326 pp. $89.95 cloth $24.95 paper

Franco emphasizes in this insightful and tear-provoking book that cruelty suggests a “deliberate intention to hurt and damage another” (1). Governments, anti-governments, and criminal organizations are the principal authorities governing its perpetration. Cruelty’s forms range from blunt acts of violence (killings, torture, and rape) to more subtle ones; the sudden “disappearance” of people can be “even more cruel than public assassinations” (192). Those who manage to avoid execution embody the “destruction of the lives of those who must go on living” (171); those who collaborate with the torturers illustrate “the moral ambiguities created by the military regimes” (190).

Eight chapters focus on historical episodes. Chapter 1 considers the 1937 massacre of Haitians by dictator Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. Chapters 2 and 3 highlight the disproportionate cruelty suffered by indigenous people and the rape of women, predominantly indigenous, in Guatemala and Peru. Chapter 4 examines torturers and collaborators, distinguishing between cruelty committed by groups “in the heat of battle” and that committed by torturers who “must calculate the degree of punishment a victim can support without dying” (94). Chapter 5 looks at cruel “revolutionary justice” as exemplified by Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in Peru and revolutionary groups in Argentina and El Salvador. Chapter 6 ponders the agonies of some survivors and the re-invention of others, and Chapter 7 thinks about those who collaborated with torturers to mitigate their own pain or to gain privileges. Chapter 8 draws from the “ghostly arts,” primarily photography. Chapter 9 focuses on the violence pandemic in Mexico, especially against women in Ciudad Juárez, where the agents of order and disorder are difficult to distinguish.

Franco writes self-confidently from the humanities. Her sources are eclectic. She relies often on reports of “Truth Commissions” but also draws from works of fiction that allow her to uncover feelings, imaginings, fear, lust, and terror. This mix of scholarly historical texts, official government reports, works of literature, and works of art makes her book an absorbing read but leaves those with social-science leanings slightly distressed.

Two verbs represent the strengths of divergent scholarly approaches—to understand and to explain. Franco exemplifies the first option. Readers will understand cruelty in its many forms better than they might through a logistic-regression equation. But explanation is not her strength; nor does it seem her intention. Notwithstanding her assertions regarding modernity, she never explains why this concept makes it into the title of the book or of the afterword. My inference from what she writes is that the practice of cruelty has a long pedigree in human experience, as exemplified in her discussion of the re-enactments of “the conquest” a half-millennium after Columbus. Modernity may
have its cruelty, but modernity explains nothing in this book. Hierarchy and difference are responsible for the victimization of “the other” today, as they were in the past.

Franco does not employ concepts from the social sciences to address intellectual challenges. Among her asserted causes for the current violence in Mexico is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In contrast, the considerable social-science work on violence in today’s Mexico now available serves to explain, not to damn. Finally, Franco does not discuss her choices. Why choose some works of fiction but not others? At what points does she leap to highlight meaning at the expense of accuracy? How should we understand the author’s craft, not just her topic?

Franco’s book, nevertheless, is a tour de force on its own terms, thanks to its clarity of exposition, its empathy toward the victimized, and its commitment to understand unspeakable crimes.

Jorge I. Domínguez
Harvard University

Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe: Interactions between Environmental Settings and Cultural Transformations. Edited by Sunhild Kleingärtner, Timothy P. Newfield, Sébastien Rossignol, and Donat Wehner (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2013) 406 pp. $95.00

What this volume does well is to call attention to the potential for interdisciplinary research to shine a light on the history of medieval Central Europe, especially on those regions and centuries lacking rich written source material. The list of methodologies employed in these articles is impressive. Broadly speaking, they include not just history (the study of written records) but also archeology, network analysis, and spatial analysis. More specifically, the articles discuss findings from such diverse fields as maritime archeology (the study of shipwrecks), metallurgy, settlement studies, archaeozoology (analysis of animal bones), the study of epizootic diseases, dendroclimatology (tree-ring analysis), palynology (pollen analysis), and archaeobotany (in this case, the study of the plant diets of the region’s inhabitants). What emerges from all of these articles is a tantalizing glimpse at how history can be combined with other fields to develop a remarkably rich picture of the ways in which medieval people interacted with the landscape—both natural and man-made.

This collection includes an introduction, fifteen chapters, and a conclusion. With the exception of one chapter written in French, the contributions are in English. Although many of the authors are not native English speakers, the quality of the writing is generally high, and most of the articles are clear—notwithstanding the occasional technical terminology.
Unfortunately, the volume struggles to maintain coherence while nominally attempting to address the broad theme of landscapes and societies. “Europe East of the Elbe” is a large and diverse region; the articles range geographically from northern Germany and Poland to Hungary and Russia. The three articles that focus on Schleswig-Holstein and the four that concern Poland do not communicate with one another as much as they could. In the conclusion, Rossignol acknowledges this problem by referring to the articles as “a series of vignettes . . . that, one could argue, are somewhat arbitrary” (379). This is a frustrating—but appropriate—description. Tellingly, the most thoughtful and challenging analysis of the volume’s subject matter is found neither in the editors’ introduction nor in Rossignol’s conclusion but in the opening pages of Piotr Górecki’s fine contribution about the Henryków Book as a source for environmental history.

Most of the contributors are to be applauded for their attempts to ask new questions using a mix of traditional and cutting-edge methodologies. The volume would have been better, however, if more of the articles were based on finished research. Many of the authors stress the preliminary nature of their findings, because there are more bones to count, more finds to date, and more data to collect in the field. Hopefully, polished end results will be published in a volume that more effectively ties together all of these scholars’ findings.

Jonathan R. Lyon
University of Chicago

_Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe_. Edited by John–Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2013) 792 pp. $50.00

This study opens a number of new interdisciplinary pathways to the field of Holocaust studies in the postcommunist worlds of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Despite a modest selection of studies about the Holocaust in some of these countries during the past two decades—such as Michael Bar-Zohar’s _Beyond Hitler’s Grasp: The Heroic Rescue of Bulgaria’s Jews_ (Holbrook, Mass., 1998) and Christian Gerlach and Götz Aly’s _Das letzte Kapitel, Der Mord an den ungarischen Jude, 1944–1945_ (Stuttgart, 2002)—we know little about the “carnival of revolution” regarding the Holocaust, that swept the region in the aftermath of communism’s collapse from 1989 to 1991. David S. Wyman gave us a hint about the fate of Holocaust memory and studies during the communist era in his _The World Reacts to the Holocaust_ (Baltimore, 1996), which is a useful primer to Himka and Michlic’s interdisciplinary study.

To some extent, the question of how various countries have dealt with Holocaust memory and study can be ascertained by their communist and postcommunist histories. Soviet Belarus, for example, paid little
attention to the fate of the Jews during the Shoah; even in the post-
Soviet era, Belarus continues to view the death of Jews in the broader
context of the Soviet citizens who lost their lives during the war. The
fact that as many as 800,000 Jews died in the Belarussian Soviet Socialist
Republic during the Holocaust was not given special treatment outside a
broader national theme.

In Russia, the question of the Holocaust is much more fraught,
linked intellectually and socially to the long traditions of antisemitism
that have haunted the face of that nation since the eighteenth century.
On one level, Russian academics have readily adopted a more traditional
Western understanding of this topic, but socially and politically, anti-
semitism remains a vibrant force in certain elements of Russian society.

This rich collection of chapters on each country in the region pro-
vides a complex and nuanced look at this issue from a variety of disci-
plinary approaches. More importantly, many of these chapters embrace a
new approach to Holocaust studies by discussing the multi-ethnic nature
of the Shoah throughout Eastern Europe and Russia, often, for example,
tracing the fate of the Roma beyond the token statements about their
victimization in many contemporary studies on the Holocaust. A num-
ber of the chapters also share such topics as Jasenovac, the deadly Ustaša
concentration camp in Croatian Slavonia, and the question of genocide.

In addition to the fascinating discussions of national memory in
postcommunist Eastern Europe and Russia, this well-edited collection
also contributes significantly to the bibliography of this new, important
field of study. Unfortunately, the only reference tools available for schol-
ars are in the endnotes. The publisher might have at least consented to
make a bibliography available online. Nonetheless, this pioneering work
in the field of Holocaust studies should be a part of any library with even
the most modest of holdings about the Shoah.

David M. Crowe
Elon University

The Legal Language of Scottish Burghs: Standardization and Lexical Bundles
1380–1350. By Joanna Kopaczyk (New York, Oxford University Press,
2013) 337 pp. $74.00

Historians have tended to ignore formulaic phrases in medieval docu-
ments, focusing on the rest of the text. Kopaczyk’s book provides a
timely reminder that such formulae can shed light on the historical pe-
riod in which they were used. Bringing together linguistics, law, and
history, she suggests new avenues of research into medieval society. Al-
though the book’s focus is the vernacular legal language of medieval
Scottish towns, the methodology is intended as a model for similar stud-
ies elsewhere that make use of electronic corpus materials. It will be of
interest not only to linguists but also to historians and legal scholars.
The book is divided into three sections. Part I discusses Kopaczyk’s methodology, the extraction of the most frequently appearing lexical bundles (repetitive groups of words in a body of material) from three electronic corpora of medieval Scots. These bundles cover the period from 1380, when vernacular legal texts began to appear, to 1565, just after the Protestant Reformation when anglicizing tendencies began to influence the Scots language. Similar investigations using English corpus collections are discussed, although no exact parallel collection of medieval English legal texts has yet been undertaken. Kopaczyk’s sources are the Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots, the Edinburgh Corpus of Older Scots, and the Wigtown Burgh Court Book, which together provide 600,000 words from charters, burgh court records, and notaries’ registers. This is the largest corpus collection analyzed in this way to date. She sets out to identify the standardizing patterns, to examine the structure and function of these chunks of text, and to see how the language of the law responded to external conditions.

Part II provides the historical context by discussing the origins of the Scottish burghs, the conditions of town life, and the role of local courts in urban society. The political history relies heavily on an older general text, resulting in some dated interpretations, but in other respects this part includes a viable discussion of Scottish medieval towns. Particularly interesting is her exploration of a linguistic “community of practice” among notaries and scribes, a sub-group in the wider community of the burgh. Part III presents Kopaczyk’s analysis of the lexical bundles with separate chapters on binomials (for example, *liberte* and *fredom*), multinomials (*maner, forme, and effect*), short bundles of three to five words, and long bundles of six to eight words.

Kopaczyk’s work illustrates that legal language reflects the conditions under which it evolved. Scots legal language contains elements of both indigenous law and external influences, including English common law, Scandinavian law, and continental Roman law and canon law. Binomials and multinomials sometimes include both Latin-derived terms and their vernacular equivalents (for example, *proportis* and *beris*). The written text reflects the traditional oral and performative nature of law, as illustrated by the formula for land transactions—“by the delivery of earth and stone”—by frequent references to witnessing, and by alliterative binomials. The very use of formulae illustrates the importance of words as mnemonic devices to ensure the preservation and underscore the authority of the exact words that enact the law.

Tracing patterns of usage over time, Kopaczyk suggests reasons for change. For example, references to the bailies, council, and community became increasingly common during the fifteenth century, implying a crystallization of burgh structures of authority. She also proposes other reasons for changes, including legal reforms by James I in the early fifteenth century. She examines geographical differences, finding that the mid-east region, centering on Edinburgh, tended to be the first to standardize much legal language. Intriguingly, her evidence suggests that
the southwest may have had its own legal traditions and usage, although this conclusion may be shaped by the nature of the corpus and requires further investigation.

In raising questions about factors promoting change in legal usage, the book suggests new areas for historians to investigate. Most importantly, Kopaczyk shows that language is both a vehicle for law and its crucial element, that it is active as well as passive, and that those interested in the past should pay close attention to it.

Elizabeth Ewan
University of Guelph


This story, told in exhausting detail in strict linear narrative, follows the downward spiral of the wayward scion of an otherwise upright and upwardly mobile family. William Jackson senior (1763–1814) amassed a considerable fortune as an East India Company operative, and in spite of a blighted career was able to establish himself back in England as a landed gentleman, although one of only recent vintage. By contrast, William Jackson junior (1791–1828) in his youth spent lavishly on his family’s credit, and when that source was no longer available, he resorted to fraud, forgery, and finally outright theft, resulting in imprisonment and transportation to Australia, where he died in abject poverty and terminal-stage alcoholism. That, more or less, is that; Phillips delivers exactly what her title and subtitle promise and little else. Consequently, _The Profligate Son_ is a much less interesting book than it might have been.

_The Profligate Son_ is a trade publication intended for a popular audience; it contains references and discussions clearly intended for nonspecialist readers with third-millennium assumptions and preoccupations. It makes brief forays into adolescent psychology and offers cursory disquisitions on substance abuse and addiction, but it borrows no methodologies from the social sciences or any other discipline. Moreover, even though Phillips has found ample material pertinent to the particular individuals and episodes that she traces, she has not framed her research to address any particular historical problem or issue.

The saga of the Jacksons might have been employed to illuminate a wider historical context in interesting ways. Instead, only as much social or cultural context enters the book as is necessary to elucidate young Jackson’s circumstances at any given time. The demands of the “story,” relating every recorded episode in exact chronological order, and at length, crowd out any opportunity to fit these events into a wider framework. Narrative is consistently privileged over analysis, and
exciting and colorful episodes take precedence over informative but quotididian discussions. A number of potentially fruitful themes are introduced—empire, consumer culture, credit and debt, social mobility, notions of respectability, and masculinity, which historians of the period have treated at length. Although Phillips cites some of these scholars in her endnotes, she does not engage substantively with their ideas. Nevertheless, both scholars and readers of popular history are usefully reminded in this work that social mobility can go down as well as up, and the book provides valuable, if disparate, nuggets of information about banking and credit, the prison system, and the early settlement of Australia, to name a few examples.

Ironically, Phillips’ obsessive linearity confounds the narrative thread, especially toward the end, once the scene has changed to Australia. The episode that cost the elder Jackson his career with the East India Company (a botched negotiation with a local ruler that resulted in a massacre) is related at the beginning before quickly disappearing, only to emerge again in the epilogue, where Phillips treats it as though it had cast a long shadow over both father and son. Indeed it may have done so, but Phillips never explores whether the elder Jackson’s failing as a civil servant influenced his parenting. She instead turns her attention to his efforts to give his son a genteel education, as if his own gentility were firmly established in the book, but it is not. Phillips says far too little about Jackson senior’s struggle for respectability; in fact, he is largely absent, except when called upon to play the stern and disapproving paterfamilias. In fact, his own pursuit of status is as interesting and important to Phillips’ larger point as his son’s is, if not more so. Phillips would have done better to set this dysfunctional relationship at the center of a “thick description” of its varying contexts, a method employed successfully by such scholars as Colley and Stater, two authors of notable “crossover” books.¹

John Eglin
University of Montana

tary hospitals and neglected the role of workhouse infirmaries. Although this description may be unfair to earlier historians of the Poor Law medical service, such as Hodgkinson and Flinn, it is certainly doubtful that the histories of sickness and poverty should be separated in this way.\(^1\) Even if we leave aside the question of the extent to which poverty was a direct cause of sickness, sickness was certainly a frequent cause of poverty and the Poor Law authorities had an obligation to provide not only for the “able-bodied poor” but also for “the lame, impotent, old, blind and such others among them being poor and not able to work.”\(^2\)

The contributors employ a range of strategies to address this gap. The majority of the chapters tend to rely on traditional forms of documentary analysis using a variety of institutional and official records, such as the Minute Books of the Birmingham Board of Guardians and the Parliamentary Papers. Methodologically, the most innovative chapters are those by Jeremy Boulton, Romola Davenport, and Leonard Schwarz about the mortality of inmates at the workhouse of St Martin’s-in-the-Fields, and by Alannah Tomkins, who consults working-class autobiographies to reconstruct the “patient’s view” of workhouse care. The book’s other chapters also address a wide range of health-related issues, including such topics as infectious disease, maternity care, various forms of mental affliction, the infirmities of old age, and medical innovation.

One of the central themes of the book concerns the distinction between the Old and New Poor Laws. Of the nine chapters that deal mainly with England and Wales, four are largely concerned with the Old Poor Law and two with the New Poor Law. Three of the chapters span both epochs. The overall conclusions tend to reinforce Flinn’s view that the advent of the New Poor Law led to improvements in the quality of medical provision in some areas and a decline in others. Parts of the service likely deteriorated in the face of demands for “economy” and “less eligibility.” However, as Samantha Shave demonstrates, the establishment of a central authority also created the opportunity for new forms of accountability, in which the exposure of local “scandals” could increase the pressure for centrally induced reforms.

The book also includes two chapters about the relationship between medicine and workhouse provision in the different settings of Ireland and the Caribbean, together with a reflective afterward by Steven King. One of the most important points to emerge from the book is the need to place the workhouse in what King describes as the “mixed economy of health care for the poor” (230). Although it can sometimes be tempting to think of “the poor” and “paupers” as relatively static groups, they should be discussed more dynamically. We still need to


\(^2\) “An Act for the Relief of the Poor” (1597), in *The Statutes at Large, from the Fifth Year of the Reign of King Edward the Fourth to the End of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1763), 684.)
know more about the routes that took people into (and, less often) out of pauperism, the ways in which they utilized different forms of health care throughout their lives, and the role that sickness played in precipitating periods of hardship and destitution.

Bernard Harris
University of Strathclyde


Most naval histories of World War I concentrate on the handful of engagements that took place between capital ships, on the U-boat war, and on the North Sea blockade. Pattee makes a useful contribution by focusing instead on the strategy implemented by Britain during the first months of the war to protect British global commerce from German interdiction. The book’s subtitle is thus slightly misleading, although it does reflect Pattee’s insistence that the campaigns mounted by British colonies and dominions against German possessions were crucial to the success of the strategy.

Pattee’s perspective is mainly that of a policy analyst. The book’s principal strength lies in presenting coherently a wide range of the factors that British naval planners took into account before the war in constructing a response to anticipated German attempts to disrupt British trade. These factors were not only military but also commercial, including, for example, the need to manage maritime insurance to encourage shippers to accept wartime risks. Pattee considers the strategy that resulted as having been successful, although the fact that it took little account of the potential of submarines for attacking commerce might be regarded as a significant failure. “Success” is apparently assessed in terms of planners’ pre-war perceptions of the specific threats that they anticipated confronting.

The book’s principal weakness is one that it shares with much (although not all) of what might be called the “policy history” genre. It describes a world in which state personnel identify problems and formulate solutions to them within a restricted cognitive field that privileges certain factors and downplays or ignores others. The privileged factors are those featured in the primary sources that Pattee uses—mainly British planning and operations documents from the Admiralty and other offices, with occasional references to autobiographies of cabinet ministers. Pattee faithfully reproduces what the documents say, but his analysis is circumscribed by the conventional perspectives adopted by the people who wrote them.

On the basis of such documents, Pattee describes British overseas naval and colonial operations essentially as the fulfillment of pre-war planning. The colonies, India, and the dominions fell into line with the
plans. Only India is portrayed as having had aims that transcended imperial planning. Pattee mentions them mainly to explain the overstepping of the initial strategy in Mesopotamia that produced the Indian Army’s debacle at Kut in 1916. The politics of imperialism in Australia and New Zealand and their governments’ expansionary aims are largely absent from the book, although such factors strongly influenced the ways in which the dominions accommodated themselves to British strategy. Pattee cites no dominion archives and only a few other dominion sources. Nor does he discuss the importance of South African internal politics in shaping the lengthy and embarrassing campaign to subdue German East Africa, even though the original campaign made little sense in terms of protecting commerce after 1915. Furthermore, he overlooks the misjudgments and confusion that led to the British naval disaster at Coronel in 1914, treating the affair as a case of pre-war planning that had the intended results, except that the Germans happened to win the battle.

Pattee’s book is an important addition to the naval history of World War I. However, because it shares the common limitations of the policy-history genre—especially the tendency to privilege factors emphasized in planning documents and to discount other factors—it cannot offer a comprehensive analytical account of its subject.

Woodruff D. Smith
University of Massachusetts, Boston

Plague and Public Health in Early Modern Seville. By Kristy Wilson Bowers (Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2013) 139 pp. $80.00

Despite the long interest of historians and the general public in medicine and disease throughout the world, few works in English focus on the Iberian peninsula. In this short and tightly written text, Bowers introduces specialists and neophytes to the abundant evidence that places Spain, and particularly Seville’s physicians and public-health practitioners, at the center of the transformations that occurred in early modern Europe. Why the choice of Seville? This city was the monopoly port for Spain’s navigation and trade with the Indies for more than two centuries. It served as the commercial hub of the first global empire, especially after the incorporation of Portugal and its colonial holdings from 1580 to 1640. Although geographically at the periphery, it was at the center of the exchange of ideas—especially the wisdom of the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian scholars and doctors who had lived in Andalusia for centuries. The city housed persistent clusters of merchants and bankers from Florence, Genoa, and even the Hapsburg Empire, as well as Portuguese ship captains and sailors. By the third decade of the sixteenth century, after the Spanish conquest of the Aztec and Inca states, and treasures began to flow from the Americas, Seville had grown large enough to permit
several communicable diseases to become endemic. Although some of them, such as smallpox and measles, extracted a heavy toll, they largely took the young. The Spaniards viewed them as inevitable, part of God’s unknowable plan.

The epidemics most feared were those that broke out intermittently and swept away both adults and children. The plague, in bubonic or pneumonic forms, erupted periodically in Spain for generations following its catastrophic appearance in the mid-fourteenth century. Sixteenth-century observers saw it as the primary threat to public health, given its symptoms, high mortality, and impact on the local and regional economy. It seemed to be one of those diseases that might be stopped by quarantine, nursing, and perhaps medication. When first apprised of the plague, city and local officials, as well as those at the royal court, feverishly set out to verify its existence and nature, and then to mount effective measures to block its spread.

Bowers studies the correspondence and actions of the city council, the royal governor, merchants, physicians, and apothecaries to explore the reactions of various groups in the city and beyond. Her documentation is rich, culled from the holdings of numerous archives and libraries. She records the bills for the medicines dispensed by the apothecaries and the debates between various economic interests hoping to keep the city open for trade; she even consults published and manuscript pamphlets and treatises about the plague and how to treat the sick. Most of the primary information comes from the municipal archive in Seville, with its detailed records of the meetings and debates of the city council, as well as the commissions established to deal with specific threats to health.

The unifying theme, emphasized in chapter titles, is what Bowers calls “balancing”; “negiotiating” might be just as apt a term. Within that framework, she examines the various ways by which ideas were articulated to maintain social order in a critical period, discussing growth and governance, competing disease concepts, the roles of the individual and the community in fostering public health, and the almost inevitable conflict between local (city) and central (crown) authorities. The result is a brief yet richly detailed and rewarding survey of medicine and the attempt to provide for public health in Spain’s largest city in the era of Philip II.

Noble David Cook
Florida International University

_Staying Afloat: Risk and Uncertainty in Spanish Atlantic World Trade, 1760–1820._ By Jeremy Baskes (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2013) 394 pp. $70.00

Straddling the tightly regulated era of Spanish colonial shipping before 1778 and the free-trade era thereafter, _Staying Afloat_ offers a nuanced
analysis of commercial risks during war and peace years and of mercantile strategies for coping with uncertainties. Baskes has researched the records of the Cadiz consulados (at the Archivo General de Indias, Seville) to underpin the broad themes discussed in his book: the risks of shipping in Atlantic trade, the potential for business problems in the principal-agent relationship, the significance of trust in the mercantile system, credit and debt problems, the use of the convoy system to minimize risk, and the performance of the marine insurance market in Cadiz. Baskes combines empirical research and the contextualization of findings from the consulados, which include detailed accounts from bankruptcy records, with insights from economic theory and the new institutional economics to explore the main issues covered. He has familiarity with econometric methods, but they do not feature prominently in the text. He includes a useful multiple-regression analysis, however, to determine the risk factors that influenced marine insurance premium rates (245–248).

Spanish colonial shipping operated differently from the oceanic trade of other Western European trading powers, such as Britain, France, and the Netherlands, in that fleets protected by convoys were prominent. This strategy was made possible by the concentration of much Spanish trade at Cadiz and at a limited number of Spanish American ports. Such convoys have usually been viewed as a way of protecting the monopoly profits of the flotas and galleons. Baskes argues convincingly against this interpretation by marshalling evidence to show that monopoly practices were not especially prevalent in the fleet system: “There were simply too many merchants engaged in the fleet trade to collude, and none of them had sufficient market share alone to drive up prices” (53). Another section of the book offers a significant revision of the existing historiography in a critique of the methodologies independently deployed by Fisher and García-Baquero González for calculating increased exports in Spanish colonial trade after 1778.1 Baskes shows that the export base year used by both historians inflates the post-1778 growth in exports.

Chapter 5 has an interesting discussion of the rising demand for credit in Mexico and other parts of Spanish America and the escalation of risk after 1778. Merchants became uneasy about further extension of credit as debts piled up; this story is familiar to anyone who has studied the British or French Caribbean during the same period. Chapters 8 and 9 provide a thorough study of the Cadiz marine-insurance market. Some of the themes addressed are the lack of correlation between insurance rates and distance covered and the use of discounts by insurers for those merchants who shipped their goods in convoys. The problems of sustaining a profitable marine insurance industry at Cadiz in wartime

during the 1790s are attributed to relatively few individuals assuming risks that were too big.

Future historians will extend the material offered in *Staying Afloat* by linking the risks associated with extending credit in Spanish colonial trade to institutional mechanisms for securing payment and recovering debts between principals and agents. Consideration of those matters would deepen the findings reported in *Staying Afloat*, which is a notable study of risk management in oceanic trade. Baskes’ book deserves careful reading not just by scholars of Spain’s colonial empire but by specialists in the business and economic history of European transatlantic trade during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Kenneth Morgan
Brunel University

*Reviving the Eternal City: Rome and the Papal Court, 1420–1447.* By Elizabeth McCahill (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2013) 302 pp. $49.95

This book is not a study of physical Rome but of its myth and symbolism—of how popes Martin V and Eugenius IV, and the humanists at their courts (Niccolò Signorili, Poggio Bracciolini, Leonardo Bruni, Flavio Biondo, and the like) formulated their ideas of the city. McCahill addresses metaphors rather than urban development. Her focus on two liminal, transitional popes who were caught “between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, between conciliarism and papalism, between an image of Rome as a restored republic and a dream of Rome as a papal capital” allows her to investigate a period largely ignored by the historiography.

Unfortunately, her book does not fit well into a model of interdisciplinarity. It is essentially a work of intellectual history, or history of ideas, with a quick foray into ritual/cultural studies. McCahill leaves her readers at the mercy of the humanists that she studies, unable to disentangle topoi and formulae from the historical reality, such as it is. She has little to say in her chapters about how most Romans felt about their city or how they imagined it in comparison with her humanists’ vision.

The book is clearly and beautifully written but weak at times in its review of the historiography. McCahill does not engage the recent literature that pertains to her work—studies of the Avignon papacy, the Great Western Schism, and of epistolary relations (as examined by, say, Trexler and Hayez), Nussdorfer’s recent book about Roman notaries, or investigations grounded in the socio-economic history of the city.1 The

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After a quick survey of the situation in Rome after Martin V’s return in the early 1420s, McCahill focuses on the Colonna pope’s ancestral ties to Rome and the Papal States. She starts with Signorili’s aggrandizing Descriptio Urbis Romae (c. 1430), which stages Rome as the locale of all great events of humanity and accords with Martin’s effort at regaining control of his capital by wooing the city’s new baronial aristocracy. The pope ingratiated Rome’s residents by reinstating the office of Masters of the Street and patronizing new doors for Santa Maria Maggiore that glorified him and the city.

The second chapter presents the curial humanists’ opinions of their employers. McCahill uses humanists’ dedications of translations as a way to show their (sycophantic) means of gaining employment. She then analyzes curial humanists’ sharp criticism of the court and papal bureaucracy. Poggio’s Facetiae (1470) anchors the second half of the chapter. After a quick review of Eugenius’ rule, McCahill stays with Poggio for her third chapter, which examines the meaning of his humor. She leaves unanswered the question of how contemporaries appreciated and responded to wit, and fails to clarify the relationship of this work to the rebuilding of the curia, if not Rome. By comparing Poggio with other curial humanists, however, she is able to affirm that his moral philosophy enabled him to rationalize the new environment that was developing around him.

McCahill changes direction in her fourth chapter, which is devoted to the court’s spirituality and the needs for reform. Early curial humanists (Marco Barbo, Poggio, Leon Battista Alberti, and Domenico Capranica) and their popes were intent on reforming the Church from bottom to top, starting with clerics, and not with the top-down approach chosen by institutionally driven reformers. Emphasizing personal spiritual revival, the austere Eugenius found spiritual affirmation in his support of the growing observant movement.

In her fifth chapter McCahill explores Eugenius’ use of ritual, public performance, and ceremonial display to legitimate his position and authority. She finds strong continuity between Avignonese practices and the baroque era. Since Eugenius was Venetian, McCahill’s choice not to discuss the pope’s approach to ritual versus La Serenissima’s civic ritual (as Muir did) is regrettable.2

In her last chapter, McCahill discusses Rome’s revival from Biondo’s intellectual perspective before turning to Eugenius’ effort at rehabilitating the city. She investigates how Eugenius drew a new spatial definition of Rome, shifting the Colonna family’s grip on the ancient city away from the center and moving the Borgo and Vatican, on the

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1 Laurie Nussdorfer, Brokers of Public Trust: Notaries in Early Modern Rome (Baltimore, 2009).
other side of the Tiber, to the political side. She concludes by emphasizing the freedom of expression that early humanists espoused, unlike their High Renaissance successors.

This book may prove satisfying to intellectual historians, but its unfulfilled potential is frustrating. Historical reality is as important as myth and idea; one aspect should not have to be sacrificed for the sake of the other. Ironically McCahill’s best chapters (1, 5, and 6) are the ones that blend imagination and reality.

Joëlle Rollo-Koster
University of Rhode Island


This book offers extraordinary insight into the Nazi horror system by tracking eighty university graduates from their youth during World War I to their entry into the ss murder machine and eventually to the trials that several of them underwent after World War II. On the basis of extensive research in the archival and published sources that are reflected in the extensive notes and bibliography, Ingrao combines anthropological and sociological insights with a detailed study of the university and ss-organization records and the reports of the murderous commando operations in which the intellectuals participated during the campaigns in Poland and the Soviet Union.

The book provides a stark sense of how these individuals came to see the world as filled with enemies of the Nordicist Germany that they envisioned. They were fully prepared to plan and personally engage in whatever horrors that they deemed necessary to accomplish what they defined as the new demographic order of Europe and possibly the world. This work vividly portrays the reality of the time; to the best of this reviewer’s knowledge, it is the only work to clarify a critical aspect of the first stage of the Holocaust. The fact that in the early weeks of the invasion of the Soviet Union, an *Einsatzkommando* (murder commando) advanced, on average, 50 miles a day, quickly killing primarily Jewish men before returning later to kill women and children, has been ignored in too much of the relevant literature (162).

As Germany’s situation in the war deteriorated, these ss intellectuals refused to recognize the possibility of defeat until literally the last moment; they had been just as unwilling to accept Germany’s defeat in 1918. They attempted to escape justice afterward, and those who were put on trial invented a variety of exculpatory tales and explanations for their actions. In view of the importance of Otto Ohlendorf, commander of the *Einsatzgruppe* D, in this account, Ingrao’s inability to take advantage of Hilary Earl’s excellent study *The Nuremberg SS-Einsatzgruppen*
Trial 1945–1958 (New York, 2009), which postdated Ingrao’s work, is unfortunate.

The one aspect of the German population policy that Ingrao failed to capture is the large-scale kidnapping of children thought to look Germanic—the Heuaktion, or Hay Operation, which was designed to weaken the Slavic and increase the Nordic population. In any future edition of this book, the collapse of the German Army Group Center should be moved from May to June–July 1944 (209). But these criticisms are minor. Those who hope to understand how Germany turned away from civilization for a dozen years to become a morass of evil can find in this book a most thoughtful and helpful guidance.

Gerhard L. Weinberg
University of North Carolina


In this small but ambitious book, Dal Lago seeks to extend recent research on the comparative history of forced labor regimes, inspired by Kolchin’s pioneering study of American slavery and Russian serfdom. Dal Lago reviews the ground covered by Kolchin but also widens the study of forced or bonded labor to embrace Brazilian slavery, African slavery, and Iberian societies with forms of bonded labor. The chronological scope of his new book is as broad as its geographical range. It begins with the founding of African chattel slavery in Brazil and Spanish America during the sixteenth century and concludes with efforts formally to end slavery in the Americas in the late nineteenth century. The analysis is grounded totally on secondary literature, as befits a study of such range. It has to be said, too, that it offers relatively little that is novel in terms of conceptual approaches. This book will appeal primarily to students seeking a guide to existing literature, not to established scholars of forced labor in history.

The story that Dal Lago seeks to tell pivots on the growth of international trade since Christopher Columbus and, more specifically, on the interrelationship between the European, especially British, demand for imported foodstuffs and raw materials and rates and patterns of resettlement, colonization, and development in territories and states that lay at the periphery of European epicenters of international exchange. Dal Lago’s approach draws implicitly (though at times openly) on a world-systems framework of analysis, but he also seeks to frame and inform his analysis by reference to other theoretical paradigms. Thus, at various

points, he invokes the Williams thesis on capitalism and slavery, theories of Atlantic history, and Tomich’s concept of a second American slavery to structure his arguments. Underpinning the entire work is an emphasis on the value of comparative studies for the furtherance of our understanding of trade and labor relations on both sides of the Atlantic Basin.

Chronologically, the book moves through the rise and expansion of slave-grown sugar, tobacco, and cotton in the Americas; and grain, citrus fruits, and other food crops in the borderlands between Europe, Asia, and Africa—notably, in the last case, the nineteenth-century Sokoto Caliphate in what today is northern Nigeria. Among the unifying themes that Dal Lago explores are the economics of plantation slavery and serfdom, the nature of master–laborer relationships, and the capacity of systems of forced labor to innovate in the context of the changing international competition for goods.

This last theme merits more extended consideration in the context of the collapse of coercive labor regimes globally during the last two centuries and in the light of the belief, commonly identified with Adam Smith, that free labor was more efficient than coerced labor. Although it is an issue that is surely relevant to historical analyses of international trade and labor relations, Dal Lago almost totally fails to address it in any serious way. To do so would require a different, equally ambitious, but ultimately more rewarding and insightful, study of coercive labor regimes beyond Dal Lago’s focus on their internal and comparative dynamics, looking instead at the changing international cultural, moral, and economic context of such regimes from the late eighteenth century onward.

David Richardson
University of Hull


How did medicine look through the eyes of our founding fathers and their families? In Revolutionary Medicine, Abrams, a scholar of Jewish studies, makes a foray into early American medicine to describe the medical experiences of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John and Abigail Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and, to a lesser extent, James Madison. Abrams’ “three main goals” are to “demonstrate the critical” roles of these founders in the development of America’s public health—
care system, to examine the personal encounters with illness that encouraged them to support “surprisingly modern notions” of health, and to “illuminate” colonial and early American medical practice as well as to provide “salutary lessons for our time” (5).

Abrams bases much of her research on the collections and papers of Washington, Franklin, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison. Her book is filled with detailed accounts of how illness and disease battered them and their families. Yet, even with the benefit of such a rich archive of source material, Abrams’ work offers little in the way of new scholarship. For example, her description of the outbreak of smallpox during the Revolutionary War through Washington’s experiences fails to expand on Elizabeth Fenn’s similar work in *Pox Americana*, which was published more than a decade ago.¹

Abrams could have delved more deeply into the many ways that medicine and medical practice entered into the lives of her subjects. She writes that Franklin became a mentor to a number of American physicians studying in Europe, like Benjamin Rush and John Morgan, but she does not go into any detail about exactly how he influenced them (101). Abrams mentions William Buchan’s *Domestic Medicine*—a popular “self-help” medical guide reprinted throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century—several times in reference to its use by Abigail Adams (19–20, 133, 148), but she fails to cite the other medical works that comprised the founders’ libraries and probably also had some bearing on their medical knowledge.

A cursory analysis of Abrams’ bibliography and notes reveals that she relied heavily on standard histories of medicine for this time period, as well as on biographies of Washington, Franklin, Adams, Madison, Jefferson, and their families. She rarely consulted histories of colonial and early America, the Atlantic World, and international/global health that could have contributed to a deeper understanding of the world in which these men and women lived. Abrams does not seem to cross disciplinary boundaries in *Revolutionary Medicine*.

Parts of the book are repetitive. Smallpox, which makes a similar appearance in every chapter, undoubtedly touched the lives of the founding fathers and their families, but surely Abrams could have found a better way to present this recurring theme? Nonetheless, *Revolutionary Medicine*, though not revolutionary itself, is a solid descriptive account of the medical world of our founding fathers.

Melissa Grafe
Yale University

Sons of the Father: George Washington and His Protégés. Edited by Robert M. S. McDonald (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2013) 285 pp. $35.00

Ten of the twelve chapters in Sons of the Fathers address Washington’s relationship with individuals: Daniel Morgan, Anthony Wayne, Henry Knox, Nathaniel Greene, Marquis de Lafayette, and Robert Kirkwood in the military; Thomas Jefferson and Gouverneur Morris in politics; and Alexander Hamilton and James Monroe in both realms. Many of the contributors to this collection, which honors the memory of Don Higginbotham, benefited from Higginbotham’s mentoring in ways that parallel the mentoring that Washington gave the figures highlighted in the book. Collectively, the biographical pieces demonstrate Washington’s genius for identifying and managing talent. Two chapters covering more general themes frame the chapters focusing on Washington’s relationships with individuals.

In discussing Washington’s mentors, Fred Anderson highlights the centrality of the patron–client relationship in eighteenth-century America. Jack Greene concludes by asking how we should account for the extraordinary quality of the men who managed the Revolution. He approaches the problem obliquely by stressing Britain’s penchant for underestimating American capabilities. The leaders of a society that had developed demographically, economically, and politically to the extent that British North America had after 1690 were entitled to more respect from the British than they received. Greene assumes that presiding over a rapidly developing society qualified those in charge to orchestrate a successful revolution. But rapid development could just as well have bred factional chaos. Although Sons of the Father underscores Washington’s ability to manage wildly different personalities, it is less successful in exploring why he was so successful in that role.

Anderson reminds us that Washington’s managerial skills were acquired rather than innate. One of his more impressive acquisitions was learning to navigate the paradoxical relationship between space and power in North America, as noted in Mark Thompson’s chapter on Knox and John W. Hall’s on Nathaniel Greene. In Europe, concentrating power was usually the key to dominating space; in America, the scattering of the population over immense expanses made this strategy far less viable. Hence, the Continental Army was no more capable of subduing American society than the British Army was. Instead, the dispersal of settlement bred a de-centered political culture, dependent upon gentry cooperation, in which problems had to be solved consensually and the renunciation of power could on occasion be an effective way of garnering it.

The absence of strategic centers, however, was a double-edged sword. Though it was a tremendous asset in defeating an enemy, Washington also needed to find ways of concentrating power if he was to persuade Britain to abandon the war, as it did after Yorktown and—almost
a decade later—if the nation was to establish its credit, as it managed to do through Hamilton’s funding scheme. Washington could not have achieved these feats by himself. Instead, he relied on the energy and creativity of many contemporaries. But as this volume shows, he both understood the direction in which events needed to move and developed a canny knack for empowering the right men to get essential jobs done at critical moments.

Richard Buel, Jr.
Wesleyan University

The First Presidential Contest: 1796 and the Founding of American Democracy. By Jeffrey L. Pasley (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2013) 516 pp. $37.50

The Founding Fathers, who opposed political parties as self-serving factions that endangered the public good, designed the Electoral College in hopes of avoiding partisan presidential campaigns. By 1796, it had already become clear that the Founders had failed to achieve this goal. In The First Presidential Contest, Pasley argues that 1796 was a transitional election in which elite-dominated politics began to give way to an ideologically charged democracy.

Unlike previous historians and political scientists who largely ignored the 1796 election because it lacked fully developed parties with formal organizations, Pasley shows that the contest played an “absolutely seminal” role in establishing patterns for subsequent American canvasses, especially by pitting liberalism against conservatism (10). Far from being an election in which elite Founders orchestrated the outcome from the top down, the 1796 vote was instead shaped by lesser-known newspaper editors and Electoral College candidates who crafted the images of the presidential contenders. These mid-level figures included men like Benjamin Franklin Bache, editor of the Philadelphia Aurora, and Leven Powell, Federalist elector candidate from Loudoun County, Virginia. Not a “Founders Study,” this work is an example of “history from the middle out” that focuses more on how the Founders’ images were shaped than on the Founders themselves because the political culture required candidates to remain silent and seemingly disinterested in the outcome (14). In addition to primary sources from countless national, state, and local politicians, as well as secondary sources from a variety of disciplines, Pasley relies heavily on the American Antiquarian Society’s New Nation Votes project.

The Republicans, with whom Pasley sympathizes, believed in the radical Enlightenment ideal that policy should result from a vigorous but rational public debate. They favored an “active democracy” in which the federal government would respond to public opinion about specific policy issues (93). The Federalists, in contrast, were social conservatives
who believed that after an election ended, the public should defer to the presumably elite leaders that it had chosen.

The emergence of the Democratic-Republican Societies in 1793 brought “politics out of the newspapers and into the streets and meeting halls” (80). Two years later, explains Pasley, Republicans tried to persuade the Washington administration to reject the Jay Treaty with Great Britain through public meetings. Federalists had little choice but to defend the treaty with popular appeals of their own. Having failed to defeat the treaty, Republicans again took their case to the people, this time seeking a change of administration in the 1796 election.

The campaign consisted of a culture war of “competing public narratives” about the candidates (225). Resorting to the “rhetoric of reaction” and anti-intellectualism, Federalists portrayed Thomas Jefferson as an “egghead,” an atheist, and a dangerous social experimenter who lacked the manliness, strength, and courage to contend with the radical influences of the French Revolution (242, 248). Not to be outdone, Republicans pounced on statements praising the British form of government in John Adams’ political writings to paint him as a monarchist.

The campaign was visible mainly in the states—especially Pennsylvania—where the voters rather than the state legislatures chose electors. Despite losing Pennsylvania, Adams won the presidency by three electoral votes. Jefferson, the runner-up, became Adams’ vice president. Attempts to tamper with the Electoral College system (most notably Alexander Hamilton’s scheme to elect Adams’ “running mate” Thomas Pinckney as president) all failed.

Carefully researched and engagingly written, Pasley’s volume is the definitive work on this underappreciated election.

Stuart Leibiger
La Salle University


The issue of race has played a major role in recent interdisciplinary scholarship about the history of Native Americans’ internal affairs. Instead of viewing Native societies as “beyond race,” studies have examined how Native peoples responded to “racial categorization and stratification” in their own communities and governance. At the core of Krauthamer’s current study of the Choctaw and Chickasaw’s African slaves is a reconstruction of our understanding not only of Native-American and African-American history but also a re-definition of the

boundaries between groups in the South and the political struggle for freedom and citizenship that faced Native peoples and their freedmen.

Krauthamer contributes an important addition to this ongoing discussion, revising previously held understandings of slavery in Indian country as “benign and inherently different from bondage in the United States.” Indian territory is not simply “the West” but “a site of slavery, emancipation, and struggles for meaningful freedom and citizenship” (153). As a historical site of study, it is far closer to the South than previous studies have allowed. Krauthamer’s study utilizes a wide variety of sources that weave together social, political, legal, racial, and indigenous history in important ways. She juxtaposes Kiziah Love, a freedwoman who told her oral history to the WPA project, with the fables and popular memories about slave history and then tells the story of freedpeople in the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations who were caught in the “complicated history of Indian sovereignty” (1). The process of acquiring capital and purchasing slaves in the market economy intersected with racial identities. The inclusion of the Choctaw and Chickasaw adoption of enslavement challenges the polarity of Southern history as simply black and white after Indian removal.

Krauthamer’s transition to chattel slavery is missing the anthropological work of Robbie Ethridge’s From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540–1715 (Chapel Hill, 2010), which traces the coalescence of the Chickasaw nation through the practice of militarized slaving societies. Krauthamer highlights the Pitchlynn family in the Choctaw nation’s acquisition of slaves as the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations developed and embraced racial ideologies that disenfranchised African Americans by linking race with legal status during the 1840s. These actions culminated with the October 1840 expulsion of all free black people by the Choctaw General Council (71).

Slaves with Baptist backgrounds purchased from Georgia highlight the source material available from missionary records of the African-American slaves in Choctaw and Chickasaw territories. Krauthamer argues that the missionaries created the training ground for the slaves’ political autonomy, opening “opportunities that might temporarily curb the reach of their masters’ control” (59). Krauthamer artfully positions Indian country in the narrative of slaves’ resistance and opposition to masters’ control over their bodies and resources. From the murder of Richard Harkins, slave codes, and, finally, factions in constitutional drafting, Krauthamer ties Choctaw Chickasaw slaveholders’ to the sectional crisis. As a broad historical narrative, Krauthamer is most successful in discussing freedmen’s political organization in the post-emancipation era. When concerns about land, suffrage, and emancipation led to the involvement of the federal government, African-American freedmen, although culturally tied and bonded to the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations, began to contemplate ways in which to grasp their freedom.
and act as political agents in their own right, looking to “the future and possibilities not yet realized” (126).

Kristalyn Shefveland
University of Southern Indiana

*Cotton and Conquest: How the Plantation System Acquired Texas*. By Roger G. Kennedy (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2013) 352 pp. $34.95

*Cotton and Conquest* is not the type of book that the* Journal of Interdisciplinary History* usually reviews. It best can be described as rambling and discursive narrative history, bordering at times on antiquarianism. Kennedy, its author, was trained in the law but spent his career in a variety of fields ranging from journalism to university administration, politics, and government service. For thirteen years, he held the directorship of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History and, under President Clinton, the directorship of the National Park Service between 1993 and 1997. By the time this book appeared, he had been dead for some time. But the argument that he advanced and defended in *Cotton and Conquest*—with a certain old-fashioned élan, not to mention solid research—warrants serious attention.

The overarching thesis of *Cotton and Conquest* is straightforward, even if the book’s research design and narrative path are decidedly not. Kennedy is concerned, first and foremost, with challenging Turner’s view that westward expansion was an inevitable national story of manifest destiny and that slavery was not central to the westward expansion of the southern states.1 Following the leads of many historians in recent years, Kennedy argues instead that westward expansion was based on choices, not inevitability, and that it was perforce international through and through, involving the Spanish, the French, Native Americans, and Mexicans. In Kennedy’s view, expansion to the southwest was about imperialism, cotton, and slavery more than anything else.

In the case of imperial expansion into Texas specifically, Kennedy makes a strong case, albeit in an amazingly roundabout way, that “[t]he acquisition of Texas as a slave society occurred after forty years of preparation and rehearsal, and thirty of strenuous and successful colonization by the planters” (275). Most of *Cotton and Conquest* is concerned with tracing this acquisition, but not without sideways and, to put it bluntly, superficial glances at the history of cotton, the evolution of slavery in North America, the Industrial Revolution, etc., none of which much enhances the argument’s clarity. Nonetheless, Kennedy demonstrates how a broad array of characters—avaricious planters, shippers, manufacturers of cotton, land speculators, financiers, and politicians in both the

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United States and Europe—joined forces in a manner that eventually succeeded in making Texas part of the slavocracy and bringing it into the union as a committed slave state. Although few professional historians today will be surprised by Kennedy’s conclusions, they will, if sufficiently patient, glean much useful detail, as well some unusual insights, from a gifted polymath’s swan song.

Peter A. Coclanis
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill


If there is a single figure who stands out from the teeming crowd of fugitive slaves, underground activists, and slave hunters who populate the pages of Blackett’s slender book, it is Richard McAllister, who in 1850 was named the federal commissioner charged with enforcing the new Fugitive Slave Law, in Harrisburg, Penn. Declaring that fugitive slaves and free blacks alike were “a miserable population—a tax and a pest” (34), he terrorized African Americans, arresting dozens of them and dispatching them back into slavery. Though a Yankee, he epitomized the racist zealotry with which the men and women of the Underground Railroad had to contend.

The appeal of this book lies mainly in such “snapshots,” gleaned primarily from a broad assortment of antebellum newspapers and occasionally court records. Blackett delivers many vivid accounts of escapes, some successful and others tragically not, as well as an illuminating discussion of slave catching and the organized kidnapping of free blacks in the Pennsylvania/Maryland border country. A section on fugitives who escaped to the British Caribbean islands is digressive but illuminating.

The book’s title is a misnomer, since it is neither a broad history of the Underground Railroad nor an extended examination of the politics of slavery. It is rather an erudite, if flawed, reflection on several aspects of the Underground Railroad, with an emphasis on the central but long-neglected role that African Americans played in underground activism. Those readers wanting a more thorough and detailed treatment of underground activity in the borderlands will find it in Stanley Harrold’s Border War: Fighting over Slavery before the Civil War (Chapel Hill, 2010), and David G. Smith’s On the Edge of Freedom: The Fugitive Slave Issue in South Central Pennsylvania, 1820–1870 (New York, 2013).

Although Blackett’s book abounds in well-chosen anecdotes, it would have benefited from providing more context—for instance, greater attention to the underground’s evolution, the volume of fugitive traffic that it handled, and its geographical reach. Nor does Blackett challenge the popular but unsupported belief that the organized under-
ground reached deeply into the South. In reality, the preponderance of underground activity took place on the upper edge of the slave states and in the North, while the majority of successful freedom seekers came from the three border states of Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky.

Blackett also gives surprising, if equivocal, credence to a bizarre, propagandistic 1860 pamphlet called Disclosures and Confessions of Frank A. Wilmot, The Slave Thief and Negro Runner, written by a purported defector from the Underground Railroad. The author, about whom nothing is known, claimed that the “Aiding and Abetting Society,” as he fantastically called it, was a sinister and far-flung conspiracy of “itinerant backsliding ministers, worn out tract colporteurs, elderly females, and a few cunning-looking negroes”—in other words, precisely what Southern nationalists claimed the Underground Railroad to be in their attempt to justify secession on the cusp of the Civil War (91–92).

Southerners tended to attribute every slave’s disappearance to the dark tentacles of the underground. As Blackett shows, however, slaves repeatedly and heroically defied their owners’ belief that they were incapable of planning their own escapes. “Wilmot’s” preposterous cabal never existed; it did not have to, because slaves were capable of voting with their own feet.

Fergus M. Bordewich
Washington, D.C.


Meier’s Nature’s Civil War seeks to expand “common soldier scholarship” by exploring the ways in which Union and Confederate soldiers assigned to the Peninsula and/or the Shenandoah Valley provided “self care” in an effort to recreate the basic creature comforts of home and to avoid disease. Her work is at its best in supplying thick description of the common soldiers’ lot—exposed to the elements, underfed, buggy, dirty, and tired—and their attempts to improve their condition. She merges environmental history with medical history and military history by emphasizing the common soldiers’ awareness of the intersection between environment and disease. The environmental factors that emerge as most critical were temperature, moisture (rain, flood, and basic hydration), and insect infestation.

Meier’s work includes an account of the official struggles of Union and Confederate medical hierarchies to craft efficient medical departments, and a novel view of “straggling” as a form of “self care” that commanders condemned as absence without leave. One of her most intriguing points is that many of the soldiers who came from farms viewed
their surroundings with farmers’ eyes, assessing its drainage, productivity, and water sources—obvious once Meier makes a point of it.

Meier builds her narrative on a rich trove of archival sources that features 205 soldiers, from both the North and the South. She even performs quantitative analysis on her qualitative collection, yielding such interesting facts as a greater prevalence of disease among Civil War troops than official records indicate. Some indication of how the men of this sample were selected would have strengthened her quantitative claims.

The emphasis on the common soldier leads Meier to downplay the importance of contemporary medical knowledge and to privilege the wisdom of the crowd above that of the medical personnel. For example, she argues that “prevention was not considered the domain of nineteenth-century physicians,” which would have surprised the staff of the United States Sanitary Commission who were engaged in that very enterprise. Medical reformers had pushed for improvements in sanitation since the 1790s, albeit using an understanding of infectious disease that targeted foul air as the principal culprit. In general, as Rosenberg emphasized, medical men and lay persons shared an environmentalist understanding of disease causation that was reflected in both the writings of common soldiers and in the analyses of medical men during the Civil War. ¹ Both physicians and patients viewed illness as caused by environmental factors—weather that was too hot, too cold, too wet, or too dry; swampy air; contaminated drinking water; etc.

This book could have profited from vetting by a medical historian or a specialist in infectious disease to eliminate some unfortunate errors. Nonetheless, it succeeds in vividly recreating the common soldier’s struggle to adjust to life in a hostile landscape with mainly his comrades and his wits to keep him alive.

Margaret Humphreys
Duke University

Freedom’s Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction. By Stacey L. Smith (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2013) 324 pp. $34.95

Standard narratives of the American Civil War, slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction typically are structured around three basic polarities—North vs. South, white vs. black, and free labor vs. slavery. For the past three decades, however, scholars focusing on early California’s complex labor and racial histories have steadily exposed the inadequacy of this venerable triad. Taken together, their work makes it clear

that the epic struggles waged by Americans between 1846 and 1877 about such vital matters as freedom, equality, race, and citizenship cannot fully be understood without reference to events in California. There, on “Freedom’s Frontier,” advancing whites confronted a diverse array of non-white peoples that included not only African Americans but also Native Americans, Latinos, and Asians.

Although admitted to the Union as a free state in 1850, gold-rush California quickly became home to a wide range of racially based unfree labor systems that matched its ethnic diversity. Toiling alongside of free laborers in California’s mines, farms, cities, and households were Mexican and Chilean peons; Hawaiian contract laborers; African-American slaves retained by indenture and held in place by the state’s fugitive slave law; Chinese “coolies” and “credit-ticket” workers; and, under the notorious Indian Act of 1850, Native Americans bound variously as apprentices, minor custodial wards, indentured servants, debt peons, and leased convicts.

Though extensive, the historical literature devoted to these enthralled workers has remained deeply segmented along racial lines. Now, at last, Smith has produced a long overdue and urgently needed synthesis that weaves their separate stories together and offers important inter-group comparisons. Along the way, she highlights the poignant plights of bound Indian and Chinese women trafficked throughout frontier California as prostitutes and concubines.

Methodologically, Smith’s work represents a splendid example of traditional archival-based historical research in primary-source documents. Smith draws heavily from a plethora of state and federal government records along with twenty-four California newspapers. Particularly impressive is her work in local and county-court case files that provide detailed and intimate glimpses into the lives of bound workers and their white employers.

Smith’s prodigious research enables her carefully to trace the rise of California’s unfree labor regimes during the 1850s and their subsequent decline during the 1860s when antislavery Republicans came to power in Sacramento. Always the subject of intense partisan conflict, unfree labor sparked contentious debates that mirrored the acrimonious confrontations waged between North and South about slavery. Similarly, the demise of bound labor led to bitter battles regarding the proper place of minority peoples within free society, again reflecting the national problem of how to deal with emancipated African Americans in the South.

Regrettably, these debates led to California’s ironic contribution to Reconstruction-era racial policy—discriminatory anti-Chinese immigration laws couched as antislavery legislation aimed at ending the scourge of “Asiatic coolieism.” As Smith rightly claims, California was “critical in the making of the postemancipation racial order of the United States” (234).

With her uniquely comprehensive treatment of race and unfree labor in California, Smith succeeds in her quest “to recast the narrative of
the sectional crisis, emancipation, and Reconstruction in the United States by geographically recentering it in the Far West” (2).

Michael F. Magliari
California State University, Chico


In 1993, African-American psychologist Kenneth B. Clark, reflecting on Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) and his involvement with the Supreme Court’s landmark decision, lamented, “I am forced to recognize that my life has, in fact, been a series of glorious defeats.”¹ Echoing the disappointment expressed by many civil-rights activists, including Derrick Bell and Charles Ogletree, Clark’s commentary exposed a generational frustration with court-ordered desegregation. With this disillusionment in mind, Thuesen explores African-American educational activism during the decades before Brown reified integration. Understanding black struggles for school equalization in the Jim Crow South, she contends, can help policymakers navigate the thorny relationship between racially separate institutions and civic inclusion.

In her decision to concentrate on the period between 1919 and 1965, Thuesen joins a rich and growing literature that embraces the idea of a “Long Civil Rights Movement.” She argues that struggles over equalization “represent much more than a brief detour on the road to Brown” (2). To the contrary, whereas Brown suggested that equivalent resources could never alleviate the damage that segregation inflicted on black children, the school equalization and integration movements did not always compete. Between World War I and court-ordered desegregation, African Americans advanced a range of strategies to promote educational opportunity and civic inclusion. While legal activists working under the auspices of the NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund targeted segregated schools in an effort to dismantle the separate-but-equal logic of Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), black parents, administrators, teachers, and children experimented with multiple approaches to strengthen black institutions and to eradicate Jim Crow segregation.

To explore the intricacies of this history, Thuesen utilizes a case study of North Carolina, paying particular attention to debates about teacher salaries, school curricula, higher education, and school facilities. She grounds her analysis in traditional social-history sources, including newspapers, archival records, and oral histories. She finds that while white southerners often invested in black education to delay desegrega-

tion, local blacks nonetheless resisted pressure from national civil-rights organizations to abandon separate institutions. The result is a sensitive and expansive account of black educational activism that takes seriously material realities and political aspirations.

In decentering the legal battle about desegregation in exchange for a more nuanced, localized account of black educational activism, Thuesen demonstrates how and why some African Americans came to see equalization as a fight for increased opportunity and integration. Lest one think that Thuesen romanticizes Jim Crow, it is worth noting that she reveals both “the remarkable achievements of equalization” and the “inherent limitations of any fight for equality in a deeply segregated society” (2). Although she appreciates the challenges that have led Bell and others to question whether African Americans erred by placing so much faith in integration, she acknowledges that the battle for educational equalization, no matter how successful, could not dismantle the many layers of inequality embedded in state-sanctioned segregation.

Hilary Moss
Amherst College


The enormous changes that shook Milwaukee during World War II transformed the political culture of the city in the immediate postwar years. According to Furet-Slocum, working-class power, which formerly challenged marketplace prerogatives, gave way to growth politics, which promoted the market values of efficiency and productivity. Furet-Slocum documents his case through copious references to the secondary literature and primary sources, supplemented by quantitative analyses of referenda held in 1947 and 1951 and a key mayoral run-off election of 1948. The questions confronting this book are whether the aggregate terms working-class power and growth politics accurately reflect the major forces in the city’s postwar politics and whether the elections that Furet-Slocum analyzes demonstrate the presumed polarization.

Furet-Slocum prefaced his postwar analysis with three introductory chapters that discuss the city’s political heritage. Industrial Milwaukee was strongly unionized, and its members were divided between a militant Congress of Industrial Organizatin (CIO) numbering 52,000 in the early 1950s and a more moderate American Federation of Labor (AFL) with a membership of 90,000 (44). Furet-Slocum then describes the socialist fiscal policies that were predicated on pay-as-you go financing, effectively avoiding the issuance of long-term bonds and even city investment in public housing. Daniel Hoan, the long-serving socialist mayor, was defeated in 1940, and during the war, his conservative successors
clashed with their working-class constituents over leisure gambling, but not over the wartime economy.

The final four chapters describe postwar politics. Within a year of the war’s end, a prolonged strike that occurred at the Allis Chalmers corporation was broken by management, resulting in the replacement of the local union’s leadership and the AFL’s retreat from politics. A 1947 referendum, supported by a coalition of moderate Democrats, ended the city’s pay-as-you go policy and allowed the issuance of long-terms bonds for urban development. The following year, the mayor’s office, although nominally nonpartisan, returned to socialist hands with the election of Frank Zeidler who, although distrusting long-term bonds, presided over a publicly financed expansion of the city’s infrastructure. The blurring of economic positions was demonstrated in 1951 when Milwaukee voters passed two dueling referenda that legalized federal funding of public housing but prohibited the city government from funding it.

The quantitative analyses of the three referenda and the mayoral election, although statistically valid, rest on shaky assumptions. Can Milwaukee’s postwar politics be reduced to the conflict between working-class interests and growth politics when the city’s political landscape included conservatives who opposed government-funded development, liberals who advocated it, and socialists who preferred to avoid public debt, each position supported by its own daily newspaper (although The Leader, the socialist newspaper, ceased publication in 1941)? Can we speak of a single working-class when workers were divided between the AFL and CIO, within the CIO, and by color? Finally, can an analysis of the 1948 mayoral run-off ignore the first round in which fifteen candidates were reduced to two finalists? Furet-Slocum has provided an extremely fine-grained account of postwar Milwaukee politics, but he has embedded it in a polarized procrustean bed.

Bruce Fetter

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee


The emerging field “The United States and the World” promises to broaden U.S. diplomatic history. Drawing from transnational perspectives, placing diplomatic history in conversation with social history, cultural history, and political economy, it is an interdisciplinary project. Van Vleck’s history of twentieth-century U.S. commercial aviation, a richly contextualized account of Pan American World Airways, is written within this new scholarly frame. The view from 30,000 feet, Van Vleck argues, captures much about the twentieth-century relationship
between the United States and the world. The aerial gaze was the imperial gaze of American globalism.

According to Van Vleck, globalism is a “global imaginary that represented the world as one but also endowed the United States with exceptional national characteristics and unique entitlements to global power” (11). One thread of the book is therefore a cultural history of aviation discourse. The airplane, Van Vleck submits, was a potent symbol of “The American Century”—of frictionless global commerce and consumerism, with a dash of, to quote Henry Luce’s tired 1941 Life magazine essay “The American Century,” “big words like Democracy and Freedom and Justice.”

Pan Am shuttled a great number of corporate executives around the globe, even if most commercial goods still traveled by sea. But Van Vleck demonstrates—drawing from an array of printed sources—that for many Americans, international aviation represented worldwide prosperity, harmony, and technological progress. With the exception of Pearl Harbor, Americans themselves were never bombed. It is hard to imagine residents of Tokyo or London having any affinity for this aviation discourse, no matter how much they yearned for Coca-Cola. But Van Vleck’s focus is upon how elite Americans rendered “the world” spatially thinkable; they often did so looking down from above. A different focus—on comparative history or “The World and the United States”—would be a different scholarly enterprise.

The “internal contradictions and external challenges” to American globalism is the second theme of the book; globalism was also “the dominant ideology of U.S. foreign policy during the twentieth century” (241). Concentrating, in this context, on Juan Trippe, the force behind Pan Am, the book is grounded in archival sources. American globalism, called “internationalism” in this era, was a “nationalist globalism.” Pan Am was a corporatist entity. From its birth in the 1920s, it depended upon government largesse and direction, becoming in many instances an instrument of U.S. military power. Chapters move from President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy to postwar conflicts with Great Britain over its imperial trade preferences, to Cold War air routes, and to the decline of Pan Am amid broader fears of U.S. decline during the 1970s.

The question is whether the two threads—cultural histories of grand imaginary and political histories of grand strategy—that Van Vleck admirably attempts to sew together can be treated as a single stitch. The book contains many moments of insight, concerning how aviation discourse represented U.S. power through the “benign activities of trade, travel, and tourism” (128). But whether or not U.S. diplomatic history and global/transnational histories of the United States—in this instance coercive power and its discursive representation—will come together or fall apart remains to be seen.

Jonathan Levy
Princeton University
Getting Physical: The Rise of Fitness Culture in America. By Shelly McKenzie (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2013) 304 pp. $34.95

In Getting Physical, McKenzie traces the foundation of the modern fitness movement in the United States. Taking the 1950s—“a time of exceptional cultural change” (2)—as her starting point, she first examines attempts by the President’s Council of Youth Fitness to “make personal physical fitness the goal of every American child” and then considers the separate routes for men’s and women’s fitness during the 1950s and the 1960s (11).

According to McKenzie, women’s fitness, which emerged most notably through popular culture (for example, women’s magazines, Jack La Lanne’s popular television show, Jane Fonda’s workout videos, etc.), emphasized improved appearance through weight loss, whereas (middle-class) men exercised in men’s clubs, YMCAs, or workplace fitness clubs to improve “heart health.” The next two chapters focus on the jogging movement of the 1970s and, finally, the popularization of health clubs primarily during the 1980s. The brief conclusion, treating “the future of fitness” (178), refers to the contemporary trends of yoga and Pilates without further contemplation of the constant change and diversity of the contemporary U.S. fitness industry.

Recognizing fitness “as a field that often leaves little in a way of a paper trail” (6), McKenzie employs an impressive variety of sources, ranging from popular magazine and newspaper articles, and books to academic sources primarily from the fields of history, sociology of the body and sport, and, to a lesser degree, from health promotion and medicine. The result is a compelling, cohesive, and easy to follow account of the evolution of fitness culture in the United States, beginning with the warnings about the dangers of physical exertion during the 1950s to the depiction of fitness as a necessary component of well-being and good looks during the 1980s.

McKenzie’s definition of fitness is “fluid.” She uses physical culture, exercise, and fitness often interchangeably. Based on a reference from 1988, McKenzie claims that “even today, physical educators, health experts, and sports authorities define the term [fitness] differently” (7). However, in more contemporary exercise literature, physical fitness is defined more narrowly as being composed of four health-related components—cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition; each one is improved by specific exercises (physical activity is a broader term denoting any bodily movement). Improved physical fitness, in this context, prevents numerous costly illnesses.

Although the open definition of fitness used by McKenzie allows her to examine how “the term fitness and the ways to achieve it are constantly being re-examined in the developments in scientific research, trends in popular culture, and health promotion policies” (178), an engagement with medical and exercise-physiology viewpoints could have further clarified how fitness and health have become intertwined during the past
decades. For example, the American College of Sport Medicine (ACSM), established in 1954, in connection with its academic journal *Medicine and Science in Sport* (1969) has published a newsletter since 1966. In addition, feminist researchers have examined women’s fitness, particularly aerobics, since the 1980s. McKenzie cites some of this work, but she could have taken greater advantage of the well-established premise that women’s fitness is about “looking good” to develop further insights into American fitness culture. Furthermore, the ongoing influence of the physical-culture movement (led by Bernarr MacFadden and Charles Atlas) into weight training, a major component of men’s fitness programs, warrants a discussion beyond a brief acknowledgement in the introduction.

Although these suggestions could have deepened the analysis, McKenzie’s book weaves the cultural analysis of consumerism intricately within fitness culture. Her discussion of the cultural centrality of jogging in American society as a direct response to the ills of consumer society by the “morally” superior, “natural,” and healthy runner is particularly engaging. McKenzie also carefully integrates a discussion of minority identities, such as gay men and African Americans, into the development of the fitness culture.

McKenzie’s book highlights that fitness was not always considered healthy, but it continues to evolve in relation to other elements of American culture. Although additional sources could have strengthened McKenzie’s arguments, the book brings together previously sketchy details regarding the development of fitness as an American cultural value in a coherent and interesting manner that can appeal to a broad audience. Future researchers can now expand on these themes and continue to trace the rapidly changing American fitness culture from the 1980s onward.

Pirkko Markula
University of Alberta


To fix a patchwork of benefits, the federal government created a nationwide, standardized program. Rules called for states to operate their own program or to transfer administration to a federal agency. The proposal worked its way through Congress during the president’s first term, and started enrolling people early in his second. The introduction of the program brought one snafu after another: Confused beneficiaries were angry about the loss of previous benefits. Digitization of paper records yielded mixed results, and officials were quick to blame computer resources that proved balky and unproductive. Eventually, the feds straightened out their procedures, and... Although this sketch might appear to depict the trajectory of the Affordable Care Act of 2010, it ac-
tually describes the creation of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the development of which is the subject of *The Other Welfare*.

*The Other Welfare* is a clear and compelling history of policy making and implementation inside the beltway by two masters of the genre. Although the main instigators of the program remained in Washington, consequences of their decisions rippled outward and influenced the material well-being of many Americans. The legislative and bureaucratic history of the federal SSI program, which was intended to unify disparate but similar programs around the country, has obvious resonance in the present day.

This history of SSI begins with meditations on welfare reform by Daniel Patrick Moynihan in 1969 and continues through Clinton-era welfare reform. Berkowitz and DeWitt perform a particularly deft analysis of the composition of beneficiaries. Initially created to aid the elderly, the blind, and the more or less permanently disabled, SSI quickly evolved into a program primarily for the disabled and, in particular, the mentally ill and mentally retarded—a development, according to the authors that no one foresaw. Furthermore, to the extent that de-institutionalization of the mentally ill in the mid-1970s happened willy-nilly, the availability of SSI for emancipated inmates offers a positive example of the law of unexpected consequences. Indeed, the ambiguity of *disability* made SSI a target of welfare reform under President Clinton, after its alleged generosity to those who were disabled by alcoholism and drug addiction. The book concludes with the term of Michael Astrue as Commissioner of Social Security, which ended in 2013. The chronological breadth of coverage from the beginning of the program to the present is most satisfying.

The patchwork of benefits consisted of state programs that dated to the New Deal. Some states provided a high and others a low level of benefits. One goal of SSI was to raise the minimum benefit nationwide, but this study provides no estimate of what a proper level of benefits should have been. Nor does it provide the standards employed by the states or the federal government to reach the eventual benefit levels—just a vague sense that more was better. After standardization, the Social Security Administration allowed states that offered substantial benefits to continue paying extra, but in some of these states, unified benefit levels threatened to reduce payments. In this case, write the authors, the feds twisted state-level arms to make sure they “did the right thing,” which meant continuing the higher benefit level. But what was the “right” benefit level?

*The Other Welfare* is an excellent and insightful contribution to the study of federal and state interactions in social-welfare policy making and execution. In a few years its readers will want to return to it to trace the parallels between SSI and Obamacare.

John E. Murray
Rhodes College
This edited volume boldly identifies the challenges and problems inherent in a project that seeks to center animals in Latin American history, in human history, and in political movements seeking the protection of “animal rights.” The critically engaged activist scholars who contributed to the volume are by no means naive; they are clearly aware of how, as Neil Whitehead’s brilliant concluding essay points out, “the uncritical call for ‘animal rights’ can become a disguised form of neocolonial control,” not unlike the ways in which “human rights” discourse has been welded to the exercise of global domination by Western governments (330).

Few and Tortorici cogently explain how the more robust, though still relatively new, literature for Europe and North America has been essential to the task of critically interrogating the exclusivity often taken for granted by the category of “human.” This volume advances such an intellectual and political project via historical vignettes that examine the effects of the Columbian exchange; the consequences of European conquest and colonialism; competing Mesoamerican, Andean, and other indigenous conceptions of animals in the natural world; and the increasing pressures in Latin America to comply with growing international demands for animals and animal parts as commodities. The book highlights the experiences shared by humans, animals, insects, and microbes in ways that have challenged, broken down, rendered ambiguous, or at times reified the species-categorical boundaries constructed in the modern period (3–5). Each of the contributors to Centering Animals in Latin American History offers methodologically distinct ways of to “think with animals.”

Part I emphasizes the charged symbolic dimensions of animal-human relations in sixteenth- through eighteenth-century Mesoamerican colonial culture. León García Garagarza weaves together Nahuatl manuscripts, archeological data, and contemporary ethnography in his microhistorical analysis of the 1558 apostasy case brought against Juan Teton, a respected Otomi religious leader, whose proscriptions on consuming the flesh of animals reveal how a Mesoamerican “cosmovision” confronted the devastating effects of early European colonialism. Few’s innovative reading of accounts by political officials, Indian elites, farmers, priests, and European travelers about the campaign in Guatemala to eradicate locusts—ambiguously supernatural and human-like devourers of human food and lucrative export products—shows that controlling the environment and the species that populated it was as much a part of the colonial project as was asserting control over

subject peoples and extracting resources. Tortorici’s study of carnival-esque canine sacraments, the human perpetrators of which were brought before the Inquisition, underscores the difficulty that anthropocentric historical sources pose for “centering animals.” Although we do not learn much about the specific animals involved, we nevertheless gain a better understanding of how late eighteenth-century dog owners among the elite in Mexico City turned to animal-centered humor as they negotiated the status-conscious colonial community to which they belonged.

Part II turns to the role of animals and animal parts in practices of popular healing, public-health campaigns, and scientific research. Adam Warren analyzes the home medical guides written by Martín Delgar, an eighteenth-century Peruvian surgeon, by comparing them with representations of Andean medical knowledge in seventeenth-century natural histories and in contemporary anthropological studies about the Kalawaya, traditional itinerant Andean healers. He demonstrates the ways in which Andean healing practices involving the use of animals have been translated, transformed, and integrated into a modernizing European medical taxonomy.

Heather McCrea, drawing on a vast array of sources, including popular novels; newspapers; travel narratives; Rockefeller Foundation archives; and diplomatic, state, and church archival materials, juxtaposes disparate “diseased moments” that encompassed—and, through national and international public-health campaigns, often blurred distinctions between—humans, animals, insects, and microbes in the nineteenth-century frontier zone of the Yucatan. Neel Ahuja examines the contradictory discourses about rhesus and patas monkeys imported to Puerto Rico during the twentieth century as “on the one hand, figures of progress and aligned with modern biomedical technology, and on the other, as ‘invasive species’ that symbolize the multiple violations of U.S. imperialism and neoliberal development policy” (181).

Part III discloses the ways by which humans have both appropriated and sought to protect animals for their own purposes, transforming them into laborers, commodities, and even powerful political symbols. Reinaldo Funes Monzote’s recounting of the interlinked histories of human and animal labor in Cuba’s sugar economy demonstrates how shifting ideas about the use and treatment of working animals were inextricably tied to agricultural mechanization, the abolition of slavery, and Cuban independence. These notions culminated in the late nineteenth-century animal-protection societies that worked to reshape the ethical underpinnings of a newly emerging postcolonial, post-abolition nation-state.

John Soluri, hesitant to “affirm ‘animal rights’ where animals are implicitly understood to be individuals,” argues instead that the “historical and ecological meaning of animals are always contextual” (246). Refusing to victimize individual furry seals allows Soluri to examine instead how seal hunters who endured harsh conditions to find and kill their valuable and increasingly “shy” prey off the coast of nineteenth-century
Patagonia at a scale that barely satisfied a growing international mania for seal fur, drawing the attention of early twentieth-century conservationists. Regina Horta Duarte’s chapter examines the history of species conservationism through the Brazilian scientists who championed bird protection by transforming rare birds into symbols of Brazilian national identity, thereby hoping to bolster the position of (and funding for) sciences in Brazil. Lauren Derby offers a thick description of la fiesta del chivo, the celebrations that ritually cannibalized Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina, the Dominican Republic dictator, on the anniversary of his assassination.

No chapter in this volume purports to characterize individual animals as historical figures. Instead, as Whitehead suggests, the project of “centering animals” seeks to understand how human history has been profoundly shaped by ideas about animals (339). The volume’s methodological variety, its engaging subject matter, and its readability, together with its bibliography, will prove useful and attractive not just to scholars and activists but also to students of Latin American history from the colonial period into the twentieth century.

Lina del Castillo
University of Texas, Austin


Until now, historians have not examined the history of prostitution in Cuba during its colonial and national history before 1955. Specialists have been far more preoccupied by Cuban prostitution since the 1980s. Sippial’s work is thus a welcome and excellent contribution to various fields, including Caribbean studies, gender studies, and the history of Cuba during the U.S. interventionist years before the 1955 Cuban Revolution. Sippial also generally succeeds in her attempt to place this story within the framework of urban studies and prostitution control in a modernizing postcolonial nation. She argues that Cuba framed the debate about prostitution in terms of “national identity in the face of changing political alliances and shifting population”; governmental control became a way to cope with “contemporary political, social and sexual anxieties” (4). For their part, prostitutes complained of the state’s intrusion into their private and public lives.

In many ways, this story seems familiar. Eileen Findlay’s Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870–1920 (Durham, 1999), Laura Briggs’ Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico (Berkeley, 2002), and Lara Putnam’s The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870–1960 (Chapel Hill, 2001) all analyzed prostitution at similar mo-
ments across the Caribbean, while other scholars have delved into the relationship of prostitution to empire in different parts of the world. However, Sippial adds the expansion of Havana beyond its nineteenth-century walls during the Spanish and U.S. occupations, thereby framing prostitution control in a unique colonial/imperial discourse that is more favorable to prostitutes during the Spanish occupation than afterward. Ironically, because the U.S. forces were more interested in eradicating yellow fever than in curtailing sexually transmitted diseases, they lost an opportunity to promote a public-health program that had begun under the Spanish. Moreover, contrary to the racist view that most prostitutes were Afro-Cubans, Sippial argues that the contemporary record noted that far more working girls migrated to Cuba from elsewhere in the Caribbean or from Europe than from the freed slave population.

Basing her research on Cuban archives and popular tracts of the times, Sippial weaves a story that holds together well in terms of the local and international context. What is missing, however, is coverage of working women that transcends the various temporal eras and that gives the influence exerted by the Catholic Church its proper due. Furthermore, her decision to end the book in 1920 leaves a lacuna in this historical process, particularly regarding the U.S. businesses in Havana that invested in rum, sugar, tobacco, and casinos. Rosalie Schwartz’s study of tourism in Cuba, *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba* (Lincoln, 1999) shows how such research can be accomplished, but one more chapter in this book would have made this study definitive.

Donna Guy
Ohio State University

*For God and Revolution: Priest, Peasant, and Agrarian Socialism in the Mexican Huasteca.* By Mark Saad Saka (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2013) 2008 pp. $50.00

This book focuses primarily on a peasant uprising that occurred in east-central Mexico between 1879 and 1884 as part of a broader wave of agrarian violence that erupted during the early years of the liberal dictatorship of José de la Cruz Porfirio Díaz. Saka argues that the rebellion had both long- and short-term causes. The long-term causes stretch back to the Spanish conquest of the sixteenth century and the implantation of a harshly exploitive and frankly racist agrarian regimen. After chronicling the origins of that regimen, Saka zooms forward to the period of Mexico’s war of independence (1810–1821). At least some of the indigenous peoples of the Huasteca participated enthusiastically in that war, which helped to broaden their intellectual horizons, spark in them a sense of nationalism, and inspire them to challenge the stifling colonial ethos. This influence played itself out during the U.S.–Mexican War of 1846 to 1848, when the Huastecan peasants first fought as guerrillas at-
tacking U.S. supply lines, and later as rebels against the Mexican government and the dominance of large landowners.

At mid-century, liberal ideology triumphed in Mexico with the end of the War of the Reform (1857–1861). A new generation of leaders championed notions of self-government and the rule of law, which rural people embraced, but those leaders also promoted individualism and private enterprise, which peasants soon found to be a serious threat. The Lerdo Law of 1856 banned the corporate ownership of real estate, leading to widespread confiscation of ecclesiastical and communal village lands by metastasizing haciendas. The 1870s saw a flurry of road, railroad, and telegraph construction that connected formerly remote regions like the Huasteca with large cities and ports. The cultivation of corn and beans gave way to the production of commercial crops, while peasants, unable to provide the documentation that authorities demanded, lost their lands and were reduced to the status of low-paid wage workers or, worse, unpaid draftees. Rapid population growth exacerbated the growing tensions.

The book has some peculiarities. The nearly half of it that is devoted to the period before 1856 includes much material that is of dubious relevance to the book’s main theme. Moreover, why does Saka pay so much attention to the period preceding the 1879 rebellion, while saying virtually nothing about the rebellion’s aftermath, leaving readers with an incomplete sense of the broad historical context? As evidenced by the book’s title, Saka wants to emphasize religion and revolution, but these themes are curious choices. An entire chapter is devoted to one of the rebellion’s key leaders, the Catholic cleric Mauricio Zavala, who denounced liberalism, encouraged village autonomy, built schools, defended indigenous language and culture, and generally developed what Saka calls a “Mexican theology of liberation.” Yet Saka says little about the rebellion’s secular leaders, and the role of religion remains unclear. Likewise, the suggestion that the events of 1879 to 1884 in the Mexican Huasteca should be considered a “revolution” is odd. Saka never clarifies what he means by the term. The rebellion certainly had a strong ideological component and ambitious goals, but it was too local and too lacking in any realistic chance of success to qualify as a bona fide revolution, at least according to most standard definitions. Indeed, many scholars doubt that even the Mexican Revolution of 1910 qualifies as a genuine revolution.

Saka has nonetheless provided by far the most in-depth consideration of an important, and largely neglected, episode in the history of Mexico, and he adds materially to our understanding of how the regime of Porfirio Díaz suppressed tensions that later gave way to the decade of bloodletting that followed.

Timothy J. Henderson
Auburn University at Montgomery

Chesterton’s history of the disputed “wilderness” known as the Chaco between Paraguay and Bolivia provides an excellent interdisciplinary study of how an emerging nation imagines a frontier region and how a frontier in turn can shape a nation’s identity and history. Thus does it echo the trajectory of the United States in its westward expansion. The Chaco was Paraguay’s Manifest Destiny, the site of a supposed agrarian national movement, even if few Paraguayans ever visited, or even wanted to visit, this region, given its physical remoteness from Paraguay’s heartland east of the Paraguay River (the one road leading into it has been paved but is heavily potholed). Chesterton’s study combines history with geography, anthropology, literature, poetry, sociology, theater, and psychology in a textured and engaging narrative.

Too little has been written about the Chaco, certainly in English; the scant material that is available usually features a military history of the Chaco War (1932–1935). Chesterton’s welcome presentation ranges from Marshal Solano López’s disastrous War of the Triple Alliance (1864–1870), which shattered Paraguay and left the Chaco in Bolivia’s hands, to the nineteenth-century scientific Social Darwinism that justified Paraguay’s annexation of the late Chaco, then inhabited by Indians who were presented as ethnically Paraguayan and in need of being “civilized.” Chesterton also examines the foundational narratives of modern Paraguay, arguing that they are bound to notions about the Chaco. Although her argument does not always result in definite proof, it is cogent and persuasive nonetheless. How the Paraguayans stamped their mark on the Chaco and shaped the region told a story about Paraguay and its people; their involvement with the Chaco forced them to consider their national identity.

The missionaries sent into the region and the Mennonites who settled there (their descendants remain even now) intended not only to stake a national claim but also to make “citizens” of the “native” peoples, whom the science of the time depicted as distinctly “Paraguayan.” The Chaco embodied the Paraguayan nationalism that emerged before and just after the Great War, as imagined in songs, postcards, literary works, and poems. In this guise, the Chaco—which certain travelers had dubbed the “green hell”—assumed a beneficial image, showcasing the good health of the nation. Like Roman legionnaires, soldiers who fought in the Chaco were given land there, notwithstanding the fact that few of them wanted it; the area remained a wilderness.

Paraguay—born, or reborn, after 1870—was on an inevitable collision course with Bolivia. Festering since the 1920s, all-out war erupted in 1932. Paraguay’s victory avenged its defeat in 1870, redeeming the Chaco (Chesterton has little to say about the Bolivians, leaving readers to wonder whether there were similar frontier and identity issues at
stake in La Paz). The war meant that the soldiers’ language of Guaraní displaced Spanish as the national tongue. Moreover, the Paraguayans’ re-discovery of the tomb of Marshal López afforded them an opportunity to bury him with full honors along with an unknown soldier in a national pantheon, as at Arlington Cemetery.

Paraguay’s acquisition of the Chaco from Bolivia had various effects on domestic politics, one of which was the military coup in 1936, supported by disgruntled veterans, that ousted the Liberal government. Its long-term legacy was the military rule and gross human-rights abuses that burden Paraguay to this day. Again, Paraguay’s plight echoes a wider history that encompasses the radical political movements in Europe that war veterans tended to support after 1918.

Chesteron is to be commended for her thoughtful, innovative, exciting, and scholarly examination of Paraguay’s frontier history that reaches far beyond the confines of that land-locked country to inform the history of Latin America as a whole in the twentieth century. Her treatment of Paraguay’s struggles with ethnicity, identity, democracy, and the military mirrors those of other South American states. Her book works on many levels, weaving together an anthropology of native peoples with a national history that bound together all of Paraguay’s citizens in a fiction about the Chaco region.

Matthew Hughes
Brunel University

_Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants._ By Sunil S. Amrith (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2013) 353 pp. $29.95

If ever there were a book that epitomizes the historical value of interdisciplinary history, it is Amrith’s _Crossing the Bay of Bengal_. This volume is a manifest of various fields of history. Among the disciplines covered are religious history, migration, environmental history, the frontier, European history, Asian history, cultural history, labor history, and women’s history. This timely volume has earned a place among the best new books in its field.

Amrith argues that historians need to move away from nationalist histories and maps and to look at history through a different lens. The one with which he primarily focuses is migration. Between 1840 and 1940, 25 million Indians migrated to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Malaya, and Burma; even more of them ended up in Indonesia and Indochina. As the author notes, “The merchants, workers, slaves, and soldiers who crossed the Bay in the early modern world shaped a maritime sphere around its arc of coasts” (62). Most of these migrants came from South India. Telegu speakers tended to migrate to Burma, while Madrasis ended up in Malaya, and Tamils in Ceylon. To the migrants European frontiers
were meaningless. Connections based on culture and commerce were ties that bound the migrants together regardless of imperial boundaries and states.

A prime example of this phenomenon can be found in the worship of Shahul Hamid of Nagore, India. A Muslim saint of the sixteenth century, Hamid was worshipped throughout the Bay of Bengal at shrines in Penang and Singapore, and supposedly in Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, and Vietnam. One participant in an annual precession in Penang to honor him noted that the crowd included Muslims, Hindus, Malays, Burmese, Chinese, Bengalis, Japanese, Portuguese, and many others. Amrith lays to rest the old shibboleth that Hindus and Muslims were natural enemies. Within the confines of the Bay of Bengal, crossing the sea was a rite of passage, often leading to a sense of community that transcended ethnicity and religion. Amrith notes that “transformations in the sea are an outcome—unintended and unpredictable—of a history of migration, imperial expansion, and technological change that knit the littorals of the Bay of Bengal together, then pull them apart” (30). The one constant of the Bay of Bengal is change.

The Bay in modern times is different in certain ways and similar in others. Nationalism, arising in the 1920s, tended to emphasize regional identity at the expense of community. The result of post–World War II independence movements is that a bay that was once European is now Asian. Amrith sees two key ways in which the Bay is playing a major role in shaping the future. The first is in the realm of competition, primarily between India and China, over its vast resources. The second concerns “the Bay of Bengal’s littoral [which] stands at the front line of Asia’s experience of climate change: its densely populated coastal zone is home to nearly half a billion people. In this context, the Bay of Bengal’s history can be a source of insight and explanation” (5).

Amrith’s book is both important and engaging; it is the kind of environmental history of which we need more, transcending boarders and frontiers and offering a more holistic lens through which to view historical causation on a global scale. Books such as Crossing the Bay of Bengal help us to understand the history of South and Southeast Asia without the stifling limitations and elitism of imperial history. For that alone, this monograph is an invaluable addition to the emerging library of environmental histories of Asia.

Christopher V. Hill
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