated alcohol with conviviality, social bonding, and celebration, due in large part to the numerous ecclesiastical holidays and occasions celebrated with drink. In England, which had the greatest choice of alcoholic beverages—ale, beer, wine, and cider—these opportunities declined with the Reformation; condemnations of drunkenness peaked with the rise of Puritanism, which went so far as to criminalize drinking. Catholic Italy, in contrast, had almost no tradition of moral outrage about drinking; Italians consumed unparalleled quantities of alcohol, mostly in the form of wine.

Martin reports that men were largely responsible for violence and that they committed a disproportionate amount of it in alehouses. Yet he maintains that the violence associated with alehouses had less to do
with drinking than with male honor, which was frequently a source of competition in such routine social settings. Because drinking was not confined to alehouses, it could hardly have been the culprit; drinking at home and at work, the other primary places of association, did not carry the same results. Moreover, the strong association of drinking with sociability and celebration may actually have limited violence by drinkers.

Because Martin relies only on printed published sources and not archival ones, his book is ultimately problematical. Since most of his evidence is from England, he gives undue weight to isolated French and Italian anecdotes. Having argued that Italy, France, and England had different drinking cultures, religions, and attitudes toward drinking, can he assume that they had similar attitudes toward male honor, violence, and law enforcement? He needs comparable analysis of French and Italian court rolls to substantiate his conclusions. Moreover, the resort to court rolls alone for evidence about alehouses may well expose the violence that occurred in them, but it cannot prove that alehouses were inherently violent places. Martin’s claim that male honor was a major contributor to violence, and that alehouses were incidental accomplices, is intriguing, but further analysis of masculinity in these three different cultures is necessary to prove the point.

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In 1547, Petrus Gonzales, a young boy, was brought from the Canary Islands to the French court of Henry II, where he was educated in Latin and grew up to be one of hundreds of courtiers. He was remarkable because he had hair over much of his body. Weisner-Hanks traces his story as he grew up, married a beautiful woman, and had a family with a number of hairy children, including the “hairy girls” of the title. From our perspective, this family may have been afflicted with a specific very rare syndrome (hypertrichosis universalis); only about fifty cases are known. But in their own day, these individuals were significant far beyond any medical diagnosis. Over the past decade, historians of early modern Europe have begun to reckon with the meanings of monstrosity. Works such as Lorraine Daston and Katharine Parks’ Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750 (New York, 1998) have shown us that the exceptions, marginal to our own scientific endeavors, were quite the opposite in the early modern period. Natural philosophers were entranced by monstrosity, convinced that close examination of nature’s most bizarre productions would illuminate the workings of nature overall.

Weisner-Hanks’ book builds upon these insights, showing us that
the Gonzales family pop up all over early modern Europe. Felix Platter, noted Basle physician, examined one of the girls; Ulisse Aldrovandi, renowned natural philosopher, devoted a number of pages in his encyclopedia of monstrosity to the family. Portraits of them circulated widely among the courts of Europe.

The book’s method is to take aspects of the Gonzales family’s story and place them in a larger context to reconstruct how their contemporaries might have interpreted them. At times, the method is revelatory. For example, Petrus came from the Canary Islands, a place associated with the very rich set of European legends and beliefs about wild men; he was understood through the lens of such legends and, in turn, his existence confirmed their truth. Other connections feel more tenuous. For example, Wiesner’s link between John Knox’s 1558 polemic against female rulers, the so-called “monstrous regiment of women,” and the meanings that contemporaries drew from the Gonzales family seems like a stretch. But while Petrus was being educated at the court of Henry II, so too was Mary Stuart, later to become the impetus for Knox’s book. Such contextual suggestions may be the only way to recover the extensive web of associations that early modern Europeans, both learned and unlearned, had as their interpretive repertoire when they encountered the anomalous, the monstrous, or the bizarre.

Chapters explore heresy and monstrosity, medical knowledge about monsters, cabinets of curiosities and the cultures of collecting, and ideas about reproduction and birth. The book is written in an engaging style that will appeal to the general reader as it excavates layers of meaning associated with this unique family.

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Exclusionary Empire: English Liberty Overseas, 1600–1900. Edited by Jack P. Greene (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010) 305 pp. $90.00

This strong set of essays surveying the constitutional and political history of liberty in English-speaking lands is reminiscent of two other pieces of writing on closely related themes. The first, and more obvious, is John Greville Agard Pocock’s sparkling essay, “British History: A Plea for a New Subject,” Journal of Modern History, XLVII (1975), 601–628. Pocock’s essay, though admittedly a short piece largely devoted to the intricacies of conceiving English, Scottish (not Scotch), Welsh, and Irish history within a mutably British framework, reached out in its concluding pages to British-shaped societies and institutions in America and the Antipodes; in spirit, Pocock’s provocative musings sketched the agenda that Exclusionary Empire pursues. It seems a curious omission that this essay never merits a single mention in Greene’s volume. (The second comparison will come later.)
Exclusionary Empire arrives with a charged dedication: “For all of those subordinated people who lost their lands, cultures, freedoms, and lives in the construction of Britain’s empire of liberty, which denied them civic space.” Greene closes his helpful introductory essay on a similar note, juxtaposing the remarkable extent to which British colonial expansion, unlike that of other empires, involved a distinctive, recurring emphasis on the settlers’ desires to retain the traditional forms of English liberty, particularly the rights of representation and the common-law protections of civil justice, while applying “systematic discrimination on religious or racial and cultural grounds” against various indigenous populations (24).

Yet questions about the origins of exclusionary policy against these cultural others do not, in fact, provide the dominant motif of the ten essays collected herein, though they figure importantly in several of them, including Greene’s discussion of the West Indies and Robert Travers’ essay on India. Instead, the controlling theme of the work as a whole is the extent to which the traditional motifs of English history, the great subjects of the controversies at home that accompanied the initial burst of expansion overseas, remained the prevailing concerns within virtually all of these settlements. There is a sense, ideologically, in which these essays collectively attest to the idea that the customary stuff of English liberty provided the most influential values that England’s emigrants, whatever their class of origin, carried overseas; it was the item in their cultural baggage that mattered most. That this concern was primarily about their rights alone, and had nothing to do with the excluded peoples that they would dominate, can hardly be surprising.

In her essay about British North America, Elizabeth Mancke surveys an array of liberties that the colonists treasured, suggesting that the right to trade freely—the liberty of commerce—is the one that merits special attention. Greene’s discussion of the West Indies emphasizes the extent to which the planters’ political concerns echoed the mainland American demands for recognition of legislative privileges, but with a special value placed on the autonomous regulation of slavery—until, that is, the emancipation of the 1830s persuaded whites to renounce their claim to legislation in order to maintain racial hegemony over the freemen. James Kelly tackles the rich history of eighteenth-century Irish politics, in which Protestant claims for traditional English rights of self-government collided, after 1789, with competing demands not only from the island’s Catholic majority but also from middle-class Protestants. Ultimately, this predicament led to the Irish Parliament’s decision to approve its own dissolution (thus anticipating the later action in the West Indies).

In the sole essay in the volume that focuses on the metropolitan view of empire, Eliga Gould traces the lasting legacy of the American Revolution by demonstrating that the claims of unlimited parliamentary jurisdiction over the empire asserted before 1776 were sharply tempered, in subsequent operation, by the lessons of 1783. A different set of lessons
seems to be the subject of Peter Onuf’s essay on “Federalism, Democracy, and Liberty in the New American Republic,” which presents a complicated set of judgments about how post-Revolutionary Americans reframed the different forms of liberty that they contentiously disputed.

The concluding five essays of the volume carry the basic story into the lands that formed the Empire after 1783—Canada, India, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. At this point, the broad informational value of this volume becomes most evident, at least for American readers who are not specialists in those societies. These essays demonstrate how much of the incredibly rich literature on the political history of these nations remains deeply obscure (I shamefacedly confess) to so many of us. The best of these essays is Travers’ discussion of India and the competing claims and shifting views of settlers, jurists, the East India Company, and members of Parliament. Particularly striking is the failure of Indians to act with the timidity about rights and privileges that many Britons were inclined to ascribe racially to them.

All of these essays bring a modern eye to old themes, recast on an imperial stage. Throughout, the frame of reference is relentlessly political and constitutional, with a social dimension defined largely in terms of who was qualified or disqualified for inclusion in the polity. This focused vision of liberty brings to mind Oscar and Mary Handlin’s sadly neglected The Dimensions of Liberty (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), which asked, If one were to write a comprehensive history of American liberty, how many different topics would it embrace, and what approaches would it take? The answers that the Handlins offered were more or less speculative in nature, but by raising questions about the social, economic, and psychological dimensions of liberty, their musings collectively stand in some contrast to the primarily political topics pursued in Exclusionary Empire.

Jack Rakove
Stanford University

_Famine in Scotland: The “Ill Years” of the 1690s._ By Karen J. Cullen (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2010) 218 pp. £70.00

Rarely has a natural disaster had such wide-ranging historical consequences as did the famine that struck Scotland in the mid-1690s. Little more than a decade later, as Scotland’s social elites despaired about their nation’s grinding poverty and profound structural weakness, the country’s Parliament finally voted away its age-old independence in favor of unification with England, previously Scotland’s bitterest and most enduring enemy. The product of this unheralded union, Great Britain, would become a formidable economic, political, and imperial force on the global stage for the next 250 years, with Scots frequently placed advantageously within it. The “seven ill years,” as contemporaries knew
them, could therefore not have been more significant (or, at the time, less foreseeable). This fact, however, makes it all the more striking that the nature and extent of this formative national crisis for the Scottish people has hitherto escaped concerted scholarly attention. Cullen’s book comprehensively fills the breach, demonstrating how this catastrophe arose and how its effects spread irresistibly throughout Scottish life. Although ultimately caused by an unfavorable climate and a vulnerable pastoral and agricultural ecology, the famine was greatly exacerbated by rigidities and inefficiencies in the prevailing systems of production and distribution. The result was a demographic devastation that left a lasting scar not only on the population of the country but also on the psychology of the people. Not surprisingly, such a multifaceted phenomenon lends itself especially well to interdisciplinary investigation, which Cullen ably accomplishes.

Cullen gives particular care to provide hard statistical data about Scotland’s economic and demographic situation before, throughout, and immediately after the famine. Fortunately, the Scots of the period were often assiduous record keepers, leaving future historians an abundance of material, ranging from the official accounts generated by Parliament and the exchequer at the national level and by county administrations in the localities, which Cullen shows to be especially useful for documenting the nature and effectiveness of the governmental response to baptismal registers; the papers of landed estates; and the proceedings of individual kirk sessions (parish committees), which are particularly helpful for filling out the critical details in the various communities. In addition to a close reading of minute books, judicial proceedings, and proclamations, which she subjects to astute interpretation, Cullen offers a systematic analysis of data about such key variables as grain prices and births and deaths to lend unprecedented quantitative exactitude to the emerging picture.

One consequence of this interdisciplinary methodology is Cullen’s ability to demonstrate not only the scale and impact of the famine but also the widely divergent experiences within different districts as events unfolded—a marked feature of the crisis that previously research had never fully explored. As a result, we can now know that the effects were greatest in the north and least damaging in the eastern lowlands, that grain prices roughly doubled because of the scarcity caused by the poor harvests (grain markets had effectively collapsed in Aberdeen and Inverness, the north’s two main towns, by 1698), and that the reduction in population either directly through death or indirectly through out-migration was close to 15 percent of the previous national total. This experience was predictably a shattering blow to the Scottish elite’s faith in the ability of their economy to support the nation’s population. The substantial costs of importing additional grain and providing much-increased welfare payments to the needy, clearly subjected both the public administration and the agricultural and commercial systems in Scotland to considerable stress.
In light of these circumstances, the decision of the national leadership less than a decade later to accept the Treaty of Union presented by the English—the inhabitants of a far wealthier and economically much more advanced country—seems significantly less inexplicable.

David Allan
University of St. Andrews

Regulated Lives: Life Insurance and British Society, 1800–1914. By Timothy Alborn (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2009), 440 pp. $80.00

Institutions of life insurance gave new meanings to death, which no longer called for humility before God. The responsible father was duty-bound to plan for a future on earth that he, by definition, would not live to see. That duty was typically enacted by life-insurance agents, who were emerging in the nineteenth century as the very model of high-pressure salesmen. Among their tricks was to call up what Alborn likens to the Ghost of Christmas Future, revealing to a man the impending misery and despondency of his family should he die uninsured. The danger—which Alborn recapitulates from the description of an 1857 writer—included sons reduced to thievery then jail, and young daughters to a much worse condition, the very thought of which makes a father’s blood run cold. Life insurance offered protection against these horrors. In practice, the insurance customer’s preparations for death depended primarily on a different kind of seer, not literary ghosts but mathematical actuaries, whose tireless work of data collection and calculation yielded the life table, a schedule of death rates and life expectancies by age. Life insurance thus reduced that greatest of unknowns, human mortality, to a system of averages, leaving, at the collective level, very little uncertainty.

It is difficult to understand why historians have given such scant attention to institutions of insurance, the rise and transfiguration of which have reshaped our lives as well as our deaths. In the twentieth century, medical and retirement insurance have come to be seen as essential and are supplied, in varying manners and degrees, by every self-respecting modern state. Yet the tools for mastering risk were pioneered by private companies supplying life insurance. Such technologies, to be sure, have not always succeeded, and their failings are even more fascinating than their successes. The most basic difficulty goes under the name of adverse selection, referring to the tendency for people to purchase insurance when they think they are most likely to be in need. In some cases, the pressure of adverse selection can be strong enough to drive out ever-expanding circles of the younger and healthier, to the point that the collectivization of risk becomes impossible. In a sense, state provision of insurance provides an escape from the downward spiral of selection, but the political problem of compelling the healthy and prosperous to subsi-
dize insurance for the sick and poor can be, as recent American experience shows, nearly intractable.

Alborn’s superb book, though priced for libraries and a specialist audience, should be of interest to anyone concerned with social or private insurance and the public role of knowledge. The range and depth of his research materials, including a variety of archives and all sorts of specialist and ephemeral publications, inspire awe. Alborn depicts the insurance company as a financial institution balanced between mathematics and marketing, a harbinger and a maker of the data-driven world. Yet insurance inspired the poetic muse as much as the mathematical one, exemplified in detective novels and films as well as the insistent imaginings of insurance agents. Alborn is alert to its quotidian rituals, such as the medical examination, which bequeathed to society the “risk factor” and many technologies of medical prognostication. He demonstrates that life insurance was about inheritance and investment, about securing loans and planning for retirement, as well as about financial security for families. Above all, he has a profound sense of the dynamic that drove the evolution of insurance, the need to regularize and systematize, to normalize diversity, and to guard against perverse incentives.

This book about British insurance is of fundamental importance for British history, social and cultural history, business history, and history of science. It charts the rise of a transformative modern alliance of social administration with mathematical technologies, generating means without precedent of regulation and prognostication.

Theodore M. Porter
University of California, Los Angeles


Numerous books have been written about the Contagious Diseases Acts that instituted regulated, and therefore tolerated, prostitution in parts of Britain and its colonies between 1867 and 1889. Historians of gender, sexuality, class, and most recently empire have all dealt with “the” Acts as have numerous local historians. Howell’s new study of British regulation offers a new perspective on this familiar issue. As a historical geographer, Howell brings to the subject of policing prostitution a keen sense of the importance of space in the disciplinary projects of the Victorian state.1

*Geographies of Regulation* begins with a detailed “map” of the locaily

1 Among the many books on the regulation of prostitution in Britain and its empire, the most influential have been Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (New York, 1980); Philippa Levine. *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York, 2003).
ties in which Contagious Diseases Acts (CDA) were applied. Howell concludes that CDA was far more haphazard in enforcement and far less dramatic in consequences than historians have believed. “The history of British regulationism,” Howell writes, “is not the history of the CDA alone” (73). Most of Howell’s book is largely concerned with those areas—Liverpool, Cambridge, and Gibraltar—where the CDA was never promulgated but where regulation nonetheless took root.

In Liverpool and Cambridge, “containment” or “localization” (the corraling of prostitutes and brothels into designated districts) achieved informally what the CDA created legally (77). The Liverpool police adopted this policy without recourse to formal legislation, and the University of Cambridge’s medieval statutes authorized university proctors to incarcerate prostitutes who consorted with students.

Other chapters of Geographies of Regulation deal with regulation in the empire. Howell focuses first on a neglected corner, Gibraltar, where the authorities created a kind of piecemeal regulation despite the fact that the Acts were never instituted. Howell ends by analyzing the colony of Hong Kong where the CDA did apply. He takes issue with historians of empire who emphasize the racial component in British prostitution policies, arguing that even though British authorities dominated, they did not dictate. In Hong Kong, colonial officers cooperated with local Chinese elites; in Chinese cities like Shanghai, regulation was the rule.

Howell has other bones to pick with postcolonial historians, but the readers of this journal will most likely find his emphasis on regulation and space more interesting. Howell asserts, “Spatiality underwrote the (prostitution) regulation project,” and “the most visible element of this policy was the formalization of zones of tolerated prostitution” (232). Is this reliance on spatial segregation a distinguishing feature of the modern state, and was it deployed in other disciplinary or even philanthropic endeavors? Unfortunately, Howell does not generalize. Other scholars will have to inherit the job of placing prostitution regulation in a broader chronological and theoretical framework.

Kathryn Norberg
University of California, Los Angeles

The Anatomy Murders: Being the True and Spectacular History of Edinburgh’s Notorious Burke and Hare and of the Man of Science Who Abetted Them in the Commission of Their Most Heinous Crimes. By Lisa Rosner (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010) 328 pp. $29.95

Ten years ago, a book like Rosner’s Anatomy Murders would not have been considered appropriate for review in a journal like this one. For a clue about why, readers need only look to its subtitle. Yet in the current climate of academic valuation (in the United Kingdom, at any rate) in
which public engagement constitutes a prime measure of “impact,” Rosner’s book presents a useful vehicle for exploring a core issue on which reviewers are asked to focus: Does the work’s research design showcase innovative interdisciplinary methodology?

The question for this review to raise, though not to answer, is whether a work that combines the accessibility of popular history with the academic historian’s trademark claim to authority, archival prowess, constitutes in itself an “interdisciplinary method”? Rosner’s account of the familiar story of Burke, Hare, and Robert Knox, an anatomist and race theorist and their primary client, certainly has qualities that make the case. She demonstrates a sure grasp of the social, cultural, and medico-political contexts of her story. Another strength is her eye for clever narrative construction. The book is structured into chapters that “travel, cadaver by cadaver, through the fateful twelve-month period” (7), with each chapter featuring a victim and a salient theme. This approach, a simple chronological account with thematic interest, makes for compelling reading. Moreover, Rosner’s careful, at times imaginative, use of archival material enables her to question not merely the accuracy of received accounts but also their very conditions of production and circulation.

An example of these qualities in action is Rosner’s first substantive chapter, which situates Burke and Hare in the context of a competitive medical education market, in which lecturers used whatever leverage they could to attract paying students. A good supply of dead bodies was one such attraction, secured either by institutional monopoly or by the efforts of individual anatomy lecturers and their students until the development of a commercial trade in corpses during the 1820s. This terrain is familiar to medical historians, yet Rosner manages to use the archives to add interesting detail—as when she uses the account book of Knox’s assistant to demonstrate the extent of Knox’s immersion in the body trade, or when she cites a letter from the Lord Advocate to customs officials urging release of a confiscated shipment of Irish cadavers to demonstrate the tacit support of Scottish officialdom for the trade.

Archives are also central to Rosner’s attempts to re-visit the life stories of Burke and Hare’s victims, nowhere more effectively than in the case of Mary Patterson, “the one Burke and Hare murder that everyone remembers, its elements re-packaged and incorporated into both fiction and annals of true crime” (105). The received version of Patterson’s demise, Rosner observes, injected an erotic charge into the anatomy murders: the story of a beautiful, promiscuous young girl delivered into the hands of her murderers by her own immorality, her corpse ultimately recognized by her medical student lover on Knox’s dissecting table. In Rosner’s view, this telling was forged from disparate sources that were then “condensed into a narrative whole greater than the sum of their evidentiary parts” (108). To go beyond these “suspect” sources, Rosner turns to a series of institutional records, most ingeniously those of a local
reform school for penitent girls, which recorded the admission of “Mary Patterson aged 16—daughter of Peter Paterson, Mason” (116). From this source, Rosner suggests an alternative identity for Mary—not the abandoned, fallen woman of legend but one struggling for respectability under difficult circumstances, who was supported, and ultimately mourned, by family and friends.

The book’s principal shortcoming can be summarized succinctly—little, if any, engagement with relevant scholarly literature. The upshot is a number of weak individual chapters—for example, on urban poverty, phrenology, and forensics—and a broader inability to demonstrate how the work extends our knowledge of the early nineteenth-century trade in bodies beyond that established by Richardson and, more recently, Sappol. Whether this is a necessary drawback of the academic/popular genre is debatable. It does, however, limit this engaging book’s value for readers looking for interdisciplinary methodology, conventionally defined.

Ian Burney
University of Manchester


About four decades ago, when Donnelly and this reviewer were novices in the Irish historical profession, the topic of this book would have fallen into the category of “secret societies,” the title of a collection of essays that appeared in 1973. Local gangs demanding redress of agrarian grievances—like the Whiteboys of the 1760s, whose name would become a generic label for protesting groups with colorful names such as the Hearts of Steel, Rightboys, and Terry Alts during the century to follow—fell under the loose heading of “secret societies,” along with vastly different groups like the freemasons, the Orange Order, and various republican movements. The activities of the republican movements fit neatly into the then-dominant master narrative of Irish history—the rise of nationalism. The most influential contribution in the 1973 collection was an article by Lee—ostensibly a study of the Ribbonmen but really a speculative argument that agrarian violence pitted (Irish) agricultural laborers against (Irish) tenant farmers more often than (Irish) cultivators against (“English”) landlords. This “revisionist” assault on


the nationalist master narrative of Irish history—together with the influence of Thompson, Hobsbawn, and Rudé—led to a number of studies of agrarian protest, including seven impressive articles by Donnelly ranging from the original Whiteboys to the Terry Alt movement of 1829 to 1831. The book under review is a capstone of that endeavor.

Readers of this journal may well expect quantitative approaches to the inquiries suggested above. Unfortunately, prior to the 1840s, the government had no consistent process for recording agrarian “outrages,” despite the intense concern of the governing classes. The principal surviving sources are voluminous correspondence between local informants and Dublin officials, supplemented by newspaper accounts. From such sources, Donnelly constructs thick descriptions of the waves of violence carried out by “Rockites” claiming leadership by a fictitious “Captain Rock” during the agricultural depression following the prosperous economy of the Napoleonic wars. When possible, he makes numerical estimates of particular types of events with cautionary reminders of the shakiness of the data. The result is a complex but convincing picture of conflict among at least four classes—landed gentry, “middlemen” (who rented land to sublet it), tenant farmers, and landless or nearly landless laborers.

How does this analysis affect the standing of the nationalist master narrative? In the past four decades, events in Northern Ireland have created a rival master narrative of Irish history based on sectarianism rather than nationalism. Donnelly places great emphasis on the circulation (interestingly dismissed by Lee in 1973) of the “Pastorini prophecy” that predicted the collapse of Protestantism in 1825. He argues that this millenarian excitement, along with Protestant proselytizing, fostered a sectarianism that contributed significantly to the extreme severity of the violence. Given that the Rockite movement occurred in the southwestern counties, farther from the counties of present-day Northern Ireland than any other part of the country, this claim marks a noteworthy shift within the Irish historical profession. Master narratives being less the product of

professional historians than of the cultures—both academic and popular—within which they work, the professional’s duty is to challenge the history consumer’s tendency to interpret the past in terms of the present, and Donnelly has admirably executed that duty.

David W. Miller
Carnegie Mellon University


One of the issues that once agitated scholars of the French Revolution was whether a “feudal” or “seigneurial” reaction, in the form of increased exactions, had taken place at the end of the Old Regime. Supporters point to the seigneurs’ increased reliance on specialized lawyers to unearth ancient dues—an urgent matter since those unclaimed for thirty years were considered extinct—and their increased use of their judicial prerogatives to enforce the collection of feudal dues and to pressure peasants to give up their rights to communal lands and forests. The additional revenues were sufficiently large to make such proceedings worthwhile, and, consequently, exacerbated conflicts between peasants and lords on the eve of the Revolution, setting the scene for the violent outbreaks of summer 1789. Opposing scholars argue that feudal dues were insignificant and seigneurial authority had been sapped by the absolutist state.

Burgundy has long been the focus for such debates. Although now renowned for its wines, gourmet dishes, and quaint villages, it was famed in the eighteenth century for the survival of feudal authority. The continued oppression of Burgundian peasants received the stamp of authority from Saint-Jacob’s mammoth study (1960), reinforced by Forster’s examination of the financial accounts of the aristocratic Saulx-Tavanes family (1971), whose extravagant lifestyle at court was sustained by squeezing their peasants dry.¹ Root’s 1987 study did not so much undermine this view as suggest that the royal administration attempted to protect the peasants against lords, in a self-interested move to secure its own stable tax base.²

The readily accessible Burgundian judicial records invite periodical reassessment of the weight of the seigneurial regime at the eve of the Revolution. Intrigued by peasant support of seigneurial courts in the 1789 rural cahiers de doléances, Hayhoe set himself to re-evaluate the ex-

tent, use, and misuse of seigneurial authority, based on the court records and annual assizes of a sample of seigneuries. This strategy allows him to challenge Alexis de Tocqueville’s claims in *Old Regime and the French Revolution* (New York, 1856) that seigneurial power in France eroded in favor of the centralizing state during the last century of the Old Regime.

Hayhoe concludes that the seigneurie remained a vibrant political and economic institution in northern Burgundy. What is more, the state recognized the utility of seigneurial courts, which complemented rather than competed against its own district–appeals courts. Hayhoe sees no evidence that provincial intendants intervened (unduly) in local judicial affairs. Seigneurs staffed the provincial Parlement and sat in the Langue-doc provincial Estates, hence offering powerful support to seigneurial prerogatives. So much for Tocqueville.

The attempt to prove the continued vibrancy of the seigneurie is problematical, however. Hayhoe fails to offer a satisfactory definition of the institution. Instead, he subsumes all local activities under the seigneurie’s judicial and economic powers. He treats communal administration as an offshoot of seigneurial authority and incorrectly places the communal practices required by open-field farming under lordly authority because of his dependence on judicial records to reconstruct rural relations. Moreover, although the careful reader will be able to piece together the judicial structure of the province, the book would have benefited from a section that outlined clearly all of the legal options open to lords, peasants, and communities, besides recourse to the seigneurial court.

Hayhoe argues that seigneurial justice could be beneficial on the basis of the 1789 rural cahiers—his peasants’ “voice”—which regretted the removal of the seigneurial court from the village to the nearest town. Hayhoe provides a good account of the rationale behind this change. In towns, seigneurs could hire lawyers or notaries to act as seigneurial judges, thus cutting costs while ensuring that men properly trained in the law oversaw their seigneuries and judged their civil and criminal suits. But in 1772, the re-establishment of mandatory annual assizes brought seigneurial courts back to the villages each autumn, much to the peasants’ relief. This development meant that petty disputes could be resolved quickly, cheaply, and efficiently, without the peasants needing to go to town. Peasants mistrusted judges whenever the lords’ interests were engaged but felt that the same judges acted impartially in other matters. Hence, their cahiers supported the maintenance of this lower court and called for its return to the countryside.

Hayhoe is at his best when handling purely judicial matters. Although he argues against a “feudal-style” “seigneurial reaction,” he agrees with those who see seigneurs using judicio-economic pressures to

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maximize their profits from “forests and fields” (even while vigorously pursuing the collection of existing dues). Lords (or their tenant-farmers and estate overseers) aggressively prosecuted communities that aimed to assert ancient rights to use forests, given the rising value of wood. Because village wardens patrolled communal forests no more assiduously than they patrolled those belonging to lords’ elsewhere in France, it is difficult to view their activity as a seigneurial vexation. It might more properly be treated as a conflict between rich and poor peasants. When Hayhoe similarly asserts that lords meant to enforce their economic control over “their fields,” he is not referring to the conflicts between lords and communities about ownership of “the commons” that were prevalent at the end of the Old Regime, but merely to the fines leveled against those who flouted standard agrarian practices by encroaching on the open fields or commons, stealing crops, or pasturing illegally. Such long-standing misdemeanors, which were subject to communal oversight, frustrated peasant proprietors of all stripes.

For Hayhoe, community and seigneurie become interchangeable, as do seigneurial courts, seigneurial “power,” and the “seigneurial system,” allowing him to treat village syndics, wardens, tax assessors, or parish vestry members as part of seigneurial authority. Since Hayhoe does not properly distinguish the seigneurial and communal realms, he is ready to conclude that villagers welcomed the oversight of “outsiders” with the authority to enforce “local norms.” The stability of the village community is thus made subject to those very seigneurial judges whose purpose was to ensure that seigneuries remained profitable for the lords. Peasants failed to free themselves from the contradictions of depending on the legal entity that helped settle local disputes and enforce the lord’s demands. Hayhoe makes a persuasive case for the continued benefits of local courts, but their larger identification with the seigneurie fails to convince. Social relations at the local level were far more complex than a sampling of judicial records, however rich, might suggest. The peasant community itself disappears in his account, as do the increasing tensions over what, for convenience’s sake, one might call the rural capitalism that divided different segments of the peasantry.

Judicial records are wonderful sources, but their limitations must be recognized. A full picture of Burgundian rural life requires a thicker description. Hopefully, Hayhoe will undertake such a study in future.

Liana Vardi
State University of New York, Buffalo


Camiscioli deploys the body—its corporeality, its procreative potential, and its motility in this wonderfully written book about early twentieth-
century immigration to France. As Camiscioli reports, nearly 3 million foreigners resided in France during the 1920s. After World War I, France confronted labor shortages, a vastly reduced male population, and a diminished enthusiasm for repeated childbearing among French couples. Immigrants were recruited for their productive and reproductive potential. But prontatalists, influenced extensively by demographic “race-science,” ranked immigrants preferentially according to their assimilative capacity and racial compatibility. Although much in opposition to Germanic-based notions of blood purity and particularism, French hybridity privileged European “racial” pairings of French women and southern European men. Camiscioli shows how the racialized naturalization of labor, the “suitability” or predisposition of certain people for undesirable work, was reinforced by the *au courant* geographical determinism, evolutionary racial science, social hygiene, and ethnology.

Taking her cue from feminist studies of empire and sexuality, Camiscioli brings the insights of biopolitical regulation (particularly the regulation of intimacy) to the site of immigration. Immigration was rarely studied, let alone studied so well, in concert with imperialism before Camiscioli’s book. She uses five particular moments in the immigration debate—pronatalist debates, industrial production, *métissage* (crossbreeding), white slavery, and independent nationality for married women. These five moments reveal the profound effect of mass movement on French intimate life, how the state actively recruited certain types of bodies for specific tasks, and how these bodies were coded according to the racial grammars of French republicanism. A thoroughgoing analysis of disparate sources ranging from social hygiene to army records on prostitution demonstrates how “social critics in this period of immense human mobility imagined the parameters of a racialized and gendered national identity” (2).

Camiscioli adopts the themes of labor and intermarriage as optics to view the emerging discourse of republican citizenship. French republicanism deployed inclusive exclusion, theoretically encompassing all but practically privileging a masculine, Gallicized vision of the citizen and legitimate bearer of rights. Camiscioli explores these tensions through the body of the *métis* subject—the conspicuous product of sexual improprieties and a threat to the perceived moral superiority (and hence imperiling the *mission civilisatrice*) of the French Empire. As Camiscioli’s review of metropolitan and colonial sexual practices demonstrates, selective inclusion policed the boundaries of the intimate. Though neither procreative interracial nor recreational interracial sex was officially promoted or tolerated, the procreative act prompted anxieties distinct from the recreational one. Social hygienists, feminists, and race scientists devised a segregated system for servicing the sexual needs of men from the colonies (particularly African and Asian immigrants), vis-à-vis their French compatriots in the metropolitan bordellos (*maisons de tolérance*).

In the colonies, regulationists devised a series of “ambulatory prostitution units” to meet the needs of French and colonial troops (118). As
Camiscioli notes, ambulatory prostitution units were not unique to French military policy, but they were installed primarily to discourage same-sex practices or interracial recreational sex. Similarly, the virtue of French women and the depravity of colonial men fueled the histrionic debates about “white slavery” and sexual trafficking of the early 1920s. Patriarchs repeatedly spelled out the danger of unaccompanied female travel, bereft of the protection/surveillance of father[land] or husband.

The final chapter on the battle over restoring married women’s divested nationality reveals the fortitude of egalitarian republican discourse and gendered national identity. Not surprisingly, feminists selectively fought for the restitution of French women’s nationality by decrying “inappropriate” (non-European) exogamous marriages, and emphasizing women’s citizenship as a matter of reproductive obligation and civic duty.

_Reproducing the French Race_ skillfully weaves together the discourses of empire, corporeality, racialization, citizenship, and intimacy in a bold and innovative look at the foundational fictions of republican citizenship, gendered identities, and the racial grammar of early twentieth-century France. Camiscioli’s command of the feminist scholarship about sexuality and empire renders the book accessible to non-Francophone specialists, a welcome addition to our knowledge of the imperial roots of contemporary immigration. _Reproducing the French Race_ contextualizes the furor over the _affaire du foularde_ and its accompanying apprehensions about multiculturalism as part of a longer historical conversation about the essential meaning of French identity.

Michelle McKinley
University of Oregon School of Law


A plot to kill the pope! Gay scholars tortured! Menacing Turks! D’Elia offers a readable book that provides textured background and a number of previews for what will be the final volume of his valuable four-volume translation of Platina’s _Lives of the Popes_.

The “sudden terror” of the title refers to the fear that seized Pope Paul II when, on Mardi Gras, 1468, a masked reveler told him that “an army of four hundred to five hundred criminals . . . lay hidden in the ancient Roman ruins next to the pope’s family palace,” waiting “to rise up, overwhelm the papal guard, and kill the pontiff” (1). The anonymous tipster disappeared into the crowd, but soon, thanks to information that certain cardinals presented to the pope, a group of humanists in papal service was charged with the conspiracy. Under torture, these pagan-

izing scholars, many of them homosexual, divulged that, in cahoots with the Turkish sultan, they were involved in a plot to kill the pope during Ash Wednesday mass. What was intended afterward never became clear, not under duress and not even with the pope conducting interrogations himself. None of the alleged conspirators was executed; instead, they were sent to prison. Two days later, the pope informed one of the humanists that he feared “an early release . . . might signal that the humanists were innocent and had been unjustly tortured” (157). Within a year, they were all freed.

Much in the surviving accounts of the 1468 conspiracy seems illogical; some scholars argue that the so-called conspiracy was an instance of papal paranoia. Yet D’Elia maintains that the assassination plot was “probable, even likely” (190). Often, in such dubious cases, historians provide a careful scrutiny of the evidence. D’Elia, however, opts to keep his primary sources obscure, building his case, instead, through collateral arguments that serve as springboards for amusing digressions. He recounts previous revolts and assassination attempts to lend substance to the affair. Collateral charges of sodomy against several of the humanists were almost certainly true, leading D’Elia to speculate about a practice that he claims to have been continuous from antiquity.

That one of the humanists, and possibly a second, had dealings with the Turks encourages D’Elia to take readers on a romp through the Balkans in a chapter about Ottoman sultan Mehmed the Conqueror; this digression is almost entertaining enough to justify D’Elia’s apparent agreement with the plotters’ conviction. But plaintive letters from the prisoners (and controversies of our own time) prompt even D’Elia to reverse course and chastise the pope: “Pope Paul II deserves condemnation for subjecting the humanists to torture and confinement in inhuman conditions, which should never be condoned” (185).

At book’s end, D’Elia confesses his inability to resolve “the complexity of the situation” (190). But like Platina, he can spin some good yarns.

William J. Connell
Seton Hall University


Trivellato’s The Familiarity of Strangers is a thought-provoking study of the Sephardic merchant community of Livorno in Tuscany, from its initial settlement in the 1590s through the mid-eighteenth century. Trivellato focuses in particular on the business partnership between two of the most prosperous families (Ergas and Silvera) of Livorno’s thriving early modern Sephardic community between 1704 and 1746. The trading networks of these two families, like those of most of Livorno’s
Sephardic merchants, stretched from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic world, although they specialized in the exchange of Mediterranean coral for precious stones from India.

Trivellato views her study as primarily economic history, and she is especially interested in the commercial practice of commission agency. Through commission agency, merchants who shared no ethnic, religious, or familial ties were able to trade with one another over long distances with a measure of trust, mutual interest, and cultural understanding. Most of the historians who have studied the Sephardic diaspora have taken a different approach, emphasizing the importance of shared ethnic and kinship ties in the functioning of the global commercial networks through which Sephardic commerce and banking often operated. Trivellato, however, complicates the interpretation of the role that Sephardic merchants played in early modern global commerce by examining how they forged and maintained commercial networks not based on ethnicity or religion—how strangers with little in common except commercial interests used commission agency and other means to engage in mutually beneficial trade.

Trivellato thus seeks to understand an area at the heart of scholarship about emerging early modern global trade networks—cross-cultural brokers and cross-cultural trade. Historians have traditionally argued that diasporas were vital to the development of global trade networks in the early modern world because groups such as Sephardic and Armenian merchants, although small in number, were able to create trust in trade networks due to their shared religion and/or ethnic and kinship ties. Trivellato argues essentially that these ethnically or religiously based networks intersected and traded successfully with those of strangers belonging to alien societies, religions, and cultures because they found other means to develop and maintain trust.

The Sephardic merchants of Livorno accomplished this feat by developing a culture of “communitarian cosmopolitanism” (18). By this term Trivellato seems to mean that the Sephardic merchants of Livorno managed to sustain a distinct identity within a Sephardic diaspora—encompassing both Portuguese New Christians of Sephardic Jewish ancestry and practicing Sephardic Jewish merchants—while developing a cosmopolitan worldview that smoothed their commercial relations not only with nearby Christians merchants but also with Muslim and Hindu merchants in their long-distance trade networks. Hence, in Trivellato’s view, cross-cultural trade also fostered opportunities for intellectual and cultural exchanges between the Sephardim and Christians. Far from eroding the identity of the early modern Sephardim or obviating all of the differences between them and Christians, these exchanges facilitated a new cosmopolitanism in early modern urban society. This is a fascinating study that will interest scholars of the early modern world as well as of European history.

Gayle K. Brunelle
California State University, Fullerton

In this English translation of his 1999 Het verraad van het Noorderkwartier, van Nierop uses a seemingly inconsequential episode during the revolt of the Netherlands against Spain to illustrate the horrific impact of the war on ordinary people. He also uses the incident to argue that the strength of local particularism and belief in the rule of law were so strong in the Dutch context that individuals, at least those who were backed by their town governments, could prevail against the forces of centralism, even during wartime.

By the year 1575, Dutch occupation of North Holland past the River IJ—the Noorderkwartier—presented a genuine military threat to the Spanish. To end that threat, royal officials planned an invasion of the north that aimed at the total destruction of the recalcitrant Hollanders via a scorched earth policy. But once the royal commander saw the strength of the Dutch fortifications, he abruptly turned his inadequate force of unpaid mercenaries around and abandoned the invasion. At a loss to explain the actions of their enemy, the rebel leadership in the Noorderkwartier concluded that treasonous elements in the local population had been prepared to betray the region to the Spanish, who had apparently withdrawn after their co-conspirators had been arrested. In fact, the supposed co-conspirators were merely an assortment of wandering beggars, who broke down under torture to implicate peasants, who were in turn tortured. Gradually the denunciations roped ever more notable figures into the horror of accusation and torture. Eventually, Jan Jeroenszoon, a lawyer from the town of Hoorn, was drawn into the inferno. But Jeroenszoon was able to make a persuasive case for his innocence and to tap a network of connections in Hoorn that brought the town government to intervene on his behalf. After he had won his release and that of two other prisoners, he filed suit for a wrongful accusation against the government officials who had persecuted him.

This story is not unfamiliar to scholars, but van Nierop is the first to avoid either a religious or nationalistic interpretation of it, opening the way for more attention to the impact of the Revolt on common people. Quoting the earlier article that triggered the research for this book, van Nierop notes, “For most contemporaries, the Revolt was probably not about anything at all. For them the war was simply a disaster, a nightmare from which they hoped to awake as soon as they could” (ix).

particular—slashed by lakes and rivers, dikes, and canals—offers an ideal site for such an inquiry. Van Nierop never lets his readers forget how the struggle against the sea shaped the political structures that ultimately determined Jeroenszoon’s fate. Military campaigns were also governed by the watery terrain; blockades and sieges could be crippled when an opponent broke the dikes. But this strategy damaged farmers’ livelihoods, adding to the misery that the Revolt brought down on the heads of common people.

Readers will appreciate the fact that the lucid writing of the Dutch volume has been preserved in Grayson’s excellent translation, making this book an accessible, important source of knowledge about people, environment, and the horrors of war.

Marybeth Carlson
University of Dayton

*Imperial Boundaries: Cossack Communities and Empire-Building in the Age of Peter the Great.* By Brian J. Boeck (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009) 256 pp. $99.00 cloth, $79.00 e-book

Boeck’s impressive and important study examines how the Don Cossacks negotiated both the attempts of Peter the Great (1696–1721) to re-fashion Russian society and the simultaneous closing of the steppe frontier, as the Russian and Ottoman Empires subjugated lands dominated by nomads (including the Cossacks) to create borders between states. In this well-written and finely constructed book, Boeck places the evolution of the Cossack community within the context of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Russian history and within a broader comparative framework of frontier studies.

Boeck contrasts the life of the Cossack community as it was in the age of the steppe, before Peter, with what it became in the eighteenth century. As he demonstrates, the Cossack community survived by undergoing a radical transformation in this era from an “open, multi-ethnic fraternity dedicated to raiding Ottoman frontiers to a closed ethnic community devoted to defending and advancing the boundaries of the Russian Empire” (1–2). The book’s structure reflects this theme, as organized into three large segments—the Don Cossack community in the seventeenth century (Chapters 2–7), its evolution during the age of Peter the Great (Chapters 8–11), and its life in the subsequent era (Chapters 12–14).

Beyond an account of how the Don Cossacks negotiated the transition from the early modern to the modern world, *Imperial Boundaries* advises historians about how to understand the Russian Empire. Instead of focusing on central state players—such as Peter the Great—Boeck seeks to “provide a mosaic of both central and regional perspectives” (6). By and large he succeeds wonderfully, drawing his materials from four cen-
tral archives and two regional ones, as well as the large amount of published documentary materials.

Boeck engagingly weaves individual lives and vignettes into his narrative to illustrate his larger themes. On the basis of this material, he convincingly demonstrates that any account of Russian imperial expansion must include the dynamics of the local societies on the frontiers. Rather than presenting the insatiably acquisitive, ever-expansive empire found in some accounts, Boeck contends that the Russian Empire did not entirely control the pace and forms of imperial expansion. Indeed, the imperial state had no master plan for expansion. Rather, expansion resulted from a series of ad hoc and situational decisions. As a result of special deals cut with frontier societies, Boeck argues, a situation emerged after 1705 in which the Russian Empire comprised an underprivileged core Russian metropole surrounded by a string of privileged borderland spaces, such as the Don, Siberia, the Ukrainian Hetmanate, and the Baltic Provinces (209; likewise 246). This insight is important and fruitful.¹

In addition to being an important contribution to the field of Russian history, Boeck’s monograph equally strives to present the story of the Cossacks in light of the burgeoning field of borderland and frontier studies. He declares, “The Don Steppe frontier cannot be fully understood apart from its connections to larger processes and patterns of Inner Asian history” (10). More expansively, Boeck analyzes the Don steppe through the analytical lens of White’s “middle ground” (16–17; Chapter 3, “A Middle Ground between Autonomy and Dependence”).² Elsewhere, he suggests that the members of the Cossack community prior to 1700 were like the “pirates, buccaneers, and maroons that emerged on the margins of European colonial societies” (27, 30, 65). Later in the book he compares the increasingly rigid boundaries that emerged between the Cossack and non-Cossack population in the post-1700 era as akin to the U.S.–Mexican border in the mid-twentieth century (228). Such comparisons provide a common analytical terrain for non-specialists to gain some purchase on the arguments in a far-removed field. Yet Boeck might have done more to compare and contrast the Cossacks with more immediately analogous historical cases—such Barkey’s work on the Ottoman Empire during this same period, or the Habsburg military line (Krajina), also a more or less contemporary phenomenon.³

¹ The paradigm of the Russian Empire of this era as a type of informal federalism, with privileged regimes at the periphery, may be found in the work of Boris Nolde, *L’ancien régime et la révolution russes* (Paris, 1928); *idem, La formation de l’Empire russe* (Paris, 1952–1953), 2 v.
The author is to be congratulated. This engagingly written, broadly researched, and analytically rigorous study should be of interest to historians of Russia as well as to scholars interested in the transition of early modern frontier societies into the modern age.

Peter Holquist
University of Pennsylvania

Pestilence and Persistence: Yosemite Indian Demography and Culture in Colonial California. By Kathleen L. Hull (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2009) 374 pp. $45.00

Pestilence and Persistence is a case-study contribution to the model of European-American Indian interactions that stresses the effects of introduced diseases on the Indian population after the arrival of Columbus. As Hull explains her work, “The timing, magnitude, and cultural consequences of colonial-era catastrophic depopulation among the Indian people of Yosemite Valley is chronicled . . . by bringing together native oral tradition, ethnohistoric accounts, historical images on film or canvas, later ethnographic data, and archaeological information that extends well beyond the colonial era” (25–26).

Continuous direct contact between Americans and the Miwok began only in 1851, when the Mariposa Battalion invaded the valley and eventually relocated some of the Indians to a newly established reservation about fifty miles away, from which they escaped to return home. But Hull’s story begins when “a black sickness” descended on the valley and caused severe depopulation. Hull dates this occasion between 1785 and 1800, but she does not attempt to specify the disease in question.

Readers are likely to find Pestilence and Persistence most useful for Hull’s description of the Yosemite Indians during the last half of the nineteenth century, for which the documentary record is surprisingly rich. Hull arrives at a population of approximately 300 people c. 1800, its lowest ebb for millennia, partly because of introduced disease and partly because of a millennium-long cycle of depressed population levels that ended around 1600 but had not yet had time to rebound. These conclusions are problematical. Historians seeking a demonstrated relationship between evidence and argument are likely to come away disappointed—perhaps even alarmed—by the intensive use of proxy data to interpret the pre-contact Miwok experience, especially those described as “items that have a known mathematical relationship to the number of people that produced or used them” (117, 302–307).

The longest chapter in this work, comprising more than one-fifth of the text, is essentially a rechauffé of twenty-five years of study about ten American Indian societies employing the disease model as an explanatory framework. Hull’s adherence to this model is evident in her use of “disease-induced” thirty times in this chapter and by her unwillingness,
in most cases, to consider alternatives to account for depopulation. The purpose of this chapter is unclear. It adds nothing to her main focus on the Miwok Indians, in which, as noted above, she has been able to use a variety of sources—mostly written and mostly contemporaneous—to build a credible case that resembles the disease model. It enlarges, but does not enhance, the core narrative, and its prominence leaves an impression that the focal study was designed only to add a cog to that model.

David Henige
University of Wisconsin, Madison


Zabin’s history of New York City in the first two-thirds of the eighteenth century explicitly sets out to interpret the experience of its residents from an imperial rather than a colonial perspective. Zabin puts stress on the commercial ties of empire, arguing that they were crucial to the ways in which social identities were shaped (as well as undermined and contested) in the period before the Seven Years’ War.

The book’s analysis revolves around the slave conspiracy trial that gripped the city in the spring and summer of 1741. Zabin’s addition to the already rich historiography about these show trials is to interpret them as a manifestation of a persistent uncertainty about status that operated both at the social and individual level. At the social level, concerns about status among the city’s commercial and political classes, particularly as related to slaves and foreigners, help to explain their willingness to give countenance to the avalanche of accusations. At the individual level, Zabin finds status to be a particularly fruitful explanation for the behavior of the two principles in the conspiracy trials—Daniel Horsmanden, the judge/prosecutor, and Mary Burton, the chief witness. Horsmanden’s position made him part of the city’s political elite, but he lacked the financial bottom to be truly at home in that role; for him, the trials were a means of securing his status. Burton was an indentured servant whose prospects, even in the rosiest of scenarios, were limited; for her, the trial was a chance to cast off her dependency.

The chapter that details the conspiracy trials is the book’s last, but it might have been better as the first, since the other chapters really come into their own as analyses of questions and issues that emerge during the course of the trials. The first chapter examines the uncertainties surrounding commercial credit in imperial New York, an analysis that serves to inform Zabin’s reading of Horsmanden as a man who manipulated image to gain credit. Another chapter examines the informal econ-
omy of second-hand clothes, pawn shops, and stolen goods. Zabin’s research supports work by Hunt, Lemire, and others in emphasizing the important role that women played in the informal economy, but it also serves to place Burton in her social setting. Similarly, the chapter on dancing masters discusses the services offered by peddlers of status, setting up Zabin’s discussion of the unfortunate John Ury, an itinerant schoolmaster who was executed as a Catholic spy. Another chapter covers the plight of free black sailors who served on Spanish ships and were captured by privateers and then sold into slavery as part of the prize goods. These men vigorously contested their free status, but the doubts that existed provide useful background for the ways in which the slave conspiracy trial unfolded. (One of the book’s best chapters, a fascinating account of how restrictions on married women’s property paradoxically gave them an opening into transatlantic trade, does not appear to be closely linked to the 1741 trials.)

Because the disparate topics of each of these chapters are not connected until the analysis of the 1741 slave conspiracy trials, the book reads more like a collection of essays than a unified argument. Moreover, when taken out of context in this fashion, the claims made in some of the chapters seem overstated. For example, the chapter about commercial credit dwells at some length on the problem of fraudulent bills of exchange. The significance of the confidence tricksters who passed these bills eventually makes sense as a foil against which to appreciate Horsemaden’s (fraudulent) pursuit of the slave conspiracy, but the chapter overlooks the more pedestrian problems of late or stopped payments by genuine correspondents that were of much more concern. Likewise, Zabin’s discussion of dancing masters describes the elite’s desire for instruction in manners without giving any real information about who these elites were as a social group and how dancing—or any of the other trappings of gentility—figured in their lives. Again, the chapter’s topic makes sense in light of Ury’s execution in 1741, but to state that this society “possessed few other connections to metropolitan cultural knowledge” beyond what was offered by itinerant dancing masters is taking a point too far (8).

The book also presents a static picture of New York between 1700 and 1760 that is at odds with the city’s rapid development from a frontier settlement of 6,000 people to a thriving commercial seaport of 30,000. Indeed, only one of the chapters describes something that changed—the increasing success that Afro-Spanish sailors had in petitioning to be treated as prisoners of war. Moreover, within British historiography, the very issues with which Zabin is concerned—status, sociability, commerce, and gender—are seen as in transition during this period. Thus,

even allowing that the book’s argument concerns persisting tensions about status, it is curious that Zabin does not discuss change as a possible cause of these tensions.

The book’s weaknesses are, however, a consequence of the ambitious and significant project that Zabin has undertaken; implicit in her approach is an argument against the compartmentalization of history. Rather than treating the histories of New York’s merchants, or its marginalized women, or its free blacks as separate, Zabin has incorporated a wide range of perspectives that each shaped to the 1741 slave revolt in different ways. The integration is incomplete, but the attempt raises interesting questions that deserve further exploration.

John Smail
University of North Carolina, Charlotte

*American Homicide.* By Randolph Roth (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University, 2009) 655 pp. $45.00

Given the regional, ethnic, social, and cultural diversity of the country and the sparseness of records prior to the twentieth century, many have concluded that a statistically based history of homicide in America was impossible. But, armed with “complete or near-complete records from scores of counties”(xi), Roth has written a history of homicide from colonial times to the present. He concludes that homicide rates among nonrelated adults correlate with confidence in the stability and legitimacy of government and “fellow feeling arising from racial, religious or political solidarity” (18).

The evidence and thesis both raise some serious questions. First, can “scores” of counties actually provide sufficient data to reach conclusions about four centuries of American history? Roth refers readers to a website for further information about his database and the formulas that he uses to compensate for missing data (and for an explanation to reviewers who “misunderstand” his work). However, rather than being a statistical problem amenable to mathematical manipulation, the deliberate decisions involved in determining whether and how homicides are reported are an essential aspect of the history of homicide.

The book includes voluminous citations but fails to address the fact that a careful examination of the data in local studies demonstrates that the variables associated with homicide resist any simple correlations. Roth acknowledges the myriad causes and explanations that have been suggested in previous works but rejects them all, pointing out that “the best predictor of increases and declines in America’s homicide rate has been the percentage of new counties named for national heroes—an indirect measure of how Americans felt about their nations and one an-
The lack of immediate connection between the two would seem to suggest that other factors might be more useful.

Roth defends his argument in a survey so sweeping that virtually every page contains enough overstatements, generalities, and outright inaccuracies to make specialists in the region or period under discussion cringe. All too often, the source cited for a particularly startling claim says nothing of the kind.

In addition to the problems of evidence and method, Roth treats homicide as simply a matter of rates regardless of context. For example, in discussing the colonial period, Roth notes, “Once the Natives were not numerous enough to defend themselves, Natives and Europeans stopped killing each other” (47). He also suggests that slavery led to a decline in homicide (70–73). Despite the indecorous implication that genocide can lead to a decline in homicide rates, Roth concludes with a banal, if naïve, prescription: “If [politicians] recognize the role that emotions and beliefs play in homicide, and the importance of legitimate government and national unity, they may be able to act in more constructive ways” (473). Regardless of motive, politicians acting in more constructive ways does sound promising.

Carolyn A Conley
University of Alabama, Birmingham

*This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity.* By Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2010) xxii, 484 pp. $45.00

*This Violent Empire* attempts to describe how, in the decades just after the Revolution, Americans formed an unstable national identity that made them violent. Smith-Rosenberg’s argument for American violence, however, seems almost as volatile as the national identity that she claims to describe.

According to Smith–Rosenberg, in the early national period, the United States was fractured not only along state lines but also along lines of region, race, national origins, class, and religion. Some people, mostly Federalists, thought that the country needed something to unify the population. Hence, they pointed an accusing finger at “Others”—people who seemed to pose such a threat that disparate Americans would join together to combat them. These Others included Shaysites and other small farmers, Indians, women, artisans, petty merchants, and blacks. The energy that these nation-builders dedicated to opposing these Others created a national identity rooted in violence that has persisted to this day. “*This Violent Empire,*” says the author, “will argue that the need to artificially produce a sense of national cohesion for a people with no common heritage . . . exacerbates the tendency to exclusion, vi-
omen, xenophobia, and paranoia all national identities harbor within themselves” (21–22).

The protagonists of this book, the people who tried to forge that sense of national cohesion, were writers and editors who published novels and political magazines between 1786 and 1820. Once Smith-Rosenberg delves into this literary evidence, however, she finds that these would-be nation-builders could not easily locate reliable enemies for Americans to hate, despise, and fear. Instead, the Others were consistently “problematized” and “destabilized.” Hence, in novels and magazines, Indians were noble as well as savage. Blacks were not just contemptible slaves but also fellow human beings who deserved liberation. Small farmers, artisans, and petty merchants may have been ignorant and uncouth, but all men were created equal, as the Declaration of Independence proclaimed. A magazine might publish stories portraying women as brainless spendthrifts, but it would also publish excerpts from works like Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York, 1792). White gentlemen—the presumptive models for a national identity—were often portrayed as more virtuous than the various Others. However, these men could also be portrayed as sybarites, thieves, and even murderers, Who would want to identify with them? Could their “performances of gentility augment troubled representations of gender and race and so produce a coherent ‘American’ identity?” (340).

Apparently not: “The differences that mark the boundaries between our Others and ourselves continually dissolve” (467). If, however, no definite, dependable Other is available, then how can there be an “us,” a coherent American identity? And if there is no coherent American identity, what else could make Americans violent? How about an *incoherent* American identity? “The roots of American paranoia, racism, and violence,” maintains the author, “lie in the instability of Americans’ national sense of self” (x). In regard to whites and blacks, for example, “one of *This Violent Empire*’s central contentions” is “that racist violence (rhetorical as well as literal) emerges, in part, at least, out of frustration with the repeated erosion of difference” (435).

The commas and parentheses in that sentence are the bloody footprints left in the snow by a thesis in retreat. The violence of the American empire, it now appears, is sometimes merely rhetorical. Moreover, whatever literal violence does occur against anybody may not be caused by Americans’ having identified that person as an Other but—“in part, at least”—by their having *failed* to do so and by their feeling “frustration” over that failure. Frustration leads to rage, which leads to violence.

Smith–Rosenberg does not show precisely how either Otherness or the collapse of Otherness caused specific historical examples of violence. She does, to be sure, describe plenty of carnage, mainly between whites and Indians—for example, the captivity of Mary Rowlandson in 1675 looms large (251–269). However, much of that violence occurred before the Revolution; it isn’t clear how novels and political magazines pub-
lished after 1785 can be held responsible for it. Perhaps American violence stems from something other than either a national identity or its instability.

James A. Hijiya
University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth


Like many European visitors traveling to America in the 1830s, Tocqueville was struck by America’s traditional commitment, at least in New England, to public education. He also famously pointed out in Democracy in America that prejudice based on skin color was ubiquitous in the northern states, leading to widespread racial segregation in schools, theaters, employment, housing, and virtually every aspect of social existence.¹

Many historians of American education have similarly recognized that racial inequality was a glaring contradiction in the movement to build common, tax-supported schools in the antebellum period. As Curti explained in The Social Ideas of American Educators, Horace Mann, the nation’s greatest school reformer a century before, usually avoided engaging directly with controversial subjects such as abolitionism or integration to avoid stirring up opposition to the fledgling school system.² By the 1970s, it was an article of faith among leading historians that racism was endemic in public schools at their founding. Thus, the standard volume on the origins of the public schools by Carl F. Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780–1860 (New York, 1983), emphasized how dominant white assumptions about racial superiority almost guaranteed that northern schools, despite considerable black protest, were often separate and unequal.

Schooling Citizens is a worthy contribution to the study of African-American struggles for access to education and schooling in the pre-Civil War era. In a series of well-composed case studies on black educational experiences in Boston, New Haven, and Baltimore, Moss examines the contradictions between common school ideals that espoused civic, republican themes of inclusion, assimilation, and citizenship and the racially exclusionary practices of the white citizenry, rarely challenged openly by leaders such as Mann. The book rests upon abundant research, including newspapers, census records, and archival collections. Although most historians will find the general narrative of Boston’s ra-

cial history familiar, Moss impressively draws upon local records to give readers an intimate view of neighborhood conflicts between whites and blacks about school integration. Like Kaestle in his general survey, as well as such other scholars as Douglas, she reminds us of the internal battles within black communities over integration. African-American parents and teachers rightly worried about job losses and the likely treatment of black children in white-controlled institutions.

The analysis of Baltimore and its African-American freedom struggles is particularly engaging. Given that blacks were excluded from the city’s public school system, Moss imaginatively explores the role of churches, apprenticeships, private schools, and Catholicism in providing the diverse means of uplift, enlightenment, and self-help within the African-American community. Moss is not the first historian to argue that racial considerations constituted some of the central, if not exclusive, concerns of antebellum educators and school reformers. Schooling Citizens asks us to ponder why Americans, both white and black, often believed in the democratic promise of schooling even though fair treatment and equal opportunity were so rarely realized.

William J. Reese
University of Wisconsin, Madison


In _A Dangerous Stir_, Summers reinterprets the politics of Reconstruction through the lens of paranoia and conspiracy. While acknowledging a debt to Richard Hofstadter’s classic _Paranoid Style in American Politics_ (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), Summers carefully teases apart the myriad strands of wartime and postwar political discourse, finding more similarities than one might think between Republican and Democratic rhetoric. Rather than simply dismissing conspiracy theories as fanciful imaginings or calculated fear mongering, Summers delves into the reasons for the stories, taking them seriously and limning them for meaning.

_A Dangerous Stir_ is richly detailed and tightly argued. Most of the action takes place in the corridors of Congress and the White House, with occasional forays to statehouses around the nation. The book is also illustrated with eighteen political cartoons—most of them by Thomas Nast—that help readers to visualize the disputes and polarization. Summers begins with an introduction to American politics of conspiracy, arguing it to have been a natural outgrowth of republican ideology: Liberty needed to be constantly on guard against the forces of tyranny and corruption. The rhetoric of conspiracy intensified during the two-party system of the 1840s and reached a fever pitch in the 1850s. Northern
Republicans feared the “Slave Power,” Southern white Democrats fretted about an army of fanatical abolitionists coming after them. The war itself did little to change the paranoid climate, especially given the realities of Copperheads and the ultimately successful plot to assassinate Lincoln.

Summers’ main concern is Reconstruction; the bulk of his book is devoted to the turbulent years from 1865 to 1868. He presents a dense thicket of charge and counter-charge, real secret plots and imagined ones, reminding readers that the war really settled very little. For years afterward, Northerners and Southerners, Republicans and Democrats wondered if a second armed conflict would erupt over the issue of black suffrage and the expansion of either congressional or presidential powers. Summers carefully traces the deterioration of the relationship between the Radicals and President Andrew Johnson, showing how misinterpretation of actions and motivations destroyed any chance of the two sides working together. Summers’ discussion of the events leading up to Johnson’s impeachment is particularly strong, vividly describing the Radicals’ fears that Johnson would raise his own army and set up his own shadow Congress.

Although all of this detail is surely interesting, Summers’ most important contribution comes in his final chapters, which delineate the post-1868 retreat from Reconstruction. Ironically, once Northern Republicans turned their attention away from Southern Democrats, the region was enveloped in a violent counter-revolution, which shattered the fragile gains made by African Americans. Summers reveals the real importance of the early fear and paranoia when he writes, “This book may be seen as the story of watchdogs who barked all the time and, because they set up such a steady yammering, ended up not heard by later historians and by a growing number of their own contemporaries” (269). In essence, the Radicals were the boys who cried wolf, and when the real conspiracy arose, through the Ku Klux Klan and “Redemption,” Northern whites were no longer in the mood to listen, or to intervene in meaningful ways. Summers also puts in a plug for the beleaguered moderate Republicans, suggesting that their less punitive, less constitutionally questionable course might have been the wiser one that could have broken the cycle of paranoia. All in all, this book is a powerful and fascinating contribution to the literature of Reconstruction politics.

Anne Sarah Rubin
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Born Southern: Childbirth, Motherhood, and Social Networks in the Old South. By V. Lynn Kennedy (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010) 277 pp. $65.00

According to Kennedy, antebellum southerners created, replicated, and justified southern values and a regional identity through discussions
and practices related to childbirth and infant nurture. Men and women—rich and poor, enslaved and free—all achieved status through birth. Ideas about birth and blood not only established individual identity but also linked people to one another within the South’s hierarchical structure, naturalizing hierarchy in the eyes of elites if not others.

Born Southern is a social history divided into two parts. The first half focuses on childbirth and motherhood in slaveholding households; the second part looks at how childbirth and infant nurture were understood and discussed in the public sphere to construct the professional identities of doctors, lawyers, and planters, as well as the political identities of southern elites. “The language of birth,” Kennedy writes, was used to forge regional identities. It did not cause sectional conflict, but it served as “a powerful symbolic weapon in assertions of sectional difference and superiority by both sides” (187).

Part synthesis and part original research into primary sources, Kennedy mines a wealth of literary sources to understand how different groups of southerners influenced, practiced, and understood childbirth and childrearing. These sources range from elite women’s correspondence and favorite domestic novels to medical and agricultural journals, judicial decisions, and legislative enactments. The result is a chorus of voices, some louder than others. The voices of slaves and poorer whites appear here and there but not consistently throughout the book. Although Kennedy examines interviews with former slaves conducted in the 1930s under the auspices of the New Deal’s Works Progress Administration and culls the documents related to emancipation compiled and published by editors of the Freedmen and Southern Society Project at the University of Maryland, black voices are heard mostly in a chapter on motherhood and in a discussion of the nation’s reconstruction following the Civil War.

Kennedy maintains that “the presence of free and enslaved women together in the same household” mattered (1) because it influenced members of the elite and professional classes. The author’s heavy reliance on sources created by elite white women and white professionals, however, shortchanges the agency of blacks and poor whites. Conflict and contestation between slaves and owners are downplayed. For example, a section on the pain of childbirth among slaves focuses on what the owning and professional classes thought about black women’s pain, not on what black women experienced or how they interpreted their own pain.

Born Southern is useful nonetheless. It recognizes that elite southerners were embedded in a social network with others (doctors, lawyers, judges, and legislators included) whose authoritative voices helped them to attribute deviance to others rather than to themselves. When it came to parenting, for example, elite southerners judged enslaved blacks and poor whites as inadequate, conveniently forgetting, in the case of slaves, their own role in establishing policies restricting a slave’s time and resources for child care. They condemned illegitimate births and miscege-
nation, blaming both on slaves and poor whites, even when faced with knowledge of children born to elites outside of marriage.

*Born Southern* will appeal to scholars who want to know how ideas about birth and blood have informed social relations and politics. Although the main audience for the book is likely to be historians, scholars in other fields will find something of interest, particularly political scientists, sociologists who employ historical methodology, and professors of law and medicine who want to introduce students to the ways in which professionals supported the social hierarchy into which they were born.

Marie Jenkins Schwartz
University of Rhode Island

*Good, Reliable, White Men: Railroad Brotherhoods, 1877–1917.* By Paul Michel Taillon (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2009) 266 pp. $75.00 cloth $25.00 paper

Since historians of the working-class experience have shifted their focus from institutions and organizations to the cultures and expressions of everyday life, the railroad brotherhoods of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have long been dismissed as the apotheosis of conservative, apolitical “business unionism,” grounded in white male privilege and lacking in class-conscious militancy. In *Good, Reliable, White Men,* Taillon refigures railroad brotherhoods as both vital symbols of the American sociocultural milieu and as central figures in the transformation of American politics. Indeed, though Taillon readily acknowledges their racism and sexism, he forcefully argues that railroad brotherhoods—representing as they did the literal and metaphorical engine for American territorial and technological expansion—figured prominently in the national drama of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The brotherhoods’ blend of workplace unity and fraternal ritual, their exclusion of women and racial minorities from their ranks and workplaces, and, ultimately, their involvement in politics “offer[s] a useful window onto processes of social, cultural, and political change” during their era of dominance and “argues for their historical role in helping to propel those changes on the railroads” (9–10).

Taillon draws heavily from the “new institutionalism,” a synthetic method that links “the new labor history’s emphasis on culture and community with analysis of the labor movement both in the context of the larger political economy and in relation to other institutions” (8). Taillon’s great strength is his dexterity in weaving together the parallel (and occasionally intersecting) histories of the brotherhoods’ culture and their increasing involvement with the nation’s political economy. To balance these two levels of analysis, Taillon constructs his narrative as a series of expanding concentric circles. He begins with a discussion of workplace and home life in the railroad “running trades” before moving...
to an examination of the fraternal character of railroad brotherhoods and their relationship to free-labor ideology and eventually reaching the heart of his subject—the centrality of railroad unions in the reordering of labor relations, and liberalism itself, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Specifically, the Erdman Act (1898), which allowed government arbitration of railroad disputes, ushered in a new era of labor militancy among the staid “business unions” of the nation’s railways. The Adamson Act (1916), which established an eight-hour day for railroad workers, served to buttress “an enduring, but not uncomplicated, alliance of labor and the Democratic Party” (202). Along the way, Taillon uses newspapers, journal articles, and speeches to deftly recount the ways in which the social culture of the brotherhoods—their fraternal character, their vicious attempts to exclude black workers from railroad employment, and their investment in an expansionist version of American masculinity—were reflections of the cultural climate of the nation itself.

The book’s only weakness is its lack of attention to alternative unionism. Although Taillon briefly brings Eugene V. Debs into the story, and he ably describes the ways in which brotherhood “women’s auxiliaries” provided a space for railroaders’ wives and daughters to mold their own gender and class consciousness, he pays little attention to the effects of the brotherhoods’ ferocious defense of white male privilege on burgeoning efforts at interracial unionization. Given that the brotherhoods themselves are the center of analysis, however, this is a minor quibble. Taillon’s strong methodological grounding and powerful narrative fuel a thoroughly convincing analysis. Good, Reliable, White Men makes a significant contribution to the history of American workers.

David Bates
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign


Battered by the recent recession and a shrinking endowment, administrators at Wake Forest University announced at a faculty meeting last spring that pay hikes would be meager. A disgruntled voice asked, “Won’t we even get a cost of living raise?” The pedantic economist in me resisted the urge to rise and explain that since the Consumer Price Index (CPI) had fallen (ever so slightly) over the preceding year, faculty members should be thankful that they did not receive a “cost of living” decrease. This episode underlines the abiding necessity of measuring the “cost of living” and the inescapable sensitivity and debates about such measures.

Because estimates of changes in the cost of living—and the very concept itself—are so politically provocative, politicians and policymak-
ers have generally searched for ways to diffuse the issue. Stapleford views their logic as part of a broader process of attempting “to ‘rationalize’ governance by restricting action to allegedly reasonable rules that are grounded in objective, empirical knowledge” (5). But the trouble is that rationalization “cannot deliver what it promises: an apolitical, neutral form of knowledge and governance,” because measures like the inflation rate are “rife with ambiguities,” which “become recognizable when one seeks to translate the concepts into operational terms” (8). Judgments with “political valences extend all the way through the calculation process” (9).

Stapleford makes this case ably by recounting the evolution of cost-of-living indexes in the United States from the late 1800s to the present—intertwining sweeping changes in the uses of these indexes with developments in statistical and economic theory and practice. He evinces the requisite ability to understand technical arguments laid out in economics treatises, as well as a careful examination of the archives, especially those of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and a subtle understanding of how the politics of these statistics played out.

The “cold,” “quiet,” and “unlovely” numbers first collected by state and federal government statisticians like Carroll Wright initially did not matter much, but when they were given an important role by bureaucrats setting wages during World War I, the lesson was relearned that “economic statistics rarely ended political debate—they proved at once too flexible (open to multiple interpretations) and too unstable (open to direct challenge through methodological critiques or indirect challenge through the citation of competing and conflicting figures)” (45). Accordingly, the book’s most interesting sections recount episodes in which cost of living estimates became political footballs—especially during World War II when the CIO and AFL labeled one BLS cost of living report “the most insulting document to organized labor that has emanated from the Department of Labor since its creation” (186).

The cumulative impact of Stapleford’s historical analysis is to explain why recent attempts to overhaul the CPI—which most economists believe overstates the underlying inflation rate—have had such a meager impact. Unfortunately, in the concluding chapters his sympathy for critics of the BLS breaks down to some extent. In addition, the analysis virtually ignores one highly important consumer of cost of living statistics—the Federal Reserve.

Robert Whaples
Wake Forest University


This imaginative study focuses on one of the more intriguing investigative techniques deployed to advance social knowledge during the Pro-
gressive Era—undercover investigation. An array of reformers, with a
eye to social improvement and a bold determination to capture real-life
conditions, made forays during the period into places where they be-
lieved evildoing existed and, indeed, flourished. Often without reveal-
ing their identity or purpose, they sought to mingle, either directly or
through hired agents, with the perpetrators and victims of various crimes
in order to gather facts and statistics that they imagined would be ef-
fäcacious in promoting effective reform. Undercover techniques were
favored especially by organizations devoted to rooting out the “social
evil” of prostitution. But they were by no means restricted to such
groups. Muckraking journalists, liberal activists determined to expose
the grueling conditions endured by working men and women, as well as
prison reformers—among a great many others—all engaged in such tac-
tics during the Progressive Era. Their detailed and voluminous reports
are a treasure trove for historians interested in late nineteenth- and early
twentieth-century social research and liberal-reform endeavors.

In New York Undercover, Fronc makes extensive, and revealing, use
of this material to examine the penchant for private surveillance among
five reform-driven organizations. Three of the five groups that Fronc
explores reflect familiar Progressive-era, anti-vice constituencies, ideol-
ologies, and interests. The short-lived Committee of Fifteen (1900–1902)
and the Committee of Fourteen brought together academics, civic
leaders, businessmen, and reform activists concerned with both the pro-
liferation of vice in New York and the inadequacy, at best, of municipal
oversight of prostitution and gambling. They relied upon undercover
investigators, most largely untrained, to amass data that might persuade
government officials to pursue stricter enforcement of existing anti-vice
regulations as well as new statutes aimed at tighter moral and social con-
trol. The Committee of Fourteen’s “Colored Auxiliary” ironically re-
enforced Jim Crow, Fronc points out. By enlisting the co-operation of
African-American bar owners and businessmen eager to protect their sa-
loons and clubs, the Auxiliary aided in preventing allegedly illicit “race
mixing” (122).

New York’s People’s Institute fares better in Fronc’s assessment.
The organization focused its energies on improving the quality of neigh-
borhood life and leisure for children and immigrants, infiltrating a
“gang” of boys and conducting social surveys as a means to this end. The
National Civic Federation (ncf) rounds out Fronc’s story. She recounts
how the ncf surreptitiously gathered evidence about radical labor agita-
tors and, during World War I, various other perceived political subver-
sives in ways that enhanced a growing federal security apparatus.

Fronc sees the various groups that she surveys as both morally com-
promised in their endeavors and successful in enlarging government
intrusiveness—conclusions that echo the themes of much recent histori-
ography about the Progressives. The larger claims of Fronc’s study—that
these organizations, and the techniques upon which they relied, were
highly instrumental in paving the way for an enlarged “national security
state” (a term usually reserved for the post–World War II period)—will
not persuade all readers. But she makes an excellent case that the groups examined exerted pressure, directly and indirectly, to enlarge government surveillance of private individuals, often advancing the interests of political, social, and economic elites in the process. Fronc’s analysis enriches understanding of a vital dimension of Progressive-era reform initiatives.

Ellen Fitzpatrick
University of New Hampshire

*The Sacco-Vanzetti Affair: America on Trial.* By Moshik Temkin (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2009) 316 pp. $35.00

The arrest of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti for a payroll robbery and murder in Massachusetts created a tumult that did not sink into oblivion with the electrocution of two Italian-born anarchists. The affaire continued to arouse international indignation at the American criminal-justice system. For about nine decades, the issues that the case raised could be reduced to the following questions: (1) Was either or were both of the defendants guilty as charged? (2) Did they get a fair trial? (3) Was their trial just an excuse to impose capital punishment? The most striking feature of the latest addition to the bulging shelves of books already devoted to Sacco and Vanzetti is the author’s reluctance to answer any of these questions. “The truth about the 1920 crime in South Braintree is not known (and never will be),” Temkin writes (7). He is equally agnostic on the salience of the Sixth Amendment, though his book presents enough evidence of the antiradical and nativist atmosphere in which the upper-crust judge conducted the trial to reinforce the disturbing procedural argument that Felix Frankfurter famously presented in “The Case of Sacco and Vanzetti,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 139 (March 1927), 409–432. Given such criticism, shouldn’t the lives of the “good shoemaker” and the “poor fish peddler” have been spared? Pope Pius XI, Alfred Dreyfus, Henry Ford, and many other luminaries thought so, but Temkin maintains silence on this issue as well.

Instead, Temkin’s book explores the reactions throughout the United States and abroad, especially in the defendants’ native Italy, and in France, Germany, Sweden, England, the Soviet Union, and Latin America. The international dimension of the case, and the intensity of anti-American sentiments that the fate of Sacco and Vanzetti aroused, have nowhere else in the scholarly literature been so fully explored as in this book. Inevitably, some conservatives at home and abroad defended the correctness of the guilty verdict, the legality of the judicial procedures, and the justness of the death sentence. But opinion was overwhelmingly hostile, often interpreting the affaire as symptomatic of the divisions of class and ethnicity that could not give these previously obscure anarchists an even break in the courts.

Temkin does a superb job of locating the wide range of responses,
both geographically and diachronically. Witness William F. Buckley’s contempt for the enduring sympathy that the pair engendered (“At the rate we are going, the only man left who will be universally acknowledged to have been guilty is Adolf Hitler” [302]), as well as Gov. Michael Dukakis’ 1977 decision to grant Sacco and Vanzetti what was in effect a posthumous pardon. Though Ben Shahn’s iconic paintings of 1931/32 are surprisingly ignored, Temkin’s research has been unusually thorough and ingenious, and his prose is vivid and engaging. *The Sacco-Vanzetti Affair* does not stake out an explicitly interdisciplinary claim, however. Nor does Temkin explore in any depth what the Constitutional right to a fair trial meant during the 1920s (or later). But even though he slights the relevance of the philosophy of law, his book leaves little doubt that prejudice pervaded both the courtroom and the appellate process.

Indebted, at least distantly, to the sociology of knowledge, Temkin does not seek to apply any grand theory to the recorded opinions of political activists, intellectuals, lawyers, artists, and journalists. But one consequence of his vigorous empiricism, his admirable tenacity in the pursuit of sources, happens to be repetitiveness; the number of perspectives on the case is large but hardly infinite. The book therefore seems a little padded. One of its key findings, however, has implications for cultural studies. The extraordinary anger that the case stirred abroad may well have hurt chances for judicial reversal or for a lesser sentence. According to Temkin, the protests of foreigners were resented as annoying interference. If so, the episode that is at the center of this book is a reminder of the force of nationalism, which can trump even such familiar categories as race and class.

The electrocution of Sacco and Vanzetti could not be halted because patriotic pride in American institutions had been affronted. International outrage suggested the outlines of a common culture, a shared sense of fairness that often cut across divisions of left and right. But the sensitivities associated with chauvinism could not be dislodged, and old-fashioned political history therefore still has something to offer. This book can be read as exposing the perquisites of power even in a society that once pledged “a decent respect to the opinions of mankind.”

Stephen J. Whitfield
Brandeis University

*Property Rites: The Rhinelander Trial, Passing, and the Protection of Whiteness.* By Elizabeth M. Smith-Pryor (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 408 pp. $65.00 cloth $24.95 paper

In October 1924, Leonard Rhinelander, scion of a wealthy and well-established New York family, wed Alice Jones, domestic worker and daughter of a Caribbean-born coachman. Less good-looking than well-
appointed, Leonard used his fashionable goods and family fortune to woo Alice—appearing, as one reporter stated, like “a weak-chinned version of the sheiks” (13). Alice fell for Leonard and the life that he promised, one vastly different from the sturdy working-class existence that she shared with her parents in New Rochelle. After a three-year courtship, they announced their marriage in the society pages, but within a month, the honeymoon ended. The Rhinelanders had initiated an annulment suit, claiming that Alice had defrauded Leonard by hiding her racial lineage. Alice, as their lawyer alleged and the New York press trumpeted, had fooled Leonard into making her his “colored bride” (30).

In *Property Rites*, Smith-Pryor uses the Rhinelander trial to weave a narrative of classification, confusion, and cultural dislocation in the Jazz Age. At once a period of migration and immigration, reformulations of gender and racial norms, and reconﬁgurations of class and status, nothing in the 1920s remained ﬁxed. As Smith-Pryor convincingly argues, anxieties about these multiple, shifting boundaries coalesced around the question of whiteness. Indeed, the color line helped to set these boundaries—delineating “character” and appropriate expressions of masculinity and femininity, determining which new immigrants would be welcomed into the national body, and regulating who had access to which material goods. Smith-Pryor skillfully links whiteness to Progressive Era class and status formation. Building on the work of Harris, Lipsitz, and others, she argues that white Americans “acted as though their status as white was something they owned and had strenuously to defend” (93).1

Whiteness was property, and white New Yorkers maintained their possessive investment in it. Hence, it comes as little surprise that the Rhinelanders based their suit on a charge of material fraud.

Smith-Pryor draws on legal and cultural sources to demonstrate that the cultural confusion that heightened the Rhinelanders’ sense of urgency also undercut their case. She moves deftly between state legal codes regulating marriage and miscegenation, eugenicist tracts bemoaning the blood taint of racial intermixture, musicals and ﬁlms depicting the New Woman and the New Negro, and the work of Harlem Renaissance writers both black and white. She shows how ill-equipped many Americans were to determine race, in spite of their conviction that it existed as a social and biological fact. In the 1920s, when consumer and jazz culture directed people toward mixed forms and spaces of entertainment, white Americans no longer felt certain that blood would tell through behavior; they would have to “see” blackness to know it. The question in the Rhinelander case became whether Leonard had seen Alice’s race on her body before he married her. If so, he could not cry fraud.

In the end, Leonard lost the suit. Although he and Alice eventually divorced and the Rhinelanders swiftly moved to scratch her name from the social register, Alice negotiated for alimony. She may have lost her husband, but she kept her property rights. Smith-Pryor effectively presents Alice’s trial in both its senses, as a legal case and as an ordeal. In doing so, she reveals much about how Americans in the Northeast lived in and across the color line and how, in the north as much as the south, white supremacy shaped property, place, and possibility.

Adriane Lentz-Smith
Duke University


Although James H. Jones put the Tuskegee syphilis-study debacle on the public’s radar screen with his book Bad Blood (New York, 1981), Reverby’s work about this deeply disturbing, experimental study of around 400 African-American men in the Black Belt of Alabama (largely Macon County) now stands as definitive. Her masterfully compiled and carefully edited collection of essays, Tuskegee’s Truths: Rethinking the Tuskegee Syphilis Study (Chapel Hill, 2000), remains one of the most comprehensive and thorough resources on the subject to date.

In Examining Tuskegee, Reverby puts the reader on notice from the outset that she is not offering a tentative speculation about the Tuskegee syphilis study but the settled appraisal of a seasoned veteran whose investigations have lasted more than a decade. “Since the 1990s,” she explains, “I have tested my ideas out around the country at lectures, conferences, and public forums in places too numerous to mention” (x). No simple rendering of “the facts,” the author’s story centers on three fascinating tropes—testimony, the collected writings, formal and informal, of those involved in the study; testifying, a “speaking out loud about a set of truths and beliefs that are usually part of a self-revelatory experience” (7); and traveling, an examination of the sometimes competing narratives of Tuskegee by physicians, scientists, reporters, authors, and, most importantly, African Americans themselves. Reverby correctly points out that her aim is the deconstruction, construction, and reconstruction of images, expectations, relationships, and responsibilities.

Readers looking for answers to tough questions may not find final answers to all of them, but they will certainly find satisfying explanations for many of them. For example, how is it that an investigation of the long-term nature of syphilis could last from 1932 to 1972 (from treatment with mercury to treatment with penicillin) without ever explaining the nature of the study to the participants or (more egregiously) without treating them? The answer, as Reverby points out, is revealed
in the attitude of Sidney Olansky, the physician in charge of the study in the 1950s: “The PHS [Public Health Service] needed time to stand still in the Study, and Olansky’s reports emphasized this understanding” (146). Macon County became frozen in time and captured within a Depression-era framework that refused to be moved by changing demographics or even modalities of care.

A central and recurrent question among jurists, bioethicists, and historians in Examining Tuskegee concerns whether the Tuskegee investigators should be judged as culpable for not treating their unwitting participants. A knee-jerk response would suggest an immediate “yes,” but opposition could counter that the rules and expectations for such human studies were inchoate in 1932 and that, after all, the project was designed to investigate the possibility that syphilis was a self-resolving disease. Reverby sorts through these issues and delivers an incontrovertible verdict:

The conflicting evidence in the autopsies, the lack of records for those who dropped out, the ways in which controls were switched to the syphilitic group, and the evidence that some of those in the syphilitic group probably never had the disease in the first place and should have been in the controls—all muddy the data. It is impossible to know if penicillin would have changed the health outcomes of those still alive in the antibiotic era and whether those who were decades out from their initial infections would have been helped. But even a syphilis study that used white patients at Stanford in 1948 and withheld treatment concluded: “Should penicillin prove effective, all arguments against the routine treatment of latent syphilis should vanish.” By the mid-1950s, penicillin became routine in medical practice, even for those in latency. (232)

Fingers, it turns out, can be pointed and blame assessed. Thus, Reverby is anything but dismissive of President Clinton’s public apology on May 16, 1997. In the end, it “mattered because it acknowledged the pain and renewed the necessity for a discussion of the history” (226).

Nevertheless, there is much more to this book than issues of culpability. Questions of how erroneous “explanations” of Tuskegee (for example, that the men were deliberately infected with syphilis) became lodged in the public discourse are critical, too. As Reverby writes, “The Study’s entrance into American lore needed not just the facts. It also needed the fictions” (203). The explication of this point becomes an important part of Examining Tuskegee.

In less competent hands, the attempt to unravel the complexities of Tuskegee would have merely replaced one entanglement with another. However, Reverby’s knowledge and skill are evident on virtually every page. Written in a clear and engaging style buttressed by convincing and
exhaustive research, this book is likely to remain the essential mono-
graph on the subject for years to come. It is no small feat to sort through
and elucidate a study that has both reshaped bioethics in America and
become emblematic of African-American vulnerability in the “age of
science,” but Reverby has accomplished it admirably.

Michael A. Flannery
University of Alabama, Birmingham

_The Polio Years in Texas: Battling a Terrifying Unknown._ By Heather
$45.00 cloth $19.95 paper

Wooten’s _The Polio Years in Texas_ will be of use to historians of Texas as
well as medical historians for its detailed exposition of archival materials
from universities, hospitals, and medical societies across a large and di-
verse state. Wooten relies on already published histories (for example,
those by Oshinsky, Paul, Rogers, and Smith) to provide the general nar-
rative of polio in America: the story of Franklin Delano Roosevelt at
Warm Springs, the Elizabeth Kenny method of warming and stretching
polio-affected limbs, the miseries of the iron lung, the astounding suc-
cess of the March of Dimes, the vaccines of Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin,
the notorious Cutter incident that resulted in 149 cases of poliomyelitis,
and the new realities of post-polio syndrome.¹ Green intersperses these
elements with original research to create two main lines of inquiry—the
“Texas version” of America’s polio story (for example, Texas’s first iron
lung, Texans writing to Roosevelt, and March of Dimes poster children
from Texas) and the version of the story unique to Texas (such as contri-
butions made by Houston and Galveston researchers to the Salk and
Sabin field trials).

Strikingly, Texas seems to finish second in several of the contests
discussed: The infection rates of Harris County, including Houston,
were exceeded only by those of Los Angeles County; the Gonzales
Warm Springs Center was modeled on Warm Springs resort in Georgia;
and Roosevelt’s nomination of Al Smith at the 1928 Democratic Con-
vention in Houston came four years _after_ his much more famous water-
shed moment nominating Smith at the 1924 Democratic Convention in
New York. Nevertheless, Wooten makes the case that Texas’ contribu-
tion to the polio story in America, though not entirely singular, is
significant enough to merit its own full-length history.

Houston and its surrounding Harris County are focal points, as they
indeed had numerous epidemics throughout the polio period, partly be-

¹ David Oshinsky, _Polio: An American Story_ (New York 2005); John Rodman Paul, _A His-
tory of Poliomyelitis_ (New Haven, 1971); Naomi Rogers, _Dirt and Disease: Polio before FDR_
(New Haven, 1992); Jane Smith, _Patenting the Sun: Polio and the Salk Vaccine_ (New York,
cause of the influx of oilmen and their myriad service providers during the early twentieth century and the vast numbers of servicemen who moved through the area during World War II. While the oil boom brought diverse and infectious populations, it also brought enormous wealth, which funded numerous world-class medical research and treatment facilities that played key roles in the polio struggle. Wooten singles out Houston’s Southwestern Poliomyelitis Respiratory Center, the first center funded by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis; its dual mission was to improve survival and release rates for patients requiring respirator support and to improve the lives of those requiring permanent support following acute care. Southwestern, according to Wooten, led the way in consolidating respirator patients and their care providers into the nation’s first intensive care units and spearheaded rehabilitation techniques. Also, remarkably, “the admittance policy at Southwestern crossed the color line in addition to state boundaries” (114), and Wooten well delineates the race-blind policies that admirably distinguished this facility and others in Texas (including the Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children in Dallas) during the polio period.

Regrettably, this book’s interdisciplinarity is diminished by its failure to consult sources in disability studies that would have provided the necessary corrective to Wooten’s notably outdated vocabulary. References to “handicapped” and “crippled” children abound, even outside descriptions of the mid-century context in which such language went unquestioned. More offensively, Wooten relies constantly on such disabling descriptors as “wheelchair-bound,” “respirator-dependent,” and “confined to an iron lung”; leading thinkers in disability studies called long ago for more active, accurate terminology (for example, “uses a wheelchair to get around” and “requires respirator support”). As disability theorists have shown, linguistic barriers turn an impairment into a disability as effectively as do physical and ideological barriers. Wooten’s limited, limiting terminology mars an otherwise worthwhile book.

Jacqueline Foertsch
University of North Texas


In Mosquito Empires, McNeill offers the first sustained examination of the major role of mosquito-borne diseases in the grand sweep of Caribbean history. By bringing modern biological knowledge of yellow fever, malaria, and the environments that sustain their insect vectors to bear on the history of European struggles to build and maintain empires in the region, McNeill argues that differential resistance to these diseases explains how Spain and Portugal successfully held nearly all of their colo-
gies against their rivals for so long, as well as why both Spain and Britain ultimately lost their mainland empires in the Americas during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The book is impressive in its scope, and it brings to the foreground a topic that has too long been an afterthought in the historiography of the region.

McNeill reveals a genuine passion for this subject. In a few instances, however, his excitement gets the best of him, such as when he attributes the origins of Great Britain to “the fevers of Darien” (119). The failed 1698 attempt to colonize Darien, in present-day Panama, effectively bankrupted Scotland; the English offer to pay off the resulting debts in exchange for union proved too attractive to refuse. McNeill documents how sickness—including, probably, malaria and yellow fever—took a heavy toll on the colony. But facing repeated attacks by Spanish forces determined to regain complete control over the strategically vital isthmus, and an English embargo that cut off any practical source of re-supply, the tiny settlement had virtually no hope of success even if it had remained healthy. Despite prompting the occasional overreach of this sort, his enthusiasm for the topic mainly yields delightful prose that is engaging, accessible, and a pleasure to read.

The most controversial aspect of the work is its reliance on retrospective diagnosis, the use of present medical knowledge to illuminate past events, against which many historians of medicine counsel. This book demonstrates both the promise and the pitfalls of the approach. Done carefully, retrospective diagnosis can provide fresh insights on even much-studied historical episodes. For example, the resistance to malaria and immunity to yellow fever that Spanish defenders had acquired—and the newly arrived armies to the region did not possess—go a long way toward explaining the repeated and otherwise puzzling failures of Spain’s stronger rivals to pry away its valuable colonies in and around the Caribbean. Given the potential for such advances, a blanket prohibition of retrospective diagnosis is plainly unwarranted. Too frequently, though, current knowledge displaces rather than complements a historian’s efforts to reconstruct contemporary understandings of disease. Historical figures’ relative ignorance is then easily seen as powerlessness, and disease alone comes to be viewed as dictating the course of history. This is the concern that motivates the opposition to retrospective diagnosis, not a desire to spare people of the past from ahistorical ridicule as McNeill suggests (63). Despite McNeill’s anticipatory protests (6), the book often lends itself to such an overly deterministic reading.

On the whole, however, Mosquito Empires is a valuable addition to the historiography of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Caribbean. Students and scholars of the region, of environmental and ecological history, and of the history of medicine will benefit from reading and discussing it.

Mariola Espinosa
Yale University
Slavery in Brazil. By Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010) 364 pp. $95.00 cloth $28.99 paper

This invaluable overview sums decades of research and reflection about what makes the slavery system in Brazil fundamentally different from many others. Klein and Luna attribute the difference partly to the size of Brazil’s slave population and partly to Brazil’s multiple uses of slave labor.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part presents the development of slavery in Brazil in a chronological fashion—from slavery’s origins in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to its rapid expansion in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, despite international pressures to bring the slave trade to an end. The authors present the development of the plantation system in Brazil as a continuation of other Portuguese experiments in the Azores and Madeira. They compare the system implemented in Brazil with the slavery in Spanish America, emphasizing the difference in size and organization of Amerindian population in both regions. Despite a great deal of interaction with the work of Brazilian scholars, the authors repeatedly use the term pardo as synonymous with mulatto without mentioning that some scholars claim that pardo refers to free blacks.  

The second part of the book investigates various aspects of slave society in Brazil, exploring how slaves shaped religious life and ultimately changed the Catholicism practiced there. It also analyzes the many resistance movements, offering an overview of the slave revolts. This section stresses the importance of the repeated arrival of Africans to the ability of slaves in Brazil to maintain cultural connections with African societies. In Chapter 6, the authors address the question of whether treatment of slaves was better in Brazil than in the United States through an analysis of reproduction rates and lactation periods. In Chapter 8, Klein and Luna stress how ethnicity and family formation helped to new social networks. However, their description of African identities as “tribal” overlooks the long debate among Africanists about the misleading meaning of the term (243). The last section of the book, in which the authors discuss the gradual transition from slavery to freedom during the nineteenth century, shows the continuation of labor exploitation and the reluctance of the oligarchy to share land with freed people during the twentieth century.

Klein and Luna use a large body of quantitative and qualitative sources, including correspondence, newspapers, official reports, legislation, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, to create a synthesis of scholarship about Brazilian slavery, presenting demographic data in user-
friendly tables and graphs. Broad in scope, this study explores the differences and similarities between the worlds of sugar and coffee plantation and mining and urban slavery throughout four centuries, highlighting slavery in Brazil as a diverse institution. This survey will be useful to students of Brazilian history, Atlantic history, and slavery in general.

Mariana P. Candido
Princeton University

*Expecting Pears from an Elm Tree: Franciscan Missions on the Chiriguano Frontier in the Heart of South America, 1830–1949.* By Erick D. Langer (Durham, Duke University Press, 2009), 375 pp. $89.95 cloth $24.95 paper

Langer has devoted a great part of his research to the southeastern region of Bolivia. This work, on the Franciscan missions in a broad region southeast of Potosí and Sucre and west of the dry Chaco region, focuses on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The wars of independence had brought a hiatus in missionary work. The founding of new missions in the region began with somewhat hostile relations between the Franciscans and the liberal government of the Venezuelan General Antonio José de Sucre in the 1820s. A period of greater government encouragement ensued from 1840 to about 1900; more anti-clerical governments after 1900 led in 1949 to the secularization of the missions, which became agricultural cooperatives.

Langer’s treatment is notable for its wide range of comparative discussions of the patterns of the Chiriguano missions with other mission territories—California, New Mexico, and closer at hand, the colonial missions of the Jesuits in Paraguay and of the Mojos region in Bolivia. He also bears in mind studies of patterns of European–indigenous interactions in North America. He makes clear that the different political contexts of the colonial and republican periods importantly affected how the missions operated. In the colonial period, friars could order the indigenes to do their bidding; in the republican context, friars had to persuade and negotiate with the indigenes.

The Franciscans and the Chiriguanos had an association (not really a marriage) of convenience. The Chiriguanos came to the missions with a mixture of motives, none of them having to do with a desire to be converted to Christianity. The Chiriguano chiefs brought their people to the missions, seeking refuge from attack by other indigenes and protection from the cattle of Bolivian colonists (51–52). Adult Chiriguanos refused conversion to Christianity, except for the occasional death-bed baptism. The friars therefore focused their efforts on indigenous youths, whom they took into mission schools. Control of younger Chiriguanos was perennially contested between the friars and the senior indigenous leaders. Nonetheless, the mission Chiriguanos defended the missions...
from attack by other indigenes. However, it appears that in the long run the missionary control was defeated by the chiefs: Demand for labor on sugar plantations in northwestern Argentina turned the chiefs into contractors of the labor of converted and unconverted indigenes in the missions. From the point of view of the missionaries, the flow of mission indigenes to Argentina was a disaster, as the friars lost control of the migrating population, who abandoned their wives and children and became enthusiastic consumers of aguardiente (cane brandy).

Many interesting features of this book cannot be discussed within the limits of this review. Langer concludes with a systematic comparison of the Chiriguano missions with those in other parts of Spanish America, discussing varying patterns in demographic decline, acculturation, indigenous resistance, and the economic roles of the missions.

Frank Safford
Northwestern University

Children of Fate: Childhood, Class, and the State in Chile, 1850–1930. By Nara B. Milanich (Durham, Duke University Press, 2009) 355 pp. $89.95 cloth $24.95 paper

In Children of Fate, Milanich provides a richly textured study of childhood and filiation in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chile that culls important stories from new archives and analyzes the liberal state’s role in “generating kinlessness.” Squarely addressing two of Chilean history’s most powerful symbols—family and its absence, as exemplified by the huacho or orphan—Milanich’s study ably demonstrates the interpretive power of a social history of children and childhood, an approach that de-centers the usual frameworks of labor, state, and politics while also providing key insights into class and state formation in liberal Chile.

The book’s title roots this work in both the enduring stereotype and historical revisionism of Milanich’s principal subject—the problem of kinlessness in Chilean society. “Children of fate” references an essay by social critic Augusto Orrego Luco—“La cuestión sociale” (Santiago, 1884)—which cataloged the social ills of a society beset by rural poverty, illegitimacy, and urbanization. Bemoaning the problem of huachismo, Orrego Luco attributed proletarian vice—from alcoholism to anarchism—to the original sins of illegitimacy and family disarray, a theme echoed and revised in both nationalist and Marxist historiography for more than 100 years. Milanich directly engages these enduring tropes, seeking not so much to disprove them empirically—Chilean illegitimacy and child abandonment rates were indeed alarmingly high—as to reexamine the cause and significance of these phenomena. Through rigorous scrutiny of legal and institutional archives, Milanich demonstrates that illegitimacy, abandonment, and kinlessness were caused not by the patho-
logical behavior of poor Chileans but by the legal norms and bureaucratic mechanisms of the liberal state.

To advance this important conclusion, Milanich worked through over 1,000 civil cases, hundreds of notarial records, published paternity suits, legal theses, and the untapped records of Santiago’s principal orphanage, as well as Pablo Pérez’s autobiography, *The Orphan* (Santiago, 1898), that traces his life from orphanage to adulthood. As explained in the book’s excellent methodological appendix, Milanich attended carefully to nuances of language about kinship and affection in sources that only rarely foreground such issues. This reading is particularly important in Milanich’s work with the legal and notarial records, in which claims of kinship—or lack thereof—had concrete material outcomes, as in a woman’s suit for child support or a testator’s bequest to illegitimate children. Eschewing the temptation to reduce these cases to ready narratives of elite dalliance and subaltern resistance, Milanich instead reveals the vernacular practices through which unmarried mothers ensured their own and their children’s survival, and the labor and affective dynamics of orphanages and families that received abandoned children. By tracing these child circulation practices—and documenting the state’s resolute indifference to them—Milanich offers a compelling counter-narrative to romantic notions of *huachismo* common in Chilean historiography. By Milanich’s account, these orphans have “families,” and illegitimate children have known “fathers,” whether or not such ties were recognized by the Chilean state.

*Children of Fate* is an important work driven by several priorities: First, Milanich seeks to demonstrate how class and status in Chilean society have been defined not only by labor and ethnic relations but also by vernacular and legal definitions of family and kinship; her book thus serves as a powerful compliment to recent historiography on labor, gender, and the state in modern Chile. Second, Milanich not only revises the meanings of *huachismo*, but also shows how the practice of excluding some Chileans from legitimate family formations contributed to liberal state formation. Finally, by crafting her study on the basis of careful and exhaustive reading of different types of sources, Milanich brings to the study of Latin American family, class relations, and childhood a much-needed emphasis on the affective nature of these relations: Milanich reads paternity suits both for their legal reasoning and for evidence of fatherly concern and oversight, and orphanage entry ledgers to show both the astounding numbers of abandoned children and administrators’ indifference to mother’s naming requests. The resulting study provides an insightful and often heart-rending account of the vicissitudes of children without parents—and adults without kin—in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chile.

Elizabeth Quay Hutchison
University of New Mexico

Blum’s study draws connections between domestic labor and child-welfare institutions in Mexico City from 1884 to 1943. After the 1943 government decree Ley de Seguridad (Law of Social Security), which declared children to be “nonworking dependents” of their employed parents and the nation, Mexicans no longer regarded children younger than seven as workers.

Blum addresses themes and sources that integrate gender, race, and class with domestic labor demands. Orphanages, child-welfare agencies, child adoptions, and juvenile-court decisions provided servants for the middle and upper classes on a regular basis until the 1940s. The sources marshaled for this study tend to have originated from the ranks of the educated upper classes with negative views about the working poor—legal codes, population censuses, court cases, medical and health care providers, public-welfare records, and articles from the print media.

Blum calls upon testimony from a few middle-class women reformers and social workers to show the lack of solidarity between women of the different classes. At times, she refers to the dominant images of deserving and needy children as reflecting the racist attitudes of people of European descent toward those of Native and mixed ancestry. Blum missed an opportunity to analyze and integrate Catholic religious practices that established colonial foundling homes for children—“hijos de la iglesia” (children of the church)—that women abandoned on church doorsteps. These children were trained to serve as cheap labor for the upper classes.

Blum brings to light, however, new sources that provide more of the views of working poor people. They used scribes to send letters to social-welfare agencies about reclaiming children left at orphanages during times of financial stress. Journalists also reported that working-class parents would demand government action to make the neighborhoods better places for children to live. But the working class often fought losing battles against perpetual low wages and unresponsive government agencies that intervened negatively in the lives of families. Blum could have interjected the “La Llorona” (the Weeping Woman) revenge stories that adult Mexicanas created to protest mistreatment by men and children.

Blum acknowledges the difficulties of finding sources that come directly from single mothers, children in the welfare system, wet nurses, and young females adopted into middle-class families as servants. The key most startling assertion in the book is that demands for domestic service continued to be a key factor in the circulation of children and the creation of child-welfare policies in Mexico City.

Elizabeth Salas
University of Washington, Seattle
Pistoleros and Popular Movements: The Politics of State Formation in Postrevolutionary Oaxaca. By Benjamin T. Smith (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2009) 578 pp. $35.00

Mexico’s great popular revolution has long exerted a magnetic attraction for scholars, drawing historians toward a neat narrative arc, whereby revolutionary reform in the 1930s established a stable contract between rulers and ruled thereafter. Historiography could then come to an end. Smith’s regional case study is one of the first to test that arc consciously. It straddles the two periods in question, namely, the “revolution made reality” of the 1930s and the authoritarian transition of the 1940s. Thanks to his publisher, who assumes that attention spans will survive Twitter, Smith has the space to delve into a complex problem in detail.

Detail duly ensues. This book is rich in socioeconomic minutiae, ranging from the workings of Oaxaca’s tropical crop sector to the Huerta brothers’ nefarious egg monopoly and in details of culture, from community resistance strategies to the muckraking regional press. With regard to high politics, Smith closely dissects the clientelist groups that sustained governors and caciques (subregional bosses). His cross-referencing of intelligence records and numerous interviews with market women brings out the fine texture of popular mobilization and the social networks that sustained leaders like the vendor “Chata la Ferrera” (María Henríquez) or the knife grinder Austreberto Aragon. These uncommonly broad research interests underpin Smith’s examination of three themes—the reforming presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas and its legacy, the centrality of ethnic relations to nation-building, and the role of popular inputs in shaping the state formation that actually occurred during the 1930s and 1940s.

Smith’s conclusions regarding Cardenismo follow those of Knight and Fallaw: The stability that allowed limited reform was bought by state-deforming pacts with caciques, not by raising any corporatist rechtsstaat.1 His conclusions regarding the postrevolutionary period are less anticipated. In Oaxaca, Smith finds the years of supposedly growing authoritarian grasp marked instead by new urban popular movements, which brought together workers, students, and market vendors, who achieved a new level of political input, vetoing disliked governors by simply toppling them. Facing such pressures, politicians remained reliant on political violence. This interpretation challenges those historians of the revolution who propose a hegemonic stability and those who believe in linear state expansion, as well as the political scientists who conceive Mexico as an authoritarian, corporatist success story.

The creative destruction that Smith undertakes is driven by hyper-empiricism, copious interdisciplinary borrowings (anthropologists and

sociologists are particularly targeted, unless they are French), and sustained attempts to deconstruct large-scale social and political processes down to local components. Rightly wary of overgeneralizing models of state formation, Smith’s analysis is characterized by the meticulous triangulation of evidence and the social contextualization of political and cultural phenomena. Yet it also constitutes a rebuttal of the misconception that empirical history is too much about what and not enough about why.

This is no exercise in hierarchical reductionism; Smith’s case study achieves more than the “anti-model” promised at outset. In following an interpretive line stretching back to Wolf, Smith focuses mainly on the relationships between the different levels of power, combining detailed subregional studies with far broader systemic analysis. There are few better portraits of the strange synergies between early state builders and caciques, or of the feedback loops by which popular inputs swayed a supposedly autonomous elite. Smith’s book enters a new field, a history of state/society relations in post-1940 Mexico, with methodological and interpretive panache. This big book, dealing with big processes, should exert a big influence on scholars of both its thematic and its geographical concerns.

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Ocean of Letters is an analysis of the development of Malagasy language literacy in Madagascar and in the Malagasy diaspora in the western Indian Ocean from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. As a result of his personal background—a childhood spent in southeastern Madagascar—Larson is particularly well equipped to view the development of Malagasy identities from the periphery, and his linguistic competence and historical knowledge is brought to bear on a range of written documents in Malagasy, drawn particularly from the archives of the French Congrégation de la Mission (the Lazarists) and the London Missionary Society. Analysis of these and other written and archival sources are set in the wider context of debates about creolization and diasporas.

The introductory chapter addresses these wider issues. Larson challenges dogma from the Atlantic world that ancestral languages of Africans in diaspora did not generally survive the forced migrations of the slave-trade period and that creoles, transformations of the hegemonic language of their masters, were essential for communication among

themselves as well as with the Europeans. The author’s concern in this case study is to demonstrate the durability of ancestral tongues, using the specific case study of the Malagasy.

After an overview of the historical constitution of the Malagasy Indian Ocean diaspora, Larson engages several chronologically arranged case studies of Malagasy literacy. In the first, he briefly discusses Lazarist missionaries’ productions of a Latin-script Malagasy at the French colony at Ft. Dauphin in the southeastern part of the island. The Lazarist’s script, however, remained sacred and private; there was no strategy of vulgarization and no specific policy of teaching the script to Malagasy. Sacred texts employing Latin script in Malagasy were often little more than an aide-mémoires for the missionaries’ verbal work in Malagasy.

After this initial and isolated foray into literacy, Larson moves to the Mascarene islands, where most of the rest of the book is set. Through sheer weight of numbers, Malagasy rapidly became the vernacular among slaves and remained the principal language of communication with and among non-Europeans until after the French Revolution. Missionary vocabularies were not written for the benefit of the Malagasy but to help slave owners to communicate with their slaves; the Malagasy seized upon the texts, both sacred and secular, as they developed literary skills in their own language. In Chapters 4 and 5, a discussion of colonial-creole struggles for control of Malagasy literacy in Mauritius, initially set in the context of francophone colonial practice, was displaced as the British assumed control and Malagasy literacy was appropriated by the anglophone London Missionary Society for proselytization in Madagascar itself. This turn of events effectively transformed Malagasy vernacular literacy from a French colonial project into a tool of Imerina administration and a means of expression for its subjects.

Chapter 6 deals with the effects of Queen Ranavalona’s interdiction on the practice of Christianity in Imerina, which, not surprisingly, led to a recrudescence of the use of Malagasy in Mauritius as the island became a base for Malagasy resistance to anti-Christian policy at home. At the same time, the abolition of slavery saw freed Malagasy establishing their own villages in Mauritius and developing a Malagasy culture there. The final chapter is devoted to the use of Malagasy in vernacular written documents, mostly letters, produced by Christian Malagasy in exile. Larson briefly discusses the Malagasy presence in the Comoros, although, unlike in Mauritius, local identities in Comoros were such that distinct Malagasy communities never developed in the islands.

Overall, this book provides a fascinating glimpse of life on the Malagasy periphery. Larson’s use of the sources is masterful, and his historical knowledge provides context. But, for the readership of this journal, the lack of other sources (ethnographic, particularly) is disappointing. The syncretic Christianity of Madagascar, for example, might equally be considered an aspect of creolization. Larson makes no attempt to turn to oral histories or genealogies, or, indeed, to contemporary Mauritian social and cultural evidence. What are the contemporary manifestations of
contributions of the Malagasy to Mauritian creole language and culture generally? This lack of nonwritten sources undermines the second part of Chapter 6, potentially the most interesting but ultimately the weakest section of the book, where the discussion of nineteenth-century Malagasy society in Mauritius tends toward repetition.

A more explicit exposition of the argument at the outset would have been useful, particularly in light of the different meanings given to creole and creolization by the inhabitants of the various locations considered (such as the people of African descent in Mauritius and native-born Europeans in the Atlantic). Is créolité indeed a form of hybridity, mixité? Or is it the opposite—a reworking of external languages (and cultures) in a new environment? Since it is sometimes difficult to discern which definition of creole the author is challenging (particularly since most creole languages are not especially mixed; Indian Ocean creole is almost entirely French in origin), it is equally difficult to follow the argument. Without this precision, and without at least an acknowledgment of nonlinguistic forms of créolité, the theme of creolization that runs intermittently and sometimes awkwardly throughout the book feels like an afterthought (and a marketing strategy at that), detracting from the work. Although the basic premise is understandable, not until the conclusion does Larson explicitly challenge the definition of créolité as mixing and suggest an alternative—créolité as versatility (351–352).

The book itself is well produced, but minor technical errors are in evidence—for instance, “Comoros” not “Comores” in English—and Larson’s odd reference to the “Channel islands” turns out to be a confusing and unnecessary neologism for the Comoros rather than a reference to any Malagasy community in nineteenth-century Guernsey. An irritating (and unavoidably inconsistent) adherence to seventeenth-century typographical styles in the representations of the letters “u” and “v” in the second chapter also seemed ill-advised; in contemporary printing convention, these letters are shaped according to the sounds that they represent and not their physical position in a word.

Iain Walker
University of Oxford


In this exhaustively researched study on twentieth-century Iranian modernity, Shayegh weaves together the twin stories of science and modernity—how Iranian scientists adopted, introduced, and developed science to promote modernity, or as Shayegh put it, how “the modernists, in cooperation with the state, sought to employ biomedical science to tackle social problems, strengthen Iran, and recast it into a united, fit,
modern society” (2). The book also tells the story of how these middle-class medical scientists shaped the contours of how modernity was defined, promoted, and addressed when its unfortunate side effects appeared. As Shayegh explains, “The redefinition of health and disease embodied the Iranian modernists’ broader understanding of modernity as an inherently paradoxical era. It reflected the tension between the hope for progress driven by science-based strategies of social control and individual self-control, and concern about the incessant dangers of modern life and the difficulty of creating the conditions required for modernization” (195).

Chapter 1 explores the historical antecedents of modern science in Iran, and why the postconstitutional period witnessed the full-fledged importation and adoption of Western science, as championed by an emerging middle class. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss the reasons why science emerged at the center of this new middle-class claim to social authority as well as status, “how originally Western scientific knowledge was adapted to form the cultural and economic capital of a modern urban middle class in Iran. Utilizing its expert authority to define the very meaning of modernity, that class emphasized is distinctness from other strata” (2).

In Chapter 4, Shayegh argues that despite their ardent promotion of modernity, medical scientists also understood its fundamentally transformative effect on Iran—not all of it welcome. Shayegh carefully explains, however, that they believed science, specifically medical science, could mitigate the ills that emerged and promote a stronger, healthier body politic. To give an example of their awareness of problems inherent in modernity, “Authors of both general and specialized texts believed modern life to affect the mental health especially of urbanites. Modernity was promoting drug addiction and venereal disease. Communication and transport technologies were speeding up life at a dangerous pace. And a new economic culture was turning time into an increasing precious commodity” (102–103).

In this context, Shayegh examines the connections between this scientific middle class and other intellectual and social groups. Did this class overlap with others or face competition for authority and status from nonmedical intellectuals and literati, as well as the larger group of ulama. To what extent was the project of these scientists adopted by the state? Clearly the state sponsored and promoted science and “modernity.” But were there differences between the state project and the ideas of this professional middle class?

Chapter 5, which charts the rise of the fields of hygiene, eugenics, and genetics and their induction into the service of Iranian demography, is a particularly valuable contribution to our understanding of how Iran was understood as a “body” to be treated and protected by medical science. Chapter 6 explores the belief that the profession of psychology offered a way to promote the mental health of the country and, ultimately, a healthier body politic. That Iran was conceived as a body politic, in a
profoundly medical sense, is well known. Shayegh’s contribution is to elucidate the standpoint of medical science—how different medical fields and professions viewed Iran’s “body,” adding an important dimension to our understanding of how and why political language had a medical component during this period in its deep connection to new notions of citizenship, nationalism, national identity, and popular sovereignty.

In a meticulously constructed argument, Shayegh avoids the simplistic binary opposition of modern/traditional—the presumption that modern equates with progress—instead preferring to look at perspectives on modernity and on its collateral costs to Iranian society. Another strength of this book is that Shayegh contextualizes the academic debates and concerns of this middle-class scientific/medical professional class within the relevant scientific fields, as well as the social history of transportation, time, reproductive health, etc. Shayegh has written the first history of modern Iranian medical thought, detailing both its scientific premises and its attendant social concerns. He is also clearly conversant with similar issues that professional groups in other non-Western societies have encountered in dealing with the complexities of Western science.

An intriguing question left by the book concerns the extent to which an adoption of theories and practices of modern science can anticipate and mitigate the resulting problems in a country like Iran. Another one concerns the path not taken in Iran. In other words, were there alternatives to medical modernity, or does Shayegh view it as largely inevitable during this period? These questions are not meant as criticisms; they testify to the unique and substantial contributions made by this study and the many issues that the book illuminates.

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Money, Oil and Empire in the Middle East: Sterling and Postwar Imperialism, 1944–1971. By Steven G. Galpern (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009) 331 pp. $90.00

The role of sterling in the postwar international financial system, the politics and economics of Middle East oil, and the gradual demise of the British Empire in the Middle East are important topics that are usually covered separately. Galpern, however, brings them together and demonstrates how they related to each other. According to Galpern, British Treasury officials and others believed that Britain’s profits from Middle East oil and the dollar savings accruing from its ability to draw on sterling oil were vital to the continued viability of sterling as a leading international currency. The centrality of Middle East oil in British plans to secure an independent political and economic powerbase after the war deeply influenced British policies toward the Middle East.
Galpern constructs his argument on the basis of extensive research in British government records—particularly Treasury files—British Petroleum records, and a selection of U.S. government documents, as well as a good command of the relevant secondary literature. Although Galpern’s focus is on the sources of British policies, greater attention to U.S. policies and actions and to the aspirations of Middle East nationalists would have added depth to his study. Control of oil was an important element in U.S. power and influence, and the United States differed with Britain about the best way to contain Middle East nationalism and preserve the Western position in the region.

Although scholars have already studied most of the topics covered in this book, Galpern provides new insights by highlighting the importance that British policymakers attributed to maintaining the viability of the pound sterling as an international currency. He also excels in his ability to convey the complexities of international finance in plain, non-technical language that even non-specialists should be able to understand. Britain’s determination to maximize its gains from Middle East oil to bolster the pound had a profound effect on its policies regarding such important issues as the 1944 and 1945 Anglo-American Oil Agreements (neither of which were ratified), the sterling-dollar oil conflict of 1949/50, its confrontation with Iranian nationalism between 1951 and 1954, the Suez Crisis (characterized as a “sterling rescue mission gone wrong”), and its efforts to influence the disposition of Kuwait’s oil earnings. The conclusion links the British devaluation of the pound in 1967 with the end of empire in the Middle East. A brief, but informative afterword compares the British experience with money, oil, and empire in the Middle East with the situation that the United States faces in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

*Money, Oil and Empire in the Middle East* makes an important contribution to the historiography of the British Empire in the postwar period. Galpern’s effort would have been stronger and timelier, however, had he analyzed more fully the role of Iraq and Iraqi oil in British imperial strategy. Although Iraqi oil may not have been as important to Britain as Iranian or Kuwaiti oil, the inclusion of Iraq in the study would have provided a fuller picture of the interrelationships between money, oil, and empire in the postwar Middle East.

David S. Painter
Georgetown University


In this slim volume (the three chapters of which fill just ninety-nine pages of text), Fogel offers to correct the usual emphasis on conflict in
Sino-Japanese relations by revisiting earlier centuries when ceremonial, cultural, and economic exchanges prevailed. His chief innovation is to probe the history of these interactions at three discrepant time-space scales. A long macro chapter opens the book by surveying nearly two millennia, proposing the notion of the Sinosphere as a way to grasp the geocultural space within which Sino-Japanese interactions unfolded from the first century C.E. to the nineteenth. A shorter micro chapter focuses on the year 1862, when a pair of go-betweens—one a ship (the Senzaimaru) and the other a Dutch merchant (Theodorus Kroes)—helped to re-open contact between the long-estranged Tokugawa and Qing regimes on the eve of the countries’ first modern treaty. The final chapter operates at an intermediate or meso scale, sketching the composition of the small Japanese expatriate community in Shanghai during the late nineteenth century.

Methodologically, this book represents translocal as much as transnational history. Although Sino-Japanese relations encompass a vast swath of space, about half of the action narrated in this book takes place in the coastal foreground, chiefly the Yangtze delta and the port of Nagasaki (as the author points out, Nagasaki is physically closer to Shanghai than it is to Tokyo). Likewise, Fogel’s instincts as a historian bring him back time and again to biography. Archival discoveries and colorful personalities are what evidently delight this irrepressible detail hound. Even his survey chapter all but bypasses headline events (barely mentioning the fateful aggressions of Kublai Khan or Hideyoshi, in particular) to dwell on lesser-known painters, poets, and priests who hazarded the maritime voyage between the two countries over the years. Among the rewards of this approach are lively vignettes of Japanese Sinophiles like Abe no Nakamaro, the “Japanese Matteo Ricci,” who mastered Chinese sufficiently to serve the Ming as governor-general of Annam.

Articulating the Sinosphere makes few concessions to the non-specialist; the book presumes a knowledgeable readership. It includes 100 pages of scholarly apparatus but no maps or timelines; its glossary gives Chinese characters but no English definitions; and comparisons to developments outside Asia are few and far between. Nor does Fogel offer a comprehensive entry into the English-language literature on his topic. The bibliography omits such classics as Ronald Toby’s State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan (Stanford, 1991) and Marius Jansen’s China in the Tokugawa World (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), as well as other important studies. Given that this book is part of an ongoing research project—and given Fogel’s impressive productivity—readers of this journal may prefer to wait for the more comprehensive work that will surely soon follow.

Kären Wigen
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Fishing Wars and Environmental Change in Late Imperial and Modern China

In Muscolino’s brilliant historical study, we learn that, after the 1870s, imperial China’s rapidly expanding population was largely due to the fishing industry. By the early 1900s, China’s new fisheries were beginning to outnumber the old ones. The number of fishing boats in the region increased from around 400 in 1890 to nearly 1,800 by 1930. In the Zhoushan Archipelago, off the coast of Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, the owners of the new fishing fleets began to take out loans to enable them to expand their catch and fill the new demand from brokers and merchants in Zhoushan Islands’ expanding markets.

As the number of Zhoushan’s fisheries increased, the number of migrants to the regional urban centers grew. These migrants built religious temples, which also became community centers where disputes were resolved, thus helping to keep the peace in the Zhoushan archipelago. Many migrant men left their inland communities to seek temporary employment in the new fishing communities before returning home. At the same time, new types of vessels enabled the men to fish even further away from their island communities.

In the islands off Zhejiang and Jiangsu, a heated feud erupted in the summer of 1905 between fishing lodges unable to obtain regional agreements that would comply with local government regulations and agreements. In 1911, another violent feud broke out between the Fenghua fisheries and members of local Chinese elite families. As often happened, whenever these large-scale disputes occurred, officials and local elites tried to step in and impose order.

By 1904, a small number of foreign-educated Chinese who had become fishing specialists were able to find positions in local government. Using the new institutions and native-place groups, they began protesting the large profits going solely to owners in Zhoushan’s growing marine environment and the lack of tax revenue going to the local government. By expanding local taxation from 1900 to 1930, however, local banks were able to make the needed loans to the fishing industry, thus producing greater output. But local problems were still responsible for a loss of fishing profits.

When Japanese fisheries began threatening China’s new fishing enterprises after 1900, the regional entrepreneur banker Zhang Jian urged wealthy Chinese to modernize their offshore fisheries and to link up with new fishing associations then forming in Shanghai and the new cities of the Zhoushan region. China’s government officials intervened in Sino-Japanese fishing disputes, but to no avail, especially in the fishing areas off the port city of Ningbo. Although Chinese fishing enterprises urged central-government officials to “take advantage of ambiguities in international law to protect their claims to offshore fishing grounds”
(15), they were unable to establish fishing rights in those areas where Japanese boats (being more modern) were capable of fishing. Hence, China’s fishing boats were unable to reclaim fishing areas from those dominated by the Japanese.

The environmental consequence of these disputes was a precipitous decline in Zhoushan’s yellow croaker fisheries, as competing Chinese and Japanese boats led to smaller catches. Fishing shortages worsened in the 1930s; disputes were difficult to prevent and control. A similar problem arose off the Shengsi Islands when fishermen began increasing the number of cages used to catch cuttlefish, causing declines in the available fish. Although cage fishing had originally supplemented fishermen’s earnings, their incomes were reduced as the supply of cuttlefish declined.

A third large-scale fishing war took place between 1935 and 1945, when ocean borders were difficult to maintain between Zhejiang and Jiangsu even though local Chinese territorial regulations had gradually improved. In previous years, conserving fish stocks became costly for Chinese groups in their territorial waters, and “their inter-bureaucratic conflict grew more intense,” even though Chinese authorities were able to increase their local revenues. From 1940 to the end of the civil war, Chinese state policies were still weakly enforced because China’s marine environment was declining.

Chinese fisheries tried to increase their fishing productivity but were unable to agree on how to access “common-pool resources” while still increasing their catch. Chinese fishermen also exploited “marine resources with little regard for their preservation” (187).

By the 1970s, large and small croakers, cuttlefish, and other varieties were in short supply. Those species made up only 20 percent of the total output during the 1990s; by the end of the twentieth century, fish numbers were still shrinking.

Back in the 1920s and the 1930s, the Chinese had begun to improve their catches in Zhoushan’s coastal fishing areas. China’s increasing use of modern techniques helped to raise fish production but only by using more tax revenue. By the mid-1930s, however, disputes between Chinese fishery experts reduced access to common-pool resources, and resulted in further exploitation of marine resources.

Chinese fishermen, like fishermen everywhere, were fearful of the risks at sea. But their religions and social institutions helped to protect them from market forces and sociopolitical elements. Although local officials still quarreled with one another, they also depended on one another as trading partners. In many ways, the Chinese profited by exploiting their fish stocks and preserving their fishery skills. Local regulations, however, did not preserve stability or prevent conflict. By violently exploiting a finite resource, Chinese fisheries applied “an extreme form of competition for resources in a relatively overpopulated region.” As the population expanded and resources were in shorter supply, customary
rules or obligations could not settle violent conflicts or restore order when necessary (101). Meanwhile, intense foreign and domestic competition was changing relationships between regional associations and China’s new political system.

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Windows into the Past: Life Histories and the Historian of South Asia. By Judith M. Brown (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2009) 120 pp. $20.00

Based on a series of lectures given at Notre Dame University, this slim volume endeavors to show how “varieties of life histories” can illuminate “key analytical themes” in the larger history of modern South Asia (3, 57). With this objective in view, Brown successively examines an Oxford college, the changing lives of several Indian families during the last century, and the lives—both “public” and “inner”—of two famous individuals, Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Of these accounts, all accessibly written, only the first, on Balliol, Brown’s own college, provides fresh material for the historian. Through an examination of the college registers, Brown demonstrates the overwhelming importance of Balliol for the working of the Raj. After 1853, Balliol supplied more graduates than any other educational institution for service in the Empire, including 273 members of the famed Indian Civil Service. Brown carefully delineates the enduring family connections and interlocking marriages that resulted, and how these “dynasties” sustained the values that underpinned the Empire (29).

In her second chapter, Brown argues that the “longitudinal” study of families can open a window into the lives of ordinary people as they responded to the social changes of their times. Much has been written in recent years about intergenerational change in Indian families, alike in India and among overseas migrants. In addition to the well-known story of the Nehru family, Brown cites the experiences of two of her female graduate students’ families. On the basis of this evidence, she suggests that women born near the end of World War I were of “critical significance” in establishing patterns for girls’ education and the career patterns of subsequent generations (47).

Chapters 3 and 4 move onto much more familiar ground. The life stories of Gandhi and of Nehru have been told endless times, not least by Brown herself. It is incontestable that, as she argues, through the life histories of these two men, “we can study the contentious business of creating a national identity and a nationalist movement” (71). Though it is helpful to have the careers of Gandhi and of Nehru set side by side, the scholarly reader learns nothing that he or she did not already know. But
Brown clearly has a different agenda and a different set of readers in view. She insists that professional historians must find a way to “speak to people of other disciplines and people outside academia.” In her view, the “inclusive genre” of life histories, as compared with “self-enclosed” scholarly writing or the narrative telling of a single life, may be an effective way of providing “serious historical analysis” to “a larger and historically hungry public” (5, 54). Whether the publication of lectures such as hers is able to advance this goal can be questioned. But surely a style of interdisciplinary history much needed is that which bridges the popular and the professional.

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