Reviews

*Plagues in World History.* By John Aberth (Lanham, Md., Rowman & Littlefield, 2011) 243 pp. $34.95

The prospect of a slender volume about plagues in world history would certainly be attractive to all those who teach either disease history or world history. Moreover, although the disease-by-disease organization of this book is not a structure that well accommodates most world-history narratives, it is an approach that most students would embrace. But that market was not Aberth’s intended audience. Instead, he claims to offer “a unique contribution to the study of disease,” as well as an “optimistic” assessment of enduring human ingenuity in solving the challenges in which human existence hangs “in the balance.” He does not see his perspective as traditional or positivist, but it is both. He asserts that his book is governed by a core question—“Why study disease?”—but a different question—“Why does the history of the Black Death still matter?”—could have been useful and more comfortably argued from his area of greatest historical expertise.

Aberth’s immediate dismissal of pre-Neolithic “legacy diseases” betrays his old-style Western European orientation to the topic. He dubs malaria to be one of those Paleolithic infections, but it has long surpassed tuberculosis on the World Health Organization’s (WHO) list of top-ten causes of death among infectious diseases, particularly the more-recent emergent, falciparum malaria. Another such legacy was yellow fever, which many other historians find to have been a significant and frightening epidemic infection in the early modern era. If the true purpose of the book was to show how humans “have been able to redirect the course and meaning [of massive, lethal epidemics] in history,” neither of these diseases can be easily omitted. Selected for special study instead are bubonic plague (which claims much more than one-third of the text), smallpox, cholera, tuberculosis, influenza, and HIV/AIDS. The plague chapter tries to establish a set of patterns in religious, cultural, and literary responses to plague that echoes through the “second” and “third” Eurasian plague pandemics, but Aberth is swept away in yet another formulation of Black Death history, fully omitting European (or even governmental and other secular institutional) approaches to plague control.

Instead of comparing social and cultural responses to epidemic “plagues” (used in a generic sense), as the introduction promised, the non-plague chapters more often compare biological and physiological aspects of each pathogen to one other. Why the pathological and microbial features of the killer organisms matter to a cultural history, and why the original geographical origins of each disease reveal something important become unexamined problems for Aberth’s “unique contribution.” By the time he reaches the HIV/AIDS chapter, pages of semidigested science and WHO websites describing the mechanisms of RNA virus replication substitute for a more logical and historically useful survey of modern blood banking and HIV/AIDS.

The book is thus disappointing. Aberth throughout offers reasons
rather than explanations for the issues that he introduces. He alludes to classic epidemic stories that will appeal to specialist readers, whom he seems to consider the right audience for this “study.” Schematic historiographical asides substitute for an analytical approach. Later chapters veer from the subject at hand through such detours as a discussion of tuberculosis in film and a recounting of autobiographical experiences. Aberth also indulges in a few odd formulations—such as the phrase “life-expectant margins of society,” by which he refers to the typical risk groups for influenza. Nowhere does he offer an instance of a society’s failure to meet the crisis of a massive epidemic to balance his unrelenting focus on Western “winners” and non-Western resisters. A few research discoveries and interesting asides appear along the way, but the book does not offer the unique analysis that Aberth promised.

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In this book, Galor synthesizes the many articles that he has published in economics journals into what he calls Unified Growth Theory. By unified he means that his theory can explain economic history since the Neolithic revolution, including Malthusian growth, modern growth, and the transition from one to the other. Galor opens his theoretical exposition with the following sentences: “In each period \( t \), a generation consisting of \( L_t \) identical individuals joins the workforce. Each individual has a single parent (69).” If this sentence seems ridiculous to you, skip to the last paragraph of this review. If it reads like a standard introduction to an overlapping-generation model, continue.

Galor’s economic models explain the transition from Malthusian to modern economic growth in a series of growth-theory models that start from maximizing individuals, contain one undifferentiated good, are limited to closed economies, and do not contain money or credit. Transitions are from one state to another: “The economy exits from the subsistence-consumption regime when potential income, \( z \), exceeds the critical level \( \tilde{z} \) (161).” How large is \( \tilde{z} \)? Galor does not define it explicitly, but he asserts that per capita income fluctuated around $450 a year for the first millennium (11). This figure comes from Angus Maddison, The World Economy: Historical Statistics (Paris, 2003), and it is in 1990 international dollars. One might speculate that \( \tilde{z} \) is somewhere near this figure.

Galor presents a striking set of regressions that show technology and various physical indicators to have affected population size in 1 c.e. and 1,000 c.e. but not income per capita (91). Because no governments collected national-income data and no newspapers reported economic data
during those times, Maddison had far less evidence for them than for more recent years, forcing him to make far more assumptions. He clearly assumed that the world was in a Malthusian state at that time, estimating that incomes around the world in both 1 C.E. and 1,000 C.E. varied only from $400 to $450. Galor’s regressions on these data therefore do not reveal the contours of early history; they instead reveal how Maddison constructed his data. This observation does not mean that Galor is wrong, only that the apparent precision gained from his sophisticated economic theory and statistical inquiry is illusory.

Galor’s interest, however, is theoretical, not empirical. He asserts that technological progress is a function of education and population size (155). Since education is endogenous, what drives technology is population size. When the population becomes large enough to make technology advanced enough, parents decide to educate their children, and modern economic growth replaces Malthusian stagnation. At the end of his book, Galor adds another possible path to this transition: “A sufficiently large technological shock would place the economy on a trajectory that leads to a sustained-growth regime (266).”

Which path corresponds most closely to what we know about the Industrial Revolution? Galor’s preferred path describes the view championed by Jared Diamond, Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies (New York, 1997); Gregory Clark, A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World (Princeton, 2007); and Joel Mokyr, The Enlightened Economy: An Economic History of Britain, 1700–1850 (New York, 2009). It conflicts with the view of Robert Allen, The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective (New York, 2009), which argued that generalized technological sophistication was not enough. The Industrial Revolution started with the addition of inanimate power to production, which Allen argued was stimulated by low fuel costs. The expansion of Europe—not mentioned by Galor—set in train a Malthusian expansion that led to trade and higher incomes in Britain. Coupled with British geography and geology, British factor prices produced “a sufficiently large technological shock.” Galor’s preferred path describes why the Industrial Revolution happened in Europe; only Allen’s approach can explain why it was British rather than Dutch or French.

How should historians regard this book? It is an impressive work of economics and will receive a lot of attention among economists. The history is not as clear; Galor’s work does not add to the analysis of Malthusian economies or the debate about the cause of the Industrial Revolution. If historians want to see how modern growth theory can be used to describe Malthusian economies more simply than in this formidable book, they might consult Paolo Malanima, Pre-Modern European Economy: One Thousand Years (10th–19th Centuries) (Leiden, 2009).

Peter Temin
M.I.T.
The Economy in Jewish History: New Perspectives on the Interrelationship between Ethnicity and Economic Life. Edited by Gideon Reuveni and Sarah Wobick-Segev (New York, Berghahn Books, 2011) 239 pp. $95.00

Economics is commonly perceived as an area for expertise in such matters as costs and rewards, production and consumption, market exchange, and the marshalling of data for analyzing options and forecasting outcomes. Seldom do these imperious and anonymous categories intersect with issues of personality, identity, and culture, let alone whim, prejudice, and other irrational forces. Indeed, to an economist, it would seem inherently counterintuitive, if not absurd, to inquire into the “Jewish” characteristics of labor participation, market development, entrepreneurship, or consumption.

However, there has been a marked increase lately in the production of scholarly material about Jews and the economy, deriving mainly from academics drawn from the liberal arts in general and Jewish studies in particular. The questions commonly addressed in this emerging body of work are not “economic” in the narrow sense but more broadly social, often privileging cultural interpretation over the gathering and analysis of statistical data. In that sense, these studies do not represent a true meeting ground between cultural historians and economists.

The volume under review is a signal contribution to this recent wave of new research. Ambitious in its terms of reference, it contains contributions from scholars dealing with venues as distinct and diverse as Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Bordeaux, Frankfurt, Hamburg, and New York, as well as South Africa, Switzerland, Hungary, the nineteenth-century colonial Levant, and pre-1948 Palestine. The book, however, is organized not according to historical era or geographical focus but discursive, cross-cultural sections—“Rethinking the Economy in Jewish History,” “Jews in the Marketplace,” and “Jewish Economies in National and Transnational Contexts.” The intent, therefore, is to seek phenomenological insight through the juxtaposition of inherently separate case studies.

As the volume editors put it, their purpose is to remap the terrain of what they call “Jewish economic uniqueness”—a phrase that not only challenges economics-based theories (in which, as noted, “uniqueness” is hardly a valid conceptual tool) but also requires the authors to pit their ideas against long-discredited tropes of essentialism. The editors view Jews as economically engaged actors whose individual and collective footprint is a traceable artifact in the history of trade, economic thought, and social relations, though they do not argue that distinct behaviors or perceptions add up to a pre-determined set of “Jewish” traits. The result is rewarding for readers interested in thematic explorations about society, culture, and money, as seen from an insider/outsider perspective.

Seeing the economy as “organically linked . . . with political, religious, cultural, [and] family” activities (1–2), Reuveni assesses the extant corpus of scholarship on Jews in the modern economy, defending the
“economic turn” in emergent research on Jews in the modern world. Jonathan Karp extends his research on the notional Jew in Western economic thought, to show how the Jews of early modern Europe constituted a paradigm-challenging case in the framing of either commerce- or industry-based conceptions of economic modernization.

In the second section, illuminating essays are presented by Susanne Bennewitz, on the social and cultural embeddedness of urban commercial culture; Helen Davies, on the Sephardic-Jewish, Bordeaux-to-Paris network that provided the context for the rise of the Pereire Brothers and their Crédit Mobilier; and Wobick–Segev and Paul Lerner, respectively, on German coffee houses and department stores as sites of contested social status and social control. Similarly enlightening are the contributions by Michael Miller, Sarah Abrevaya Stein, Adam Mendelsohn, and David De Vries that together elucidate examples of transnational, ethnic networking in the modern, global economy from the early nineteenth to the first half of the twentieth century (the third section of the book). Essays by Kirill Postoutenko and Anthony Kauders that purport to delve into the question of stereotype and representation fall short of contributing new, analytical clarity to a sorely vexed set of problems.

It may be indicative of the current crop of studies about Jews in the economy that commerce in its various manifestations occupies the spotlight. Labor history is more or less absent, a lacuna that ought to be more directly addressed in future studies.

Eli Lederhendler
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In this book, Gerlach contributes to the continuing debates among historians and social scientists about how to approach, define, and analyze the destruction of civilian populations during the twentieth century—genocide, crimes against humanity, mass atrocity, mass killing, massacres, ethnic cleansing, etc. Gerlach also introduces his own category, extremely violent societies. Gerlach’s investigation stresses social dynamics, supplementing political with social history as a corrective to the many studies that feature top-down analyses of mass violence. He explains extremely violent societies as “formations where various population groups become victims of massive physical violence, in which, acting together with organs of the state, diverse social groups participate for a multitude of reasons” (1). Emphasizing the “multi-causal” nature and mass participation of such violence, Gerlach argues for the necessity to “inquire into the entire social process of which mass violence is a part, the relationship between structural and physical violence, between direct vio-
lence and dynamic shifts in inequality, and between social groups and state organs” (3).

His broad approach is reflected in a use of disparate case studies and a range of techniques and structures of violence. Part I, “Participatory Violence,” discusses mass slaughter in Indonesia (1965 to 1966) and the slaughter of the Armenians (1915 to 1923). Part II, “The Crisis of Society,” examines mass violence and famine in Bangladesh (1971 to 1977), sustainable violence—strategic resettlement, militias, and other factors under the category of development—and Greek society (from 1912 to 1974), particularly during the Nazi occupation.

The first chapter expands on his article—“Extremely Violent Societies: An Alternative to the Concept of Genocide,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, VIII (2006), 455–471—which generated substantial scholarly debate. Gerlach’s approach is to critique genocide scholarship to justify his own conception of “extremely violent societies.” He defends introducing this broad, new concept to describe mass destruction of civilians by taking aim at the limitations inherent in the term genocide (as well as ethnic cleansing, war crimes, massacre, etc. [291, n. 12]). He views genocide studies in particular as too narrow and ideological, lacking empirical rigor, and betraying activist/intent bias, among other shortcomings.

Although some of Gerlach’s criticisms have merit, he does not provide the premises and presuppositions behind his approach, and his broad outlook downplays the role of ideology and the importance of distinctions between different types of violence. Nor does he sufficiently acknowledge and integrate new research in anthropology, law, sociology, political science, and other disciplines. For example, he ignores the crucial interplay between genocide as a legal concept and a subject of scholarship. He points to the narrow understanding of “intent” in genocide scholars’ search for a plan, their reliance on elites, etc., but he leaves out the recent interplay between scholarship and judicial proceedings that explicates the “intent to destroy,” as well as the range and complexity of destructive processes.

Methodology is a crucial issue in the study of mass violence. Gerlach’s category of extremely violent societies purports to address “the lack of an empirical foundation” in genocide studies (7). His emphasis on societies in crisis, dynamic processes of destruction, etc., in fact continues and builds on new directions going on across disciplines in the scholarship of mass violence. The author supports “dense description” derived from “a large pool of primary documents as well as secondary sources” in trying to counter simplistic reductionist accounts and competing nationalist narratives about mass violence (8). He concedes, however, that such resources are not always available. In three of his five case studies—Indonesia, East Pakistan/Bangladesh, and Turkey—documentation is either inaccessible or nonexistent. Hence, he turns to the records of foreign diplomats and other observers, as well as secondary sources. His extensive, frequently annotated documentation (192 pages in length) provides a valuable resource for further research. Unfortu-
nately, Gerlach does not discuss the methodological challenges of comparative or interdisciplinary analysis in any depth, such as relying on secondary sources (which can be due to both scholars’ language limitations and a lack of documentation) or justifying the criteria for the selection of cases to study.

Gerlach’s intent is to pose questions that connect a broad range of processes, including direct and indirect killing, famine, rape, displacement, guerilla warfare, etc., with the dynamics of interplay between victims and participators (a broader term that he prefers to *perpetrator*). He writes that his approach is not a means “to offer a comprehensive history . . . throughout space and time”; it “does not aim at a systematic comparison between the countries” (12). Besides offering some general conclusions toward the end of the volume, each chapter pursues “individual, specific research problems instead of following uniform questions and adhering to a common structure” (12). These problems include documenting the ebb and flow and multi-causal nature of violence, people targeted, diverse motivations, and both the short- and long-term factors contributing to social crises.

His first case study is the interaction between military and popular violence in the mass slaughter of perhaps 1 million individuals, along with mass arrests (estimated at 1.8 million) and other displacements, across the Indonesian archipelago in 1965/66. Gerlach points out the political reasons why these events remain largely unknown to the public, and he deconstructs the oversimplified and false accounts that make up the Indonesian state narrative and Cold War explanations on all sides of the political spectrum. What Gerlach emphasizes in all of the mass violence that he examines is its multicausal, complicated nature, as well as the local, short range motives and the longer-term economic and social dynamics surrounding it. He dissects and contextualizes the complicated dynamics of violence by documenting its locations, its changing levels, and its participation by “a coalition” composed of both state and non-state actors, including political elites and the military, religious and civilian groups, and individuals with sometimes overlapping motivations. Gerlach’s analysis of the varied social composition of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), the largest Communist Party ever to exist in a non-Communist country, documents participants’ motivations and the reasons why violence accelerated and subsided in different times and places.

Gerlach rewrites aspects of the historical narrative by deconstructing hegemonic discourses (such as those of Bangladesh/East Pakistan) and emphasizing economic over ideological motivations in the destruction of the Armenian community in Turkey. He explores factors from famine (and the human agency involved) to guerilla warfare to socio-economic transformations in their effect on social developments. As a guiding perspective, however, Gerlach’s conception of “extremely violent societies” raises more questions than it answers. Yet, his analysis of a series of cases (such as more than fifty years of Greek history, a sobering
enterprise in the face of recent riots and economic crises) provides impe-
tus to re-think and further research the multifaceted dynamics of mod-
ern mass violence.

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_Free World? The Campaign to Save the World’s Refugees, 1956–1963._ By Pe-
ter Gatrell (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011) 278 pp. $90.00

This solidly researched book examines the World Refugee Year (wry) of 1960, the global campaign to galvanize attention to, and action for, the refugees around the world. The first several chapters provide an ex-
haustive historical background of the events, trends, and processes that set the stage for it. Chapter 1 provides a broad overview of the major global events, such as World War II and de-colonization, that moved millions of people, though often without any welcoming place to go. Chapter 2 examines in greater detail some of the major refugee crises—including those in Palestine, Hong Kong, Hungary, and Algeria—that grabbed the world’s attention and created some momentum for wry. The second half of the book explores the political, discursive, cultural, and performative aspects of wry.

_Free World?_ is a fine contribution to the literature about the interna-
tional response to refugees during the period from 1945 to 1963. Yet it also uses this period as a focus for certain important features about the dynamics and trends surrounding the plight of international refugees. Some of these broader observations are widely accepted—for instance, those regarding the importance of geopolitics. Some of the issues that Gatrell discusses could use more attention, such as the politics of repre-
sentation for refugees, and others are mentioned without adequate ana-
lytical probing, including how we are to understand the relationship be-
tween patterns of mobility and immobility.

Every field of study has its idioms and accents; that concerning refu-
gees is no exception. It often operates within the tradition of critical so-
cial science, keen to identify the causes and effects of disparate forms of power that are often accepted without question. But it equally often contains unstated assumptions that merit deeper examination, particu-
larly when the sympathies of scholars color the materials and analyses of the historical record. Gatrell’s account of the plight of the Palestinians is not immune to this danger. He states as a matter of fact that “the ‘sur-
vival’ of the Jewish nation is predicated on the continued curtailment of Palestinian rights to a secure a future on land they once held” (243). But whose position does this statement represent, his or the “Jewish na-
ton’s”? Why is survival put in scare quotes? Is Gatrell implying that we
know better than to accept the possibility that Jews might be reasonably worried about their physical survival? Is he intentionally or unintentionally conflating all Jews with Israeli Jews?

In a subsection titled “God and Caesar: Churches and NGOs,” Gatrell reviews the different Christian-based agencies involved in wry. At the end of the section on “church” activity, he states, “One notable feature of wry was the relative invisibility of Jewish agencies and the emergence of a vocal Islamic agency” (135). One might ask, “Relative to what—to what we expect from Jews, or to the generosity of Christians?” Why does Gatrell believe that Jewish agencies were surprisingly quiet? Is it because Jewish organizations were consumed with the task of helping Israel absorb countless displaced peoples and refugees from Arab countries? Should we be as surprised that Christian agencies favored Palestinians but neglected the Jewish refugees in Israel who faced similar challenges after 1948? Why is it significant that an Islamic agency arrived on the scene? Furthermore, what are we to make of Gatrell’s explanation that the primary reason for its presence was to use refugees to further a different agenda? What are we to make of the fact that, according to Gatrell, only one Islamic-based agency was involved in the movement even though wry focused on Palestine, and additional headline-making refugee crises were affecting Islamic populations in South Asia and North Africa?

These questions are not intended to depreciate Free World, which is a valuable contribution to the field of refugee studies, but rather to suggest important considerations that could be incorporated into future research.

Michael Barnett
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How did the Byzantines lose North Africa to the Muslims in the seventh century C.E.? Kaegi deploys an interdisciplinary approach to address this issue and to produce a critical synthesis based on the methods of history, religious studies, archaeology, numismatics, and epigraphy; the source criticism of Arabic, Greek, and Latin texts; Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic toponymics; and topography. These approaches are well integrated with each other in his arguments, and his appeal to a variety of disciplines compensates for a lack of information in the literary sources.

One of Kaegi’s most original contributions is a detailed survey of topographical zones across North Africa and the identification of thirteen micro-regions, the diversity of which created challenges for military and political decision making and operations. In addition to ex-
plaining why the location of Sbeitla was strategic, this survey enables him to make the reasonable argument that ‘Uqba’s campaign from Qayrawan to the Atlantic in the 680s went inland through the east–west valleys, not because he wanted to avoid the Byzantines on the coast but because there is no viable coastal route west of Carthage.

In general, Kaegi explains the Byzantine collapse by a combination of ecclesiastical politics; a crisis of Heraclian dynastic legitimacy; fears of internal military unrest; fiscal pressure; gaps between Greek and Latin culture and between Greeks, Latins, and indigenous populations; and lengthy and tenuous communications that impeded any viable defense. In particular, Constans II’s presence on Sicily in the 660s and his attempts to raise money by head taxes, navigation and commercial taxes, and confiscation of Church treasures alienated his subjects in Calabria, Sicily, North Africa, and Sardinia and hindered local resistance to the Muslims. Kaegi sees the events in Byzacena between 660 and 670 as the decisive turning point for the Byzantine collapse in North Africa, and the assassination of Constans II in 669 as the end of coherent Byzantine resistance.

Local resistance was also impeded in North Africa by the Byzantine failure to ally with indigenous leaders, resulting in confusion and missed opportunities instead of coordination. Thus, Kasilo (who drove the Muslims out of Qayrawan in the 670s and killed ‘Uqba in an ambush in the 680s) and the forces of the Kahina in the 690s were not part of the Byzantine resistance, although the Muslims had to deal with them.

Although Kaegi recognizes the strategic importance of North Africa to the Byzantines—in that its loss would threaten Sicily, southern Italy, and east–west navigation across the Mediterranean—he does not consider the possibility of strategic objectives on the part of the Muslims. Their initial occupation of the North African coast may have been an outflanking operation against the Byzantines in the eastern and central Mediterranean.

Kaegi is also teleological in that his focus is on why the Byzantine defense of North Africa ultimately failed, not on why it took the Muslims so long to succeed (about seventy years). He seems to contradict himself by suggesting that the latter can be partly explained by the establishment of a Byzantine military presence farther west and south in Algeria than previously assumed.

In general, Kaegi’s account is closely argued, thoughtful, nuanced, careful, and judicious. It is also full of hypothetical arguments. Kaegi asks all of the right questions, only to report that they cannot be answered definitively because of a lack of documentation.

Michael G. Morony
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Many of the contributors to this volume have been working together for decades, collectively examining early medieval European history, primarily on the basis of charter evidence. Their greatest triumph, *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe* (New York, 1986), created a paradigm shift in how historians think about early medieval social relations. This volume is less earth-shattering, but it is solid and wide-ranging.

David Ganz shows how eucharistic offerings during the Latin mass provided an opportunity to display the social differences among members of congregations who were hugely diverse in wealth, status, and power. Leslie Brubaker studies a tenth-century mosaic in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople that shows Constantine I and Justinian I presenting models of the church and the city to the enthroned Virgin and child. The replacement of the actual donor of the image (a tenth-century ruler) with portraits of illustrious past emperors “makes the link between imperial legitimacy and the Virgin manifest; and . . . makes visible the legitimacy of imperial power itself” (61).

Fouracre surveys the changing use of the term *beneficium*. Beginning as a general term for a personal favor with the expectation of reciprocity, it came to designate those permanent, heritable secular holdings that would, by the eleventh century, also be known as *fiefs*. During the twelfth century, *foedum* replaced *beneficium* as the label for this type of landholding arrangement; *beneficium* continued to be used to designate a church living. Throughout the period, the term expressed the tension between “wishing to give” and “not wanting to alienate, in order to maintain the recipient in a state of endless reciprocation” (88).

Ian Wood proposes a new way to look at the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, generally considered to be a single community founded by Benedict Biscop. Wood argues that Wearmouth, founded by Biscop on land given to him by King Ecgfrith, was seen by many as a family monastery, whereas Jarrow was a completely separate royal foundation established by Ecgbert with no input from Biscop. The two houses were combined only at a later date.

Janet Nelson surveys Charlemagne’s gifts to the Church, his diplomatic gift exchanges, and the annual gifts that he exchanged with his noble *fideles* to demonstrate that “what mattered was not just the gifts themselves . . . but the audience before which they were given. . . . The setting mattered too in the sense that the specific political context affected the meaning of the gift” (147).

Ann Christys rethinks the story of the queen of the Franks who sent gifts and an offer of marriage to the Abbasid caliph. The incident is known from copies of the queen’s letter transmitted in a variety of Arabic letter collections. Christys first shows that the queen’s letter is “a
spoof” and then uses the letter to explore the Arabic terminology for gifts (162). Rosemary Morris studies gifts made between monks on Mount Athos during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Because monks were forbidden to have personal property under canon law, Athonite monks who participated in the land market often disguised sales as gifts.

Chris Wickham draws attention to *launegild*, a legal characteristic of gift exchange in those parts of Italy that followed Lombard law. First attested in the seventh century, *launegild* was a compulsory counter-gift, which could range enormously in size and value, and which “was seen as necessary to stabilize the gift” (197). Wickham suggests that *launegild* injected a social dimension of trust into what otherwise would have been “not very ‘gifty’” transactions (215). However, *launegild* vanished in the twelfth century with the development of effective city tribunals that could enforce contracts even in the absence of personal trust.

Davies examines tenth-century charters from Christian Iberia and concludes that between the “two poles of sale [for a price] and gift for no consideration there were many different kinds of transactions” (229). Yet, those who recorded the transactions had to utilize either sale format or gift format in their documents. Therefore, “we must guard against taking the words at face value” (236).

The conclusion, written by Wickham “on behalf of the contributors,” generalizes from this fragmented series of studies: “Each gift relied on, and/or was intended to establish, a specific social or political context, and could be refigured semantically depending on how successful it was” (241). In the end, the meanings that gifts actually had varied from one instance to another.

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*Worth and Repute: Valuing Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of Barbara Todd.* Edited by Kim Kippen and Lori Woods (Toronto, Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2011) 491 pp. $37.00

This rich *festschrift* in honor of Barbara Todd showcases the influence of her important work on widows, women’s legal agency within the English common law system, and women’s economic power. Together, the chapters provide a model of interdisciplinarity, with studies that draw on legal and medical history, performance studies, economic history, and religious history. A common attention to women’s or gender history allows the various authors to revisit familiar sources with new eyes. The volume is weighted toward English topics, following Todd’s own research, though Continental Europe is represented in articles that focus on Italian city-states, Valencia, and early modern travels in France.

*Worth and Repute* is divided into three sections of loosely linked
chapters. The first, “Working the Margins,” includes a fine study from Nicholas Terpstra. Examining the overlap between the development of the early modern Italian silk industry and the enclosure of poor women in workhouses, Terpstra argues that the silk merchants’ charitable endowments of these institutions guaranteed labor for difficult and ill-paid work. He calls for a revaluation of the notion that early modern workhouses had only an indifferent impact on European industrialization.

Two chapters illuminate medieval and early modern women’s participation in a spectrum of medical practices. Woods’ chapter uses records of pastoral visits to trace the career of one female practitioner in medieval Iberia. She argues that attention to “‘the middle ground’ of medical practice,” which she situates between the unlicensed healers on the one hand and university-trained physicians on the other, challenges the idea that women were not accepted as diagnosticians in medieval society (93). In a world where university-trained physicians were few, women who were partially licensed served an important role in diagnosing and treating the sick. Kevin Siena deploys coroners’ inquests, fiction, and medical narratives to argue that female searchers of the dead had more authority to offer definitive opinions on causes of death than scholars have previously understood.

“Using the Law,” from which the twin notions of the law’s malleability and adaptability emerge, is the most coherent of the collection’s three sections. Sharon McShefferey’s study of a seemingly commonplace announcement of a marriage and her careful reconstruction of its suspicious circumstances serves as an important reminder that historians of the law ought to be circumspect not only about what medieval documents can tell us but also about why medieval people wrote things down in the first place. Dana Wessell Lightfoot argues that elite Valencian widows remarried for complex reasons; they were not just pawns in the games that their families played. Jamie Smith’s study of Genoese wives with absent husbands settles the case of which family (natal or marital) was more important to women; they were equally important to her and vice versa. Her careful analysis of the modifications in Genoa’s laws shows how women continued their legal activities despite a husband’s absence. Hilda Smith and Karen Pearlston discuss early modern English women’s legal agency. Examining women’s petitions to the Court of Alderman and their presence in the freedom lists, Smith discovers that women exercised a significant independence as artisans and shop owners. Investigating feme sole traders’ ability to incur debt and sign contracts, Pearlston highlights the limits that even judges favorable to women’s independent economic activities placed on early modern women.

The chapters in the last section, “Performing, Playing, and Pleasing,” have the least obvious connection with each other, but they have an important role in the volume by introducing differing masculinities and sexualities. Tim Stretton’s chapter combines legal and literary sources to consider the unsavory actions of George Puttenham, a court-
ier and literary man. He presents the multiple “scripts, codes or ideals” from which Elizabethan men and women could draw their presentation of masculine behavior, considering the complex interrelationship of class and gender (358). Paul Cohen’s wonderful portrayal of an Italian priest and traveler who wrote about linguistic difference as an aphrodisiac examines the ways in which plurilingual encounters revealed class, gender, and cultural differences in the early modern world.

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Sibling Relations and the Transformations of European Kinship 1300–1900. Edited by Christopher H. Johnson and David Warren Sabean (New York, Berghahn Books) 356 pp. $95.00

Since the end of the 1990s, Sabean has been sponsoring a wide-ranging collaborative enquiry with the laudable aim of reviving and re-assessing the utility of kinship as an analytical concept in Europe’s modern history, building on his own, earlier micro-studies of Neckarhausen. This initiative began after a scholarly generation when historians—exactly like anthropologists—had turned away from a kin-based approach, believing that one mark of modernity was its reduced importance, and even disappearance. The first product of this scholarly pursuit was Kinship in Europe: Approaches to Long-Term Development (1300–1900) (New York, 2007), edited by Sabean, Simon Teuscher, and John Mathieu, which set out the intellectual case for returning to kinship as an analytical tool and posited two key transformations. At the end of the Middle Ages, notably fluid social patterns gave way to a system that was agnatic, patrilineal, and vertical, with descent between generations accompanied by a strong sense of lineage. This system survived into the eighteenth century, when it began to be superseded by a horizontally organized system of consanguineal kindreds characterized by much more affection within families, which persisted into the twentieth century.

The present volume builds on its predecessor and explores the impact of these changes upon younger children, who are neglected in studies of past societies, particularly those in which primogeniture prevailed. An editorial introduction lucidly outlines the main themes and problems. It is followed by a dozen articles, most of which have important points to make about the position of cadets and the inheritance arrangements for them. The chapters about the early modern period are more wide-ranging, and several are outstanding. Bernard Derouet (in what is sadly likely to be one of his final publications; he died while the volume was in production) contributes a characteristically well-crafted and subtle examination of the “dowry as a modality of exclusion from the patri-
mony” (31), revealing how completely the prevailing patrilinear inheritance system determined family roles.

Sophie Ruppel distils her detailed research on German princely society into an illuminating survey of seventeenth-century courts, underlining the importance of hierarchies established by birth order within aristocratic sibling relationships, in contrast to the much more equal relationships between siblings in the later modern period. Benjamin Marschke provides an important reminder of the hidden and often-neglected succession problems of Brandenburg-Prussia’s ruling family during its seventeenth- and eighteenth-century emergence. Finally, Gérard Delille, in the most important contribution of the volume, offers a further instalment in his seminal re-interpretation of marital and inheritance patterns between the fifteenth and the nineteenth century, demonstrating how the demographic consequences of primogeniture, and the restricted marriage that often accompanied it, undermined the early modern system of kinship identified by Sabean. Delille’s remarkable ability to operate at both the micro- and the macro-level of analysis gives his conclusions especial force.

The essays on the period after c.1750 are not of the same significance; three out of the six have already been published in easily accessible places. The most substantial are Christopher Johnson’s exploration of the emotional life of a nineteenth-century Breton family through an illuminating, and remarkably extensive, surviving correspondence, and Leonore Davidoff’s revealing exploration of sibling tensions within the extended Gladstone family, which provides an unexpected new perspective on the life of William Ewart Gladstone, who served as Britain’s prime minister four times from 1868 to 1894. In the second half of the book, family micro-narratives and literary sources come to the fore, in contrast to the more rigorously analytical approach of the early modern articles.

This volume, and the wider project of which it forms one part, are significant contributions to the current re-assessment of kinship, and planned volumes on transnational families and the importance of blood in defining kin are eagerly awaited. Yet, although the broad lines of Sabean’s double transformation can be accepted and, indeed, welcomed, various reservations arise. Elite families—ruling, noble and, in the later period, bourgeois—provide almost all of the evidence on which it is based. The uneven survival of sources makes this limitation comprehensible, but it needs to be addressed nonetheless. So too does the geographical range of the essays, which—with the exception of Delille’s focus upon southern Italy—is confined to northwestern Europe; England, France, and especially Germany receive by far the greatest attention. The applicability of the new perspectives to Mediterranean, Central, and Eastern Europe must be demonstrated rather than implied.

Moreover, it is surprising that changing demographic patterns do not receive more attention. The scenario for the agnatic and patrilinear
system that prevailed from the end of the Middle Ages onward was a system of modest population growth (at best), high infant mortality, and permanent demographic uncertainty. Wrigley calculated that, in a more or less stationary population, the likelihood of a male child who lived into adolescence resulting from any single marriage was no more than 60 percent, and that one marriage in five was likely to be childless—important points about a system within which primogeniture, and especially male primogeniture, was crucial. ¹ The system of patrilinear descent, and the restricted marriage pattern that accompanied it, both depended upon and were threatened by the vagaries of demographic chance, as Delille alone explicitly recognizes in this volume. The rapidly increasing population levels from the eighteenth century onward accompanied, and may well have contributed to, the different kinship patterns that characterized the later modern era.

Hamish Scott
University of Glasgow


During the past quarter-century, Scott has established a firm reputation as a scholar of the political history of Stuart England, with particular emphasis on republicanism, the instability caused by the English Civil War, the fall and execution of Charles I, the failure of the Cromwellian regime, the restoration of the monarchy, and the achievement of stability under the Anglo-Dutch political revolution of 1688/89. He has pursued these themes in such books as England’s Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context (New York, 2000) and Commonwealth Principles: Republican Writing of the English Revolution (New York, 2004). While these works have been in gestation, early modern British history has witnessed an upsurge in the study of its Atlantic dimension, especially with regard to colonization, trade, and empire. In this new book, Scott takes account of this “Atlantic turn” in historiography.

When the Waves Ruled Britannia extends Scott’s interest and expertise in this era by focusing on theorists and annalists who used geographical language for political ends. The book is interdisciplinary in combining the analysis of texts concerning the geography of islands, continents, and internal regions with examination of the politics of state power and national identity, notably in relation to the growth of naval power, the exigencies of warfare, and the struggle to create a strong, viable maritime nation. Scott draws upon printed primary texts by numerous authors,

including Dee, Camden, Hakluyt, Purchas, and Heylyn; unpublished manuscript essays, principally in the British Library and the National Maritime Museum; and a selective, relevant bibliography of secondary material.¹

Scott does not explain why he selected particular primary texts and omitted others. For example, he does not mention the writings of Postlethwayt, which include extensive information on England’s maritime and naval strength in the eighteenth century vis-à-vis state power.² Nor does he provide consistent information about the selected writers’ absorption of one another’s arguments, the nature of their audience, or their influence on government policy. Rather, he uses the primary texts to illuminate the main themes pursued in the book. Scott’s reading of individual sources is sophisticated and insightful, but sometimes he presents too much direct quotation; some of his passages are little more than a series of pithy quotations with little linking commentary (see 22–24, 51–52, 66–67, 107–109).

Proceeding in a generally chronological direction from Elizabethan texts using geographical language for political purposes to Georgian texts following the same precepts, Scott shows how England’s island status was conceptualized, redefined, and promoted as a way of fostering national identity and British overseas maritime expansion throughout the early modern period. English seafaring and navigation had limitations in the sixteenth century; war exposed the fragility of the state’s defences. Dee and Hakluyt both advocated boosting England’s economic and political strength by concentrating on the nation’s geographical position as an island and its need to expand overseas to increase its power and prestige. Hakluyt, in particular, regarded the colonization of North America as an opportunity for England to establish a Protestant counterbalance to the Spanish Roman Catholic Empire in South and Central America. Dee, Hakluyt, and some of their contemporaries tried to “drive the nation into a dynamic relationship with the sea and its mobility” (53).

Seventeenth-century English writers used geographical language to emphasize the importance of “the discipline of the sea” to boost the economic, military, and political prospects of the English state (xiii). The Cromwellian period displayed “a republic and empire fully apprised of its mercantile and naval interests and potential” (72). During the eighteenth century, writers touted Britain’s maritime strength—for example,

¹ See, for example, John Dee, General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfecte Arte of Navigation (London, 1577); William Camden, Britain, or a Chorographical Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland (London, 1610); Richard Hakluyt, The Principall Navigations, Voijages and Discoveries of the English Nation (London, 1589), 2 v.; Samuel Purchas, Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes: Contayning a History of the World, in Sea Voyages & Lande-Travells, by Englishmen & Others (London, 1625), 4 v.; Peter Heylyn, Cosmography in Four Books: Containing the Chorography and History of the Whole World: And All the Principal Kingdoms, Provinces, Seas, and Isles Thereof (London, 1677).

² See, for example, Malachy Postlethwayt, The African Trade, the Great Pillar and Support of the British Plantation Trade in North America (London, 1745).
Daniel Defoe in his commentaries about ports and river improvements in *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* . . . (London, 1724–1727) and John Oldmixon, who argued that colonies such as Barbados exemplified British maritime power in *The British Empire in America* . . . (London, 1741). Scott’s dissection of these changing orientations is a helpful contribution both to the significance of geographical language for political purposes in contemporary texts and to the increasing significance of Britain’s island position for the empire between the reigns of Elizabeth I and George III.

Kenneth Morgan
Brunel University


Given the extensive scholarship on literacy and the book, on printing and the print trade, on the circulation of books and manuscripts, on marginalia and common-placing, on cheap print and popular works (as measured by number of editions), and so on, Cambers is necessarily careful both in surveying the historiography of this vast and proliferating field and in situating his own study within it. In light of the centrality of the Bible, printed sermons, theological treatises, devotional works, and guides to pious living for the Puritan movement and the “godly” culture that it produced, he argues that an investigation of Puritan reading habits, and reading venues, is illuminating both for our understanding of Puritanism during the long seventeenth century and its place within early modern English society.

The principal point of such an investigation is to establish that “both in their domestic piety and in more overtly public displays of their religiosity, puritans read in ways that were for the most part communal in nature and public in orientation” (246). Thus does Cambers refute Burckhardtian and Weberian views that connect Renaissance individualism, Puritanism, silent reading, and modernity, echoes of which he sees as pervasive in contemporary studies of Puritan culture and the book (246).1 To this end, he employs descriptions of Puritan practice found in letters and diaries, biographies and autobiographies, and other contemporary writings that provide evidence of what and who were involved when reading took place in the closet and bedchamber, in the study, in the hall and the parlor, in the library, in the parish, in the town, and even in prison.

This necessarily anecdotal evidence may well testify that reading aloud to an audience took place even in such ostensibly private spaces as

the closet and the study, but it cannot prove beyond question that silent, if not always solitary, reading did not predominate in the godly household and elsewhere. Furthermore, although the godly undoubtedly read religious literature or had it read to them, the proportion of the total that this type of literature constituted is beyond recovery. Camber mentions the pleasure that the devout Elizabeth Isham took in hearing Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* and the fact that the godly Henry Newcome read Samuel Butler’s *Hudibras*, hardly part of the godly canon.

The book has other difficulties. Woodcuts in some popular ballads depict communal devotional scenes, but their texts are not clearly Puritan, as opposed to simply Protestant. Again, Camber draws from the writings of Alice Thornton, a royalist Anglican, and from those of Anne Clifford and Elizabeth Cary, both Catholics, whose habits of pious reading and hearing were similar to those of the godly. Camber notes that the term “family religion” came into use during the second half of the century and that these pious practices drew on behaviors urged by Arthur Dent and other early Stuart Puritan divines. Yet, he cites as exemplars of this tradition not only the Presbyterians Samuel Slater and John Shower but also John Tillotson, the future archbishop, and William Payne and Thomas Bray, conforming Anglican clergymen. Is it possible that the devotional practices and reading habits that Camber sees as defining the behavior of godly Puritans in fact characterized the pious practices of every devout Christian during the long seventeenth century?

Paul Seaver
Stanford University

*Medicine in an Age of Commerce and Empire: Britain and Its Tropical Colonies 1660–1830.* By Mark Harrison (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010) 353 pp. $115.00

The title of Harrison’s latest contribution to the history of medicine shines with promise. The combination of commerce, tropics, colonies, and medicine suggests the possibility of a multidisciplinary approach to the wider topic that would enrich our understanding of the dynamic, entrepreneurial British world of the long eighteenth century. The geography of commerce and colonialism/empire, and of medical locations, networks, and institutional structures; the anthropology of cultural and commercial interaction and exchange between indigenous and British medicine; the economics and business practices of medicine overseas; demography and statistics—all of these fields could be utilized to explore British medicine’s encounter with the “warm climates” of the tropics and the ways in which it informed, instructed, or influenced the medical men whose careers took them into the unfamiliar and the unknown.

The purpose of Harrison’s book is not, however, to explore the outward exposure of British medicine overseas but to examine the inward dynamic—the effect that the experiences of these medical men had
on British medical culture and practice. Harrison’s concerns and methodology belong solidly to the history of professional medicine—an area in which the input of sociology has become so embedded as to be invisible to the interdisciplinary eye. The colonial “legacy” to British medicine was, Harrison argues, transformatory; it had a “formative influence upon the development of what came to be known as ‘Western medicine’” (9).

The views and experiences of individual practitioners, derived from their various writings, constitute Harrison’s source material and dominate his text. He examines medical ideas and practices in detailed case studies that also demonstrate how this medical world operated. It was a web of networks and communication, influenced by political, commercial, religious, and professional considerations. Commerce, however, does not in itself receive much attention. Harrison is less interested in trade and transport than in the military institutions that defended and supported those activities and that employed so many of the British medical men whose careers incorporated experience overseas.

The book falls into three parts. Part 1 considers “medicine as natural history,” as well as the release from cultural constraints that many medical practitioners enjoyed in the colonial context, enabling them to pursue knowledge by any methods deemed appropriate. Dissection, for example, was still relatively rare in Europe, surrounded by cultural taboos; in the colonies, however, postmortem examinations and the study of morbid anatomy became acceptable practice.

Part 2 considers tropical therapeutics. Part 3 examines the “ills of empire” and the perception of colonial commerce and administration as destructive of the very qualities of physical strength and political stability that had enabled and underpinned the enterprise in the first place. Service overseas brought wealth and new opportunities for consumption to Britain; it liberated intellectual inquiry and generated new scientific knowledge; and it helped to set medicine on the road to modernity. But these developments came at the price of death, disability, and identity crisis both at home and abroad. Notwithstanding the considerable benefits of the colonial enterprise—knowledge, material goods, and even wealth—the consequences for individual lives were frequently unhappy, and widely acknowledged to be so.

Anne Hardy
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine


The so-called “local turn” in the study of science that began in the 1970s had two major impulses. One came from the social history of science, specifically Thackray’s influential writing about the uses of scientific cul-
ture in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Manchester. The animating questions in that work concerned the symbolic, more than the utilitarian, relations between science and industrializing society and the roles of scientific culture, broadly construed, in shifting schemes of social identity. The second source of localism was the sociology of scientific knowledge, in which the questions were mainly philosophical. Scholars were skeptical about the “universality” of scientific knowledge and about formal method and self-evident validity as sufficient explanations for its credibility and authority. This skepticism inspired microsociological research about the contemporary laboratory and the arts of persuasion and credibility management that allowed certain scientific claims—not all of them—to transcend their local origins.

Later, Bruno Latour developed an ontological vocabulary for understanding the conditions on which science traveled—“immutable mobiles,” “centers of calculation,” and “stronger and weaker heterogeneous networks.” Historians of science began to attend to spatial dimensions in understanding not just local “contexts of discovery” but also the “contexts of justification” that had been regarded as impersonal and transparently rational. Eventually, historical and cultural geographers joined forces. Some of the most focused historical work about the spaces and places of science has now come from scholars in geography departments, including Withers at Edinburgh and Livingstone at Queen’s, Belfast.

Although Elliott makes introductory gestures toward sociological-philosophical genres, the work collected in his book belongs almost exclusively to the social-historical frame for studying provincial English science pioneered almost forty years ago by Thackray and then continued by such historians as Inkster, Morrell, and Porter. Elliott writes, for example, about the improving impulse behind provincial botanic gardens, science and spiritual improvement in the eighteenth-century Dissenting Academies, natural history and regional identity in English county towns, the social and political uses of science in Nottingham, and the meteorological and electrical work of the neglected eighteenth-century Derbyshire practitioner Abraham Bennet—a discussion that follows from outstanding studies of the history of British weather science by Jankovic and Golinski.

2 See, for example, David N. Livingstone and Charles W. J. Withers (eds.), Geography and Revolution (Chicago, 2005); Livingstone, Putting Science in Its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge (Chicago, 2003); Withers, Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically about the Age of Reason (Chicago, 2007).
4 Vladimir Jankovic, Reading the Skies: A Cultural History of English Weather, 1650–1820 (Chicago, 2001); Jan Golinski, British Weather and the Climate of Enlightenment (Chicago, 2007).
Elliott’s chapters do not link tightly to each other, and his general findings about the social and cultural uses of provincial science are not clearly articulated: “Scientific culture,” he writes, “contributed towards the development of multiple overlapping religio-political and spatial identities shaped by diverse local factors as well as national and international cultures” (3). Intermittent gestures to major theoreticians of space and place—Jürgen Habermas and Latour—are mainly ornamental, and engagement with what Elliott occasionally calls “epistemological” questions is only marginal. But Elliott has done a genuine service in making this scholarship accessible. His book should find an appreciative readership among social historians of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain.

Steven Shapin
Harvard University

Geography and Science in Britain, 1831–1939: A Study of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. By Charles W. J. Withers (New York, Manchester University Press, 2010) 278 pp. $95.00

A study of the geography of science—how its included sciences were affected by the locales where the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BA) met—ought surely to show interdisciplinary awareness. Yet, even though Withers is well acquainted with studies that emphasize social, spatial, and other nonintellectual influences on the history of science, he is cautious about pronouncing in detail on subjects other than his main concern, geography. He strongly implies nevertheless that, just as geography developed as a “civic science,” other subjects were affected as forms of “knowledge and of cultural authority” by the places in which their practitioners met (244, 245). Old-fashioned geographers might assume that “place” had something to do with geology, climate, and vegetation; Withers’ approach is, rather, a “spatially sensitive social constructivism” (67).

Except for the extent to which this strategic phrase signifies the interplay between spatial and cultural approaches, the book shows little obvious interdisciplinary research: Withers uses manuscript and printed records of the BA meetings, some relevant institutional or private papers, local and national newspapers, and an impressive range of printed primary and secondary literature. He covers half a dozen themes in geography’s development, each in a broadly chronological manner. The result is an extremely important contribution to the history of geography that challenges a good many existing assumptions; whether the lessons learned about the importance of BA meetings apply to other sciences is a question that is not fully answered in the book.

In the course of his study, Withers covers geography’s troublesome relations with other BA sections, some of whose leaders doubted whether
geography was a science at all. He notes the significant influence of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) on meetings of geography’s section (Section C until 1851; thenceforward E) and links its nineteenth-century emphasis on exploration to the way in which the subject developed. However, he makes seriously misleading assumptions about the Society and its explorers in relation to British imperialism—especially his notion that geographical exploration in the middle and later years of the nineteenth century went “hand-in-hand with territorial advances in Britain’s empire” (8). His tendency to assume that “imperialism” was an undifferentiated phenomenon throughout the nineteenth century might have been avoided with an awareness of recent works by Cain and Hopkins or Darwin. On a more trivial point, Withers is unjustified in stating unequivocally that John Hanning Speke committed suicide rather than face Richard Francis Burton in the 1864 BA debate about the source of the Nile (92).

Some of the most interesting and important passages in this book are concerned to show how modern geography evolved after the doubts and difficulties of the nineteenth century. Older accounts would see Mackinder’s famous 1887 article as the key event because it showed how physical and “political” geography might conjoin to make geography a discipline rather than just an assemblage of information. Withers argues that the real crisis in geography did not come until the years 1912 to 1914, when attempts were made to re-organize the BA sections. The problems continued into the 1930s with the formation of the Institute of British Geographers, which rivaled both the BA and the RGS. The analysis by Withers may be unduly influenced by his predilection for a geography that is essentially a “human” or social science. But might not a geography of this kind, increasingly divorced from, for example, geomorphology and other field studies, lead to the re-opening of the nineteenth-century chasm between “physical” and “political” geography? If so, will geography once more find it difficult to relate to other sciences in the BA?

Roy Bridges
University of Aberdeen


For many people, the Great Exhibition of 1851 still stands as the triumph of mid-Victorian civilization, as it apparently did in its own day. Most


written and visual accounts recommend the Exhibition’s material and secular characteristics, expressing confidence in its celebration of social and technological “progress.” The master narrative rarely includes dissent, controversy, or references to religion. Rather, the iron and glass structure itself and the countless commercial and technological displays within its courts extol free trade, reform, and machines—the secular holy trinity of Victorianism. Religious displays and other spiritual aspects of the show were deemed to have been peripheral, either missing the mark entirely, or merely expressing the crankiness of Evangelicals. The only notable exception was the controversy about Augustus Pugin’s construction of his neo-Gothic Medieval Court (110–112)—a dissent fueled by anti-Catholic and antipapal sentiments, part of the momentary fear of visiting papist “heathens” from the Continent. Otherwise, technology and peace dominate the story, both for the Victorians and their historians.

Cantor’s latest book upsets that tranquil picture of secular triumphalism by showing that the mid-Victorians took seriously the various religious aspects of the Great Exhibition. These were not peripheral interpretations but common ones; religion provided explanation, justification, praise, and criticism. The Bible, for example, helped Victorians to “make sense of the Exhibition” (6). Participants used the event to pursue converts, express England’s divine providence or its impending Apocalypse, bash Catholics and the pope, and fuel fears about Protestant religious tyranny. So much for pleasant mid-Victorian “equipoise” at the Crystal Palace!

Rather than secularism and consensus, religion and controversy were the order of the day. Anglicans, Quakers, Congregationalists, Catholics, Jews, and Nonconformists all considered the Great Exhibition as part of their religious view of the world and their place in it. Their Victorian “frame of mind” was not uniquely secular, or religious, but, more precisely, both, as was the Exhibition itself, reflecting a social and theological religiosity consistent with English culture and society at that time.

Cantor points out that conventional impressions about 1851 held at bay, if not ignored, the vast amount of literature—including sermons, handbills, and tracts—that discussed the Exhibition in religious terms. Those terms included the nation’s religiosity and that of particular visitors and exhibits, even the “heathens” among them. He has assembled a valuable array of such primary sources, made more meaningful when teamed with the interest in the Great Exhibition expressed in the popular religious press—Evangelical, Catholic, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan periodicals included. Cantor has unearthed nearly 150 different religious periodicals published in London during the decade leading up to the Crystal Palace. Contributors to such periodicals found religious meanings in seemingly secular displays, such as those of science and technology, and they were by no means reluctant to express in print specific religious interpretations.
The nuanced dance of science and religion both at and beyond the Great Exhibition is the essence of Cantor’s book. Cantor’s scholarship is a clear-headed, well documented, and an appropriately illustrated study of how the Victorians understood their religious and secular world. Celebrations of the Exhibition’s religious displays were echoed by expressions of religious fear on the part of Catholics and Protestants: Would the Exhibition lead to Britain being flooded by papists, or would the show be one more extreme example of Protestant power? If it were “paradise regained,” whose paradise would it be?

Not all of this discussion will be new to those who have read recent scholarship about the Great Exhibition, much of which has focused on competing interests and controversies. Those labors, however, rarely include references to the religious interests and controversies that Cantor grasps. No other scholar has so carefully explored the crossroads of mid-Victorian religiosity and secularism.

The author concludes by reflecting upon the event in “Retroспект.” His few passing thoughts about the closing ceremonies and about historians could have been strengthened by a consideration of the memory and history of the Great Exhibition—a two-headed ghost that haunted and guided future exhibition organizers and visitors, as well as shaped British identity for the next two generations. Why, for example, was the important role of religion written out of the histories of the Great Exhibition and even the memories of participants? Why was public and private memory secularized? Building upon Cantor’s work, we can ask about the role of religion at the Great Exhibition’s many allegedly secular successors in Britain and abroad in the colonies.

Peter H. Hoffenberg
University of Hawaii, Manoa

Reforming Urban Labor: Routes to the City, Roots in the Country. By Janet L. Polasky (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2010) 238 pp. $55.00

Polasky explains the origins of working-class suburbs and of commuting to work in London and Brussels with reference to English and Belgian reformers concerned with the relegation of the urban labor force to unhealthy slums. This study predates the usual emphasis on interwar and postwar social housing, focusing instead on the decades before World War I. Polasky presents a finely designed comparative study of the social engineering that linked housing and transportation reforms, and of the social good that they were supposed to engender: Students of urban history will recognize such familiar reformers as Henry Mayhew, Charles Booth, and Emile Vandervelde, but this book places them in the context not only of their research activities but also of the social and political struggle to win better housing for workers.

Polasky analyzes the prose of these reformers to expose its bourgeois
assumptions—for example, the notion that workers who had a cottage where they could return to their wives at the end of the day would not drink or raise corrupted children. Polasky elucidates her findings with epigraphs, generous maps, and contemporary illustrations. Moreover, she combines her data regarding the populations of London and Brussels in single graphs to facilitate comparison. Most importantly, she is able to present a complex, intertwining, up-to-date history of two political and cultural spaces by designing chapters around themes common to both of them, showing both similarities and differences. In short, Reforming Urban Labor is a tour de force of comparative history.

The book opens with a portrait of the overcrowded capital cities before moving to reformers’ schemes for improvement—first workmen’s railway systems linking them to suburban dwellings and then to what the Belgians called “le cottage” housing. Subsequently, Polasky shifts from an exclusive focus on reformers—an all-purpose identifier that covers men of varied political persuasions—to the politics of reform that included demonstrations by irate, unhappy working-class commuters. Mixed reports on the outcomes of suburban housing follow. The final chapter—“Commuting Labor, 1918–2010”—offers a sweep of sobering insights: The development of social housing may have produced a stable, law-abiding population, but it also resulted in segregation by class (Britain) and local identity (Belgium). Innovative programs initiated after World War I were doomed by the Depression, and the depredations of World War II turned developers to high-density housing. In Britain, the fate of social housing adapted to the party in power, and continued, along with railway transportation, to be more at the mercy of private enterprise than it was in Belgium.

Once again, at the end of the twentieth century, Europeans—now the European Union—recognize the intimate connections between land use, housing, and transportation policies, struggling to find solutions to seemingly intractable problems exacerbated by the automobile. Polasky notes that “the dreams shared by the Belgian and the British reformers confronting the crisis of industrialization in the nineteenth century had become a reality a century later, but a reality that brought with it a new cycle of challenges” (196). This book explains the way in which these initial dreams were realized, albeit partially and imperfectly.

Leslie Page Moch
Michigan State University


Dunbabin, an eminent authority on medieval France and the career of Charles of Anjou, has written a more thought-provoking book than this
meager title suggests. Her topic is not the Angevin conquest of southern Italy in the 1260s but rather what the temporary French visitors to their new Regno (southern Italy and Sicily) learned there and brought back to northern France. The vast majority of travelers (elites often by sea and armies by land) to the south were warriors, many of whom settled there or died in the wars. The few returning to Capetian France and Flanders were changed men with new knowledge gained in the Regno about how to rule more effectively. Hence, this book is partly about the transformative experience of war, as well as the effects that an imperialist project had on both the colonizers and the colonized.

Being well aware that medieval France encountered a complex web of influences gained from wars and crusading in England, Languedoc, and the eastern Mediterranean, Dunbabin has to disentangle the particular effects of the Regno’s traditions from these other possible sources of experience. French nobles who understood lordship saw in the south one of the most legally sophisticated and centralized monarchies in Europe. Hence, it is not surprising that Dunbabin finds the origins of some late Capetian administrative and fiscal innovations in the lessons that returning veterans drew from the Norman and Hohenstaufen governance of Naples and Palermo. Because the years 1266 and 1305 mark a period of intense French engagement in Italian affairs, it makes sense for Dunbabin to focus on this period.

This book becomes interdisciplinary and innovative in Dunbabin’s attempt to look beyond bureaucracies and taxes to illuminate possible southern influences on developments in the north. One interesting argument concerns how and why the university of Paris during the late thirteenth century became more like the one in Naples. Medicine and science were interests in places like Salerno and Naples; teachers and students came to expect more than arts and theology from Parisian masters. The kings of France also learned from their southern cousins to take a stronger interest in the faculty and to view it as a source for opinions to justify their policies toward the church in Rome and the Jews, among other issues. Dunbabin’s ability to locate Thomas Aquinas in his southern Italian milieu is particularly refreshing, as is her view that many of his ideas were shaped long before his Paris sojourn. He is the prime but not the only example of southerners whose path north was smoothed by the new links between Paris, where he became famous, and Naples, where he returned home to teach, and to die.

Other fruitful interdisciplinary themes in this book concern how the knighting of lawyers and the style of sumptuary legislation, southern traditions, came north. Another possible theme is northern Italy, through which so many French men, and a few women, passed, and where other cultural influences and fashions awaited the open-minded.

Steven A. Epstein
University of Kansas
Dobie’s *Trading Places* is an attempt to explicate the silence—in her words, the “unactualized discourse”—in French literature about the use of African slaves to produce tropical commodities. She traces “the complex relationship between the relative invisibility of the colonial world during a period that lasted until around 1770, and two related but far more prominent eighteenth-century thematics: fascination with ‘Oriental’ culture, and the array of discourses devoted to the relationship between ‘civilized’ Europeans and ‘primitive’ societies exemplified by the indigenous peoples of the Americas” (xi–xii).

This book is rigorously interdisciplinary. It draws extensively from Dobie’s specialty of comparative literature, as well as history, philosophy, political economy, and material culture, to highlight the various displacements that masked the cultural silences surrounding France’s morally tainted enjoyment of luxury goods and other economic benefits derived from a brutal system of colonial slavery. Most scholars of Enlightenment France are aware of the philosophical debates about slavery that culminated in its temporary abolition from the French colonies in 1794. Dobie points out, however, that this discussion of slavery was relatively muted until the late 1760s. Until then, French consumers enjoyed the products of plantation slavery while largely ignoring their provenance.

Dobie’s analysis of this discursive silence is divided into three sections. In Part I, she demonstrates that French literature tended to examine slavery in the context of exotic Oriental despotism, not the French colonies; consumer goods such as tropical woods and imported textiles received an Oriental veneer. Dobie notes that “the Oriental world was referenced and represented as a point of origin for new textiles, techniques, and styles. In sharp contrast, the important role of Europe’s colonies as producers of raw materials and consumers of cotton textiles long remained largely invisible” (124). This viewpoint allowed French consumers to sidestep the moral question of slave production and their own complicity in that system.

In Part II, Dobie considers the trope of colonial encounters in literary fiction. She argues that, even as contact between French settlers and “natives” became less common in the French Caribbean, “travelogues and fictional narratives continued to portray colonization in the guise of an encounter between Europeans and Amerindians” (165), largely ignoring the development of creolized slave societies. Finally, she examines the genuine critique of slavery that emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century. This critique was usually couched in the language of political economy and the costs/benefits of slavery; it avoided the moral implications of human forced labor. Even those philosophers who opposed slavery were sometimes tentative in their conclusions.
This extraordinary book reveals Dobie’s skill with the tools of various disciplines. Her ability to extract meaning from both silence and indirection is nuanced and compelling. Her argument that silences reflected a “reluctance to confront or come to terms with a moral issue” is persuasive (6), although we cannot rule out the possibility of ignorance or indifference. Slavery might not have appeared an unqualified evil in a society as hierarchical as Ancien Régime France, in which few enjoyed genuine freedom. However, when *philosophes* began to consider the possibility of natural rights and liberty for all men, slavery also became a topic of real debate and moral concern.

Christine Adams
St. Mary’s College of Maryland


The relationship between race and national identity in the modern period has emerged as a major theme in European historiography, but the Spanish case has remained on the margins of this literature. Indeed, the role of race in modern Spanish identity followed a different trajectory from the classic German Nazi case, but it was also distinct from that of the major European colonial powers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which forged racialized identities in the context of expanding empires. What Goode argues convincingly, however, is that Spain developed its own version of racial thought and racism that fits into a broader comparative spectrum. Race was ubiquitous in almost every modern national context, including Spain’s.

Fitting modern Spain into a spectrum model of race and nationalism requires a more flexible understanding of racism than the Nazi “norm” that dominates European historiography. In this conventional framework, modern racism is defined narrowly as the exclusion of groups according to “scientific” categories of biological purity. Ever since Frederick Pike identified the Spanish term *raza* as nonbiological and non-scientific in *Hispanismo* (Notre Dame, 1971), the conventional wisdom has been that Spain did not participate in “modern” (that is, Nazi) forms of racism. Instead, Goode argues that debates about Spanish identity were both infused with racialized language and bolstered by scientific arguments, thus falling along what should be a broader spectrum of racial thought. What is distinct about the Spanish case was the celebration of racial mixture instead of purity as the origin of the Spanish nation. Theorists disagreed about how the mixture developed and which were the stronger and weaker links, but the broad consensus was that finding the exact mixture was the key to regenerating the nation. Goode shows that the mixture model of racial identity is no less amenable to racial engineering than the purity model.
Also key to Goode’s argument is demonstrating the scientific basis of Spain’s racial thought. Once again, conventional wisdom often assumes that the combination of Spain’s strong Catholic political and religious identity and its economic “backwardness” delayed the development of the scientific disciplines associated with late nineteenth-century ideas about race. He demonstrates, however, that the Spanish sciences developed along a timeline similar to that of their European counterparts, and that scientific arguments about race were accepted across the political spectrum, from the most conservative Catholics to the liberals. According to Goode, both Catholics and liberals viewed modern science as a useful tool for social manipulation and political progress, although they mobilized it toward different ends. The claim that science traversed the political spectrum also helps to break down what Goode rightly calls the “tired” division of late nineteenth-century Spain into modern/scientific/liberal vs. conservative/antiscientific/antimodern camps—the so-called “Two Spains.” Instead of a teleological battle between “modern” and “conservative” Spain that culminated in the Civil War of the 1930s, Goode portrays a more fluid intellectual world.

Within this larger framework, Goode’s book focuses on a case study involving the scientific discipline of anthropology. The budding field of anthropology in the late nineteenth century was the site for much of the scientific theorizing about racial difference. In the first part of the book, Goode depicts anthropology emerging as a discipline in Spain during the late nineteenth century despite such obstacles as the expulsion of professors from the public universities after the constitutional monarchy was restored in 1875. Goode also demonstrates that Spanish anthropologists were in conversation with their European counterparts in a shared language of racial types and head measurement. In the second part of the book, he makes the important connection between racial thought and practice, showing how racial ideas influenced policies and institutions, from criminal anthropology to military recruiting to the Jewish repatriation movement, which some liberals supported as a measure to regenerate the Spanish “race.”

In his suggestive epilogue, Goode gestures to the recent interest in the racial policies of the Franco era, from the effort to identify the “Marxist gene” to the forced adoption of Republican children. Most Spaniards view Francoist racism as an aberration, but Goode re-frames it as a radicalization of a familiar language that Spain shared, and still shares, with the rest of the modern world. In contrast to the lingering image of Spanish “difference,” this history of racial thought and policy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveals that Spain was all too modern and European.

Pamela Radcliff
University of California, San Diego
In *Becoming Neapolitan*, Marino offers a multifaceted perspective on public rituals in Naples between the mid-sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries. The study is a sweeping excursion into a variety of sources, many of which are available only in Italian. It thus brings into view the urban panorama of one of seventeenth-century Europe’s least understood cities. Naples was the largest city of the Spanish Empire, a densely inhabited immigrant destination, where as many as one-third of the residents were born beyond the city’s walls. With a population of 360,000, Naples dwarfed most cities in Italy; it was as large as Paris until it was decimated by the plague in 1656. It was both a religious boom town (with more than 150 churches and monasteries built in the first half of the seventeenth century alone) and “the most vice-ridden city in the whole universe,” according to Cervantes and other authors of Spain’s Golden Age whose literary imaginings could not ignore the city that Marino calls the “jewel of the Spanish crown” (27).

Naples did indeed glitter in the seventeenth century, but to its Spanish masters, other metaphors also applied. Its coat of arms was, appropriately, an unbridled horse; it shook its Spanish rulers often, even throwing them off from time to time. *Becoming Neapolitan* examines how Naples was simultaneously wild and loyal to Spain, linking this precarious balance to the rich ritual life that permeated urban culture and contributed, according to Marino, to the stitching together of a civic community that could coalesce despite considerable social divisions and animosities. Naples was governed by Spanish viceroys who cultivated the tightest bonds of loyalty with the city’s nobles. The nobles, in turn, distanced and distinguished themselves from the *popolo*, a more socially disparate, middling group of professionals, merchants, and guildsmen who were the social superiors of the impoverished “plebs.” Nobles cultivated a civic-mindedness based upon Christian virtue and reason, qualities that made them (in their own view) more fit to rule than the other groups but also required them to participate in the politics of the city.

While Spanish policy played these diverse groups against each other, leaving them in a continual state of disagreement, the sheer quantity and quality of the city’s pageantry managed to facilitate a semblance of civic cohesion. Depending on the observer’s mode of calculation, early modern Naples may have had anywhere from 178 to 230 feast days per year, or as one viceroy blithely referred to their number, “a little less than infinite” (83). Attempts by authorities to limit holidays were believed to invite divine wrath, including the plague of 1656, which killed two-thirds of the city’s population. Marino richly documents the ebb and flow of feasts, which Spanish rulers attempted to co-opt as ceremonies in which loyal subjects could demonstrate their fidelity to the Crown. Civic dramas sometimes erupted in violence (most notably in the rebellions of 1585 and 1647), but forbidding celebrations out of fear
of rebellion could inspire rebellion as well. Although political ceremonies were rigorously choreographed events, the inauguration of a new viceroy could engender sincere rejoicing when his predecessor had been particularly despised. Marino’s study juxtaposes the aims of rituals with ceremonial outcomes to provide a comparative perspective on the meaning of civic rituals for their diverse participants.

The festivities of St. John the Baptist receive close scrutiny, since they illustrate the potential for ritual to bring the whole of Naples together, albeit in remarkably divergent forms of participation. The religiously inspired focused their devotions on the liquefaction of St. John’s blood. The noble elites favored St. John’s feast, which offered them the opportunity to participate in the orderly and decorous march of the viceroy and to revisit the ceremonies later in numerous printed festival books. The popular classes reveled in the fireworks and the naked St. John’s dance, followed by naked bathing in the Bay of Naples, a “rebaptism” and fertility ritual that was suppressed with difficulty by the authorities. Marino’s reading of the feast, along with his examination of wide-ranging evidence from art to board games, foundation myths, folk tales, and would-be saints, makes a significant contribution to the growing historiography of Naples and provides a more nuanced understanding of the politics of pageantry in the early modern city.

Caroline Castiglione
Brown University


This carefully researched and well-written book explores an area of Nazi Germany that has been touched only lightly in the existing extensive literature about the Third Reich. How did businesses actually operate in the market; how did they advertise; how did individual consumers react to the availability or scarcity of consumer goods; and what did consumers think about what was happening? Wiesen has covered not only the existing relevant scholarly literature but accessed a substantial variety of business and organizational archives, as well as the better known official records. He first provides a brief but helpful survey of economic development in Germany during the 1930s before reviewing the way in which the National Socialists saw and hoped to control the market.

In a carefully organized series of chapters, Wiesen describes and analyzes the interaction between the government and the business world; the regime hoped simultaneously to help the economy to recover from the depression, to remove Jews from the business world, to control the type of marketing that took place, and increasingly to divert economic resources to a re-armament program preparing for war. Such was the
context in which business leaders adapted to National Socialist politics while also trying to maintain a degree of autonomy in their practices and their pursuit of profit. The author conveys a genuine sense of the times in describing the major concerns of the Bayer pharmaceutical company, the Henkel producer of laundry detergents, and Kaffee Hаг, the creator of decaffeinated coffee, as they navigated the new marketplace.

Of special interest for business and cultural historians is Wiesen’s careful coverage of the German Rotary Clubs’ ultimately unsuccessful attempts to accommodate the Nazi control of business, resulting in their dissolution in 1937. His analysis of German consumer and market research as performed by the Society for Consumer Research, which survived the Nazi defeat and continued into the German Federal Republic, shows similar originality. The author reveals throughout the book how, for ordinary Germans, memories of deprivation in World War I, the immediate post–World War I years, and the Depression helped to create the notion during the 1930s that the economy had improved in spite of shortages and during the distressed years of World War II, when the stores had depleted their stocks, that it would improve again.

Although Wiesen repeatedly argues why Götz Aly’s Hitler’s Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State (New York, 2008) is mistaken in its emphasis on the alleged bribery of the German public by the theft of property owned by Jews inside the country and the looting of occupied territories outside it, he fails to engage the extent to which German consumers at the time benefited from the enormous number of packages sent home by soldiers. Furthermore, except for a brief reference (195), Wiesen does not pay sufficient attention to the extent to which belief in the stab-in-the-back legend intensified the constant concern of the regime’s leaders about home-front morale during the war.

These minor quibbles aside, Wiesen’s book opens a significant new perspective on the realities of daily life in Nazi Germany and how those in the Volksgemeinschaft, the racial community, lived their lives as consumers before and after the Third Reich.

Gerhard L. Weinberg
University of North Carolina


In this well-documented study, Dennison explores the peasant community and its household economies on a Russian serf estate, using the interpretive framework of institutional economics, which, in her words, “takes its inspiration and starting point from the recent work of development economists and economic historians persuaded that institutions are the fundamental determinants of social and economic outcomes” (17).
This approach places the author in the distinguished company of economists like Ogilvie, whose recent work on Bohemian serfdom makes impressive use of institutional economics.¹

The author has focused on Voshchazhnikovo, a large serf estate located east of Moscow, which exemplified the monetary rent (obrok) estates that were widespread in the seven non–black-soil provinces around Moscow. She has skillfully mined its rich estate records to show how serfdom shaped the household structures and family economies of the peasants who were subjected to it.

In her discussion of the peasant community, Dennison helps to debunk the myth of the Russian peasant commune as a self-governing, egalitarian institution that protected its members through the periodic re-allocation of both communal resources (land) and communal obligations (taxes and rents). Dennison’s detailed findings provide a more nuanced picture: Elected communal officials charged with re-allocating resources and obligations carried out their tasks in a partisan spirit that excluded poor peasants from access to resources. Indeed, so calloused were the communal leaders toward their poorest members that the estate owner himself once wrote to the Voshchazhnikovo commune, reproving it for its neglect of the “old, blind or otherwise infirm [peasants] living in abject poverty, often without homes or communal land” (114). Dennison’s analysis of the peasant economy shows that market relations permeated most areas of peasant life. Serfs could not, de jure, own land, but the estate owner (Count Sheremetev), allowed his peasants to buy land in his name. His estate administration registered all of the land transactions between peasants, providing them with deeds to the lands that they purchased. By 1858, on the eve of Emancipation, the peasants of Voshchazhnikovo owned more than 15,000 acres, in addition to nearly 25,000 acres of communal land.

The labor market was also highly developed; three-quarters of the households participated in the labor market as either employers or wage laborers. Peasants working as wage laborers did not constitute a village proletariat. Most of these peasants belonged to middling or even prosperous households; some of them even bought luxury goods, as well as necessities. The dowry of Praskovi’ia Pugina, who worked as a servant, contained luxury items like French silk head scarves, a pearl necklace, and a silver tea service.

The strength of this book lies in Dennison’s detailed analysis of household structures and economies and her skill in bringing this analysis to life with finely observed scenes of daily life on the estate. Less impressive are her conclusions, which do little justice to her pioneering research. For example, although she is correct in concluding that the estate owner encouraged the peasants’ integration into the market economy,

this finding is not new; Fedorov published abundant evidence of it nearly forty years ago. The author is also correct in concluding that Russian serfdom did not provide “the incentive to engage in the sort of entrepreneurial initiatives that played such an important role in the agricultural and industrial revolutions in early modern northwest Europe” (231). But this observation is not new either. Russia was not England. Moreover, despite the deficiencies of Russia’s institutional framework, at least five serf households in Voshchazhnikovo had assets of more than 10,000 rubles. There were fifty-two such households on a nearby estate! The point is that such capital accumulation in serfs’ hands suggests informal networks of exchange that substituted for the lack of an institutional framework. We know little about these informal mechanisms, but hopefully the author will explore them in future publications.

Edgar Melton
Wright State University


Vinkovetsky’s sweeping and meticulous analysis seeks to explain why Russia sold Alaska, the last of its American colonies, to the United States in 1867. Yet, considering the difficulties that this outpost presented to Russia, the reader might well ask why the Empire did not part with it sooner. To be sure, Russian America (chiefly present-day Alaska) was initially a lucrative possession, especially after Russia began circumnavigating the globe during the early nineteenth century. In particular, the Russian American Company (RAC), an innovative joint-stock venture founded in 1799 between merchants and their imperial government, profited handsomely from the sale of sea furs, especially otter, as the supply of Siberian land furs dwindled.

A host of challenges eventually compelled Russia to give up, first, its tenuous perch on Fort Ross, ninety miles north of San Francisco (sold to a private individual in 1841), and then Alaska, its most prized possession. For one, Russia faced great difficulty attracting and maintaining a viable colonial population, given the colony’s remoteness, harsh climate, and periodic epidemics. Furthermore, competition (from Britain, America, and Spain), mounting Tlinkit resistance, and the vulnerability of the RAC headquarters in the port of Novo-Arkhangelsk (Sitka) all prompted the sale of Alaska in an era of good feelings toward the United States. In

addition, the Great Reforms, following upon the disaster of the Crimean War, aimed to end serfdom at home and native servitude abroad.

Although Russia’s only overseas colony was relatively short-lived, this colonial venture offers a fascinating prism through which to examine the lives of colonists and of indigenous peoples. With the aid of a table, maps, and illustrations, and drawing on RAC, Church, and governmental archives, as well as extensive travel accounts and a broad array of secondary literature, the author brings to light various intriguing facets of Russia’s failed experiment.

Readers will learn about the ethnically diverse natives (including Creoles, the children of Russian men and Native women), as well as the (oftentimes oppressive) tactics that the RAC employed to subjugate them. The RAC constantly tried to co-opt native elites through gifts, feasts, trade, and the bestowal of titles and honorifics, but the RAC never succeeded in pacifying the native population completely. Although the RAC made some attempt to “Russify” the natives (largely through Christianization), it also took care to preserve local customs, since the value of the Alaskan colony depended greatly on native skills in obtaining sea furs.

Although Orthodox missionaries contributed to the colonizing project, some of these missionaries were more interested in shielding natives from exploitation than in generating profits for the RAC. In fact, one of most lasting effects of their ephemeral enterprise might well be the cultural identity that many natives paradoxically continued to exhibit as Russian Orthodox Christians even after the sale of Alaska to the United States. Vinkovetsky’s depiction of the Russian encounter with native Alaskans and Californians through economic, political, social, ethnic, religious, and historical lenses provides a panoramic view of a dramatic slice of Russian history.

Patricia Herlihy
Brown University


This important monograph examines the dynamics behind marital breakdown in late imperial Russia, as well as the state’s response. It draws mainly on the archive of the Chancellery for the Receipt of Petitions Addressed to the Emperor, established in 1884 to institutionalize the autocrat’s claim to dispense “extra-legal” justice. The Chancellery handled a variety of matters, including petitions (mostly from women and from St. Petersburg and Moscow) seeking protection from marital discord and a passport for separate residence. Although each religious organization had control over marriage and divorce, the Chancellery had
the authority to grant legal separation—a practical solution when religious authorities (above all, the Russian Orthodox Church) adamantly opposed divorce.

This study presents a close, sensitive reading of these Chancellery files, supplemented by printed and archival materials. Its main contribution is the close analysis of official policy and the attitudes of plaintiffs, defendants, and witnesses as embedded in petitions and depositions. Engel demonstrates that the Chancellery displayed flexibility and, even if disposed to defend male prerogatives, tended to intercede in defense of wives who had been demonstrably wronged. That shift reflected the professionalization of the upper officialdom (the higher, especially legal, educational, and attendant liberal values that reshaped the Chancellery), as well as the sentiments of the emperor in whose name it acted (Nicholas II [1894–1917], who showed far more empathy than his father Alexander III [1881–1894]).

Engel devotes much attention to the exegesis of individual cases, the goal being to elucidate and explain changes in values and identities. For example, she shows the unexpected influence of the “cult of domesticity” (which served more to redefine masculinity than to determine women’s roles), the transformative power of extrafamilial employment for women, and the gradual evolution of law and policy regarding such matters as internal passports, spousal property rights, and child custody. She contextualizes all of this material in a comparative framework that reveals how Russia followed or deviated from analogous processes unfolding in Europe and America.

Methodologically, the source base raises some questions. First, although Engel’s study consulted 260 files from the Chancellery, relying mainly on 122 of them (6 percent of the extant holdings), it is unclear how Engel chose these particular files, evidently not by random sampling. Nor has history been kind to this Chancellery archive: Approximately 95 percent of the original holdings have been lost (for unknown reasons). Since the effect of these losses is indeterminable, it is difficult to make statistical inferences about frequency and patterns. Second, the Chancellery dealt only with contested separation. Amicable separations (which involved millions of people who left the village—and left their spouses—in favor of the city) had no need of the Chancellery. The Chancellery processed about 1,000 cases per year—a minuscule fraction of the millions of migrant workers, female as well as male, who obtained passports and traveled freely.¹ In a word, one cannot assume that these files reveal much about the magnitude and dynamics of “marital breakdown” in late imperial Russia.

Nonetheless, this study of extant texts affords rich insights into official thinking and the attitudes of those seeking imperial intercession.

¹ For the fourfold increase of internal passports for migrant labor (from 1.4 to 6.0% of the population) from 1860 to 1913, see Boris N. Mironov, Blagosostoianie naseleniia i revoliutsii v imperskoi Rossii (Moscow, 2010), 524.
The result is a wide-ranging and sophisticated analysis of the changes that transformed the family in late imperial Russia.

Gregory L. Freeze
Brandeis University


In this excellent book, Baloutzova reconstructs the evolution of social legislation regarding the family during the interwar period by inserting her case study into the general framework of population policy and social welfare. During the last century, population engineering has been steadily moving in the direction of limiting family size, with the notable exception of Europe, where the enormous human losses of World War I and long-term fertility decline engendered pronatalist policies. Social welfare, embattled on all sides, seems to have been in place forever, especially for those who do not know its difficult and tentative beginnings. Although the two policies have different ideological connotations and origins—population engineering being driven mostly from nationalism and raison d’état and social welfare being fueled by ideas of equality and justice—the author demonstrates that they often came together in the logic and practice of the state.

Baloutzova’s stated goal is modest—uncovering the early stages of state-instigated family policies, as well as the governmental and popular ideology behind them. Her results, however, are pioneering. No one heretofore has undertaken the meticulous reconstruction of legislative policies. Drawing on a rich variety of sources from a half-dozen Bulgarian repositories—mostly parliamentary minutes and appendixes, archival documentary data from several ministries (tracing the justification of certain bills and investigations), newspapers, and magazines—as well as from personal memoirs, Baloutzova’s social history competently maneuvers between issues of historical demography, political history, medical history, and legal studies. Her careful writing skillfully balances the survey component (especially for readers unfamiliar with Bulgarian history) with the specifics of the issue at hand.

In an atmosphere of humiliated nationalism and severe economic crisis, coupled with the “discovery” of the plummeting birth rate, the family as a metonym for the nation became the focus of public controversy. This book traces in great detail the legislative debates about professional natal care to combat infant mortality; the limited 1929 Health Bill, notorious for the unsuccessful transfer of U.S. models; issues of illegitimacy, social hygiene and eugenics, and mothers’ and women’s rights; the 1934 Decree-Law for public assistance; the introduction of family allowances, culminating in the legislation of early 1940; and the League of
Child-Rich Parents and its role in the 1943 law promoting large families.

The heroes of this account, although not explicitly feted, are Aleksandar Stamboliiski (1919–1923) whose agrarian regime pioneered the debates about preventive medicine and maternal health care, and the deputies on the left who kept the issues alive. Not surprisingly (and unlike the two blurbs suggesting that the Cold War has not ended), Baloutzova points out the communists’ conscious acknowledgment of the pre-war origins of the family-allowances scheme, even as they extended it to all ethnic groups.

Some of Baloutzova’s points are unconvincing—for example, the assertion that the social structure of Bulgaria’s peasantry and of its monarchy were major barriers against fascism. The same configuration in neighboring Romania germinated a powerful fascist movement with deep roots in the countryside. Moreover, her grounding of the debates between the proponents of a state-run preventive medicine and of a curative approach based on private medical treatment in two medical traditions—Russian and Western—is simplistic. In fact, these debates were characteristic of most European states at the time. But these minor quibbles do not detract from the overall rigor of an analysis that will serve as a foundation for further cross-national and cross-regional comparisons for some time to come.

Maria Todorova
University of Illinois


At first glance, the title of this book seems to indicate a narrowly focused study of a single tribe. In reality, it is a consideration of the complicated history of two centuries of cultural evolution in what is now the southeastern United States. The thread that runs through this panoramic story is the sociocultural group known historically as the Chickasaw tribe. Ethridge masterfully introduces the many Native and European characters that played a part in the process, using primary documents and secondary works to deduce the allegiances and aims of the groups and individuals involved.

Ethridge approaches her study from an anthropological perspective. Starting with the arrival of the Hernando de Soto expedition in the interior in 1540, the competition between Spanish, French, and English colonial interests directly affected the Mississippian chiefdoms, causing turmoil and modifying Native power structures in the region. Some polities disappeared, but most of them were drawn into cycles of aggregation and shifting allegiances. Ethridge recounts these changes as
they affected and altered the Chickasaw people throughout the centuries.

After a short introduction, the book offers an overview of the Mississippian cultures of the Southeast, with an emphasis on the Chicaza. The violence that ensued when the Soto expedition encountered the Chicaza was reported in the four narratives of the entrada.1 In this section, Ethridge relies heavily on archaeological evidence, which is the only source for the prehistoric period, and can also be used to infer some of the cultural movements of later groups. Her explanation of Mississippian religious beliefs is masterful. These beliefs affected all aspects of native life, including warfare and leadership. Throughout the book, Ethridge deftly combines ethnohistorical, archaeological, and ethnological data to explain the changes that occurred in the South.

The Soto expedition and subsequent early contacts disrupted Native groups through warfare and disease, but the most profound effects were caused later by the European encouragement of commercial trade in animal skins and Indian slaves. Ethridge recounts the stunning evidence of widespread slaving among Native groups, which was especially encouraged by the English. The Chickasaws and their precursors were major participants in this system, which exacerbated population movements and power shifts in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The story concludes with the Yamasee War in 1715. By that time, slaving had expanded in the South to reach every Native group. The Native cultural systems were drastically disrupted by dependence on European goods (especially firearms and ammunition), which ultimately facilitated increased colonization by Europeans. Ethridge’s treatment of this complicated subject is engaging and impressive.

Jeffrey M. Mitchem
Arkansas Archeological Survey


Silverman delivers a well-researched, comprehensive study of the Brothertown and Stockbridge Indians. He takes a complex story that has previously been told in only a limited way and makes it accessible not just to formally trained historians but also to others wanting a more complete picture of indigenous attempts at survival. Filling in some of the many blanks between first contact and twenty-first century America, he explains why American Indians and tribes exist today despite coloniza-

1 For the four narratives, see Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight, Jr., and Edward C. Moore (eds.), The De Soto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539–1543 (Tuscaloosa, 1993).

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tion, disease, warfare, and other means of removing them from the landscape, which sometimes included literal removal from the east to the west.

Silverman examines the Brothertown and the Stockbridge through the lens of race to demonstrate how Indians were often able to maintain their identity after adopting their conqueror’s religion, dress, mannerism, and language, despite the realization that their differences from the colonizers were not superficial. His terminology works to describe the feeling of a deep—almost biological—distinction that explains the ongoing inequalities experienced by Indian people (9). Even though the Brothertown and the Stockbridge, adopted many of the superficial characteristics of the “white” population, equal treatment was not forthcoming because they were still Indians. They continued to exist on the periphery. The indisputable message sent to them was that being “civilized” was not a matter of religion, dress, or language but of skin color.

When the Brothertown and Stockbridge became U.S. citizens by separate acts of Congress, ninety years before Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act, they were supposed to acquire the complete set of legal rights and duties that this status bestowed. Silverman explains, however, that from the very beginning, such privileges were destined to evade them, just as they would evade freed slaves nearly three decades later. The act of 1839, which gave the Brothertown citizenship and an allotment of reservation land, protected them from the 1830 Indian Removal Act, which might have authorized their removal to Kansas (they had just moved voluntarily from New York to Wisconsin; ironically, some of the Brothertown and Stockbridge later chose to live in Kansas). It did not, however, win them the other rights and privileges, such as the vote, that citizenship routinely accorded to whites. Their ongoing struggles to obtain them served only to reinforce the idea of racial discrimination (196, 207–208).

As Silverman explains, the Stockbridge did not all agree that U.S. citizenship would be their savior (201–206). This debate within the tribe continues to reverberate throughout Indian Country into the twenty-first century, raising questions about the true source of tribal sovereignty. Issues raised by many of the Stockbridge more than 150 years ago were not dispelled by either passage of the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924 or the passage of time.

Silverman’s chronological account of Brothertown and Stockbridge citizenship concludes with the most recent chapter in Brothertown history. The federal government stopped acknowledging the Brothertown Indian Nation in the early 1980s (215). After nearly thirty years in the administrative federal acknowledgment process, the Brothertown received a negative proposed finding of federal acknowledgment in 2009. Although this decision can be appealed, the basis of the proposed finding all but prevents the possibility of a final determination that differs in any substantive way. The Office of Federal Acknowledgment (oFa) interpreted the congressional legislation that conferred citizenship on the
Brothertown in 1839 as an act of termination that it was powerless to overrule. Under federal law, only Congress can undo an act of Congress.

Silverman points out that “American society has found it easier to ignore the Brothertowns, not because the Brothertowns have ever ceased to exist but because they confound popular assumption about what it means to be Indian” (214). The epilogue of his book therefore brings his story full circle. Initially thinking citizenship would equate with acceptance and survival, the Brothertown were eventually to learn otherwise. At best they could be civilized Indians, but they would never be white. To confound the problem even further, the OFA decided 170 years later that citizenship stopped the Brothertown from being Indians as well.

Silverman concludes by spelling out the obvious questions that this predicament raises: “When does an Indian cease to be an Indian? Is there such a thing as a quintessentially Indian culture? Can an Indian tribe exist without an actual tribal homeland? Is it possible to be a member of an Indian tribe without outwardly belonging to the Indian race? And, perhaps most important of all, who decides?” (216–217). The last question suggests a bifurcated answer that speaks to a people both inside and outside the dominant culture. But any answer will result in new questions, involving the complex view of Indians as a single race and of Indians as comprising hundreds of distinct political entities. If the U.S. government is to be the final decision maker, a racial definition of Indian is relevant only to the extent that it aids in the creation of newly recognized tribal governments.

Silverman provides a new perspective that includes an acknowledgment by both whites and Indians of their inherent differences, resulting in unequal treatment. This perspective has undoubtedly existed on the periphery since first contact, as evident in various contexts—religion, civility, literacy, and education. Whenever one excuse for inequality in rights would come to an end, another would replace it. Thus, it is only natural that, as Silverman points out, “the distinctive shape of the Indians’ civilized reforms reinforced old divisions between them and the colonists” (47). These divisions, whether racial or otherwise, were essential to continuing colonization and conquest, including the U.S. government’s self-appointed authority to decide who is Indian and who is not.

Kathleen A. Brown-Pérez
University of Massachusetts, Amherst


This book is an interesting study of Puritan racial attitudes and practices in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England. In his analysis of the sermons, diaries, and correspondence of English colonists—particularly those of ministers Jonathan Edwards, Stephen Williams, and James
MacSparran—Bailey addresses the issue of race from a variety of angles, looking at colonists’ expressions of color prejudice, infantilization of racial others, commitment to the institution of slavery, and paternalistic inclusion of people of color in a steeply hierarchical society. Throughout the book, Bailey thoroughly and incontestably documents the pervasiveness of racism in colonial New England society. His discussion of how the word *black* connected people considered racially others with the spiritually demonic is especially powerful and illuminating, as is his evidence describing the economic and emotional benefits that slaves afforded ministers, who routinely ranked among the slave-owning class.

Bailey juxtaposes this entrenched racial inequality against the more egalitarian implications in Puritan commentary on a godly afterlife accessible to all and in church membership, which created a space where whites, blacks, and Indians acted and were treated in equivalent ways. This contrast between stridently devout communities that theologically endorsed a color-blind faith and an exploitive ideology built upon a belief in racial difference is what most intrigues Bailey, who casts it as the fundamental contradiction embedded in New England Puritan society. Indeed, Bailey seems more puzzled by this contradiction than do the historical characters in the book, particularly the prominent ministers. Bailey shows that they were comfortable espousing a religious faith of humility and debasement while they enjoyed material lives richly rewarded by the labor of people of color.

Many scholars will find this book important and insightful, whether they are interested in New England Puritans or the history of race. Moreover, Bailey’s consideration of race in multiple contexts, including Puritan understandings of the properly ordered household and the too-little-studied topic of New England slave markets, makes this book a model for other historians to follow when designing a project, gathering the material, and analyzing it for race’s presence and dynamics. The book’s only deficiency is that it could have been more substantive in the breadth and depth of its research. More research probably would not have changed Bailey’s argument or conclusions, but many of his best examples redundantly reappear throughout the book as stories we have already heard. Such quibbling aside, *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England* makes an essential contribution by revealing New England Puritan society in a new light.

Nancy Shoemaker
University of Connecticut

*Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America.* By David F. Holland (New York, Oxford University Press, 2011) 286 pp. $61.49

Mankind has questioned the nature and alleged sources of revelation from God since Satan asked Eve, “Hath God said?” *Sacred Borders* traces...
the participation of antebellum Americans in this ongoing discussion. The title represents a metaphor that Holland uses throughout—the books of the biblical canon forming a border to be defended or crossed. He sees his work as patrolling “the borderlands” to witness challenges to the canon and attempts to protect it from encroachment. Although his account is fundamentally chronological, Holland identifies important patterns that connect movements, groups, and individuals separated by decades and even centuries. Some of the names are familiar; many of them would be known only to religious-history specialists. Puritans, deists, Unitarians, Quakers, Shakers, Native Americans, African Americans, Mormons, Millerites, Seventh-day Adventists, and Transcendentalists are all represented, as are Jonathan Edwards, Ethan Allen, Emanuel Swedenborg, Ellen White, Joseph Smith, William Ellery Channing, Orestes Brownson, and a host of others.

Holland confesses that he was surprised to discover that most of his subjects placed the nature or character of God at the crux of their concerns. Is God simply benevolence personified or a complex mix of attributes? Given His nature, must He communicate with everyone at all times, or is communication with a particular group during particular times sufficient? Does God communicate with individuals for their own private edification or only publicly for the benefit of all? Must God’s revelation to man be supernatural in character or does He speak predominately through nature and natural impulses? Holland’s treatment of these and other questions centers on religious history, but it intersects with, and draws from, theology, politics, philosophy, psychology, sociology, ethnic studies, and law.

Holland approaches the subject with what may well be the only suitable method. He uses a myriad of primary source materials from the period, including sermons, correspondence, personal journals, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, poetry, treatises, and autobiographies in order to investigate people’s beliefs. He explains that much of the research was done “the old-fashioned way: in the stacks, in the special collections, and at the microfilm reader,” but that he also made extensive use of electronic databases that allowed him to “survey vast amounts of historical terrain in search of patterns” (219). He used hardcopies or microfilm of all electronic sources that did not “provide actual facsimiles of the documents, citing nothing that [he] had not examined in its original form or photographic reproduction” (220). Secondary sources present commentary and broader historical context, but Holland allows people to speak for themselves regarding belief.

Holland’s analysis of “continuing revelation” is more convincing than is his analysis of “challenges to the canon.” The two terms are not synonymous, despite his conveniently constructed definition emphasizing “functional equivalency” (9). Sacred Borders is predominately about various theories and claims of continuing revelation, discussing only a few actual challenges to the canon in the normal understanding of the term—like adding the Book of Mormon or the Shakers’ Sacred Roll to it. The coverage is comprehensive and informative, and even though Hol-
land’s style is turgid, the threads of his argument come together persuasively in the end.

Gregg L. Frazer
The Master’s College

The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713–1763. By Paul W. Mapp (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2011) 480 pp. $49.95

Mapp’s imaginatively crafted book explores the relationship between European geographical uncertainty about the North American West and imperial rivalries between Spain, France, and Great Britain during the eighteenth century. Offering a continental rather than an eastern-littoral or Atlantic-world perspective of early America, Mapp consults a trilingual source base of maps, geographies, travel narratives, scientific treatises, and political papers to demonstrate that European misconceptions of lands west of the Mississippi River influenced the origins, unfolding, and consequences of the Seven Years’ War, otherwise known as the “Great War for Empire.”

The book’s five parts advance two main objectives. The first three parts (Chapters 1–8) illustrate the ways in which ignorance of the West and its potential relationship to Pacific Rim trade shaped European imperial ambitions. Mapp deftly explains why geographical knowledge of the North American West, compared to that about Eurasia or colonial possessions in other parts of the world, remained elusive. Treacherous coastlines thwarted maritime exploration, and a bewildering array of plains, deserts, canyons, and mountains, along with constant warfare with and among numerous Indian communities, prohibited extensive investigation of the interior. Wherever Europeans were able to set foot in the West, the diversity of Indian languages, descriptions, cartographical representations, and motives that they encountered frustrated their efforts to acquire accurate information. In other words, the West lacked the indigenous centralized polities found in Mexico, Peru, China, Russia, and Europe that made the detailed surveying of those lands possible. Regardless, Europeans continued to imagine that the region harbored inestimable mineral wealth, civilizations comparable to those of the Incans and Aztecs, and a northwest passage linking Atlantic settlements to Asia, Spain’s lucrative South Sea colonies, and undiscovered islands in the Pacific Ocean.

The remaining two parts (Chapters 9–15) assess the extent to which European interest in, and confusion about, the West influenced the course of the Seven Years’ War. Rather than challenge current historiography, Mapp focuses on three understudied aspects of the war. First, he contends that British searches for a northwest passage via the Hudson Bay helped to sway French officials, who viewed such endeavors as one thread in a larger pattern of expansionism and aggression, to declare war against Britain. Second, Mapp avers that Spain remained neutral in the
early years of the war due to its wariness about French presence in western territories, thus depriving France of a much-needed ally and hastening its defeat. Finally, he concludes that France’s changing attitudes about the potential value of the West led it to cede its Louisiana possessions to Spain in 1762. Spain accepted the cession not because it still believed that the land held promise but because it hoped to curb British expansion. In each instance, Mapp reveals how designs on, and ignorance of, western lands led European powers to contradictory and often self-destructive policy decisions.

Mapp’s book is thoughtfully researched, structured, and argued but not necessarily interdisciplinary in its approach. Although Mapp draws on the works of historical geographers, anthropologists, and ethno-historians, his primary objective is to understand the perceptions and actions of imperial traders, explorers, missionaries, and officials. But readers approaching the text from literary, material-culture, or Native American Studies angles might see missed opportunities in his analysis of such sources as maps and travel narratives, as well as his discussions of the Indians who inhabited the West, some of whom, like their European counterparts, were moving westward, encountering new lands and influencing continental diplomacy.

Notwithstanding this minor criticism, Mapp has written an excellent book. Scholars interested in the early North American West will discover a treasure trove of English, French, and Spanish sources with which to augment their own research. Historians of empire, diplomacy, and the Americas will likewise benefit from Mapp’s ambitious and successful effort to study early America from continental and multi-imperial perspectives.

Jeffrey D. Kaja
California State University, Northridge

Habeas Corpus in America: The Politics of Individual Rights. By Justin J. Wert (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2011) 285 pp. $34.95

Consider three statements: (1) The Supreme Court’s decision in Smith v. Jones flowed from its complete misunderstanding of the doctrine of res judicata. (2) The Supreme Court’s decision in Smith v. Jones flowed from the desire of Justice A to show his appreciation to Justice B for forgiving a gambling debt by voting for Justice B’s opinion. (3) The Supreme Court’s decision in Smith v. Jones flowed from the interplay of the contending political forces bearing on the Court at the time. Notwithstanding the obvious stereotyping, it would be easy to attribute these assertions, respectively, to legal historians primarily trained in law, history, or political science.

Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of all three viewpoints, a thoughtful scholar will seek to take each of their perspectives into ac-
count to some degree. A serious legal historian, regardless of disciplinary background, would most likely write, “The immediate explanation for the outcome of Smith v. Jones, a case that twisted the doctrine of res judicata into knots for decades, was the desire of Justice A to do a favor to Justice B. Its broader national significance was in providing a principal campaign issue the following year when Candidate X ran for re-election to the White House.”

Wert is a serious legal historian. He is also a political scientist. Hence, his chronological rendition of habeas corpus in America from colonial times to the present highlights the degree to which civil liberties are ultimately delimited by the forces of majoritarian political institutions. “[T]he book’s overarching argument [is] that habeas corpus is a tool of politics and politicians as much as it is a tool of the law and of judges” (xii). The analytical weakness of Wert’s account is that, because it severely discounts granular legal and historical factors, it describes rather than explains case outcomes.

In this narrative, the Supreme Court’s primary concern is with protecting its own institutional authority to issue the writ (133; 196–197). Hence, the Court largely defers to the desires of incumbent “political regimes when they seek to enlarge or decrease the substantive rights that are enforced through habeas” but does “not bow to or work in concert with . . . dominant national coalitions [whose] conceptions of habeas would ultimately . . . divest the Court of habeas power” (19).

This insight is not without importance. An emphasis on the significance of habeas to the Court’s preservation of its independent institutional role rather than to the protection of the individual liberties of the alleged terrorists guided the lawyers who litigated the post-9/11 cases that reached the Court between 2004 and 2008. But Wert’s explanation for the results—“The point at which judicial sympathy with the political regime stopped and judicial institutional independence began occurred when the Court perceived that its institutional power to issue habeas writs was jeopardized” (205)—would apply equally well if each of those cases had come out the opposite way.

Wert’s book thus does little to advance an understanding of when claims for civil liberties, which are by definition short-run judicially enforced checks on the desires of the majority, will or will not prevail. Yet the book is uniquely valuable. Wert has fully mastered the relevant literature, and his account of events, particularly those in the decades surrounding the Civil War, is factually reliable and consistently readable. As an entry into the field for someone interested in a basic up-to-date narrative rather than in more particularized historical explanations or individual legal analyses, this volume is the best on the market.

Eric M. Freedman
Hofstra Law School

1 Recent examples in the habeas corpus field include Paul D. Halliday, Habeas Corpus: From England to Empire (Cambridge, Mass., 2010) 310–313 (written by a historian), and Freedman,
How did liberty become the central theme and binding metaphor of the new United States after the American Revolution? How could leading Revolutionaries evoke natural rights and universal liberty while personally denying both to their own slaves and deliberately building polities to exclude most other people? Rozbicki builds his unfailingly intelligent meditation on Revolutionary liberty upon a close and deep reading of what such leaders said and wrote, and, to a lesser degree, what others said and wrote about them. At one level, his book is a rich repository of quotations from a wide range of Anglo-American elites and the institutions that they controlled. Yet, although his source base is that of a conventional intellectual history, his approach is a novel blend of cultural analysis and historical theory that gestures toward a longue durée history of liberty in its Western and mostly Anglophone forms.

Rozbicki notes that the Revolutionary elites were deeply committed to a profoundly unequal society in which they would reside at the top—as public-spirited men of state. To establish this point, he uses not only a wide sampling of their public and private writings but also a comparative framework reaching back to early modern and even medieval England. There and thereafter, liberty was “a social relation between unequals,” a “relation of difference,” that was “inherently exclusionary and elitist rather than universal” (2, 11, 51). Liberty, like land, was a zero-sum game. By the mid-eighteenth century, American colonial elites had grown so secure of their own liberty that they were prepared to deploy new, more inclusive forms of the concept to resist imperial impositions and convey their values to the outside world. But as they split into factions during the 1780s and 1790s, such provincial-turned-national elites undermined their own claims to disinterested virtue, “broadening the cultural and social space of liberty” and anticipating their collapse as a cohesive class (174).

At the heart of Rozbicki’s approach is an understanding of language, culture, and power as mutually constitutive elements of experience. In proclaiming their virtue—in other words, their liberty to be disinterested—revolutionary elites were neither concealing their “real” interests nor betraying their “nominal” principles. They were communicating with each other, with European observers, and with more and more nonelite Americans. They were playing a traditionally elite role within a revolutionary drama of their own making and in this way placing claims upon themselves even as they continued to assume their right to rule. Others eventually began to adopt their terms for another purpose, a “democratization” that first unfolded “in the symbolic sphere, where meaning, condensed in signs and words, was easily accessible and immediately usable” (195). Put another way, the talk about liberty dur-
ing the Revolution subtly changed the ways in which elites had to communicate with everyone else, and the long-term result was the gradual, fitful transformation of freedom construed as elite privilege to freedom construed as universal right.

In his praise of the “nonsystemic nature of the Revolution” (225)—that is, its willingness to let objective reality catch up with the symbolic expressions—Rozbicki harkens to an intellectual tradition best associated with Arendt.¹ The American Revolution in this view did not try to do too much; its originally preservative, fundamentally political goals grew organically into the democratic ferment of later decades. By contrast, the Jacobins and Bolsheviks sought to turn language into practice overnight—and appalling violence ensued.

Because Rozbicki’s grasp of his historical subjects is profound and often brilliant, the debates that such meta-narratives will provoke speak to the overall strength of his book. However, Rozbicki might also have engaged with recent, neo-Progressive treatments of the Revolutionary elite and the world that they tried to make. For scholars like Holton, Bouton, Smith-Rosenberg, and others, some of the same elites found in Rozbicki’s book were not just traditional gentry who had to cope with rude appropriations of their words but aggressive businessmen forcing broad and painful changes in the society and economy.² Determined to build a powerful state for the harsh world of Atlantic capitalism, they suppressed government-issued currency and banks, created federal courts to secure speculative contracts, and consolidated credit in the hands of the wealthy. Large numbers of Americans resisted such changes, sometimes using ideas of equality that do not trace well to the intellectual traditions that Rozbicki privileges. Surely this dimension of the Revolutionary era also deserves a place in the wider narrative of American democracy.

J. M. Opal
McGill University


Drawing on insights from psychology and sociology, Hamner has written an engaging history that seeks to understand the experience of combat as powerfully contingent upon time and place. Although recognizing some broad continuity across the centuries, Hamner rejects essentialist

notions of a universal experience of battle, in which only the outer trappings, such as uniforms, change. In particular, his central analysis of the combat motivation of American infantry during the War of Independence, the Civil War, and World War II, leads him to conclude that the psychological landscape of battle changed profoundly as the stoic fatalists who composed eighteenth- and nineteenth-century battlelines, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder and swapping massed volleys at close ranges, gave way to the more autonomous, but isolated, soldier, fighting at greater ranges on a fluid, open battlefield.

Hamner proves ready to challenge conventional wisdom. Consider the notion that, first and foremost, soldiers fight for each other. From Marshall’s studies at the end of World War II onward, the notion of “primary group cohesion” (the idea that in combat the strong social bonds within small groups—mess mates or simply buddies—are the bedrock of motivation) has become an orthodoxy in professional military studies, academic works, and popular culture. Hamner, however, reports, first, that even when death destroyed these bonds, soldiers continued to fight. He offers a poignant example in the Virginian infantryman William Burke, who lost the last of his mess mates at Gettysburg. Second, taking his cue from research in experimental psychology and sociology, Hamner points out that the rationale for tight primary-group cohesion is frequently opposition to organizational goals; the soldier whose overwhelming concern is the welfare of his wounded friend will forgo tactical success. “Comradeship” in the name of combat is hardly nonexistent, but it clearly has limitations as a universal explanation for the will to fight. On that key issue, Hamner offers insights specific to particular battlefields: On the close-order battlefields of the musket era, men refrained from running either because they wanted to avoid public shame or because officers and “file closers” physically prevented them from doing so. More recently, soldiers receive training that offers them skills and attitudes that confer a sense of control over events; the infantryman has evolved from automaton to autonomy.

Unfortunately, Hamner’s evidence derives exclusively from published sources, and the experiences of the twentieth-century American soldier dominate his analysis, at the expense of his eighteenth-century counterpart. Hamner’s stark dichotomy between the “linear” tactics of the musket era and the “dispersed” tactics of the twentieth century is also problematical. His view of the South African War of 1899 to 1902 as a decisive tactical turning point obscures the fact that European battlefields had witnessed the presence of the autonomous “skirmisher” since the late eighteenth century. Similarly, his closing discussion of “asymmetric post-industrial warfare” in Iraq and Afghanistan seems to overstate the novelty of this kind of campaign (210). Federal soldiers in 1864 Missouri would have recognized the current conflict in Afghanistan as guerrilla warfare and understood its particular psychological de-
mands. Such quibbles aside, this book can be readily recommended as a study of combat motivation in history.

Gervase Phillips
Manchester Metropolitan University

Tom Paine’s America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic. By Seth Cotlar (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2011) 269 pp. $35.00

Thomas Paine’s Common Sense (Philadelphia, 1776) famously inspired the American Revolution. Within three decades, however, “the most widely read theorist in the age of democratic revolution [had] become persona non grata in the modern world’s first self-described democracy” (3). Cotlar seeks to understand that transformation. More broadly, he explores not only the course of a potentially radical mode of political development that was not taken in the United States but also how, by the time of Thomas Jefferson’s inauguration, that mode had been abandoned and de-legitimized even by its putative friends.

In this important book, Cotlar examines the newspaper editors, printers, and booksellers who in the early 1790s attempted to create a nation of citizen readers, an activist community striving to implement Paine’s brand of egalitarianism. These writers were interested more in influencing ideological development than in political organizing. They consciously tried to craft a community of the democratic “many” whose interests stood against the privileged “few.” In fact, not until the late 1790s did they turn primarily to electioneering. Crucial to this venture was the identity that they constructed as transatlantic, cosmopolitan democrats. Conceiving of themselves as citizens of the world, developing radical notions of a democratic political economy, and taking their arguments directly to the public, these writers offered an alternative political path, a possible future that receded even before the decade was out.

Their egalitarian democratic vision was snuffed out for four reasons: (1) Its link to French Jacobinism made it toxic through guilt by association. (2) Events such as the Whiskey Rebellion and the French Terror furthered perceptions that it was dangerous and illegitimate. (3) Federalists, applying “Jacobin” as an all-purpose term of derision, mounted a concerted campaign against it, which, in the contested 1790s, succeeded in winning public opinion. (4) Moderate Jeffersonians, who might have championed this vision, instead saw it as politically lethal, joining Federalists in expunging it from political discourse as something “foreign,” thus un-American and dangerous.

The radical democratic moment faded rapidly. But that it existed at all is a major point of this book. Cotlar suggests, contrary to conventional historiographical wisdom, that the Constitutional settlement of 1787/88 was not a permanent counterrevolutionary rollback of democ-
racy. As he demonstrates, a potentially viable democracy on Paine’s terms found articulate advocates during the early 1790s. Rather, it was the 1800/01 triumph of the moderate Jeffersonians who soon joined with Federalists in declaring “Jacobinism” illegitimate and unacceptable that marked the American Thermidor. The irony that this triumph occurred with the victory of “Jeffersonian democracy” is not lost on Cotlar, who writes that key Jeffersonians and their opponents “sheared the word ‘democracy’ of its previously revolutionary . . . even levelling implications”; what was once called democratic came to be dismissed as “Jacobinical” (214). Cotlar laments these developments and the “fundamentally constricted” range of meanings for democracy in the early republic (4). Furthermore, this marginalization of radical democracy forces us to reappraise the nature of Jeffersonian democracy.

Cotlar’s methodology involves the close reading and contextualization of newspapers published by the radical democratic opposition during the 1790s. He pays close attention to the intellectual content of these writings, which circulated radical European ideas and stressed the interconnectedness of democrats worldwide. Literary and social-science theories also inform his discussions, which remain grounded in historical research despite their theoretical orientation.

This provocative, if brief, work makes a persuasive case for the transatlantic dimensions of the 1790s political world. It also raises fascinating unexplored questions: What relationship did these radical Jeffersonian editors have with Jefferson himself in the 1790s, or with Jeffersonian Republican congressmen? What did Jefferson think of their writings? Were there links between the radical papers and other grassroots democratic organizations besides the Democratic Societies? A fuller epilogue might have addressed these issues, but Cotlar’s achievement is significant nevertheless.

Todd Estes
Oakland University

_The Deadlocked Election of 1800: Jefferson, Burr, and the Union in the Balance_. By James Roger Sharp (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 2010) 239 pp. $34.95

The United States almost had a civil war in 1801. So argues Sharp in this compelling study of Thomas Jefferson’s election to the presidency. The tie between Jefferson and his ambitious ally Aaron Burr in the electoral college vote set the stage for intrigue, corruption, and a possible usurpation of the presidency. The ultimate decision was in the hands of the Federalists, the party that had controlled national policy since the early 1790s. Both the Federalist party and the rival Democratic-Republican party had strong regional majorities, each believing that it alone represented the true interests of the American people. Sharp’s book explains the birth of this meaningful polarization. It reveals a young republic
struggling to find Constitutional solutions to a series of fundamental political crises. As an expert in the politics of the early republic, Sharp's analysis is a welcome corrective to recent popular readings of the dramatic election.

Sharp is well versed in the latest social-science approaches to the period. He employs salient work to give an exceptionally well-grounded and judicious exploration of the formative politics of the United States. Although much of the history of the “Founding” era is either marred by partisan influences dating from the period, dominated by filiopietism, or engaged in contemporary debates about “original intent,” Sharp will have none of it. To contextualize the significance of that election, and the danger of the deadlock, as exhaustively as possible, Sharp gives a full account of the origins and rise of the parties. Hence, not until Chapter 8 does he arrive at the tie in the electoral college. Drawing heavily on his analysis of party politics in the 1790s and synthesizing much of the recent literature on political culture, electioneering, and political thought, Sharp gives a strong and concise picture of the politics of the decade. His work is balanced, careful, well documented, and usually convincing (though not always, as in his suggestion that Alexander Hamilton was “irresistible to women” [8]). The book serves well as a primer about the character of politics in the early republic; it also includes an excellent bibliographical essay.

After his extensive analysis of the politics of the 1790s, Sharp discusses a number of events and issues—the fight about Hamilton’s plans for national economic growth, the French Revolution, the rise of the democratic-republican societies, the Jay Treaty, the election of John Adams, the XYZ controversy, the Quasi-War with the French, and the Alien and Sedition Acts—before finally coming to the deadlocked election of 1800. Like a master storyteller, he fashions the drama around a colorful cast of characters living cheek by jowl in the swampy village of Washington, D.C., where the public buildings were scarcely more than blueprints, the food was expensive, and the men running the country were crowded into boarding houses with little to do but argue about politics and worry about rumors of conspiracy. Like his analysis of the politics of the 1790s, his narrative of the resolution of the deadlock in the House of Representatives is excellent.

Yet, although Sharp frames his book around the problem of accepting a legitimate opposition, building slowly to the climax of the deadlock in the presidential election, the book ends too abruptly. Until arriving at 1800, Sharp repeatedly explains that the differences between the parties were “intractable.” Why else would the Federalists threaten to usurp the presidency? After chronicling the election of Jefferson, however, Sharp ends the book by briefly asserting that despite stimulating democratic political development in the states, the election did not create a period of “modern” party politics or the idea of a loyal opposition. He maintains that those transformations would have to wait until the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828. But these assertions, which fly in the face of both recent and older
Politics and Partnerships: The Role of Voluntary Associations in America’s Political Past and Present. Edited by Elisabeth S. Clemens and Doug Guthrie (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010) 329 pp. $55 cloth $19 paper

Politics and Partnerships is an exceptional edited volume. It brings together an introduction and ten chapters about the interaction between American voluntary or civic associations and markets and political institutions. The chapters report findings that span more than 200 years of American history and a broad range of different kinds of voluntary associations and their interactions with varied social sectors. The most general claim of the volume, as stated in the introduction, is that the boundaries separating the “third sector” of voluntary associations from political and market institutions are porous. The associations of civil society have always been influenced by their interaction with, and interpenetration of, market and institutional political processes but in highly contingent ways that have varied across time and social space with unpredictable outcomes.

The book’s excellent introduction reframes the scholarly debates about civil society by arguing that “[o]nce the relations among government agencies, voluntary or civic associations, and even private firms are placed front and center, their history is transfigured from the development of three distinctive domains to a process of contestation over the legitimacy of organizational forms, their respective jurisdiction, and their interdependencies” (3). The chapters that follow transfigure the history of these three domains.

The chapters are ordered chronologically and divided into three thematic parts—“Of, by, and instead of Politics”; “Nonprofits in a World of Markets”; and “Boundary Crossing: Contemporary Recombinations of Markets, States, and Nonprofit Organizations”—every one of which is excellent. In the first part of the volume, the articles concentrate on the porosity of the political boundary of the voluntary “sector.” For example, Johann N. Neem’s excellent chapter about civil society and nationalism in the nineteenth century shows how alternating attempts by political leaders to prevent and then to encourage voluntary
associations provided the members of these organizations “with concrete settings in which national identification could be constructed and maintained” (36). The American national identity emerged in this antebellum civil society, and this civil society then played a role in fragmenting the Union.

Clemens’ historical sociology of the American Red Cross establishes how under the New Deal a “bright line” was drawn between public funding of social relief and private organizations like the Red Cross and then made blurry again. The chapter explains how voluntary relief in the face of drought and economic collapse in the early 1930s failed, only to rebound during the late 1930s and grow increasingly intertwined with government aid in the preparation for war.

The second part of the volume explores the relationship between the market and voluntary associations. Alice O’Connor’s excellent chapter chronicles the way in which conservatives reacted to the progressive trajectory of institutions like the Ford Foundation, attempting through a host of new organizations of their own to make the market and market logic the dominant force in civic life and the world of nonprofits.

Doug Guthrie’s chapter provides a needed statistical description of corporate philanthropy, detailing how much corporations give, what they give to, and how they vary in their giving. The third and last part of the book consists of three fine-grained analyses of contemporary nonprofit work within particular communities and by specific voluntary associations. The rich micro-focus of these chapters brings much detail and complexity to the overarching themes of the book.

The breadth and depth of the analyses in this volume are rare. Politics and Partnerships is indispensible for all scholars interested in the empirical and theoretical dimensions of voluntary societies across U.S. history, as well as in relationships between civic engagement and political institutions and market forces.

Michael P. Young
University of Texas, Austin


Fountain’s elegant discussion of the changing significance of Christianity among African Americans before and after emancipation depends on a quantitative analysis of data drawn from 4,000 Work Projects Administration (WPA) interviews, slave narratives, and autobiographies. His
findings are corroborated by commentary in white observers’ journals, letters, and publications. Attentive to differences in region, age, and gender, Fountain charts the demographics of African-American slave conversion to Christianity. He concludes that before emancipation fewer than 40 percent of these slaves identified themselves as Christians. Treating this finding as a surprise, he devotes a chapter to identifying barriers to conversion in slavery. Outlining religious alternatives to Christianity, the following chapter argues for the survival of African religions rather than the persistence of African practices in Afro-Christianity. Fountain cites evidence of the persistence of Islam as well as religious practices known as “conjure” and “voodoo.” The final chapter charts a surge in conversions among former slaves during and after the Civil War. Fountain attributes this surge to the influence of a Christian core among slaves who had linked Christianity to the promise of freedom and predicted Confederate defeat. With emancipation, their views appeared justified. Free to organize separate black churches, former slaves created institutions that promoted a version of Christianity celebrating liberation and human equality.

Fountain’s explicit purpose is to challenge the prevailing scholarly view that syncretic Afro-Christianity displaced traditional African religions and functioned as the cultural center of slave communities. His conclusion that Christian converts were a minority among the antebellum slave population certainly undermines arguments that assume African religions were eradicated under slavery. Yet, it is striking that he found approximately the same percentage of Christians among slaves as in the population at large. Hence, the cautionary note that Fountain sounds pertains to all historians of antebellum culture when they encounter claims about nineteenth-century America as a Christian or Protestant nation. Estimating nineteenth-century church membership is notoriously difficult, but the most sophisticated analyses indicate that the “churched” percentage of the population increased throughout the century, from approximately 10 percent in 1800 to roughly 35 percent in 1850 and 45 percent by 1890; the country was not a majority Christian nation until the twentieth century. Thus African-American levels of Christian adherence tracked, or perhaps slightly exceeded, that of the population as a whole. The triumph of rhetoric over reality, both at the time and in subsequent historical accounts, reveals the hegemonic power of those whose words were published.

In contrast to Fountain’s attention to slave attitudes and practices, Wallace’s study of antebellum evangelicalism in relation to slavery and Catholicism focuses on an elite stratum within society—religious leaders, intellectuals, and opinion makers. Wallace makes important contributions to our understanding of antebellum culture. He devotes unprecedented attention to American Catholic views on slavery. He also

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demonstrates that American intellectuals, including religious thinkers, displayed considerable interest in contemporary European politics and in Catholic history as they grappled with what an influx of Catholic immigrants would mean to their nation. Surveying anti-Catholic, nativist sentiments published by Northern intellectuals in books and religious newspapers, Wallace uncovers commentary about European affairs and about European medieval history routinely offered to an American audience that has been largely overlooked in histories of American religion. He also examines the less virulent anti-Catholicism voiced in the South, where immigration was a minor factor and political anti-Catholicism alienated many Southerners because the Northern Know-Nothing platform adopted an anti-slavery stance. Wallace’s major contribution, however, lies in his charting of the emergence of Northern evangelical political theology as a substitute for state religion.

Wallace’s overarching thesis—that Northern evangelicalism treated slavery and Catholicism as twin evils and utilized the same theological and political arguments to condemn them—is not entirely persuasive. That a rhetoric of freedom versus slavery was widely utilized in the new nation is not surprising. Northerners often used slavery metaphors in their condemnation of undesirable social or religious practices, as well as in their polemics promoting temperance, woman’s rights, and anti-Mormonism. Parallels between anti-slavery and anti-Catholic rhetoric are not sufficient to prove a theologically specific link. That some Northern evangelicals were simultaneously anti-Catholic and anti-slavery does not logically connect the two phenomena. That some Southern evangelicals were also anti-Catholic while being pro-slavery makes Wallace’s argument even less compelling.

Wallace begins with a premise about the New England origins of a Protestant theology that condemned slavery and Catholicism as threats to the nation. New England’s writers and historians in the nineteenth century assiduously cultivated the myth that America’s Protestant democratic political culture originated in New England. Wallace perpetuates this dated notion, conflating New England with the whole of the North. His study also conveys a mistaken assumption that Northern evangelicals were predominantly anti-slavery. Although he notes that Northern evangelicalism was not unitary, he does not acknowledge that abolitionism was a decidedly minority position and that even moderate anti-slavery was rejected by the majority. In contrast, temperance and anti-Catholicism, and their political supporters, were widely embraced.

Wallace also misses a decline in anti-Catholicism among Northern intellectuals and evangelicals that his own evidence base reveals. His survey of religious newspapers cites only two references from the 1850s that could be construed as anti-Catholic. All of his other anti-Catholic citations are to articles published before 1850. This diminution reflects a rapprochement with Catholicism, often associated with European travels and growing interest in European religious art, that muted the anti-Catholicism of many bourgeois Northern evangelicals.
Reservations about Wallace’s argument notwithstanding, his study addresses important questions regarding the ways in which antebellum intellectuals and evangelical leaders struggled about what should substitute for a state religion. The power of religious leaders to advance the notion of a Christian or Protestant America and the belief that civic morals depended on religious ideas had, as Wallace makes clear, mixed consequences in the nineteenth century. The effects of their formulations linger in the politics of the present, possibly explaining why historians continue to make the assumptions that Fountain’s study challenges.

Patricia R. Hill
Wesleyan University


Glatthaar’s publication of Soldiering in the Army of Northern Virginia is designed to provide the underlying statistical analyses behind his well-received narrative, General Lee’s Army: From Victory to Collapse (New York, 2008). Glatthaar is one of an unfortunately small cadre of historians who incorporate quantitative work into their practices. In the process of writing General Lee’s Army, he created a dataset of 600 randomly selected soldiers and proceeded to establish their socioeconomic and demographic profiles. The dataset itself is an impressive feat.1 The results of his data analyses in Soldiering in the Army of Northern Virginia often confirm received wisdom, but they also offer correctives to consensus views that the Confederacy’s Civil War was a “rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight” and that slaveholding among Confederate soldiers was actually not predominant.

In separate chapters, Glatthaar examines the composition of the three main branches of service—the infantry, the cavalry, and the artillery. Not surprisingly, he finds that the infantry was comprised predominantly of farmers and suffered the highest casualty rates, whereas wealthier planters gravitated to the cavalry. Artillery troopers, who were generally more urban, tended to be the poorest of the three. What Glatthaar does, however, is to place his subjects into their socioeconomic context, yielding more definition to their characteristics. Young men might not have owned any property by themselves, but their families often did. Classifying such soldiers as without assets thus misses the wealth of their households.

Similarly, in other chapters, Glatthaar reveals that although only 37

1 I can personally attest to the rigors involved in the construction of the dataset, since my dissertation—“Answering the Call to Arms: The Social Composition of the Revolutionary Soldiers of Massachusetts, 1775–1783” (University of Minnesota, 2004)—employed a similar process.
percent of all soldiers owned slaves personally, 42 percent of infantrymen and 54 percent of cavalrymen lived in households with slaves. Furthermore, he states, “Other soldiers worked for slaveowners, had clients and customers who were slaveowners, had family members with whom they did not reside who were slaveowners, or had other strong bonds to the peculiar institution” (154). Only careful data collection and analysis could have made such an important discovery. Glatthaar’s data also illuminate other traits based on patterns of age and marital status and class, but his more interesting comparison is between officers and enlisted men. Not surprisingly, officers were usually older, wealthier, and more established professionally than enlisted men were. Strangely, however, officers sustained significantly higher death rates than rank-and-file soldiers. This text is full of such fine-grained data on every facet of the soldiering population.

Although the publication of quantitative data is to be applauded, their presentation has some problems. Specifically, Glatthaar, in his desire to make the findings accessible, decided to format his findings in summary form, expressed exclusively in bar charts and as percentages in the text. Seeing the actual data in tabular form would have been helpful; in particular, the total number for each variable would have offered a better sense of sample sizes. Furthermore, Glatthaar reports an endless variety of characteristics as percentages with little explanation about the historical significance of the correlations between data points. At the very least, posting his data on a website would make his arduous work available to other scholars.

Walter Sargent
University of Maine

Moments of Despair: Suicide, Divorce, & Debt in Civil War Era North Carolina. By David Silkenat (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2011) 312 pp. $45.00

Silkenat’s Moments of Despair is a genuinely interesting book about three depressing topics—suicide, divorce, and debt. With a focus on North Carolina in the Civil War period (broadly construed to include both the prewar and postwar periods), he explores, via mostly anecdotal historical evidence, how the Civil War and the changes that it brought helped to reshape the attitudes of North Carolinians—black and white—about suicide, divorce, and debt.

After a brief introduction, Silkenat divides Moments of Despair into three parts, dealing respectively with each of his dreary yet fascinating subjects. He starts with suicide, asserting that white North Carolinians condemned self-destruction in the antebellum period but that African Americans, still mostly enmeshed in slavery’s misery, proved more sympathetic to people in their community who killed themselves. Following
the Civil War, as whites coped with defeat and blacks in North Carolina enjoyed their new freedom, attitudes on suicide reversed for both races: “While white North Carolinians became more tolerant of suicide after the Civil War, the state’s African American population demonstrated the opposite propensity” (10).

Likewise, the Civil War led to a significant shift, according to Silkenat, in how people in North Carolina viewed marital breakups. Although the legislature made divorce easier during the antebellum period by allowing couples to dissolve their marriages in court instead of requiring a special act of the legislature, divorce remained rare among whites because of strong social disapproval. Silkenat finds the study of divorce among black North Carolinians complicated by slavery. Not only were slaves prohibited from contracting legal marriages; they also found their unions undermined by the constant threat of sale and by their inability to live with their spouses (except for Sunday visits) because of the small holdings typical of the state’s planters. Nonetheless, slaves took their informal marriages seriously, although the realities of slavery made them more accepting of couples of their race that voluntarily decided to part.

The Civil War greatly affected the stability of marriage for both blacks and whites in North Carolina. The separation of white couples because of men serving in the Confederate army strained many marriages. Silkenat presents postwar statistics that clearly show a growing number of divorces among North Carolinians due to separations caused by the Civil War and to relaxation of the social stigma attached to divorce among whites. For African Americans, the situation was more complicated. Black church leaders saw marital respectability as a way to bolster their race’s claims to freedom and citizenship, but they faced resistance from ex-slaves accustomed to informal marital relations, which allowed them to “quit” a spouse without legal permission and to marry someone else if they so desired.

Silkenat ends his book with a lengthy examination of changing attitudes toward debt. He finds that even though white North Carolinians before the Civil War ostensibly abhorred going into debt because of the belief that it enslaved people to their creditors, they indulged in considerable borrowing and lending beneath the camouflage of gift giving. Blacks in North Carolina were essentially unable to borrow money before the Civil War, he asserts, but when freedom gave them access to credit, they were reluctant to declare bankruptcy and thus risk a loss of respectability, even though the stigma was not as severe among whites as it once was.

_Moments of Despair_ is a valuable contribution to our understanding of how the American Civil War affected the lives of ordinary people. Although not all of the book’s conclusions are convincing, Silkenat marshals considerable evidence from disparate sources to create an impressive sociocultural study.

Donald R. Shaffer
Upper Iowa University

Declarations of Dependence comes at an apparently opportune moment in contemporary American politics, when there is much talk about the purported overreaching of the state and the desire of the American public for a less intrusive and much less costly government. Focusing on North Carolina, Downs argues that, contrary to the myths held dear by many historians (and many current right-wing partisans and commentators sympathetic to the Tea Party), Americans were not always and everywhere fiercely independent-minded, self-sufficient monads. Rather, especially during and after the Civil War, many people sought the succor of their government (local, state, and federal) and cast themselves as deeply dependent on the sympathy and largesse of their politicians. Produced by a Civil War that fundamentally altered perceptions of what the American state could (and should) do for its citizens, this new “patronalism,” as Downs characterizes it, was an “unsystematic, even antisytemic, personalistic view of governance [that] served simultaneously as both obstacle and spur to the development of a more powerful, more rational liberal state” (3).

Although it touches on patronage and clientelism, this book is considerably more about political style and political culture than about political practice (despite the argument that, since the cultural turn, we can hardly separate them). Its thesis rests on an impressive depth of archival research gleaned primarily from letters written by ordinary citizens, both former slaves and whites, to their representatives and officials during the war and through the disenfranchisement campaigns of the 1890s. Beautifully written, albeit repetitive and meandering at times, the book also displays Downs’ impressive grasp of mid- to late nineteenth-century U.S. and southern historiography.

Notwithstanding archival work that is deep and meticulous, readers of this journal might find some aspects of the book’s research design problematical. Downs may well be right that the Civil War introduced a new form of patronal politics, but the absence of any data on, or analysis of, letters prior to the war makes that assertion of novelty suspect. It is also difficult to know how pervasive the sentiments and expressions of dependence were. Even though the letters that Downs offers as evidence are rich, evocative, and apropos, his reliance on letters per se may well stack the deck in favor of his argument. After all, people wrote letters because they were in need, and need inherently suggests dependence. Corroborative evidence from other sources, as well as data before and after the period in question, would help to confirm that these declarations were as pervasive and unique to the time as the author would have us believe.

Nonetheless, works of this sort should not be construed as necessarily attempting to offer proof. Instead, Downs’ book can best be seen as a provocative attempt to re-examine certain shibboleths—specifically, in-
individuation and independence—in American history, thus opening up interesting avenues for future research about the nature of citizenship and political thought and action. Better yet, it offers a useful corrective for certain assumptions about both the historical and contemporary character of American political culture.

Kent Redding
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee


Embedding her work within recent historical currents that treat the American West as a colonial site, Cahill argues that the federal government designed the Indian Service as a form of “intimate colonialism.” Relying on a familial model of interactions within the boarding schools and on reservations, the Office of Indian Affairs sought to “harness personal relations in the service of the state” (137).

Cahill organizes her book into three parts: (1) a discussion of how federal Indian policy during the assimilation era shaped the Indian Service, (2) an examination of day-to-day experiences of Indian Service employees, and (3) a survey of changes in policy brought about in part by the unique demographics of the Indian Service.

While reviewing much other historical scholarship in her first section on policy, Cahill offers some fresh insights. First, she convincingly argues that policymakers modeled the Indian Office after the Freedmen’s Bureau, especially in regard to its educational initiatives. Second, she points out that the government’s policy shift from treaty making to assimilation represented a “key episode in the formation of the modern state” (18). Third, she observes that the mindset of the Office of Indian Affairs—that everyone connected with the Indian Service had a role in preparing Indians for “civilization”—“made the personnel of the Indian Service and the reservation landscapes into key components of a totalizing strategy of cultural change” (58).

The second part of her book contains the most original contribution. Cahill focuses on the unique demographics of the Indian Service, namely, that it employed large numbers of white women, married couples, and Indians—a unique configuration of workers that the U.S. government deemed necessary to carry out “intimate colonialism” among Indian communities. Although many historians before Cahill have commented on the number of women involved in the Indian Service, particularly its boarding-school personnel, Cahill amasses the quantitative data to show just how true, and how unusual, this profusion was.

At its heart, the book explores a central paradox at the core of the Indian Service—that thousands of Indian people sought and accepted
employment there even though it functioned as “the administrative arm of a conquering state,” as Cahill puts it (2). The government’s reliance on this “colonized labor force” was meant to showcase assimilated Indians as models for other Indians to follow. However, as Cahill demonstrates in her chapter on the Hoopa Reservation, many Indian people pursued work in the Indian service not to assimilate but to improve their economic status and to maintain family ties. Indian parents often tried to secure employment at the very boarding schools that their children attended.

Cahill includes a fascinating chapter on “Sociability in the Indian Service” that shows the unintended consequences of intimate colonialism. In one captivating photograph, she shows that some white field matrons on the Hoopa reservation began to use Hoopa baskets to carry their supplies. More troubling still to authorities, many interracial romances between white women and Indian men bloomed within the service.

The final section of the book studies the influence of Progressive reforms on the Indian Service. The era’s increased focus on professionalization, rationalization, and efficiency—and its new requirement of credentials for employment—ironically blocked certain avenues of advancement for Indian people. This part of the book is weaker and not as well integrated into the overall narrative, but in the scheme of things, this is minor criticism.

Overall, Cahill’s work is perceptive and astute. Her investigation of the unique workforce of the Indian Service offers uncommon insights into myriad other topics—the link between the maternalism of white women reformers (“maternal politics”) and the welfare state, the rise of the bureaucratic state, the role of the American West in the rise of this state, Progressivism, American Indian labor history, and “intimate colonialism.”

Margaret D. Jacobs
University of Nebraska, Lincoln


The promise of interdisciplinary work is that it will help us to ask better questions, which is exactly what Garone’s important and impressive new book does. California’s Great Central Valley has appeared in famous histories by Hundley, Pisani, and Worster on the history of irrigation, by Nash on the history of ideas about disease and health, and Kelley in an entire career of works on U.S. political culture. Yet no published

1 Norris Hundley, The Great Thirst: Californians and Water—A History (Berkeley, 2001); Donald Pisani, From the Family Farm to Agribusiness: The Irrigation Crusade in California and the
monograph has treated this vast and complicated region as a physical unit deserving its own history. Garone’s first, bold claim is that California’s inland wetlands are a legible unit, a composite place deserving a history of its own. To write that story, he leans on work in ornithology and stream ecology in addition to the history of science, environmental history, and the history of the American West. He draws on several historical traditions, synthesizing classical political histories of land ownership as well as more recent cultural histories of land use. Particularly impressive is his clear explanation of the extremely complex political and legislative history of state and federal water-supply projects.

The book’s second contribution is to attack what Garone calls the agricultural mystique in the American West—the centuries-old assumption that the best use of land is remaking it to enhance its economic productivity. Using careful archival work and deftly summarizing scholarship in wetland science and wildlife ecology, Garone shows that converting California’s interior wetlands to fields was costly and, in many cases, shortsighted. Central Valley wetlands were rapidly and brutally transformed because of large capital investment and federal subsidies. Yet within decades, much of this farmland was threatened by scarce water supplies and, paradoxically, by the residues of irrigated agriculture itself. Moreover, the terrible ecological consequences of the wholesale destruction of California’s interior wetlands—extinct races of salmon, decimated wildfowl populations, and lost habitat types—contributed to a societal shift that, by the 1970s, led to efforts to preserve and restore wetlands in California.

This point leads to the book’s third great contribution. Garone’s central claim is that wetlands disappeared only to reappear thanks to an unlikely private–public partnership. Americans typically think of public lands, especially designated refuges, as the most accommodating places for wildlife habitats because private ownership has historically been devastating for them. Rice growers in the Central Valley were responsible for some of the greatest destruction of wetlands in the nation’s history. In the past twenty years, however, rice growers have begun managing their fields as wetlands. Flooding rice fields after harvest has more than doubled the available seasonal wetland habitat in California, helping to reverse the collapse of duck populations and boosting Pacific waterfowl populations to levels not seen since the 1970s (252). Since 2003, “the extent of flooded rice fields exceeded the combined total acreage of all public refuges and private wetlands in the Central Valley” (250). This re-

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West, 1850–1931 (Berkeley, 1984); idem, To Reclaim a Divided West: Water, Law, and Public Policy, 1848–1902 (Albuquerque, 1992); idem, Water, Land, & Law in the West: The Limits of Public Policy, 1850–1920 (Lawrence, 1996); Donald Worster, Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West (New York, 1986); Linda Nash, Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge (Berkeley, 2007); Robert Kelley, Gold Versus Grain: The Hydraulic Mining Controversy in California’s Sacramento Valley (Glendale,1959); idem, Battling the Inland Sea: Floods, Public Policy, and the Sacramento Valley (Berkeley,1989).
versal is due to a mix of private, state, and federal expertise, money, and cooperation. Garone’s conclusion is unusual in the field of environmental history: The future may be brighter than the recent past.

Matthew Morse Booker
North Carolina State University


Connolly launches his study of urban politics in nineteenth-century America with a popular political song from the 1850s entitled, “Paddy’s Fight with the Know Nothings.” This vivid tale of woe and violence reflects familiar tensions between Irish Catholics and nativists, but it also reveals a deeper dynamic at the core of Connolly’s thoughtful analysis. The American Party expressed a nostalgic longing for moral consensus and a deep ambivalence about the pluralistic politics taking hold as industrialization and immigration advanced across the urban North. Connolly explores this contested shift from the republican ideal of a virtuous citizenry, united behind a shared moral vision and led by the “best men,” to a newer idea of politics as a marketplace of competing interest groups and politicians as skilled entrepreneurs trained to manage conflict. He demonstrates how this process played out from the antebellum period through the Progressive Era (focusing on Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and, most of all, New York) while Americans reluctantly abandoned their vision of unity for a pluralistic reality.

Big-city bosses are central to this story, and among Connolly’s most original contributions is his chapter about “Inventing the Machine.” The term machine could connote power, efficiency, and complexity, but it usually implied bosses who were unskilled operators deriving power from a manmade (hence illegitimate) source, and supporters who were mere machine fodder. For workers, the machine symbolized dehumanizing force; it was no coincidence that when Henry George ran as labor’s candidate for New York mayor in 1886, cartoons depicted him smashing the machine. As this anecdote suggests, even as Connolly describes the critical roles that bosses played in urban politics (clearly enjoying the color that they lend his narrative), he acknowledges their shortcomings as advocates for the working class (not to mention the limitations of their hypermasculine street-fighter style).

Connolly is sensitive to matters of gender in his analyses of both machine and reform politics. In his treatment of Progressive reform, he ventures beyond acknowledging the familiar contributions of female activists to argue that women like Jane Addams and the lesser-known Mary Parker Follett advocated an alternative democratic vision that earnestly solicited the perspectives of workers and immigrants. This chal-
challenge to the top-down view of Progressivism is a welcome reinterpretation.

In starting his study with a popular song, Connolly offers an early taste of his methodology. Reflecting the highbrow/lowbrow blend of Gilded Age politics, he draws his insights from contemporary political theory and sociology, from newspapers and new mass-market magazines like McClure’s, and from popular songs, dime novels, and the cartoons of Thomas Nast. The result is a narrative that moves fluidly between analyses of the era’s finest minds and vivid portraits of the scoundrels who ran city politics. Connolly is equally wide-ranging in his secondary literature, drawing on political science as well as history in framing his inquiry.

Although this material is well-trodden historical ground, Connolly breathes new life into it by bringing together a rich variety of sources, and a number of fresh insights, to forge a convincing argument about the contested shift from republicanism to pluralism. His expertise in urban and political history lends his study clear crossover appeal to students and scholars of history, political science, and urban studies. Written in an accessible style— with a clear central argument to which the author frequently returns—this book also serves as a good introduction to nineteenth-century politics and political theory.

Evelyn Sterne
University of Rhode Island

The Louisiana Populist Movement, 1881–1900. By Donna A. Barnes (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2011) 318 pp. $45.00

In this richly detailed book, Barnes succeeds in providing an intriguing study of the Louisiana Populist movement. Although her study, and its immediate subject matter, is restricted to the latter part of the nineteenth-century South, her tale is actually a timeless one. Barnes’ larger project is to understand how and why plain people (1) fail to recognize and act on common class interests over emotional wedge issues such as race, or (2) allow their legitimate material grievances to be redirected into faux-populistic outrage that targets the wrong adversaries. In Tea-Party America, Barnes’ work has obvious, distinct, and sad echoes.

Barnes is curious about the enduring question of how people of modest means—poor, plain, working-class people—may attempt to improve their circumstances and those of their children through collective action. Unlike most other authors, Barnes is concerned with a social movement generally considered to have been “unsuccessful,” purposely choosing an ostensible failure on the grounds that it may be able to teach us something that a universally acknowledged “success” cannot.

After an initial chapter exploring the three leading social-movement
theories (resource mobilization, political process, and framing), Barnes’ next eight chapters painstakingly detail the Louisiana Populist movement from its pre-conditions and early Farmers’ Union years, raising the issues of biracial cooperation, the shift from economic cooperation to politics, and variances in political strategies. Succeeding chapters address mobilization, political opportunity, and framing with reference to the national election years of 1892 and 1896, as well as the state elections of 1894, and discuss the problems surrounding the fusion of the Democratic and the People’s parties as generated by free-silver advocates.

One of the book’s more important conclusions concerns the Populists and race. Barnes concludes that the mobilization of Louisiana farmers into the Populist movement was undermined by a contemporary drive for disfranchisement that decimated the potential voter base (and political opportunity/process) of the movement. Here Barnes’ work stands in stark contrast to the more sanguine estimations of Woodward, Kousser, Perman, Hair, and others, who endowed poor-white farmers with a racial egalitarianism and enlightenment that, Barnes argues, did not exist in Louisiana (233–234). She also posits that a bitter framing dispute between free-silver fusion and anti-fusion factions impeded the movement, taking specific issue with the work of Hicks and Hofstadter.

She is not shy about pointing out differences of interpretation with other scholars, even those with whom she largely agrees, such as Goodwyn and McNall.

The author’s writing is clear, concise, and balanced, and the end product is an excellent example of the melding of the disciplines of history and sociology. Historians, though generally good story tellers, sometimes allow their works to become dominated by facts and details at the expense of a greater analytical arc and a wider audience. By the same token, sociologists and other social scientists, though generally skilled at mathematical modeling and the quantification of human behavior, sometimes struggle to connect abstract theories and elegant data sets with work grounded in original sources—material that can bestow the scholarship with an unmatched level of authority. Happily, Barnes’ detailed study is solidly grounded in the relevant primary and archival sources as well as responsive to the analytical framework provided by so-


cial science—specifically, the use of the three social-movement theories mentioned above. A particularly ambitious goal of the book is to demonstrate that treating these theories in a complementary fashion is more fruitful than “depicting them as competing theories or selectively employing one or the other” (xiii).

Glenn Feldman
University of Alabama, Birmingham

*Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru.* By Kathryn Burns (Durham, Duke University Press, 2010) 247 pp. $79.95 cloth $22.95 paper

This well-written and engaging book attempts to “historicize” the colonial archives of Cuzco in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by examining the role of notaries as legal intermediaries who translated the needs and desires of citizens into official notarized records (*instrumentos*). When Lockhart and a generation of scholars began relying on notary records as the basis for their studies, they emphasized that these largely mundane documents—used to transact a sale, make a loan, write a dowry, or to give testimony in a lawsuit—constituted a down-to-earth view of local social practices. Burns probes more deeply into these legal transactions, however, arguing that notary offices were actually sites of negotiation, where the greed and trickery of both notaries and their clients helped to shape the production of notary account books (*protocolos*). Although Burns is thoroughly convincing in debunking the “transparency” of these apparently mundane documents, she is less successful in presenting the changing historical context in which these documents were produced.

Given their powerful societal role as “ventriloquists,” who prepared the documents that gave voice to people’s legal needs in everyday life, notaries often enjoyed a reputation in Spain and the Indies as rogues and scoundrels (2). As a result, the Crown attempted to regulate their activities by providing approved documentary forms and procedures. Legal self-help manuals emerged by the mid-sixteenth century to give notaries guidance about performing their functions properly. Nonetheless, Burns examines how Cuzco’s notaries became enmeshed in complicated colonial social networks, which allowed them to conduct their business effectively and also to prosper outside the notary workplace by investing in land, commerce, mining, and other (often illegal) economic enterprises. These outside activities and the notaries’ duties, such as taking testimony in a wide variety of cases, often led them to leave the more mundane, everyday clerical duties to a chief assistant (*oficial mayor*), who presided over a group of apprentices willing to learn the craft during a

decade or more of training. Not all of these young trainees, who often began as teenagers, would succeed in becoming notaries themselves, since the Crown sold the offices and allowed the holders to turn them over to family members or close associates after paying a fee to the treasury.

Notaries used a variety of clever legal strategies to circumvent the intent of the law, such as fake contracts (confianzas) and documents that protested other legally notarized statements (exclamaciones). In short, notaries could manipulate the legal record in the service of a powerful client or on their own account to shelter assets, disguise debts, sell merchandise, control land, or engage in a host of other shady ventures. As a result, modern scholars must read materials from the notorial archives carefully and critically, appreciating the complex political, social, and economic interests behind their production.

Burns presents a fascinating and complex tale of intrigue, convoluted politics, and tangled economic and social networks that comprised the world of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century notaries in Cuzco. To serve their clients and themselves, notaries sometimes manipulated the very documentary record that they were sworn to uphold. According to Burns, notary documents reflect this complicated reality, rather than providing an authentic, unvarnished depiction of local social transactions. She also provides a corrective to practitioners of the “New Philology” (who use similar documents produced in indigenous languages by native notaries in Mexico) by pointing out gently that modern historians must not assume that “indigenous notaries spoke for their communities, faithfully representing their language and desires” (145).

Although Burns presents an intriguing series of stories to bolster her generalizations, she does not explain effectively how two centuries of changing political, social, and economic conditions in Cuzco might have altered or influenced the work of notaries and the production of notorial documents. Apart from this criticism, her fine book should appeal to a wide audience of historians and scholars in other disciplines interested in archives, writing, and the exercise of power in the early modern world.

Kenneth J. Andrien
Ohio State University


Brazil’s jogo do bicho (“animal game”) is an illicit lottery game familiar to anybody who has spent time in Brazilian cities, especially Rio de Janeiro. On the face of it, nothing about it seems particularly puzzling.
The jogo do bicho is a daily lottery in which people place bets of any size, including small ones, choosing from an array of animals, with pay-outs ranging from modest to vast. The game’s illicit operation is laced with connections to organized crime and extends into the political realm through corrupt officials. On occasion, those connections provoke a response, but, in general, both municipal and state governments simply tolerate the game.

But, as Chazkel’s rich examination reveals, the origins of the game and its shadowy status are key elements in understanding the emergence of modern Brazil. In particular, Chazkel focuses her attention on a puzzling contrast in the early decades of the game. On the one hand, beginning in 1917, police, buoyed by important segments of public opinion and municipal officials, initiated an aggressive effort to close it down. Police arrested scores of bicheiros (the sellers), and intellectuals and public officials decried the decline of public morality and blamed the game for a host of social evils. On the other hand, the bicheiros and their lawyers skillfully subverted the formal written laws to a receptive judiciary that routinely dismissed all charges against the defendants. In short, one branch of the law cracked down on the game, while another revealed little sympathy for the campaign and accepted any and every legal ruse to escape punishment.

The reasons for simultaneous official hostility and tolerance and the ways that average cariocas (the term that Rio’s locals use for themselves) maneuvered within that space provides a textured, subtle, and fascinating tale of at least two critical elements of the development of modern Brazil—the emergence of the informal economy and the consolidation of the modern state (and its weak basis in Western, liberal conceptions of the rule of law). Ultimately, Chazkel documents a post-slavery, urban survival story about Brazil’s increasingly enclosed, common spaces where people congregated, worked, and engaged in commerce. As the city population grew, the modern state effort to protect propertied classes and regulate economic activity made life harder and harder on the ground. The jogo do bicho emerged as a mechanism that permitted a wide array of exchanges (even as a substitute for currency) and short-term employment. In detailing this informal world, Chazkel argues for an understanding of law as something lived, not written, and for understanding the underclasses not simply in terms of resistance, but as a mix of resistance to, and use of, the dominant legal and normative structure.

Chazkel’s narrative also helps to show how the informal sector originated and how it linked in myriad and complex ways with the formal world of law and economy. Although her examination does not explicitly focus on them, it also exposes some of the roots of the extraordinary injustices in Brazilian society. The history of the jogo do bicho is replete with examples of a state passing laws and regulating economic activity in ways that failed to take the majority of the population into account. The fact that this informal world interacted with the formal one in numerous
ways and that parts of the state worked to promote an “everyday justice,” as Chazkel refers to it, does not mitigate the terrible inefficiency and ultimately the cruelty of the state and its laws—either at that time or today. Chazkel has provided a terrific account of the formation of modern Brazil and a valuable source for understanding the injustices still underlying contemporary politics.

Peter Kingstone
University of Connecticut

*Forceful Negotiations: The Origins of the Pronunciamiento in Nineteenth-Century Mexico.* Edited by Will Fowler (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2010) 313 pp. $35.00

The pronunciamiento (literally, “pronouncement”), a military uprising, was, in Fowler’s words, “undoubtedly the most important political practice of nineteenth-century Mexico” (xxxvii). About 1,500 such episodes occurred during the half-century from 1821 to 1876. Essentially an extraconstitutional device staged by perennially dissatisfied military men (and occasionally their civilian allies) to gain attention for political grievances and exact change from the national government, the pronunciamiento came to be so deeply embedded in Mexican political culture that, as one of the authors in the volume observes, it constituted part of the national identity.

The dozen chapters in this useful collection for the most part cover individual episodes between the year of Mexican independence from Spain in 1821 and the eve of the liberal political ascendancy in the mid-1850s. The authors represent a mix of senior scholars with younger ones from Spain, Britain, Mexico, and the United States. Two highlights of the collection are Fowler’s introductory and concluding chapters, which deploy a sociological understanding of the pronunciamiento as a form of political behavior that grew up in the legitimacy vacuum following the demise of the colonial regime. Two others are the chapter by the late Michael Costeloe about British investment in the mining sector and its relationship to British attitudes toward the movements of the early 1830s and the chapter by Michael Ducey about local linkages and military uprisings in the Huasteca region during the tumultuous 1820s.

Most of the chapters are straightforwardly descriptive in the traditional mode of political history, but their cumulative effect is not only to map out a narrative political history of the period but also to create an anatomy of how pronunciamientos began, progressed, and ended. There is a useful chronology of the major political events of the period (xli–xlix), and reference to an online database of enormous size. The relative brevity of the chapters recommends them as readings for undergraduates, although there is much to interest more advanced scholars.
The chapters as a whole raise two major issues never resolved by the authors—one empirical, and possibly beyond the range of what such short pieces can accomplish, and one conceptual. The first is the extent to which the pronunciamiento can be considered representative of the thinking and aspirations of common people rather than simply a mechanism for disgruntled elites to leverage violence into political and economic gain. Some of the authors explicitly, and others implicitly, assert that it was a sort of parademocratic practice that functioned to incorporate the “popular masses,” absent effective electoral practices (Timothy Anna, 12). This claim is difficult to support, however, since the evidence is often lacking.

More serious is the conceptual problem—that the pronunciamiento becomes a baggy category that tends to lose some of its analytical edge in the authors’ employment of it to describe a wide range of political phenomena, including what look to be cynical careerist episodes, classic coups d’état, mini-revolutions in the Mexican provinces, and the overthrow of national political regimes through armed uprisings. Witness Agustín de Iturbide’s movement of 1822, for example, in which he toppled a proto-constitutional national regime only to install himself briefly as Emperor Agustín the First. It looks much more like a coup d’état than a pronunciamiento, since he already held the reins of political power and was disputing control of the country with a stubborn national congress rather than bargaining for advantage from the margins. Nonetheless, the questions raised by the authors are important and the empirical contribution of the volume significant.

Eric Van Young
University of California, San Diego

Cuauhtémoc’s Bones: Forging Identity in Modern Mexico. By Paul Gillingham (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2011) 340 pp. $28.95

Most students of Mexico are familiar with the story of Cuauhtémoc’s bones, though they may be hazy about the details. At first glance, it seems the stuff of comedy. In 1949, documents surfaced in the remote and impoverished village of Ixcatéopan, in the rugged southwest Mexican state of Guerrero, bearing the surprising news that the last Aztec emperor was buried there, more than 1,000 miles from where he met his fate at the hands of treacherous Spaniards. Digging under the altar of the village church, a group of bumbling amateur archaeologists soon discovered what they believed to be his tomb, and Mexicans all over the country enjoyed a bout of patriotic revelry. Unfortunately, a commission of experts examined the documents and bones and declared them to be poorly staged fakes, igniting a raucous controversy that pitted zealous
leftists, nationalists, and *indigenistas* (advocates for the indigenous population) against professional anthropologists and archaeologists. The tomb’s defenders were incensed by the experts’ findings; some of them suggested that the experts should be shot as traitors.

The episode of Cuautémoc’s tomb has long needed a skilled sleuth not only to investigate the details but also to analyze what they reveal about modern Mexican nationalism. Gillingham rises admirably to the challenge, leaving few stones unturned in this work. He even manages to detect the perpetrator of the celebrated forgery—a late nineteenth-century villager named Florentino Juárez, whose aim was to enhance his village’s prestige and political clout. Gillingham presents readers with many colorful characters, including the tomb’s irrepressible champion Eulalia Guzmán, a historian so swayed by indigenista passions that she held Aztec human sacrifice to be a slander invented by the conquerors.

Most importantly, Gillingham expounds at length on the “uses of Cuauhtémoc,” concluding that the emperor’s symbolism was too diffuse to yield much in the way of coherent meaning. Leftists saw him as a symbol of resistance, while nationalists tried to turn him into a bland symbol of national unity. Gillingham’s analysis complicates standard notions of nationalism, which often posit that nationalist symbols are foisted on ordinary people in order to foster support for the state. Ordinary people, however, do not necessarily understand those symbols as elites intend them to; sometimes—as in the case of Cuauhtémoc’s tomb—they even turn out to be the producers of those symbols.

The book’s weaknesses are few and minor. Gillingham can be wordy at times, though even his digressions tend to be fascinating. The book’s first chapter is a narrative of the Spanish conquest of Mexico that might be more detailed than necessary and surprisingly conventional, based largely on Spanish chronicles. Gillingham rejects most of the innovative recent work about the conquest by such scholars as Restall, Townsend, and Brooks, which has raised intriguing questions about the reliability of those chronicles. Gillingham even endorses the notion that the Aztecs mistook Hernán Cortés for the returning god Quetzalcoátl. Since that idea has been repeatedly debunked and has largely fallen out of favor, Gillingham could have been more generous with the reasoning behind his endorsement. Myth creation is, after all, his topic.

Gillingham is able to cover a remarkable amount of ground in this volume, from the agrarian history of Guerrero to the work of Mexican literary titans like Palacio and Payno. He has clearly read voraciously in

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multiple disciplines, and his book manages, starting in the microcosm of Ixcateopan, to cover an impressive amount of Mexican history. He writes with a wit and elegance that is regrettably rare in academia. The book is worthy of a large and admiring audience.

Timothy J. Henderson
Auburn University, Montgomery


This book—an important addition to a growing number of publications about the Mediterranean city as a site with multilayered and complex intermingling between Muslims, Christians, and Jews—focuses on both the idea and the reality of the minority quarter. The idea of the minority quarter is based on a number of assumptions about European ghettos and on the observations of travelers. To the extent that it is possible, the authors set out to determine a reality formed from a variety of sources, both written and material. The visual evidence, in particular, is beautifully depicted through maps and a collection of old and new photographs. In a study that examines these quarters during Muslim and Christian rule, where one or the other faith was in the majority, Jews comprised the one constant minority. Hence, the Jewish quarter forms the central focus of each of these studies.

The book includes what might first appear to be a disparate group of six cities, three in Morocco, two in Italy, and one in a section of Istanbul. The chronological span is equally widespread, from the early medieval period to the late twentieth century. Miller’s introduction, however, places the six separate case studies in a coherent context that allows her to address the historiographical and methodological issues surrounding the study of Mediterranean minority quarter. The examination of minority quarters in different places provides a glimpse of how these quarters fared during changes in rule, population, and economic prosperity. Some of the differences in their characteristics were due to whether they were open or closed or whether they were settled all at once or in a piecemeal fashion. The essays share two main questions—how the minority quarter functioned as both a separate and an integrated entity within the city and how it was sustained through time.

The question of integration versus separation appears in all of the essays in their attempt to discover how the minority quarter differed from other parts of the city and how it related to areas outside the city. Depending on locale, a variety of terms designated the minority quarter: mallāh in Fez, meschita in Palermo, and, to some extent, millet in Turkey. One term that consistently attracts skepticism concerning its applicability is ghetto. Many of the minority quarters covered in these essays had vol-
untary, mixed populations who were free to circulate within other parts of the city. For example, William Granara points out that the minority quarter of late medieval Palermo, though described as Hârat al-Yahûd by Arab chroniclers, was neither exclusively Jewish nor the only domain of Palermo’s Jews. In later periods, as shown in Miller’s essay on Tangiers, these quarters could also include diplomats, who comprised another type of minority.

The other connotation of *ghetto* as a dark and overcrowded slum was often used by European travelers to describe minority quarters in Mediterranean cities even though these critics were familiar only with certain parts of these quarters. Balata in Istanbul was described by an Italian traveler of the early twentieth century as a “vast ghetto . . . which winds like a disgusting serpent along the shore of the Golden Horn” (178), an impression based on visits to a small section of the quarter. As Karen Leal shows, Balata had extensive gardens and areas that were far from densely settled.

This book seeks to show not only what made minority quarters different but also to discover whether any similarities are evident in their patterns of growth. In that regard, various chapters show the extent to which central nodes, usually synagogues, helped to establish the direction of a quarter’s development, whereas city walls and gates determined its limits and main entrance. The growth pattern of a quarter could incorporate a diversity of architectural styles (and religions), like that of the Beni Ider section of Tangiers, where the minority population’s structural changes faced little intervention from the state. By contrast, the walled mallâh of Marrakesh, a project undertaken by the Saadian regime in a remote part of the city, displayed a far more regular pattern of growth within its orderly grid of streets.

A main theme in the volume concerns attacks on Jews as abetted by state authorities. An essay jointly written by Miller, Attilio Petruccioli, and Bertagnin describes the changing fortunes of Jews in early modern Fez. The growing antagonism of Muslims toward Jews caused the circulation of rumors about Jews spilling wine in mosques and the discovery of saints’ tombs. These accusations resulted in Jews being banished to the mallâh. In the modern period, Jews looked for help in Europe to curb overcrowding and improve living conditions.

The significance of memory is woven into essays that describe the new residents of minority quarters once inhabited by Jews. No matter how many different groups passed through such quarters, their monuments and, to some degree, their street patterns bear witness to earlier communities. The task of keeping memories alive through the study and preservation of histories and monuments proved difficult in each city. As shown dramatically in Fez, not all of the stories in circulation reflect an accurate history of a minority population. The authors’ use of visual and legal records adds a critical dimension to studies not only of the minority quarter but also of the surrounding city.

This fascinating volume outlines salient features and functions of
various Jewish quarters. Linked as they were by trade, the rise and fall of Hispano-Moorish civilizations, and the trappings of modernity, the trajectory of these quarters speaks volumes about the vibrant mixed communities that once defined the Mediterranean city. Challenging outdated paradigms about the Islamic city, Jewish ghettos, and Jewish exceptionalism while introducing readers to the unique nature of these quarters, this volume brings new material and important critical insights to questions of urbanism and minority populations in the Mediterranean world.

Ethel Sara Wolper
University of New Hampshire


Zarinebaf’s Crime and Punishment in Istanbul, 1700–1800 is another addition to the small but growing number of works that have been shedding light on the history of the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Until recently, the eighteenth century was considered only in relation to the preceding or following periods—seen either as a continuation of the period of decline that preceded it or the beginning of the era of reform and modernization that defined the following century. By looking at the eighteenth century from the vantage point of the administration of justice in Istanbul, Zarinebaf shows that far from being stuck between competing trends, the Ottoman state managed to improve its effectiveness in important ways during this tumultuous period in its history.

Zarinebaf considers both big “crimes,” such as violent upheavals and rebellions, and everyday crimes, such as prostitution and petty theft. She shows that the growth of both forms in the eighteenth century was closely related to broader forces that affected not only the Ottoman Empire but also the other societies in the region and beyond.

By dealing simultaneously with macro- and micro-trends from a broad and comparative perspective, Zarinebaf provides an unusually rich and textured picture of what Istanbul was like and how it functioned as a social unit in the eighteenth century. She shows how the rebellions that shook the Empire’s foundations were planned, why they occurred, how the state responded to them, and how the culprits were apprehended and punished. On a more local level, she discusses the factors that contributed to the growth of prostitution, elucidating how authorities managed, and even tolerated it, as a necessary evil.

Crime and Punishment in Istanbul also includes careful analyses of the legal bases for the definition of crimes, as well as detailed discussions of court procedure and the meting out of punishment. Zarinebaf argues
that on the level of both large-scale political rebellions and petty transgressions, the idea of what constituted criminal activity was by no means self-evident or fixed in the Ottoman Empire. What emerges from this study is a system of justice that was flexible, dynamic, and constantly evolving in response to rapidly changing circumstances. Zarinebaf shows that by utilizing its juridical instruments on the imperial and local level, the Ottoman state actually improved the effectiveness of its surveillance precisely at a time when many scholars consider it to have been in chaos and decline.

Zarinebaf’s broad, cross-regional, and theoretical reading, combined with archival research, also reveals the nature of punishment in the Ottoman Empire. Her vivid descriptions of those who were banished or condemned to galleys for various crimes, as well as those who were publicly and violently punished for participating in rebellions, brings their drama to life.

Rarely does a study succeed with equal brilliance on both the large and small scales of analysis. Ottoman historians and generalists interested in a holistic account of early modern Europe will find *Crime and Punishment in Istanbul, 1700–1800* a useful and accessible study.

Reşat Kasaba
University of Washington

*Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution*. By Christine M. Philliou (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2011) 286 pp. $60.00 cloth $23.84 paper

Philliou, perhaps unconsciously, embeds the most direct statement of her text’s historiographical challenge to the field of Ottoman Studies in her mention of Steve Kotkin daring her to “write a history of the Ottoman nineteenth century without using the word ‘Tanzimat.’” Her parenthetical comment, “I almost managed it,” illustrates the extent to which entrenched historiographical norms can shadow even the most profound alternative narrative (264).

What exactly is the appeal of a non-Tanzimat-focused research agenda? Philliou’s *Biography of Empire* provides a fairly nuanced answer that should certainly engage specialists but also draw the attention of global historians attentive to changing interstate dynamics and strategies of rule during a period of profound and systemic upheaval. *Tanzimat*, meaning “re-ordering” in Ottoman parlance, is used by scholars to mark a general period of reform punctuated by two crucial documents promulgated in 1839 and 1856. It formed the final lynchpin in a statist master narrative of the Ottoman Empire. Moving from rise (fourteenth to sixteenth century) to decline (late sixteen to late eighteenth century) and concluding with Westernization (the long nineteenth century), Philliou argues that this narrative assumes that the nineteenth-century reforms
represent a turning point from decline and decentralization to revival and modernization (xviii). As a result, the so-called Tanzimat period remains overwhelmingly affixed to binary assessments of change. Were the Ottomans capable of modernity or traditionalists incapable of eschewing past means of governance? Is modernization always already Westernization or were indigenous models of reform active within Ottoman dynamics of rule? Most significantly, did a national ideology necessitate the death of an imperial one?

Philliou responds to these binaries with a close analysis of one man’s career, bringing to life a story that fits into the telos of neither emergent Balkan nationalisms nor Tanzimat reformations. Stephanos Vogorides (1780–1859) navigated away from his Bulgarian-speaking origins to become a vocal member of the Greek-speaking, Phanariot community that was intimately linked through ceremony, governorship, and language to the administrative strategies of the Ottoman Empire.¹ Vogorides, “a historical dead end, given the available frameworks of imperial and national histories” (175), allows Philliou to provide a counter-narrative that strikingly challenges the idea that minorities were somehow marginal to the political machinations of the Ottoman state. She thus widens our understanding of both the state—becoming a network of lived practices and encapsulating the agendas of multiple actors—and politics—relying on a notion of governance gleaned from the work of Michel Foucault to capture the multiple sites and bundled beliefs legitimating social and political order (xxiv).

In Biography of Empire, Philliou juxtaposes Phanariot patterns with two hallowed social groupings in Ottoman historiography—the ayan, regional powerbrokers, and the janissaries, a military elite social group. This comparison is rare, but it vividly illustrates a significant move, between the years 1770 and 1830, from an Ottoman discourse based on military power to one increasingly dominated by diplomacy. Vogorides’ story further demonstrates how the activities of the Phanariots, a presumed minority, shifted from the informal, albeit structurally necessary, provision of informal translation services to the creation of a formal Office of Translation that was eventually to become part of “the nucleus of a new Muslim reforming elite” (135). What was once marginal became integral; in fact, Vogorides’ career demonstrates that the Phanariots can be conceived as “marginal” only with the hindsight of national movements and imperial collapse.

These assertions might seem mundane to non-specialists without proper attention to the chronology. Although Greek independence was formally declared in 1821, Vogorides revived Phanariot networks and transformed his position within an Ottoman vocabulary of rule first in the 1820s and then again in the 1850s when interstate politics became of a piece with Ottoman imperial strategies. Philliou begins the book with a memorandum in which Vogorides identifies himself as an “Ottoman

¹ The term Phanariot derives from a quarter in Istanbul (Phanari in Greek, Fener in Turkish) where the Orthodox Patriarchate was and is located.
Christian” aligned neither with Greek nationalists nor Russian Orthodoxy. He seeks to resolve both his position and that of the Empire within a discursive terrain that acknowledges an Ottoman legacy of rule while carving out a new space for diplomatic alliances. By 1856, Philliou argues, the possibility for a system in which multiple identities might co-exist under an Ottoman umbrella ended at precisely the moment when the Ottomans espoused confessional equality.

What about the “Tanzimat” that Philliou hoped to avoid? The term indeed appears fewer times in this book (twenty-four, to be exact) than in any other book that comes to mind about the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. Oddly enough, however, Philliou simply defers the problem. By writing Ottoman history through the lens of Vogorides and the Phanariots, she provides a dynamic and intricate treatment of a period that rarely receives its due. But the text is also a tease; only in a short concluding chapter does Philliou attempt the close discursive analysis that the introduction promises. Moreover, she does not fully redeem the provocative claim that Vogorides’—and, by association, the Empire’s—nineteenth-century story can best be understood as a moment of apaxis—a discursive rupture and a gap between political ideals and political realities.

The close attention to Phanariot networks, though important for Ottoman scholars, often overwhelms both a clear story and a clear methodological intervention. Furthermore, the post-1856 Tanzimat still stands, fully intact and definitive of the late Ottoman Empire. Regardless, Philliou’s text is undeniably the most important treatment of the Phanariots as a distinctly Ottoman mechanism of governance and stands as a resounding alternative to the sharp dichotomies of Christian/Muslim, state/society, and national/imperial.

Vogorides was once described by a contemporary as a Christian possessing a “Muslim soul.” That Philliou’s Biography of Empire can explain how such a portrait is possible is a major accomplishment. The book is highly recommended to scholars concerned with theoretical questions of identity, agency, and the eclipse of the past through the constructions of the present.

Heather Ferguson
Claremont McKenna College


Mikhail’s Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt is particularly welcome in light of the fact that studies of the environmental history of the Ottoman Empire are still few and far between. The fundamental object of Mikhail’s study is the system of irrigation in Egypt during the Ottoman period, and his argument is far from the old chestnut of Karl Wittfogel’s Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power (New Haven,
Instead, he makes a convincing case for the Ottoman willingness to rely heavily on local knowledge in the maintenance of Egypt’s innumerable dams and canals. Mikhail is not the first to note the Ottoman openness to local custom, but this book develops that quality into a full-blown paradigm of Ottoman management of the environment.

Typically, a project such as dredging a canal was initiated from the bottom up. A local leader would approach the kadi who would, after inspection, approve the repairs. The peasants who lived in the immediate area of the work provided the labor. Mikhail argues that this arrangement suited everyone. Peasants had a direct interest in the improvements, and the state benefited from a working irrigation system. This latter point feeds into Mikhail’s second major argument—that Ottoman environmental management combined extreme localism with imperial initiative. As a granary of the Empire, Egypt needed an effective irrigation system and hence massive amounts of wood for the construction and maintenance of dams, canal embankments, and bridges. In one of the strongest chapters of the book, Mikhail demonstrates how the Ottomans worked assiduously—and mostly effectively—to make sure that Egypt received a steady supply of wood from such timber-rich areas as Anatolia. In so doing, he mounts a strong critique of the enduring “hub and spoke” metaphor of the Empire, whereby each place is analyzed only in its relationship to Istanbul. Instead, as Mikhail shows, “The harvesting and moving of wood connected disparate parts of the Empire into a working whole” (154). Indeed, so strong is his case about the centrality of wood in understanding Ottoman Egypt that his explanation of Muhammad Ali’s invasion of Syria as an attempt to get access to it becomes highly persuasive (165).

In the latter half of the book, Mikhail discusses the changes that occurred during the latter half of the eighteenth century and then under Muhammad Ali. He states emphatically that only at that point did the management of water in Egypt become despotic, thus curtailing the autonomy and space that the Ottoman regime had granted to the peasantry. This part of the book is less successful. Mikhail argues that this historical movement began sometime in the eighteenth century, that is, before the French invasion, but he is never clear about what was driving it. At other times, he seems to argue that Muhammad Ali’s methods owed nothing to the Ottomans but were derivative of French colonial policy. Mikhail’s haste to condemn Muhammad Ali also leads him into moments of weak historical proof. His assertion that Muhammad Ali “despised” the Egyptians rests on a quotation from a secondary source that simply said so without evidence (238).

Despite these caveats, Mikhail has written an important book that convincingly casts Ottoman Egypt in an entirely new light. His book should be read by every Ottomanist, as well as by environmental historians.

Molly Greene
Princeton University
To say that the outcome of World War I settled little in international politics is a truism. So, too, is the contention that older, malleable conceptions of civic identity gave way to harsher, inflexible assertions of ethnic difference in the various European and Asian empires dismembered after 1918. To trace these processes in action is a difficult task nonetheless. Shields accomplishes it with genuine flair in her detailed account of the Alexandretta sanjak, a northwestern Syrian province that slipped from French to Turkish political control between 1936 and 1939.

Hinged between the Mediterranean harbor of Alexandretta and the ancient city of Antioch, the sanjak was, at once, a crossroads, an entrepôt, and a frontier. Assigned to France as holder of the League of Nations mandate over Syria in 1920, the sanjak was also home to a cosmopolitan population of around a quarter of a million. As Shields makes abundantly clear, to describe the sanjak’s residents as Turks, Sunni Arabs, Armenians, Circassians, Greeks, Alawis, Druzes, or members of other heterodox Muslim sects, is, in some way, to buy into the new identity politics of the interwar period. These simplistic, rigid categories ignored centuries of co-existence, shared agricultural employment, and trade in lands and goods among the region’s inhabitants. These practices were, in turn, reflected in intermarriage, hybridized languages, and cross-cultural festivities, all of which tended to blur rather than define communal identities. Yet, what is so striking, and so alarming, about the story told in *Fezzes in the River* is the evident speed with which mutual tolerance could be supplanted by internecine violence once such identities were reified by hardliners on all sides.

The book’s title refers to a particular focal point of this conflict—forms of dress. Whereas Turkish-speaking followers of Kemal Atatürk advertised their allegiance by sporting Western-style clothing, their Arab cousins opted instead for the sedara, the traditional headgear favored by Iraq’s King Faisal. The unfortunate traditionalists who continued to wear the once ubiquitous fez thus made themselves targets for attack. This focus on the changing symbolic meanings behind demonstrable acts of public violence is central to Shields’ microhistorical approach. Osten-sibly a detailed chronological account of the jumble of diplomatic negotiations, League of Nations investigations, and local political posturing that produced the sanjak of Alexandretta’s change in status—first to an uneasy, and brief, quasi-independence in 1937 and thence to military occupation and de facto annexation by Turkey in July 1938—her book is actually much more. Her accounts of tomato sellers who were harrassed because they were suspected of being Turkish sympathizers or of schoolchildren who were compelled overnight to adjust to a different language of instruction provide a glimpse of how divisive this new identity politics could be. Thousands would leave the sanjak in 1938 while
France, Turkey, and the League of Nations declared their satisfaction at an issue satisfactorily resolved.

This unwavering focus on the human consequences of flawed schemes to protect “minority rights” in an era of ethnically defined nationalist allegiance lends great resonance to Shields’ book for anyone interested in the roots of political violence. Thoroughly researched and historically astute, it is an exceptionally fine piece of work.

Martin Thomas
University of Exeter


Like many recent histories of Chinese commodities that span several periods of different social and political orders, Golden Silk Smoke is informed by the cultural anthropology of Appadurai, especially his essay, “Commodities and the Politics of Value.” This strategy is appropriate for exploring the “biography” of articles of international trade and commerce in states that came under imperialist pressures from the last half of the nineteenth through to the mid-twentieth century—in this case, that of tobacco in China. Part of the larger discussion about the precise nature of commodities centers on the degree to which the organizational and technical conditions of their production are exclusively Western innovations either imposed on colonialized states or simply copied by them. Benedict’s history, which devotes roughly half of its space to fads, factories, female smoking, and nationally tinged literature between 1840 and 1949, clearly asserts that although the Chinese experience with tobacco was certainly subject to globalizing forces and foreign influences, the “drug food” had already been domesticated in China by the early seventeenth century. Hence, most of the book’s coverage of the period prior to 1840 is devoted to detailing tobacco’s early international transmission and its subsequent Chinese-style production and consumption, including its equivocal role in traditional medicine and its distinctive role as a social lubricant.

In the process of employing historical, anthropological, social, economic, and literary forms of analysis, Benedict demonstrates the strengths of producing commodity history from a non-Western perspective. Such strengths are particularly apparent in her analyses of how tobacco consumption was differentiated by class and gender. One exemplary class division concerns the technology of tobacco consumption. The poor puffed away on cheap pipes until after 1949 while the wealthy snorted costly early modern snuff and later sported pricey modern machine-rolled cigarettes. From a global perspective, Benedict notes that

these distinctions resemble those prevalent in other countries “subject to external political and economic interference,” like Egypt, rather than the more developed, and presumably more interfering, states of Western Europe and North America (11).

Benedict’s longest chapter, which is about female consumption of tobacco from 1900 to 1976, makes a similar point—this time about the divergent trajectories of gendered smoking in China and the West. Nineteenth-century Chinese women were free to blow smoke, figuratively speaking, in the faces of their Western sisters, who were effectively banned from tobacco use by Victorian and Edwardian mores. By the twentieth century, however, this situation had reversed itself, with various sorts of Western “flappers” assertively lighting up, as it were, in the faces of patriotic Chinese women of the Republican period, who succumbed to nationalist exhortations to reject the “foreign” miasmas of tobacco and opium (though both were deeply rooted domestic cultivars by this time).

These examples are representative of the corrective methods that the author uses as part of her general approach to recount “the history of Chinese consumption as it actually occurred over many centuries” rather than simply tracking it along “an idealized path leading to a homogenized ‘consumer society’ modeled on” the industrially developed Western world (3–4). Non-linear, non-Western experiences are valuable for a more critical interrogation of terms like modernity, and even globalization, the import of which is often taken as teleologically given in commodity accounts closer to the homes of these concepts. Although it is debatable whether Benedict has been able to portray the nearly 500-year history of Chinese tobacco as it “actually” happened in only 254 pages, she has provided an appropriately “globalized” and augmented overview of the considerable literature on the subject.

David A. Bello
Washington and Lee University

The Religious Question in Modern China. By Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2011) 464 pp. $40.00

This book is an extremely ambitious effort to pose, and partly to answer, large questions concerning “religion” in China’s recent past. The authors are largely successful both in articulating these questions and analyzing them cogently. But the most remarkable feature of the work is the example that it sets for interdisciplinary collaboration, bringing together insights from history, religion, sociology, and anthropology.

The authors’ task is to view the history of “religion” in China since the late nineteenth century to the present as a single fabric. They claim that although Chinese religion was diverse before 1900, it had an “ordering center of gravity: the religio-political state” (3). Destroyed by the
cumulative assaults of the Revolution of 1911, the May Fourth Movement, the secularizing pressure of the KMT (Guomindang), and the extreme disruptions of the Communist decades, this religion was reduced to a mere shell of its once-vibrant life, thereby de-centering society. Notwithstanding its handicaps, however, religion remains surprisingly active in China, partly because the modernist and statist nation-building ambitions and programs of the KMT and the Communists alike have both failed to provide a substitute for the old religious culture. In recent years, the state, perhaps less insecure than in the past, has given a little more behavioral latitude to religious activities than it did forty or fifty years ago, though the wounds inflicted by the relentless secularizing campaigns of the twentieth century are still raw.

The authors trace the process of declension in the old broad-band and ubiquitous traditional religion to the reforms of 1898, when the Chinese elite first began to acquiesce in the Western separation of “religion” and “superstition.” At this point, organizational or institutionalized religions became legitimate, whereas local cults, spirit mediums, and village temples were relegated to the category of “superstition.” This process, which has taken many decades, is still evolving in Chinese communities around the world (the past twenty years has also witnessed a wave of new temple building and reconstruction, and a stunning growth of Protestant Christianity).

The authors have adopted a broad and eclectic approach. They are familiar with the literature of this ungainly field, and they never introduce a contemporary topic without solid historical grounding. This work also covers Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore in some detail. The sections about qigong, Falun Gong, and Christianity (especially those on evangelical Protestantism) are impressive. The authors insightfully view Christianity as well placed to attract considerable adherents within China’s competitive religious context. They point out that a combination of the flexible network organization of the unregistered congregations and the appeal of such practices as healing, speaking in tongues, and prophecy could sustain a high growth rate, especially for Protestants.

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This collection of essays about public health in China illuminates the interconnected web of medical systems and technology, socioeconomic shifts, and politics in managing disease and hygiene. The scholars, mostly
from Taiwan, draw from the fields of history, sociology, and history of medicine in this broad, well-written, and widely researched volume. *Health and Hygiene in East Asia* is divided into three roughly chronological sections, though the overlapping themes of shifting medical paradigms and the importance of socioeconomic and political factors in public-health projects are present throughout.

“Tradition and Transition,” the first section, addresses changing concepts of contagion and disease that drastically altered ideas about the constitution of a vigorous body and a healthy environment, markers “indicative of national character and strength” (68). Leung shows how a new understanding of *chuanran* (contagion) in late Qing traditional Chinese medical texts was crucial in fighting the 1910/11 Manchurian plague epidemic. In Chapter 3, Sean Hsiang-Lin Lei shows how the diplomatic crisis in Manchuria, as Japan and Russia encroached, spurred the Qing regime to contain the disease with the use of germ theory and the diagnosing microscope. Politics and public health again intersect in Yu Xinzhong’s study of the transition of night soil and waste treatment from a native agricultural product to “a concern of public health” in treaty-port Shanghai under British colonial administration (51).

The volume’s middle chapters on “Colonial Health and Hygiene” address China’s semicolonial administrations in China—namely, the Japanese colonies of Manchuria and Taiwan and the treaty ports under the control of various nations. The most thrilling chapter in this volume is Ruth Rogaski’s “Vampires in Plagueland,” which examines conflicting meanings of *weisheng* (hygienic modernity) in Manchuria. While Japanese colonizers viewed Manchuria as backward and disease-ridden and their own public-health efforts as heroic, the native inhabitants conversely considered the Japanese as horrific, syringe-wielding vampires. Likewise, Rogaski points out that although public health brought “the desirable benefits of health and modernity,” it was simultaneously “a mode of social control, a coercive force” (156). Two studies of Japanese colonial administration in Taiwan round out this section—a sociological analysis of the Japanese reform of colonial midwifery, and a study of the island’s efforts to eradicate malaria.

The final chapters in “Campaigns for Epidemic Control” draw on themes from the previous two sections, illustrating that definitions, perceptions, and political and socioeconomic concerns are critical in improving the health of a people. The campaign to fight schistosomiasis in Jiangnan was successful not only because of political efforts but also because of socioeconomic changes that improved everyday sanitation and diminished the snail-vector environment, reminiscent of the malaria eradication and midwifery reforms from the previous section. Two examinations of the SARS outbreak and the ensuing quarantine measures in Taiwan and China bring the book full circle, reminiscent of similar Manchurian plague containment 100 years earlier. These chapters demonstrate the limits of “decision-making processes of health authorities”
(255), underscoring the irrationality of “treating national borders as meaningful lines for locating a virus” (258).

This volume skillfully highlights the importance of a holistic view of medicine and an understanding of the “web of biological relationships” between humans and the environment in managing and understanding disease and health (271). The authors show that epidemic control and public-health successes have as much to do with politics and socioeconomic considerations as public-health policy. Furthermore, in research and in policy, placing scientific and technological knowledge above other factors is perilous and arrogant; Wu Chia-ling contends that the greatest threat to public health worldwide today may not be epidemics themselves but the mistaken belief “that true security against epidemics is feasible and possible” (271).

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_Ancestral Leaves: A Family Journey through Chinese History._ By Joseph W. Esherick (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2011) 374 pp. $60.00 cloth $24.95 paper

_Ancestral Leaves_ is both a family history of Esherick’s affines, a descent group of the Anqing Ye lineage of Anhui province, whose recorded history begins in the fourteenth century, and a wide-ranging history of modern China. A number of émigrés have written histories of their families during the modern era. Central to a number of these works is an account of a family’s successful positioning of itself within the elite during the twentieth century and its eventual victimization under the People’s Republic. In contrast, Esherick places the similar experiences of the Ye family in historical context, balancing the personal and particular with a superb understanding of late imperial and modern politics, social history, and cultural change. The life histories of various family members are deeply researched and selections from their genealogical records, diaries, letters, literary works, and interviews show how they saw their world and their choices in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Esherick succeeds in humanizing the history of China’s modern transition without losing a historian’s perspective on the lives of his subjects. It is a wonderfully rewarding book.

Three of the many themes running through _Ancestral Leaves_ deserve mention. First, Esherick describes the broadening horizons of the family. Ye Kunhou, who established his line through his service to the Qing dynasty during the rebellions of the nineteenth century, did not really see beyond the empire. For him, the victories of foreign powers over the Qing were actually the defeat of foreign forces, and the opening of treaty ports was the Qing’s gift to the surrendering powers. His son, Ye
Boying, equally successful in his official career, saw no further. In fact, neither of them was interested in anything beyond the interior of northern China and the court in Beijing; they were men of the interior, who took little or no note of the modernizing developments in the coastal cities.

Ye Chongzhi, Boying’s grandson, however, established himself up in the treaty port of Tianjin, turning from pursuing an official career to business, in which his success owed much to the family’s political connections. His many sons (by two concubines) took advantage of new opportunities in business, science, politics (the Communist Party and the liberal Democratic League but not apparently the Guomindang), and even entertainment. By and large, they all aspired to national prominence, but for some of them, this ambition came to include studying abroad in Japan and the United States. The last generation covered in the book saw seven children seek advanced degrees and settle in the United States. Their horizons have gone from a city in Anhui to encompass the globe.

The cultural worlds of Kunhou and Boying were “traditional” in the sense that they acquired such literati cultural skills as poetic composition and art collecting and adopted a very conservative Confucian political view. For them, the rebellions that wracked the nineteenth century were attributable to misconduct by state officials, a belief that required the assumption that the political system was perfect in principle and could orchestrate social harmony were it not flawed in its effectuation. They also held the belief that government should interfere as little as possible in society, which required the further assumption that left to their own devices, the people could take care of themselves and that, by nature, they would act harmoniously. From the fact that events during their lifetimes contradicted both assumptions, they concluded not that they were mistaken about state and society but that those who rebelled had to be suppressed without mercy. Neither of them were true products of the examination system, although their education was grounded in the examination curriculum; their rise was facilitated by the purchase of degrees and offices, meritorious service, and the cultivation of ties with other Anhui natives.

These men were certainly typical of some portion of Qing officialdom, but the book does not tell us anything about what they were not: What other points of view existed at the time, and what other types of officials were active? Can it be shown that their limited intellectual horizons were more typical of officials in North China or in the interior than of natives in the coastal provinces or in the south more generally?

The second theme is the change in family culture, from the patriarchal large family that was maintained from Kunhou to Chongzhi to the nuclear families of Chongzhi’s children. The Chinese state has often been ambivalent about large families, honoring them in the abstract but in practice seeing the value of family division and the multiplication of
tax-paying households. Kunhou’s commitment to family was focused on his descendants; he and his progeny were not interested in sharing their wealth and networks with the kin who remained in Anqing (despite the entreaties of those kin). In fact, their recent reconnection to the Anqing lineage seems to have been arranged as part of the Esherick’s research (although some lineages today are trying to re-establish lost connections on their own).

The multigenerational family—in which education took place at home, women were kept inside, marriages were arranged on the basis of matching status, and family division was postponed as long as possible—was elite by definition, and maintaining such a family was a mark of elite status. The splintering of these families beginning in the 1920s was a product of the dislocations of war, new ideas, and state policy. As a result, elites began to conclude that they had little to gain by maintaining a large family and much to gain by minimizing ties and obscuring ancestral connections, especially when political character was thought to be in the blood, during the political campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s.

Yet this trend cannot be entirely the case, since today in some southern regions, predominantly single-surname villages abound, local industries are owned by descent groups, genealogies are being recompiled, and the locality is once again the focus of identity. Is it possible that when Ye Kunhou and his sons broke from their Anqing kin, they were choosing to make government service the family business—at a time when connections and nepotism offered many opportunities for a career in government to men without higher examination degrees—and no longer saw any value in the tradition of combining occasional official status with long-term embeddedness in local elite society?

The third theme has to do with the Ye family as elite. They were, Esherick says, an elite of a “middling sort” (xi), which appears to mean that among the small percentage of the population that composed the political, business, and academic elites of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some were ahead of them and some behind them. This social position was supposed to be safe, or so the aristocrat Yan Zhitui writing in the sixth century had advised his descendants. The Ye brothers, whether they served the Party or were on the state payroll, suffered during the PRC’s political campaigns. Afterward, however, when they were restored to status, they reknit their connections to each other and used their positions to benefit their kin, sending their children to universities and establishing family members abroad.

Is it a retrospective and external view to think that the Ye brothers were enacting a successful strategy for maintaining the elite status of their family? Esherick notes that in the transition from the Qing to the Republic, marriage alliances continued to be status-based and that official status under the Qing still mattered to Ye marriages in the early Republic. Once marriages came to be based on personal choice rather than parental arrangement, did status-based marriage come to an end? Does personal marriage choice and the rise of the nuclear family mean that, in
some sense, the Ye family as a corporation no longer exists or will soon cease to exist? Many scholars observe that the families of high officials intermarry even today, but can the same be said about the families of other elites? The social processes of China’s past allowed for a degree of both social mobility and elite self-perpetuation. If these processes, the subject of much research by social historians including Esherick, always pertained to families that sought a degree of political involvement, the question is whether the current generation of the Ye family removed itself from this pattern by leaving politics (the one member who was rising in government suffered an untimely death).

Much of the social history of Chinese families since the twelfth century has been written about the south; only recently has north China begun to gain attention. This history of the Ye succeeds in telling the story of modern China through the branch of a southern lineage that became a northern elite family. Hopefully, someone will pick up their story in the next generation, at which point it may well become a case study of a new kind of international family, spreading across the globe from China.

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