Past Scents: Historical Perspectives on Smell. By Jonathan Reinarz (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2014) 296 pp. $90.00 cloth $25.00 paper

Reinarz’s Past Scents aims to offer a “comprehensive and coherent introduction to the history of smell” (1), a subject usually defined by its ephemerality, diffusiveness, and visceral impact rather than its cultural or historical significance. Its challenge to the traditional history of olfaction more than hits the mark, presenting not only a rich overview of the cultural history of olfaction but also a compelling synthesis of historiographical approaches to this topic and a sharp summary of the state of the field. Reinarz draws extensively from recent work while also expanding its purview to include the insights of anthropologists, literary scholars, classicists, art historians, and sociologists, as well as insights from the history of medicine. The strength of the book lies in its interdisciplinary and transtemporal approach; that Reinarz can achieve such breadth without sacrificing the variances inherent in this topic is a real achievement. The result is a comprehensive, coherent, and accessible introduction to the subject that deserves a wide audience.

Aligning himself with the argument that the senses are cultural phenomena, Reinarz organizes the book into six chapters that explore the social ramifications of past definitions of the science of smell. To ask who or what smelled in the past, as Reinarz says, is never a neutral question: As the famous nineteenth-century perfumer Edward Rimmel put it, “The history of perfume, in some manner, is the history of civilization” (1). Reinarz’s book seizes on the associative links embedded in such a claim in order to undo its logic. To understand the subject and objects of smell in the past is to grapple with the cultural history of “civilizations,” including those that have been explicitly excluded from such constructions. Among other things, Reinarz traces the use of scents in shaping cultural meanings of religion, luxury, race, gender, class, and a growing sense of urban spheres.

After a useful overview of various medical theories of olfaction in the introduction, the first chapter examines smell’s role in religion, focusing on the fourth century C.E. (when early Christians first embraced ancient links between fragrance and worshipping the divine); the second chapter, about “fragrant lucre” and the perfume trade, delves more deeply into how liturgical practices inspired a burgeoning perfume trade in medieval and early modern Europe. Chapter 2 surveys how scent ingredients emerged as lucrative objects of exchange, in part because of a growing belief in their medicinal efficacy. How one smelled was linked to one’s health.

The next three chapters demonstrate, however, that medicinal constructions of bodily smell often provided a ready rationale for social exclusion under the aegis of public health. Reinarz offers three cogent case studies about (1) the role of smell in constructing a “foul” and “fragrant” other; (2) the role of olfaction in shaping histories of racial difference (in medieval Europe as well as in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America) and gender (vis-à-vis trenchant and misogynist constructions of the smell of women’s bodies in both European medical histories and gendered histories of the production and consumption of perfume); and (3) the role
of class (in charting the rise of deodorization as a marker during the nineteenth century). In the final chapter, Reinarz shifts gears, examining the spatial ramifications of such olfactory histories on urban life. The smells of the city reflect its changing composition, as well as the structural challenges that it faced due to population density. For this reason, scholars are now using smells to construct new kinds of “maps” of urban space, pushing against a teleology of civilization aligned with deodorization.

This book suggests that engagement with the cultural work of smell both in the past and in the present can be richly rewarding. Reinarz’s timely survey of historical perspectives on smell will (hopefully) inspire further research that will move us beyond simple binaries of fragrant/foul and self/other toward more redolent possibilities.

Holly Dugan
George Washington University


The study of global governance has grown tremendously in recent years, in part because the concept embraces many facets of contemporary international relations (IR) and efforts to deal with the variety of issues and problems that transcend the borders of states. In 2005, Barnett and Duvall noted, “In little more than a decade the concept has gone from the ranks of the unknown to one of the central orienting themes in the practice and study of international affairs.”¹ Now, in addition to efforts to analyze the wide variety of actors and arrangements involved in addressing contemporary global challenges, scholars are looking back in time to examine earlier initiatives that presage more contemporary ones, possibly to glean insights relevant to international governance today.² Mitzen’s *Power in Concert* aims to extend our understanding of the core role of states and their intentionality in global governance and to “push back” against the heavy influence of neoliberal thinking in IR scholarship about it.

Although at first glance, Mitzen’s book might appear to be yet another study of the Vienna Settlement of 1815 and the Concert of Europe, it is something else altogether. Mitzen has coupled a careful re-examination and analysis of historical accounts with a sophisticated use of the IR

literature about collective intentionality to construct her argument about the centrality of concerted international public power to governance. Her point is that states’ choices to undertake joint commitments can shape their behavior, particularly as a result of their participation in forums, by creating a collective identity that facilitates thinking beyond their singular interests. With this focus, Mitzen adopts Rosenau’s early definition of global governance as “order plus intentionality,” the core of which, she rightly notes, has not been retained as the study of global governance has grown. In addition, Mitzen frames the idea of an international public power beyond the state that comes from states acting together, exercising authority, and taking responsibility.

The Concert of Europe has long been considered the first example of states (particularly major powers) organizing themselves through periodic conferences to address common concerns, including security. What distinguishes Mitzen’s study is her examination of the Concert and the Vienna Settlement as a turning point in European history, building on Schroeder’s argument that the success of the Settlement derived from the major European powers’ long process of learning how to think systemically in order to defeat Napoleon. In a pair of chapters, Mitzen analyzes how the Concert powers avoided war with each other during the 1820s, as well as how they dealt with the reverberations of the Greek War of Independence and of the Ottoman Empire’s decline (the “Eastern Question”). The shared concern was to maintain European stability by keeping the peace rather than relying on the balance of power, and to agree to meet periodically to manage crises.

Mitzen emphasizes that “forums made it possible for the great powers to ‘see’ Europe, which provided reassurance that a sphere of common concerns actually existed...and] reminded the great powers of their commitment in a way that made it more possible to act on it than if they have had merely invoked ‘Europe’ without linking it to any practice of meeting” (216). In today’s world, such international conferencing, which has become commonplace, is often denigrated as “mere talk,” but Mitzen makes a good case for the impact of knowing that one may be held accountable by fellow leaders or statesmen. After teasing out the historical evidence to construct her arguments, Mitzen skillfully summarizes alternative accounts of key events, the evidence of joint commitment among the five major powers, their intentionality, their use of forums, and the actions that they did and did not take (137–141).

Looking at why the Concert failed to prevent the Crimean War in the 1850s, even though none of the great powers ostensibly intended

to fight, Mitzen discovers “a steady stream of face-to-face, conference diplomacy invoking the European order” and the precedents of treating the Eastern Question as a shared concern. However, “despite these similarities, in 1853 these states failed to make the Russo-Turkish War a common concern”; the result was a great power war (178). For Mitzen, the Crimean case highlights the limits of Concert commitments and diplomacy; during the 1850s, the European powers made choices much different from those that they had made during the 1820s.

Whereas much of today’s global-governance literature downplays the role of states and the value of forums, Mitzen’s book emphasizes the importance of the international public power that only states can create together. She also counters the tendency in some IR literature to link global governance to post–World War II U.S. hegemony, high levels of interdependence, and the neoliberal consensus by pointing out that none of the Concert’s great powers were democracies and that their political ties were relatively “thin.” To be sure, “thick” ties enable greater cooperation, but given the rise of China and other powers with interests and ideologies that diverge from those of the United States and the West, Mitzen’s study demonstrates that governance (whether truly global or not) can rest on “thin bonds of international society” (227). Nonetheless, global governance today is “something quite different than ever before.” Mitzen is clear about the changes within and between periods of time and the nature of the problems that governance still needs to address.

Margaret P. Karns
University of Dayton


Michaels has managed the enviable feat of producing a comprehensive scholarly review that is both accessible and engaging. She draws on the disciplines of sociology, psychology, and political science to situate the startling history of Lamaze within the political imperatives of the postwar Soviet Union, France, and the United States.

Mention “Lamaze” and most people think of unmedicated childbirth and patterned breathing, but that is just one of the many incarnations of Lamaze, far removed from both its origins and its contemporary philosophy. Though Lamaze now has countercultural associations, at its inception, it was largely a product of the ruling elite—mandated from above and dismissed from below.

In the postwar period, while Britain, France, and, most importantly, the United States were increasingly providing access to pharmacological

6 Murphy, “Global Governance over the Long Haul,” 1.
pain relief to its female citizens, the Soviet Union could not afford the medications, and could not access or create the delivery systems to administer them. Making a virtue of necessity, Soviet obstetricians created a psychological method of pain control that drew heavily on the work of the Soviet psychologist Ivan Pavlov, known for his work in classical behaviorism and the conditioned response.

According to the original theory of what became known as psychoprophylaxis (preventing labor pain through psychological conditioning), the pain of labor was psychologically conditioned by culture and maintained through fear. Therefore, psychological conditioning involving education in the mechanics of birth, reassurance that birth is not painful, and rigid adherence to a physician’s instructions could produce “painless” labor and compliant patients.

Psychoprophylaxis was imported to France as part of a Franco-Soviet scientific cooperation meant to curtail American cultural imperialism. Although Fernand Lamaze was not a Communist, he worked in a hospital system maintained by the French Communist Party. French Communists were eager to promote a method developed by Soviet scientists and mandated by Soviet decree for the benefit of proletarian women, in contrast to pharmacological pain relief that could be accessed only by those who could afford to pay.

Although Lamaze (the technique, not necessarily the obstetrician) enjoyed a heyday in 1950s France, it fell out of favor as disillusionment with the Soviet Union grew. Lamaze achieved its greatest success in the United States where its origins had been forgotten, and where it was changed to become a powerful battering ram against medical paternalism. It subsequently changed again to be viewed as a means of achieving an authentic, ecstatic personal experience. More recently, Lamaze has become a corporate enterprise, run from above and profiting through the certification of Lamaze instructors and the licensing of Lamaze merchandise.

*Lamaze: An International History* is an excellent example of interdisciplinary history, situating historical facts within the sociological and political framework of each time and culture in which it became established. It will be of great value and interest to medical professionals, midwives, doulas, and childbirth educators, as well as professional historians.

Amy B. Tuteur
Obstetrician, Boston, Mass.

*Laughter in Ancient Rome: On Joking, Tickling, and Cracking Up*. By Mary Beard (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2014) 319 pp. $29.95

As Beard engagingly admits, this book was “in some ways an impossible project” (78). The first part (Chapters 1 through 4) is more theoretical, dealing with such questions as, Can nonhuman animals laugh? Do all
humans share certain ways of expressing laughter—for example, a sound such as English-language speakers write as “ha ha” or the Roman poet Terence as “hahahae”? Are there universal ways of joking, like puns or deliberate misunderstandings? The second part (Chapters 5 through 8) is a more specific study of particular instances of “Roman laughter.” Beard defines Roman broadly to include the earliest works to survive complete in Latin—the comedies of Plautus and Terence—as well as the writings of Cicero, the second-century African Apuleius, and the late antique or medieval “joke-book” entitled the “Laughter Lover” (Philogelos).

Beard has avoided the double danger of killing the subject by solemnity and cheapening it with excessive quotation of ancient jokes. The eighty-plus pages of endnotes and bibliography mark this book as a serious study of Roman laughter, wide-ranging, deeply thought, and extensively researched. It represents a trend in classical studies, a kind of “neurological turn,” which has prompted research into such subjects as dreams and emotions that once seemed beyond investigation.

Certain themes stand out. One is the difficulty of accessing “Roman” laughter: When, for instance, the senator Cassius Dio chewed laurel leaves in order not to laugh at Emperor Commodus cutting off the head of an ostrich, at what was he laughing? Another intriguing theme is the distinctness of Roman, as opposed to Greek, laughter. The Romans had many more words than the Greeks to express the idea of laughing (Beard contends that the word usually translated as “smile,” subridere, actually means “laugh”). Hence she concludes with the suggestion that “it was indeed ‘the Romans’ who invented ‘the joke’” (209).

There are many excellent discussions along the way, one being the famous laugh of the child in Vergil’s Fourth Eclogue. There are also some problems. One of them Beard confronts squarely—the difficulty of defining Roman. What is Roman, for instance, about the Philogelos, written in Greek and compiled in late antiquity or the Middle Ages? Beard proposes that Romans “commodified” jokes (208), because the first reference to a joke collection is in Plautus’ Stichus, a play known to have been adapted from a Greek original. The opening of Aristophanes’ Frogs shows that fifth-century Athenians were perfectly familiar with stock jokes, even if not with joke books.

It might also be argued that Beard has made jokes and joking too central to her study of laughter. As Cassius Dio’s stifled laughter shows, not to mention many scenes in Roman comedy, Greeks and Romans laughed at situations and not only at jokes. Nonetheless, Beard’s careful and responsible study shows that investigating Roman laughter was not “an impossible project,” but it was no laughing matter either.

Christopher P. Jones
Harvard University
In this thoughtful book, which transcends a typical survey of the state of a field, Cameron diagnoses a series of interdisciplinary academic discourses in which Byzantium should matter more than it usually does. The questions with which she frames her work—Was Byzantium an Empire? Was it an “Orthodox Society”?—invite Byzantinists to participate more fully in interdisciplinary conversations with scholars of comparative literature, art historians, and historians of religion. But Cameron also urges colleagues working in these related fields to pay more attention to Byzantium and Byzantinists. Standard narratives about Western culture and the formation of Europe have often neglected Byzantium, and current trends toward late antiquity, comparative empires, and pan-Mediterranean or Near Eastern history—and even world history—tend to blur the borders of Byzantine studies. Where and how does Byzantium fit? Occasionally within her trenchant analysis of how Byzantinists both succeed and fail to engage their colleagues and the public, Cameron affords herself a plaintive tone to lament the insecurity of the discipline, especially in Anglophone universities: “It does not easily fit existing departmental structures, or feature among their priorities” (4). Positions have been cut and programs closed. What is the cost?

Cameron does not always answer her questions; instead, she illustrates their complexities and presents the case for nuance. She calls for greater theorization in a discipline that often lags behind developments in related fields. Even so, she acknowledges the emergence of a new generation of scholars well equipped not only with the necessary philological skills but also conversant in cultural criticism, and she applauds the inclusion of Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, and Arabic materials and engagement with the Western Middle Ages and the rise and formation of Islam.

Cameron reads widely in the field, intervening in balanced and constructive ways that guide further inquiry. She is particularly interested in debates about ethnicity and religion; she is fair but not necessarily gentle to those with whom she disagrees. She worries about the effects of nationalisms, especially Greek and Slavic, on Byzantine studies, even as she acknowledges Southeastern Europe as a region where Byzantine matters most acutely. She questions recent work, especially that of Kaldellis, in locating a Byzantine Hellenism relatively detached from Orthodox identity.† She expresses skepticism at the suggestion of Brubaker and Haldon that the Iconoclastic Controversy

may have had little to do with the history of doctrine. Some scholars struggle to imagine a Byzantine secularity, whereas others unreasonably assume that official Orthodoxy pervaded society and that norms of doctrine and ritual practice might be sufficient explanations for many aspects of Byzantine life. Worse, some have asserted that only those who are Orthodox can understand Orthodoxy. The academic study of Byzantine religion from a secular perspective remains underdeveloped, although Cameron might have missed its emerging vibrancy.

Blockbuster exhibitions of Byzantine art hold the public’s interest, providing an encounter that often exoticizes or spiritualizes Byzantium. Of pieces on display at a Royal Academy show in 2008/9, Cameron writes, “Many visitors found them hard to understand, but nearly all found them breathtaking” (71). The appeal of its art is both an opportunity and a trap for Byzantium. Cameron expresses caution about recent work, such as Pentcheva’s, that reflects on expectations of radiance, dazzle, and a mystified transcendent. Not everyone will agree with the judgments in this brief but stimulating book, but it provides perfect reading for societies, programs, and departments seeking to join the conversation about Byzantine matters.

Derek Krueger
University of North Carolina, Greensboro


Guasco’s study reframes the history of English slaveholding by placing it in the context of human bondage in the early modern English world. Bondage and slavery were, he argues, familiar as ideas and experiences to Englishmen of the period: The early development of slavery does not represent a radical shift but an adaptation of existing models and experiences.

Guasco builds his argument across six chapters. The first chapter maintains that the English were familiar with slavery through the Bible and Protestant theology, through the history and laws of Rome as taught in England’s grammar schools and universities, and through narratives of English history that identified conquerors—Danes or Normans—as enslaving the English. Furthermore, serfdom continued to limit the freedom of a significant number of English men and women during the

3 See Bissera Pentcheva, The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium (University Park, 2010).
sixteenth century, and penal slavery was a governmental experiment during the mid-Tudor period.

The second chapter explores English encounters with slavery around the world, particularly in the Mediterranean: The English (however disingenuously) prided themselves on their freedom, but enslavement, particularly of war captives, was familiar. In the third chapter, Guasco turns to the ways in which English privateers attempted to use alliances with Africans against the Spaniards in the Americas. The Africans, however, did not see the English as natural allies; they used them strategically to gain freedom from Spain. The fourth chapter examines the experience of, and narratives about, the “thousands” of English sailors enslaved in the early modern Mediterranean. Guasco suggests that far more of them died than returned; those who managed to return were often treated as apostates, having converted to Islam rather than embrace martyrdom.

The final two chapters look at how slavery was transplanted into English America, from the earliest days onward. Guasco emphasizes the multiple models of slavery available to colonists, its practice in the Spanish colonies, debates about the enslavement of Indians, and the ways in which early colonies adapted bondage to control behavior. When the early colonists began to acquire African slaves, they treated them as slaves before they had legal structures to do so, and only gradually moved away from Spanish models of slavery, with their high levels of manumission. The book thus demonstrates both that English men and women were familiar with slavery and that the ultimate structure of plantation slavery was not a foregone conclusion.

Guasco also examines slavery and freedom in the English imagination. The English had a concept of slavery regardless of any actual practice. He points to the hypocrisy behind the English view of its brand of freedom as uniquely humane. Guasco has read widely, and produced a rich account of the English cultural experience of slavery during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. However, there are blind spots in his coverage. His search for forms of bondage and slavery is not always true to their wider context, particularly their intersection with other historical developments in English society. What is more important, the attempts to enforce villeinage during the sixteenth century or the broad resistance to them from all levels of English society? How were ideas about slavery connected to ideas about gender and sexuality? More importantly, given the political resonance of the concept of slavery in England, what was the political use of such language? Since this book is primarily a cultural history, with an episodic structure, change over time on the English side is not always visible in it, but few historians of England would move as seamlessly as Guasco from the 1540s to the 1640s. Guasco is not, in general, reflective about his methods, or his sources. A bibliography would have helped.

Such caveats, however, do not detract from the significance of Guasco’s work. Slaves and Englishmen provides a persuasive account of
bondage in English experience that will challenge historians of both colonial America and early modern Britain.

Susan D. Amussen
University of California, Merced


Ito presents his *London Zoo and the Victorians: 1828–1859* within evolving discussions about Victorian ideas about animals. Indeed, Ito intends his book as a critique of what he considers a prevailing argument about the London Zoo—that it should be understood primarily in the context of the colonial ambitions and colonial mindset of the Victorians. Focusing on a tight historical frame of the zoo’s first thirty years, and paying particular attention to how the zoo developed amid debates about cultural politics, public science, and the values to be placed on various kinds of animals, Ito argues that the people who were responsible for developing the Zoological Gardens “were not just vessels through which texts and objects produced meanings,…they were relatively, if not completely, independent agents who modeled and modified the ways in which they appropriated knowledge” (13). Importantly, these people, for Ito, were not primarily interested in colonialism.

At its best, Ito’s *London Zoo* presents a rewarding, if often cursory, account of the early years of the Gardens, showing the variety of reasons, for example, why the leadership wanted to have giraffe in the collection during the 1830s; why the Society’s natural history museum on Bruton Street, Piccadilly, and the breeding facility at Kingston Farm developed out of interests quite different from those behind the Gardens; and why, despite the fact that the Gardens were built for the exclusive use of the Fellows of the Zoological Society and their guests, a much broader swath of the public managed to access the grounds. Ito’s discussion of the works and popularity of George Scharf, the early illustrator of the Gardens, is particularly thoughtful, and the appendixes carry much useful data about attendance and collection size in these early years. Writing animal history typically pushes authors into interdisciplinary work. Ito is clearly comfortable working with a wide variety of sources, from works of art to accountants’ ledgers.

The only disappointing aspect of the book, which is easy to excuse because of the book’s strengths, is Ito’s commitment to debunking a straw–man argument about zoos and empire. Although it is certainly the case that historians since Harriet Ritvo in her seminal *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987) have tended to discuss nineteenth-century zoos within the broader context of distant lands, peoples, and animals, Ito unnecessarily generalizes and simplifies arguments about zoos and empire to
make his case that the day-to-day details about running the zoo had little to do with colonial ambitions and politics. His work, he insists, shows that “‘empire’ is not the only contextual element in the zoo” (161), but no thoughtful historian would ever claim that it was. Nonetheless, Ito’s *London Zoo* presents compelling and well-chosen quotidian details to critique arguments about larger trends; readers sympathetic to that approach will not be disappointed.

Nigel Rothfels
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee


Not so long ago, after revisionism had discredited virtually every social interpretation of the French Revolution, commercial capitalism seemed to have had only an indirect bearing on that great event. However, in the last few years, partly because of new interest in the Revolution’s global origins, a growing number of historians have sought to reconnect the commercial and political spheres of eighteenth-century France without resorting to the Marxist models of class conflict common to most pre-revisionist interpretations of 1789. But how to do so convincingly has remained elusive, especially given the complex dynamics of state breakdown painstakingly unraveled by revisionist scholars.

In this brilliant, imaginative, and well-researched book, Kwass, building upon his previous excellent work on the politics of taxation, ingeniously argues that it was not so much commercial capitalism that corroded the structures of the Old Regime as its “darker” side, namely, illicit commerce.¹ To be sure, Kwass acknowledges the existence and importance of the “consumer revolution,” to which some historians have pointed as a destabilizing factor and without which his story would not make much sense. Eighteenth-century French consumers were purchasing more goods than ever and, thanks largely to colonial trade, in greater varieties. But as Kwass demonstrates in illuminating detail, this demand was frustrated significantly by the fiscal state’s efforts to regulate commerce, in some cases (for example, Indian calicoes) by banning it altogether to protect domestic textile production, and in other cases (tobacco) by imposing monopolies to fund the state’s increasingly costly operations. The result was the creation of vast networks of illicit commerce, wherein smugglers—like the folk-hero Louis Mandrin—motivated by profit, and consumers, looking for cheaper and more exotic goods, happily collaborated in cheating the state. Thus does Kwass cleverly substitute consumer/state conflict for class conflict as one motor of the Revolution. As illicit commerce grew,

and the state responded by imposing increasingly more stringent laws, regulations, bureaucratic controls, and punishments to contain it, the smugglers’ many natural allies among the population came to see in their repression one conspicuous manifestation of the creeping “despotism” against which 1789 was the explosive reaction.

Was the development or the repudiation of such apparently repressive mercantilism a concomitant of the modern state? As Kwass persuasively concludes, both of them were. To be sure, the revolutionaries replaced the burdensome indirect taxes and the hated, heavy-handed apparatus erected to collect them as part of their effort to end despotism and liberalize the economy. Yet, the fiscalization of consumption that had provided nearly half of the revenues received by the Old Regime was so lucrative that the Revolutionaries quickly restored it in a less oppressive form after renouncing it. It is difficult not to draw from this story Tocqueville’s conclusion that the Old Regime persisted in spite of the disruptions of the Revolution. Indeed, Kwass can readily be considered one of Tocqueville’s worthy successors.

Thomas E. Kaiser
University of Arkansas, Little Rock


Unlike street solicitation, serving as someone’s mistress is a form of prostitution with a little-known history. Because mistresses were virtually invisible, the police usually ignored them, thereby depriving us of historical sources that concern them. An unusual set of police reports, however, allows Kushner to describe mistress-keeping in mid-eighteenth-century Paris. In Erotic Exchanges, she focuses on the women in these relationships, reconstructing their “life histories” to describe “their historical significance” (13, 3).

Many of the police reports that Kushner cites were published in the late nineteenth century and have been utilized by historians both amateur and professional. Erotic Exchanges surpasses these earlier studies; it is longer, more detailed, and devoted exclusively to kept women. The first chapter, which explores how the police reports were produced, also describes the Parisian police force and the lives of the police inspectors who wrote the reports. However, Kushner does not scrutinize the texts with a critical eye. She takes them at face value, arguing that the reports

are accurate because the inspectors corrected them when they erred and updated them when new information emerged. The reports, which exhaustively document kept women’s family backgrounds, their initiation into the world of venal sex, their successive lovers, and (above all else) every gift that they received from patrons, are probably accurate, at least in the mundane details (addresses and the sums of money). But attention to detail in this respect does not preclude the kind of subtle biases of presentation or selection that can distort the inspectors’ portraits.

Kushner uses the information in the police reports to write six chapters organized according to a kept woman’s life cycle. She begins with the women’s birth families (usually from the ranks of artisans or lower-level officials) before turning to the women’s initiation into the world of commercial sex. One of Kushner’s more interesting chapters concerns girls who were sold by their families into elite prostitution. A later chapter concerns the fate of kept women when age forced them to retire. A few of them wed, but not to elite men. Usually they took husbands whose social standing approximated that of their birth families.

Kushner does not overlook the elite men who kept such mistresses, devoting a full chapter to them. But she declines to speculate on their social backgrounds, citing the difficulties posed by Old Regime social categories. Instead, she focuses on an even more treacherous subject, their sentiments regarding the women that they kept. The relationships between the two parties were generally, she concludes, “not merely mercenary, but meaningful” (162).

The core of Kushner’s argument rests upon the money and goods bestowed on the women by their patrons; she refers to these gifts collectively as the “contract.” The label is misleading because the promises made by a patron were purely verbal and utterly (as Kushner herself admits) “unenforceable” (161). Yet, Kushner considers this agreement similar to a “marriage contract,” arguing that it even conferred “respectability” on the kept women (162, 146). The term contract also carries the implication that the mistresses were engaged in work. Because scholars, activists, and even policymakers since the 1980s have come to describe prostitution as “work,” Kushner’s assertion does not surprise. Nevertheless, some readers might not be convinced. Kushner maintains that the “contract constructed sexual acts as services that could be sold” (160), but she does not explain how sexual acts or services constituted labor. An interdisciplinary approach would have provided an answer. Social scientists working on contemporary prostitution have used the concept of “emotional labor,” as developed by Hochschild, to describe the activity that goes into sex work.2 Hochschild argues that “emotional labor”

is performed by service workers (stewardesses and nurses, for example) because they must manage their emotions and discipline their bodies to produce the desired emotional response in their clients. Was the eighteenth-century kept woman who strived to please her patron and mold her appearance and personality to his whims very different?

Kushner might have done well to compare the Parisian kept women to elite prostitutes elsewhere in the world and to explain the significance of mistress-keeping for our understanding of eighteenth-century society. Even so, Erotic Exchanges lifts the veil covering elite extramarital sexuality in eighteenth-century Paris. Historians of women, sexuality, luxury consumption, and Old Regime elites will find it useful and informative.

Kathryn Norberg
University of California, Los Angeles

The Medieval Salento: Art and Identity in Southern Italy. By Linda Safran (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) 469 pp. $95.00

The Salento—roughly corresponding to the heel of Italy—was home to a complex, mixed society in the Middle Ages, intertwining Latins and Greeks, Normans and Angevins, Orthodox and Catholic, Western and Eastern Christians, and Jews and Muslims. Safran’s outstanding book is a sophisticated and rich study of the ways in which these groups conveyed identities to themselves and those around them.

The themes of the book are established in the opening chapter, in which Safran sets out the parameters of her study. She develops a nuanced notion of identity—its fluidity and diversity—and how individuals can hold multiple identities at once. Safran brings together many different approaches to this subject, from sociolinguistics and ethnology to cultural anthropology and iconography. In every case, Safran provides clear definitions of her methodologies, assesses their strengths, and acknowledges the critiques and issues that they raise. She is rightly wary of the limitations that modern labels and categories impose upon medieval people whose lives were more varied and complex than cursory depictions can ever imply. She balances proclamations of ethnicity with declarations of social and professional status and balances religious affiliation with gender and linguistic preference.

Given the range of ideas that it incorporates, Safran’s writing is a model of clarity and organization, supported by ample secondary literature, which students and academics will certainly appreciate. Since Safran trained as an art historian, visual and material evidence lies at the heart of her study—primarily wall paintings, sculpture, and epigraphy—but her book is far more than a study in art history. All of her ideas come together in her final chapter, “Theorizing Salentine Identity,” in which she champions cultural process and the importance of histories that are
inclusive and multiple rather than individual and discrete. Her critique of
the language of cultural contact—singling out the overworked concepts
of influence, acculturation, syncretism, and palimpsest—is both passionate and
insightful.

The meat of the book comes in two parts—an extensive database
that describes and transcribes all of the known images and inscriptions
that Safran uses to make her case and a series of chapters that explores
the different ways in which identity could be proclaimed, debated, dis-
guised, and changed. Four of these chapters cover topics that arise directly
from the material in the database, examining how names, languages,
statuses, etc., appeared in texts and images and how people viewed and
used them.

Three chapters take a different approach. Rather than working from
the evidence of individual texts and monuments, Safran constructs
notional medieval lives, fleshing them out through the material evidence.
She examines the life cycle from birth to death, as well as the rituals
associated with religious and secular life. These chapters allow Safran to
consider an extraordinary range of interactions between people and their
social and physical environs—where people stood in church or synagogue;
how they responded to various spaces and images; and how they expressed
themselves in marketplaces, processions, bathhouses, etc. In every case,
Safran employs the evidence in her database, always in a nuanced and
sophisticated way.

Safran’s strength lies in her ability to examine many diverse groups
in a single study, rather than in a series of discrete studies. She gains
much by considering the differences between them as well as the simil-
larities within them. She gives women and children as much attention
as she does bishops and dukes. A work like this one requires years of
research to build up a familiarity with the material evidence, much of
it dispersed, relatively unknown, and scarcely available. It also requires
a scholar who can grasp the potential of applying multiple approaches
to material more usually confined to matters of style and iconography.
Safran clearly loves the Salento, and the region is fortunate to have found
such a devoted scholar.

Antony Eastmond
Courtauld Institute of Art
University of London

Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Rise of the Fourth
Confession. By Todd H. Weir (New York, Cambridge University Press,
2014) 304 pp. $95.00

Dating back at least to Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, social theorists
have generally seen secularization—the decline of religious practice, the
diminished influence of organized religion, and the lessened salience
of religious interpretations—of human existence as an integral part of modernization. In view of the continued—in fact, often increasing—importance of religion in the contemporary world, this assertion has been the subject of some dispute. Weir, in his study of “free religion” in nineteenth-century Germany, approaches the problem from a different perspective. He suggests that the key concept is not secularization but secularism, the development of a body of ideas and of the organizations incorporating them that asserted a nonreligious, increasingly science-based view of the world. This approach succeeds in illuminating a number of developments in Central Europe’s nineteenth century, but secularism does not always seem conceptually adequate to resolve the issues raised by the concept of secularization.

Weir begins by investigating the intellectual and theological development of free religion in nineteenth-century Germany, from its origins in the 1830s and 1840s as a kind of Unitarianism, through a phase of Hegelian pantheism, to the mystical-scientific interpretation of human life in the universe that had emerged by the last quarter of the century. Weir describes this last development as monism. Haeckel, a biologist, coined the term for his own particular version of free thought, but Weir uses it in a more general sense to encompass all strands of free religion at the beginning of the twentieth century.1 He effectively demonstrates the close connections between free religion and left-wing politics from the democrats of the 1848 revolution to their successors, the progressives and socialists of subsequent decades.

To investigate secularism, Weir employs Bourdieu’s theory of a religious field, which links religiosity to social structure, in this case perceiving secularism as tied to the social conditions of small producers on the margins between the middle and working class.2 Although the membership of Berlin’s free-religious congregation, a focus of Weir’s investigation, was certainly dominated by this social group, Weir must admit that other forms of free religion, such as the Ethical Culture Society, flourished in a more bourgeois milieu. Rather than being tied to a particular social group, secularism existed among all (at least urban) social groups, albeit taking different forms in each.

Another central conceptual point is Weir’s assertion that adherents of free religion formed a “fourth confession” in Central Europe, after Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism. The problem is the extremely low number of organized adherents of secularism, before 1914 never reaching 50,000 nationwide. There is certainly a good deal of evidence that many Germans shared some elements of the views of organized secularists—as can be seen in declining church attendance, anticlerical

1 Ernst Haeckel, *Die Welträthsel: Gemeinverständliche Studien über Monistische Philosophie* (Bonn, 1900).
hostility to organized religion, or growing interest in scientific theories as a
guide to ethics and morality—but these developments occurred largely
outside the small and increasingly sectarian world of the secularists. Since
such attitudes and behaviors are all examples of secularization, it would seem
that a concentration on secularism to explain the relationship between
secularization and modernizing social change is not entirely sufficient.

Jonathan Sperber
University of Missouri

Postcolonial Germany: Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation. By Britta
Schilling (New York, Oxford University Press, 2014) 258 pp. $110.00

Tracing “memories of empire” after decolonization has become a popular
research topic for at least three reasons—the appearance of a useful body
of theory about collective memory, the fact that collective memory is
implicit in the concept of “postcolonialism,” and the imminent unavail-
ability of the last bearers of first-hand colonial memories. All of these factors
are evident in this book, which examines colonial memory in Germany
from World War I to about 1990. Although its perspective is broad, it
is not fully comprehensive. Its focus on representative topics in specific
periods is an appropriate strategy, however, given the heterogeneity of
colonial memory. Moreover, the memories with which Schilling is con-
cerned are almost exclusively those of white Europeans in Germany and
in Germany’s former African colonies. The Pacific and China are largely
absent, and, for the most part, the memories of Africans are presented as
subjects of reports by Germans, not as objects of research in themselves.

Schilling describes Germany as having been “decolonized” at the
end of World War I. The manner in which Germany’s decolonization
occurred—its colonies confiscated by the victors on the formal grounds
that Germany had been a bad colonial ruler—gives comparison with later
cases only limited utility, but it was crucial for the construction of German
colonial memories. One such “memory”—of Germans as effective colo-
nialists with loyal African subjects who preferred them to their later
rulers—was a deliberate attempt to counter the assertion that had justi-
ﬁed the seizure of the colonies and to campaign for their return. Other colonial
memories of the interwar years were also constructed for use in national
politics. Schilling describes a few nonpolitical memories, including exotic
colonial “dreams” embodied in “colonial balls” during the 1920s, which
she associates with fads for jazz, Josephine Baker, and tropical con-
sumer goods. She suggests, however, that even these fancies tended to
be understood in the context of forced decolonization.

For the post-1945 period, Schilling focuses on how the split between
West and East Germany structured alternative public versions of colo-
nial memory. Whereas the East portrayed itself as heir to a supposedly
consistent anticolonialism on the socialist left, the West often officially
referred back to the memory of “good” German colonialism, emphasizing the benefits conferred by Germans on their grateful subjects. Schilling cites government files concerning official gifts to newly independent states during the 1960s to reveal the complex role of colonial memory in formulating policy toward Africa. She also discusses the radical left’s use of memories of German colonialism to attack the contemporary Federal Republic during this same decade. In a chapter about the disappearance of public monuments to colonialists, Schilling paints a picture of public colonial memory fading during the 1980s, whereas in another chapter, she shows how private memories continued to be maintained in the families of Germans who once lived in the colonies. She does not attempt to explain in any depth the modest resurgence of public and academic interest in Germany’s colonial history that has been evident since about 2000.

Schilling does not display a particularly thorough knowledge of German colonial history; she makes a few factual errors, although none of significance. Her attempt to connect each of the chapters to a body of theory is sometimes successful and sometimes not. Overall, Schilling makes a useful contribution to the historical literature on collective and colonial memory.

Woodruff D. Smith
University of Massachusetts, Boston

*A World without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide.* By Alon Confino (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2014) 283 pp. $30.00

On the basis of extremely careful and wide-ranging research, Confino offers a new perspective on the events that have come to be known as the Holocaust. He shows how the National Socialist government of Germany worked strenuously from the very beginning of its rule in 1933 to promote the idea that all of the evils and problems in the world would be solved with the eradication of the Jews. The Nazis used not only propaganda but also, significantly, public rituals, which Confino conveys through illustrations, most of which are new to the literature on the subject. Two of the most important rituals were the burning of books in May 1933 and the public burning of the Jewish Bible—in the form of torah scrolls taken from synagogues—especially in November 1938. In a small way, the process of total exclusion began with the posting of signs prohibiting Jews to enter certain communities, restaurants, swimming pools, and other buildings and institutions. Furthermore, the deportations of Jewish persons from German cities beginning in the fall of 1941 were also deliberately conducted in public.

Confino shows how in 1938/39, the authorities increasingly prepared the German public for the acceptance of killing as an entirely appropriate procedure; he then provides a summary of the actual killing process. In accord with the general theme of the book, Confino also stresses the
systematic collecting of books and archives from Jewish institutions and the effort to remove suspected Jewish elements from Christianity. Unfortunately, he does not relate this procedure to the Nazi plans for the reconstruction of German cities after the war and the building of new German settlements in conquered territory, neither of which accommodated churches, since Christianity was also to disappear.

Adolf Hitler is curiously missing from this account of the Führerstaat, the Leader’s State. Confino makes no reference to Hitler’s telling an enthusiastic Munich audience in April 1920 that all of the Jews had to be exterminated. Nor does he mention Hitler’s report to the foreign minister of Czechoslovakia in January 1939 that the Jews of Germany were to be killed; to the Romanian leader Ion Antonescu on June 12, 1941, that all of the Jews in the Soviet Union were to be killed; to the Croatian Minister of War on July 21, 1941, that all of the Jews in Europe were to be killed; and to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in November, 1941, that all of the Jews on earth were to be killed. The relevant documents have been available for decades, as has the evidence that the Nazis set the Reichstag fire and had prepared arrest lists days before the fire.¹ Advance readers should have caught the erroneous dates for the Allied entrance into Rome and Hitler’s suicide.

Notwithstanding a few criticisms, this book has great value and importance. It offers in a thoroughly documented and illustrated manner a perspective on Nazi Germany that is largely missing from the existing literature. It provides major insights into the new world that the Nazis envisioned, as well as their manner of involving the German people in it.

Gerhard L. Weinberg
University of North Carolina

Louisiana: Crossroads of the Atlantic World. Edited by Cécile Vidal (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) 278 pp. $49.95

In this superb collection of eight finely crafted chapters, plus excellent introductory and concluding essays, Vidal has compiled a well-conceived volume that examines Louisiana from the perspective of recent Atlantic-world scholarship. The volume focuses primarily on Louisiana’s colonial period, when Louisiana belonged to the French and then to the Spanish New World Empire (and partly to the British Empire). Although a couple of the chapters extend into the early nineteenth century, the essays mostly concentrate on the eighteenth century and on the French and Spanish colonial experience.

The volume construes “Louisiana” broadly, but it centers on the lower Mississippi Valley—in particular, the area that would become

¹ See Benjamin C. Hett, Burning the Reichstag: An Investigation into the Third Reich’s Enduring Mystery (New York, 2013).
the modern state of Louisiana. Moreover, although genuinely global in scope, the chapters are also attuned to particular and local histories. Likewise, although wide-ranging, both geographically and conceptually, each of the chapters addresses a specific topic. The introductory and concluding essays—by Vidal and Sylvia R. Frey, respectively—place the chapters in their larger historical and historiographical contexts and highlight the volume’s broader themes.

Although the authors address a host of issues and questions relevant to current Atlantic-world studies, the origins and development of the concept of race, and the construction of modern racial categories, in all of their complexity and nuance, are clearly central to the volume. Conceptions of race and race relations differed under French, Spanish, British, and American rule, and they continued to evolve during each distinct period. Yet something amounting to the modern idea of race always remained essential to Louisiana society. Moreover, all of the chapters show that even though local conditions and circumstances were integral to the development of notions of race in Louisiana, these notions could not be understood without reference to the wider Atlantic world and to the different metropolitan centers that variously ruled Louisiana.

Based on extensive archival research as well as on a close, indeed meticulous, reading of the sources, the chapters are also firmly rooted in the vast secondary literature. The footnotes alone are a goldmine for both recent and older scholarship on colonial Louisiana. All of the chapters can be considered, broadly speaking, social or cultural history, but certain of them also incorporate concepts from demography, historical geography, economics, linguistics, ethnography, and cultural anthropology. The authors also succeed in maintaining considerable analytical and theoretical rigor without, for the most part, descending into jargon. Whether Louisiana, for all of its diversity and complexity, can indeed be considered, as the subtitle maintains, the “crossroads of the Atlantic world” is debatable. Would any place fit that description? But this excellent volume will be of undeniable interest to scholars of the Atlantic-world experience.

John C. Rodrigue
Stonehill College


Robert Love’s Warnings examines the operation of the poor law in Boston. The city’s selectmen hired “warners,” such as Love, to search for newcomers and warn them to leave. Strangers could stay and seek employment, but if they needed relief, the colony would have to pay for it. The book
provides biographical sketches of those people whom Love warned. Love, who searched Boston’s streets for transients and recent arrivals, left detailed accounts of strangers’ names, birthplaces, last habitation, occupation, Boston residence, and the number of people in their party by age and sex. The biographical sketches are based on Love’s records and its nominal linkage to other sources that uncover the lives of those warned.

The book sustains George Ravenstein’s “Laws of Migration,” as revised by twentieth-century demographers. Just as in late nineteenth-century England, most of the migrants in Dayton and Salinger’s research had moved a short distance, in this case relocating to Boston; nearly all of them came from New England. Boston received more migrants than any other New England town, but most of them left soon after arrival, usually for the countryside—a common final destination in the early modern world.

A number of them came in search of opportunities in domestic service, desperately in need of wages sufficient to feed and clothe themselves and their families. The authors argue, however, that Boston’s migrants were primarily from the middling sort—yeoman farmers and artisans. Their classification of only one-fifth of those whom Love warned as poor challenges earlier historians’ insistence that nearly all of those warned were poor. But the story is more complicated. The book presents enough compelling data to challenge its own conclusions. Boston migrants certainly included a substantial number of the middling sort. But this group probably did not constitute four-fifths of the strangers entering the town. Love includes travelers (both poor and middling) who came to Boston by sea or by land, planning to leave immediately for elsewhere. But he excludes two groups traditionally considered poor—sailors, a constant and large portion of Boston’s population, who fell under the jurisdiction of a ship’s captain, and British occupying soldiers, who were the responsibility of their officers.

The operation of the Massachusetts Poor Law compounds these problems. Love probably identified nearly all of the absolutely destitute strangers in Boston. After all, the selectmen wanted him to locate those most likely to need public assistance. But many of the others that he warned were probably among the working poor—young female domestic servants, wage laborers, or journeymen artisans down on their luck—a group that the authors combine with the middling sort.

Boston’s population never reached 20,000 before the American Revolution. Yet it attracted thousands of strangers during the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Even during the severe recession following the Seven Years’ War, migrants continued to arrive. As New England’s largest town and entrepôt, Boston played a vital role in New England’s economy, attracting apprentices and domestic servants, as well as those without visible means of support. The turnover was great. Those who came for only a few months or years, expecting to return to their home villages or move to a growing frontier, were replaced by a steady stream of new migrants.
Robert Love’s *Warnings* adds much to early American history, the history of American and global poverty, and the study of law and public welfare. Its thick description of the lives of poor people and of struggling workers humanizes a mostly unknown part of the colonial population and sheds some light on how the early United States dealt with the problems of internal migration and immigration.

Allan Kulikoff
University of Georgia

*Charity and Sylvia: A Same-Sex Marriage in Early America.* By Rachel Hope Cleves (New York, Oxford University Press, 2014) 267 pp. $29.95

Charity Bryant and Sylvia Drake were two literate seamstresses who lived in Weybridge, Vermont, in the first half of the nineteenth century. What brings them to the fore as the subject of this beautifully written book is that they lived together as a couple in their own house and were regarded as joined in a marriage by contemporaries and posterity, including Charity’s nephew William Cullen Bryant. In telling their story, Cleves has written more than a work of recovery of a lesbian past. She offers an intriguing inquiry into the language of letters and poetry. Her close reading uncovers hidden meanings to reveal the private coded words of the same-sex female lovers. Cleves also explores the essential silence that shielded the women during their lifetime.

Bryant was the elder of the two, born in Massachusetts in 1777 to a consumptive mother who died soon after her birth. Her independent streak and masculine manner attracted female friends, evoked gossip, pushed her out of her father’s house, and forced her to move a number of times before coming to Weybridge to visit friends. There in February 1807, she met Drake, seven years younger. Sylvia’s family life in Massachusetts had been disrupted by the economic troubles following the Revolution; ultimately, she was able to resettle with her mother in Vermont in the house of her brother who had ventured to western New England, bought land, married, and prospered. Drake’s married sister Polly, newly settled in Weybridge, welcomed Bryant when she needed a place to stay.

Bryant had already known a number of romantic relationships with women when the two met. Drake was the less experienced, but she responded quickly and by July the two were united in work and love. Eighteen months later, they moved into their own home, a single 144 sq. ft. square room on a quarter-acre leased lot. This structure, with periodic additions, served as both their home and their workshop for the next four decades. It enabled their hospitality and became their base as they devoted themselves to their clients, apprentices, family, church, and benevolent society. Cleves gives rich historical context to their daily life.
In some ways, the two women reproduced the social roles of husband and wife, Bryant serving as head of house and business and Drake as cook and domestic worker. We learn much about their harmony but little about what may have been the ups and downs of their relationship, their disagreements and conflicts; Bryant’s independent streak could hardly have been completely quelled during these years. Cleves gives much attention to their possible sexual relationship. As she does with Bryant’s earlier love affairs, she teases out information from letters and poems. Some of the exegesis is brilliant and convincing, especially her ability to connect seemingly bland words to romantic and sexual meanings via the quoted fragments from published writings known and shared by writer and recipient. There are, however, moments when Cleves goes too far in sexualizing language, especially as she deals with the women’s confrontation with their sinful selves. Same-sex sexual practice was hardly the only activity to cause many Christians to feel the deep depravity of original sin in the era of the Second Great Awakening.

Ironically, in a book determined to reveal sex in the past, one of its signal achievements is to convey the power of an earlier era’s shared silence, the unspoken words of family members and neighbors. Protected by the cloak of silence, Bryant and Drake lived their conjoined lives—dedicated to each other, hard work, and service—with communal acceptance and respect.

Helen L. Horowitz
Smith College

* A Commercial Republic: America’s Enduring Debate over Democratic Capitalism. By Mike O’Connor (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2014) 287 pp. $34.95

O’Connor’s engaging survey of leading debates about political economy throughout American history helps to explain why many of us are oblivious to the role that the federal government necessarily plays in our market economy. Despite the enduring popular appeal of laissez-faire from the Jacksonian era to the present, the “American government cannot help but alter market outcomes, often significantly” (243). Echoing Alexis de Tocqueville’s influential analysis in *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840), O’Connor posits an ongoing tension between “liberty and equality,” the central concepts around which controversies over capitalism and democracy have pivoted in the history of American liberalism (244). As they “struggled to reconcile their commitment to the political sovereignty of the people with their equally fervent desire to ensure the integrity of markets and to protect private property,” Americans have perpetuated a tension that defies resolution and defines democratic capitalism.

O’Connor’s study begins with a Hamiltonian tradition of “stewardship” that linked the federal state with elite investors and the promotion of manufactures. Despite resistance from reactionary Republicans, Alexander
Hamilton established a central role for the state in fostering a “diverse and healthy economy” (47). Jacksonians resisted federal intervention—most notably in banking—but embraced markets. Their “laissez-faire populism” proved ill-equipped to deal with the business cycle and paved the way for a return to power by neo-Hamiltonian Whigs and their successors (61). But suspicions of state power remained the democratic default in future decades, disabling efforts to curb concentrations of private wealth and power. However significant the federal government’s role has always been in the economy, American voters have been reluctant to use their power to promote egalitarian outcomes. The collapse of the New Deal consensus and the triumph of the populist right’s anti-tax orthodoxy confirm the democratic legitimacy of supposedly free markets.

O’Connor’s best chapters help to explain why Americans are reluctant to interfere in markets. Led by Justice Stephen F. Field’s influential dissent in Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad (1886), the Supreme Court transformed the corporation from a grant of power to achieve a public purpose to a “sort of placeholder for individual interests,” thus providing “a Liberal, individualist justification for what was effectively an illiberal, collectivist enterprise” (110). Field’s jurisprudence showed the importance of ideas in determining the character of democratic capitalism. In contrast, modern liberals fell short on the intellectual battleground, failing to elaborate a rationale for social democracy and the welfare state before it was too late. In O’Connor’s sympathetic analysis, John Rawls’ enormously popular Theory of Justice (Cambridge, Mass., 1971) ironically served as an epilogue to liberalism’s brief and limited ascendancy. Conservative, pro-market theorists and pundits would instead carry the day, as their “antitax message” developed into an “overarching theory of government” (203).

A Commercial Republic does not pretend to be a comprehensive synthesis. O’Connor could have drawn on a rich new literature in American political development that has “brought the state back in[to]” our understanding of political economy. Moreover, any one of the themes that he addresses—from trade to currency policy to taxation—could have been much more systematically developed. But O’Connor has succeeded admirably in showing how previous generations have engaged with the policy controversies that continue to define the character of political economy in America.

Peter Onuf
Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies


This wonderful book draws on classics, political science, and sociology to fill a large gap in the history of the U.S. women’s movement. Most importantly, Tetrault uses the concept of the “origin story” to show how
Seneca Falls in upstate New York, the site of a relatively minor meeting, became the women’s movement’s founding myth and the most recognized event in U.S. women’s history. “We have many good histories of the meeting,” she writes, but none of its myth; she uses myth not in the sense of a falsity but as “a venerated and celebrated story used to give meaning to the world” (4–5). Never employing jargon, Tetrault clearly shows how Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony created this myth, which they used to focus the movement on winning the vote for white women.

The Fifteenth Amendment, which gave the vote to black men but not to women of any race, divided feminists for more than twenty years. In the minority that opposed “the black man’s vote,” Stanton and Anthony gained control of both the movement and its history by excluding rival groups and individuals, holding a series of 1848 commemorations, and, finally, by writing an encyclopedic but biased history that left out the other side. Not even present at Seneca Falls, the indefatigable Anthony became “the narrator and historian of a nascent myth” (72). She and Stanton celebrated Seneca Falls in 1873, 1876, 1878, and 1888. Although these commemorations are forgotten today, their three-volume History of Woman Suffrage (New York, 1881 [I and II], 1886 [III]) still remains a foundational text. Although scholars know its limits and biases, the encyclopedic length of these books sanctions it as “the official record of the movement” (143). This History gives short shrift both to pre–Seneca Falls events, from lectures by feminist abolitionists to interracial women’s conventions, as well as its authors’ rivals, like Lucy Stone. In her chapter “Commemoration and Its Discontents, 1888–1898,” Tetrault clearly demonstrates the re-united movement’s increasing conservatism. With Anthony as president, and allied with the large Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the new suffrage association excluded blacks—even Frederick Douglass, who had been at Seneca Falls—and Stanton, whose Woman’s Bible (New York, 1895) made her too radical.

Tetrault concludes with a fascinating epilogue, showing how Seneca Falls came to dominate women’s history during the 1960s. Using the iconic 1921 statue of Stanton, Anthony, and Lucretia Mott, which celebrated the supposedly “complete victory” of suffrage in 1920, Tetrault shows how both racism and sexism shaped the women’s movement. It was not until 2009 that a bust of Sojourner Truth, representing black feminists, joined the statue, which had been stored in the Capitol’s basement until 1997. By bringing her story to the present day, Tetrault demonstrates how “memory is made, not found, and what we remember matters.” She ends with the hope that “the myth of Seneca Falls” may finally be obsolete, allowing both scholars and activists to explore “other radicalizing experiences and theoretical foundations” (198). This fine work illuminates both the past and the present.

Bonnie S. Anderson
City University of New York

Progressive Inequality is an important, a deeply researched, and an altogether impressive examination of interclass contact and relations in New York City between 1890 and 1920. It is not a new topic; the 1970s saw a cycle of such studies. But this work revises the topic significantly, advancing well beyond the “social control” arguments of that scholarship. Huyssen reveals the elitist disdain at the nexus of the charitable relation, blind and unaware though it be. This cultural history is attentive to language as well as to “robust, often unilateral exercises of power” (16). Huyssen favors a “cooperative” spirit linking the classes, and he is particularly harsh, sometimes even contemptuous, of the language and politics of the leading philanthropists of the 1890s.

In the second half of the book, which purports to engage givers who have a better sense of the poor and understand themselves better than their predecessors did, Huyssen makes a category error by eliding Gilded Age reformers and actual Progressives. He misses a generational shift. Those whom he criticizes—Robert W. DeForest, Richard Gilder, and Josephine Shaw Lowell—were all born in the 1840s, whereas the later reformers whom he sees in a more positive light—Lillian Wald, Jane Addams, and Mary Simkovitch—were born in the 1860s; Mary E. Dreier was born in 1875. Hence, the philanthropies of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era ought to be distinguished, even though his conclusion notes that neither was democratic in a cultural or political sense.

Yet generation is not destiny. Regrettably, Huyssen declines to follow Lowell into the Progressive Era, when she began to condemn manufacturers and middle-class consumers for exploiting the poor. The later Lowell was moved by the Haymarket riot, the Homestead strike, and the Henry George campaign for mayor in New York to bring together poor women (“shop girls”) and middle-class women (consumers) in the National Consumer League to collaborate in the name of justice rather than charity: What the “poor want is fair wages and not little doles of food.”

Huyssen admires Wald’s settlement house work, as well as Jacob Schiff’s support of it, adding, however, that Wald’s aid to the poor unavoidably “reflected, rather than subverted, the inequality upon which it rested” (183). The early parts of the book are prosecutorial in tone, whereas the latter chapters are marked by restrained celebration. The alliance of women with money (notably Alva Belmont) and women without money (the seamstresses and various union leaders) become Huyssen’s focus. The great shirtwaist strike of 1909/10 ended inconclusively; a year later, the horrific Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire followed. By that time, interclass mobilization was coming apart.

The book ends on that sad note; indeed, the poor, the vulnerable, and the exploited are still with us. Yet the tragedy that paralyzed one generation of New Yorkers mobilized another one—Al Smith, Robert F. Wagner, and Frances Perkins—who brought the state into play in a way that strengthened labor, thus tilting the polity toward more justice, though still not enough.

Thomas Bender
New York University


Every so often a historical monograph appears that challenges cherished orthodoxies and interpretations of American legal history. Compton’s *Evangelical Origins of the Living Constitution* can be counted as one of them. It asks us to reconsider the following questions: (1) What were the core principles of Constitutional “originalism” and how and when were they subverted? (2) Who engaged in these acts of sabotage and for what reasons? (3) Was there a “constitutional revolution” during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt? (4) Who gets the praise or the blame for these developments?

Depending upon ideological orientation, the heroes or bomb-throwing seditionists in this narrative are those Bible-beating Protestant evangelicals and pietists (mainly Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians) who sought through law to purge our land of its manifold evils—especially slavery, lotteries, and alcohol. They also led the crusade to curb the influence of the Catholic Church and its desire to tap public funds for religious education, although Compton does not touch on this subject.

This Second Great Awakening of American Protestantism achieved its greatest victories before 1900 with the three Constitutional amendments that abolished slavery, established African-Americans citizenship, and banned race as a qualification for voting. But Compton’s focus remains exclusively on the legal campaigns to eradicate lotteries and make America “dry” during the years before the ratification of the eighteenth amendment in 1919/20. To achieve these ends, these religious reformers had to confront and overthrow three bedrock pillars of the Founder’s Constitution—the Contract Clause, the Due Process Clause, and Dual Federalism—all of which had been designed to prevent rapacious majorities from eviscerating property rights and breaking down the walls that separated federal from state jurisdiction.

Although not without a struggle, the moral reformers reached their basic goals through state legislation but then faced a predictable gauntlet of judicial obstacles erected initially by the Supreme Courts of John Marshall and Roger Taney with respect to the revision of corporate charters; the boundaries of the police power; and the defense of an integrated, national marketplace. Despite these initial setbacks in the courts, the
well-organized opponents of lotteries and booze had largely won their victory by 1903. As Finley Peter Dunne’s fictional Mr. Dooley reminded us around that time, “the Supreme Court followed the election returns.”

The opposition’s retreat began in 1880 with *Stone v. Mississippi*, simultaneously abolishing a state-sanctioned lottery charter and blowing a huge doctrinal hole in the Contract Clause. It continued in *Mugler v. Kansas* (1887), in which John Marshall Harlan and the majority dynamited the Due Process Clause as a limitation on the destruction of property in the case of intoxicants. It climaxed in 1903 with the Harlan opinion in *Champion v. Ames*, eroding the once-hallowed distinction between “commerce” and “police power.”

While religious zealots drove the political agenda, their legislative victories gained the ultimate constitutional endorsement of the Supreme Courts led by Morrison Waite and Melville Fuller, bodies seldom noted for their radical inclinations when it came to social and economic reforms. Nonetheless, when such hard-boiled critics as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Roscoe Pound, and the Legal Realists sallied forth to bury the Founders’ Constitution once and for all, they discovered that the evangelicals of the Second Great Awakening and their unusual judicial allies had already completed the demolition.

Compton is not the first scholar to note the significance of lotteries and temperance for American constitutional development, but he is the first to trace its precise role in destabilizing the original intention of the Founders and how progressive and New Deal secular activists drew upon this body of precedents. Justices Scalia and Thomas take note.

Michael E. Parrish
University of California, San Diego


The ubiquitous, intensive, yet unconscious use of energy is a hallmark of our society. It is entirely possible to use electricity without understanding it, or even being cognizant of it. How Americans became so dependent on, and yet so unaware of, mineral energies is the problem that Jones addresses in *Routes of Power*.

This book traces the transition from an organic energy regime of wood, water, and muscle power to a mineral energy regime of coal, petroleum, and electricity in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Mid-Atlantic region—the first to undergo this transition—“played a disproportionate role in forging new energy practices in the United States,” establishing patterns replicated elsewhere (3). Whereas most books about energy transition focus on the discovery and production of energy sources, Jones focuses on the creation of high energy consumption. The key, he argues, was the development of transportation
infrastructures—coal canals, oil pipelines, and transmission wires. Supply preceded demand. Those who built these infrastructures deliberately cultivated the demand for coal, oil, and electricity among largely urban consumers. Although electricity is a form of power, not a fossil fuel, its connection with the transport infrastructure and with coal and petroleum make it a logical part of this story. Organic energy regimes require labor and punish consumption, but mineral energy regimes reward consumption. Transport infrastructures made cheap, plentiful energy available, stimulating demand, which further expanded infrastructure, reduced energy costs, multiplied energy applications, and increased consumption “in a synergistic feedback cycle” that reinforced the mineral energy regime (9).

Over time, the energies delivered by these transport conduits eliminated organic energy sources and practices; as people lost the ability to make energy choices, they came to believe that energy transitions were inevitable. Increased use of, and dependence on, mineral energy sources was accompanied by a growing level of unconsciousness about the consequences of energy consumption. The transition from organic to mineral energies restructured space and society, reorganizing the Mid-Atlantic region into urban “landscapes of energy intensification” and rural, impoverished “sacrifice zones” ravaged by the extraction of coal and oil and the re-engineering of the Susquehanna River for hydroelectric production (2, 12).

Jones’ chapters about electricity are particularly revelatory, keeping popular and persistent notions of inevitability squarely in its sights and driving home the point that energy transitions are historical creations, not historical certainties. Nothing about the mineral energy regime was pre-determined. By outlining the patterns of past energy transitions, Jones hopes to encourage new policies, practices, and infrastructures for a more sustainable energy future that can meet the challenges of finite supply and climate change.

This book demonstrates that studying energy requires an interdisciplinary approach. The physical power from energy translates into social, economic, and political power. Working at the intersection of technological and environmental history, Jones shows that understanding political economy and social context are integral to understanding energy transitions. His elegantly written and cogently argued narrative of how Americans spent down the planetary savings account of solar energy amassed in fossil fuels is as compelling as a mystery novel.

Ann Norton Greene
University of Pennsylvania

*Maya Lords and Lordship: The Formation of Colonial Society in Yucatán, 1350–1600.* By Sergio Quezada (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2014) 248 pp. $34.95

This book examines precolonial Maya political, social, and territorial organization and the demise of Maya elites of various ranks during the
Spanish colonization of Yucatan, Mexico. Because of its rich historical and cultural information, in addition to its theoretical contributions regarding Maya political organization and culture change, it is of interest to ethnohistorians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and geographers, especially those working in Maya and Mesoamerican studies. Solidly researched, it drives home two significant points: (1) Precolonial Maya political organization was not based on territory or land ownership, and (2) various ranks of Yucatec Maya elites were eliminated at different times by evolving Spanish colonial policies. This volume updates Quezada’s earlier publication in Spanish, which included his initial interpretation that Maya territory was important in Maya politics, but it loses useful tables and illustrations. The new text, however, preserves detail about Maya society, political offices, and Spanish colonial policies.

Quezada re-analyzes information from commonly utilized colonial documents to argue that Maya social and political organizations were built on social ties and obligations. Earlier reconstructions of Yucatec Maya territory and geographical provinces in the literature, which he outlines, were based on Spanish constructs and not indigenous Maya ones. Unlike Spanish and Aztec territorial political structures, the basic unit of Yucatec Maya polities and interpersonal interaction was based on the *batab*, a middle-ranked Maya noble, who mediated between upper-level elites and heads of families throughout a region. This point is also novel in Quezada’s research, since many scholars state that the highest-level elites were the core of Maya politics.

The Maya *batabs* (usually men) held political authority, not territory or land, and had vassals in various places who pledged tribute, service, and personal allegiance to them. Their subjects met at the *batab’s* residence. At this point, Quezada’s notions of Maya territory and polity become slippery. It is possible that Maya territory may have existed; it just shifted with alliances over time. Most politically complex societies with large agricultural settlements and tribute had territory, land ownership, or usufruct, and sites of belonging. Nonetheless, his argument regarding the centrality of social networks between Maya of different rank across the landscape and the power of personal obligations of reciprocity as the basis of Maya political structure instead of the control of land is compelling.

Interestingly, Maya elites survived the initial Spanish conquest. When the Spanish overlords extracted tribute from the Maya, these new leaders bypassed upper-level native elites, but they, too, relied on the *batabs* as mediators. The Europeans effectively dissolved the time-honored social ties among Maya nobles of various ranks through sociopolitical change, eventually establishing Old World territorial divisions. In a fascinating twist, the Spanish re-organization of Maya society and economy actually gave more power to *batabs*, thus ensuring their survival until the end of the colonial period when Spanish land and economic reforms removed all control from the last Maya elites. The policies of the colonizers
have influenced the organization of Maya society, settlements, and land ownership to the present day.

Joel Palka
University of Illinois, Chicago


The last twenty years has witnessed a noted shift in the thematic interests and conclusions about the first half of nineteenth-century Cuban history. Previously, the dominant topic of historical investigation was the rise of the sugar economy, analyzed from the insights of dependency theory. Sugar became the single most important catalyst in explaining the causes behind Cuba’s war for independence, even helping to explain the historical roots of Fidel Castro’s 1959 Revolution. Beginning in the 1990s, however, when Cuba lost the Soviet Union as an ally and benefactor, its economy atrophied, and sugar production came to a grinding halt. The economic and political chaos of the 1990s led historians to look at topics far removed from sugar and its hegemonic role in shaping Cuban history. Van Norman’s excellent study is the latest addition to this budding historiography. Diligently working his way through imperial archives in Spain, national archives in Havana, and regional archives in Cuba, Van Norman examines the neglected role of coffee in Cuba during the nineteenth century. In particular, he analyzes how coffee produced a type of slavery vastly different from that on sugar plantations.

Van Norman organizes his book into three parts that address three broad topics. Part I examines the structure and demographics of Cuban coffee plantations. Van Norman convincingly shows not only that “the crop mattered”—coffee plantations were not run like the agro-industrial work camps found on sugar plantations—but also that coffee’s economy of scale fostered the emergence of a rapid rate of creolization among the slave population. After analyzing the structural dynamics of coffee plantations, he then turns to the heart of his book, which explores labor, religion, family, housing, geographical space, and slaves marketing and selling their own goods. Readers of this journal will find the chapters about religious practices and the spacial layout of the coffee plantation to be the most interdisciplinary. Drawing inspiration from anthropological and religious studies, Van Norman describes the enslaved population’s attempt to re-create an African cosmology that also spoke to their immediate Cuban surroundings. Moreover, he employs scholarship about cultural geography and archival sources to show how slaves subverted their masters’ intent to convert them into crude instruments of labor by establishing their own family and kin relations.
Another of Van Norman’s major contributions is the way in which he re-orient the study of resistance and slave revolts to show what was particular to coffee plantations. Over time, the rapid rate of creolization, the development of more stable family and community relations, and the opportunity to harvest and market agricultural production resulted in a “moral economy” that came to govern slave life on coffee plantations. When these rhythms and expectations were upset, rebellion often followed. For example, Van Norman cites the cholera epidemic as a cause of the 1833 slave revolt on the plantation Salvador. The slaves perceived cholera as an indication of malevolent forces at the command of whites that they had to eradicate. Hence, the uprising was not just about opposition to enslavement; it was also a religious movement to restore balance to the world that had been upset by evil spirits.

More than seventy years ago, Ortiz, Cuba’s foremost anthropologist of the twentieth century, deftly counterpointed sugar and tobacco as the two dominant crops that shaped Cuban history. By counterpointing coffee to sugar, however, Van Norman’s book brings further complexity to the study of nineteenth-century Cuban history. Thus will it appeal to a broad range of scholars who study Latin America, the Caribbean, the Atlantic, and the African diaspora.

Matt D. Childs
University of South Carolina

The Politics of Giving in the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata: Donors, Lenders, Subjects and Citizens. By Viviana L. Grieco (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2014) 298 pp. $55.00

Grieco provides a detailed and well-argued analysis of the mechanisms involved in the financial support provided to the Spanish Crown by individual subjects and corporate entities during times of military crises. Included in her analysis is the complex political weave embedded in these material contributions. She focuses on the age of international wars among European powers during the 1790s, including brief but significant military engagements within the territories of the Río de la Plata, and ending with the stirrings of revolution in Buenos Aires in 1810/11. Grieco’s larger objective involves placing the Spanish system of public financing in a comparative context involving English and French practices.

Grieco focuses on the donativo system whereby the Crown called on its subjects to respond to financially patriotic calls for help in a time of dire need. She analyzes a rich trove of qualitative and quantitative data drawn from administrative account books to present her findings. For Spain, limping on weakened finances by the late eighteenth century,

---

1 Fernando Ortiz (trans. Harriet de Onís), Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar (Durham, 1947; orig. pub. in Spanish, 1940).
wars against France and England exacerbated its financial difficulties. The enlistment of subjects resulted in donations from such corporate bodies as the Catholic Church or the Consulado, the import-export merchants’ guild of Buenos Aires. Funds and goods were also donated by individuals, who significantly increased their share of donations during the early nineteenth century when the city’s municipal government took over the system’s administration. In the management of these calls for help, the Crown played by rules that, on the one hand, reflected long-held cultural and constitutional traditions of collaboration, but which, on the other, were loose enough to yield differential treatment of donor subjects.

Grieco’s arguments fall along two dimensions. The first one deals with the characteristics of the donativo system in the domestic realm—that is, within Spain and its viceregal domains, specifically in the Río de la Plata. The second one deals with the Spanish system of fiscal resource gathering in an international-comparative framework. Regarding the domestic dimension, Grieco concludes that Spain successfully avoided the imposition of new taxes; indeed, its subjects did not perceive calls for material support as new impositions or forced loans. She goes further to establish that long-held traditions and practices, supported by Christian ethics, formed a constitutional system that allowed for uniform taxation to be deflected and avoided as part of negotiated arrangements that permitted a variably distributed system of justice. General acceptance regarding the core elements of the polity’s common good resulted in a value system that included proportionate benefits to donors, large and small.

Support by subjects rested on two features: (1) an understanding that equality of treatment was not conducive to system stability and that it might allow the Crown to impose new and higher taxes on everyone and (2) the Crown’s flexibility in negotiating terms, which involved variably distributed returns of both funds and benefits. Grieco highlights this flexibility, demonstrated through multiple examples of donativo arrangements, in order to undermine the traditional view of an absolutist Spanish Crown. Collaboration rather than conflict with subjects characterizes not an absolutist system but one of mutual accommodation. Grieco contrasts this Spanish system with the more oppressive regimens of public financing implemented by England and France.

Grieco argues that during periods of exigent needs, the British treatment of its territories in North America and the French treatment of its propertied classes at home represent examples of absolutist, predatory, and rapacious fiscal practices that drove away North American subjects and stymied economic development. In the British case, the perceived financial opportunities obtained through the purchase of government bonds created a dynamic market that appealed to a broad spectrum of the investment public. In this manner, the needs of the British fiscal-military state were harmonized with private interests. But this communion of interests did not extend beyond the metropolis to the British colonies.
in North America, where additional taxation was imposed without return benefits. For its part, the French monarchy’s approach to fiscal needs failed to develop a market-based public finance and credit mechanism, relying frequently on coercive borrowing practices and, in the case of perceived adversaries, confiscation. In short, the French model evoked an absolutist set of practices in which property rights would remain insecure.

To be fair, Grieco’s book is not a full-bore comparative study; it does not delve deeply into the mechanics and politics involving the British and French cases of public financing. It confines its detail and nuance to the Spanish monarchy. But Grieco’s larger point—that, even in the absence of modern methodologies of public financing, the Spanish system remained respectful of property rights and studiously avoided fiscally rapacious practices that ran counter to its constitutional traditions—merits attention and further discussion.

Mark D. Szuchman
Florida International University

_The Bishop’s Utopia: Envisioning Improvement in Colonial Peru._ By Emily Berquist Soule (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) 287 pp. $45.00

_The Bishop’s Utopia_ recounts Martínez Compañón’s achievements during his eleven years (1779–1790) as bishop of Trujillo, in the viceroyalty of Peru. Born in Navarre in 1737 and trained in Aragón and Guipúzcoa, he climbed the ranks of the Church hierarchy. He was named canon of Lima’s cathedral in 1772, then bishop of Trujillo in 1779, and finally, bishop of Bogotá in 1790. He died in 1791. His post in Trujillo involved acting as an intermediary in three separate contexts—(1) between the court in Madrid and the more remote corners of the Empire, (2) between Lima’s bureaucrats and Trujillo’s mine owners and workers, and (3) between reform-bent officials and Indian parishioners clamoring for reform. In Soule’s book, Martínez Compañón’s handling of these responsibilities is a showcase for what a socially minded and culturally sensitive representative of the Spanish Crown could do in the name of common good, in the wider context of Bourbon reformism and of a peculiarly Spanish brand of the Enlightenment.

Martínez Compañón left behind a rich paper trail—letters; instructions to his subordinates; questionnaires about the topographic, climatic, social, historical, and natural characteristics of his diocese; and the so-called _Trujillo del Perú,_ nine volumes containing 1,372 watercolors documenting Trujillo’s natural history. Soule draws on this diverse material to highlight different aspects of the bishop’s accomplishments.

The first chapter introduces the bishop’s readings—an eclectic mix of the Church Fathers, chroniclers of the conquest and evangelization of
America, and writers with specifically ethnographic interests in the origin of American man. These reading lists situate him squarely in the context of the debates about the inferiority of America that were raging during the second half of the eighteenth century. Soule aligns herself with recent scholarship to give shape and meaning to those debates.

In the following five chapters, the book comes into its own, rich with original scholarship and sensitive to the spaces that Martínez Compañón inhabited during his stay in Trujillo. In Chapter 2, Soule follows the bishop on his visita, his reconnaissance expedition around the diocese that took two and two-thirds years. Soule traveled to some of the same places herself to obtain a sense of the desolation of the mining town, the lushness of the jungle, the bustle of the city streets, and the solitude of prehispanic ruins. Like the questionnaires addressed to priests throughout the bishopric, the purpose of the visita was to gain knowledge about Trujillo, which resulted in his most audacious reforms—the foundation of towns and schools and the improvement of the lives of those working in the Hualgayoc silver mine. Soule presents these projects as case studies to reflect on how action at the local level can become entangled in, and frustrated by, wider networks of power and influence, involving far-flung interests—in Martínez Compañón’s case, as far removed as Lima and Madrid.

While carrying out reforms, Martínez Compañón amassed an impressive collection of objects—specimens of natural history and antiquities—and of images and descriptions of these artifacts. The Trujillo del Perú, the subject of the book’s sixth chapter, serves Soule as a starting point for one of the most debated questions in contemporary history of science: What role did indigenous informers play in the production of eighteenth-century Europe’s knowledge about the natural world? Soule rightly notes that we have little information about the actual participants in this process, but she pores over the watercolors, drawing on clues, to make Indian informers, collectors, preservers, or painters of specimens as visible as possible. She concludes that the Indians of Trujillo collaborated in the making of the Trujillo del Perú to help in the creation of a “utopian vision of Trujillo for the world outside to see and treasure” and “to celebrate the local identity of their town, region, or viceroyalty” (167). This assertion warrants further reflection; it is not easy to see why Indians, in Peru and elsewhere, would have freely renounced their monopolies on medicinal plants in order to celebrate a viceroyalty that had not always treated them well. Modern-day fascination with the “free” flow of information has tended to see transmission and collaboration in the place of power relations or forms of persuasion or coercion.

In the same vein, the use of native languages does not necessarily reflect, as Soule implies, fruitful collaboration. As Nieto Olarte and Moreno de los Arcos pointed out, naturalists employed native terms when they appeared to convey information about plants more effectively than did Linnaeus’ taxonomic system, which would not be globally adopted for
more than 100 years. The *Trujillo del Perú*, like other natural histories of its kind (such as Fray Bernadino de Sahagún’s sixteenth-century *Codice Florentino* and the thousands of pages that resulted from the eighteenth-century expeditions of Alessandro Malaspina and Martín de Sessé y Lacasta and José Mariano Mociño), was not published, not because of some high bureaucrat’s contempt for vernacular knowledge, as Soule implies, but because the Crown made it a policy to keep such information from the eyes of its competitors.

The book’s final chapter commemorates Martínez Compañón’s legacy. The question arises whether what he had in mind was establishing a utopia or simply much-needed reform within the imperial system. On the one hand, as Soule points out, throughout the 300 years of Spanish rule in America, urbanization meant colonization; towns, like the ones that he helped to found, would ensure both economic activity and the eventual creation of a pious Christian community. On the other hand, by rebelling against a model of forced labor and captive markets, taking on powerful mining interests in Hualgayoc in favor of more humane working conditions and increased productivity, Martínez Compañon was fulfilling the law of Church and King, which many prelates had forgotten. The line between law, reform, and utopia is not always clear. Soule’s book, richly documented and illustrated, provides a conclusion that should stir an interesting debate.

Mauricio Nieto Olarte


Miruna Achim

*Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Cuajimalpa*

---

**Representing Argentinian Mothers; Medicine, Ideas and Culture in the Modern Era, 1900–1946.** By Yolanda Eraso (New York, Rodopi, 2013) 293 pp. $87.75

As part of the tradition of Argentine history, most English-language publications deal with the history of the capital city, Buenos Aires, and scholars who are interested in provincial and regional topics quickly learn that it is easier to write about topics that focus on the capital. The publication in English of Eraso’s work on social medicine and motherhood provides a corrective to the prevailing idea that important history does not emanate from provincial sources. Indeed, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to focus on medicine and motherhood from the three vantage points offered in this book—medical, textual, and visual records—that highlight the role of the Catholic Church and religious practitioners—without this change in perspective.

*Representing Argentinian Mothers* explores how Catholic efforts to retain authority regarding reproductive issues centered on the notion
that Marian motherhood exemplified the modern role for women. Furthermore, Catholic priests and doctors who identified themselves as more influenced by religion than science thoroughly rejected not only feminist visions of modern motherhood but also the control of maternity hospitals and orphanages by female philanthropists, themselves often fervent Catholics. Women were supposed to birth children in silent suffering while men set policy. Even photojournalism and provincial art ignored the image of the pregnant woman, fixating instead on poor and desperate mothers. As Eraso cogently concludes, “Prospective motherhood emerged in Argentinian society as an object not defined by a unique discourse but rather as an object that remitted to a diffuse corpus where various competing, temporal, registers have penetrated it to shape its contours” (261).

This work looks closely at the province of Córdoba, north of Buenos Aires, which was always the center of religious piety and expression serving as a counterpoint to the liberal, secular world of Buenos Aires. Outside the capital city, despite the presence of a university, feminism developed later, and the science of maternity and child rearing remained conservative, nurtured more by papal encyclicals and Catholic Action than eugenics and French visions of child rearing or puericultura.

Eraso’s sensibilities derive from an undergraduate education in Córdoba, graduate studies at Oxford University, and exposure to an international historiography and bibliography of social medicine. The combination of these backgrounds enables her to present a fascinating and ultimately critical analysis of Catholic influence at a time when information from the United States and Europe about maternity, abortion, and the need to lower infant–mortality rates in the modern nation–state was undergoing intensive dissemination. The groups that she studies had little impact in Buenos Aires; women in Córdoba had to deal with notions of the body and of medical intervention that were largely foreign to the capital. Ideology and a lack of economic and medical resources in rural and poor areas conspired to produce a high birth rate and a high infant–mortality rate outside the capital city (Buenos Aires could boast of low birth rates—sometimes to the dismay of public officials—and low infant–mortality results).

This study should appeal to those who are interested in women’s history, the social history of medicine, and the history of eugenics.

Donna Guy
Ohio State University


McCann’s vibrant study surveys the recent political history of Rio de Janeiro’s _favelas_—the mostly unplanned urban neighborhoods where
the working poor built, bought, or rented housing. He starts with the high
watermark of the favela-association movement that emerged to represent
residents threatened by favela removal projects toward the end of Brazil’s
military government (1964–1985). He argues that the favela associations
challenged the divide between the formal city and its informal favelas.

Most favela associations mobilized their constituents to elect the
socialist politician Leonel Brizola as Rio de Janeiro’s state governor in
1983. Brizola promised to halt favela removal and to give residents legal
title to their property. His campaign spurred many to invade land and
quickly construct a home because they anticipated that, once in office,
Brizola would legalize their property rights. McCann argues, however, that
Brizola’s election removed the threat of removal, which led favela residents
and their leaders to reconsider land titling because it would require resi-
dents to make regular payments and to pay property taxes. Brizola’s
“One Lot Per Family” program titled only 2 percent of the 1 million plots
announced as the program’s goal. A subsequent municipal program that
bypassed favela associations, dealing directly with individual residents,
was more effective at regularizing title to land, but its successes were
piecemeal. Brizola’s efforts to provide basic infrastructure, access to public
education, and municipal jobs for favela residents were much more effec-
tive than attempts to regularize land tenure.

Economic downturn, hyperinflation, and the criminal organizations
that began to occupy favelas during the 1980s and 1990s to distribute and
profit from cocaine sales checked the autonomy and influence of the favela
associations. The drug lords that began to run many of the favelas clipped
the local association leaders’ wings. In response, some neighborhoods
formed militias for protection, but these militias often were as oppressive
as the drug gangs. These developments had a chilling effect on efforts to
end police abuse of favela dwellers. Residents of the formal city stereotyped
favelas as sites of crime, violence, drug abuse, and corruption. Nazareth
Cerqueira, Brizola’s chief of police, attempted to alter the relationship
between the police and favela residents with community policing, but
his initiatives gave way to militarized police action in subsequent adminis-
trations. The stated goal of Mayor César Maia’s more recent Favela Bairro
Program was to end the distinction between neighborhoods (bairros) and
favelas. A municipal program with international funding, Favela Bairro,
provided new favela infrastructure, but it did not address problems of
security, nor did it expand land entitlement. In McCann’s words, it “could
not address the deeper political separation between favela and bairro” (176).

McCann ably demonstrates these larger trends with concise analyses
of changing conditions in specific favelas and with reference to compelling
histories of specific politicians, bureaucrats, drug lords, priests, lawyers,
activists, policemen, real-estate developers, and favela residents themselves,
among others. He utilizes a wide array of sources from archives to oral
history. What could have been a dismal tale of violence and corrup-
tion overrunning a grassroots social movement is lightened by McCann’s
epilogue in which he describes a return to some of the ideas of the early favela-association movement. Rio de Janeiro’s police have returned to Nazareth Cerqueira’s methods of community policing, coupled with investment in municipal services. Since 2008, the Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora (UPPs, Units of Pacifying Police) have been banishing drug lords and occupying key favelas with police trained to work with local residents. This modicum of security has allowed more favela residents to benefit from broader economic growth that is more evenly shared in twenty-first-century Brazil.

The investments needed to host international sporting events have resulted in more employment opportunities, but they have also led to the removal of favela residents. The demolition of housing contributed to a rapid rise in the value of housing and the cost of rents. The mass spontaneous protests of June 2013 in cities across Brazil brought together middle-class and working-class Brazilians to decry the rising costs of transportation and housing, the lack of security, police brutality, political corruption, and the massive investment in sports stadiums when many public services—from healthcare to education—remain inadequate. McCann describes these events as a possible opening for an alliance that could help to end the divisions between the formal and informal city, but the obstacles to such a sustained alliance seem formidable.

McCann provides a masterful contemporary interpretation of Rio de Janeiro’s favelas, but he might have offered a more detailed comparison between Rio de Janeiro and other cities in the Global South. His treatment of other cities’ efforts to reduce violent crime, especially those of São Paulo and Bogotá, are compelling, but he does not develop the theme of land entitlement in the same manner. The introduction notes that Brazil was in the vanguard of South American nations by ending its military regime while other nations grew more authoritarian, and that Rio de Janeiro’s favelados were in the “vanguard of the vanguard” when they mobilized for the right to remain in their homes (13). The residents of Santiago’s irregular neighborhoods, however, gained much higher rates of titled homeownership under both Salvador Allende’s socialist government and Augusto Pinochet’s rightwing dictatorship. A fuller consideration of such comparative ironies would have situated Rio de Janeiro better as a trendsetter or an outlier.

McCann’s warning that big infrastructure projects intended to provide a quick fix for favelas are likely doomed to fail echoes Scott’s criticisms of state interventions that treat individuals like generic subjects rather than creative individuals with knowledge of their own environment (195). In this context, McCann had an opportunity to intervene in larger debates about state-led development that would have complemented his criticisms of Hernando de Soto’s The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else (New York, 2000) (40).

1 See James Scott, Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (New Haven, 1998).
These quibbles aside, McCann’s analysis is insightful, and his research brings exciting new perspectives to contemporary Rio de Janeiro’s urban history and, more generally, the history of Brazil, Latin America, the Global South, and urbanity.

Peter M. Beattie  
Michigan State University

*Biography and the Black Atlantic.* Edited by Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). 370 pp. $55.00

This exceptional set of essays explores the “Black Atlantic” through biography. The volume is organized around particular life stories that illustrate the implications for interpreting the interconnected histories of Atlantic societies. Generally, these fine contributions raise issues of how to reconstruct biographies to determine their significance as individualized glimpses into patterns of history; responses to enslavement; and the quest for liberty, dignity, and meaning. Implicitly, biography is interdisciplinary because it draws on written and sometimes oral texts that have to be examined through the lens of literary criticism while explaining the context in terms of historical methodology. This volume addresses this dual orientation carefully and thoroughly. Suitably critiqued, it can help to propel the genre even further as a historical tool of analysis. The book is divided into twelve chapters and an afterword. A number of contributions summarize or extend earlier studies of individuals.

One of the great achievements in this volume is the focus on the biographies of women, who are seldom seen or heard in the history of slavery, particularly those women who were enslaved in Africa. Jon Sensbach discusses the lives of Rebecca Rotten and Maria, the “Mooress,” both of whom were Moravians. Cassandra Pybus looks at Jane Thompson, who escaped to British forces in Virginia and ultimately found her way to Sierra Leone in 1791. Rebecca Scott and Jean-Michel Hébrard follow the path of Rosalie of the “Poulard Nation,” identified as Fulbe, during the era of the Haitian Revolution.

Martin A. Klein provides a marvelous overview of African biographical studies, as well as an introduction to the problem of finding the voices of the enslaved; he gives particular attention to scholarship about slaves born in Africa that has often been overlooked. Sheryl Kroen uncovers the ideological underpinnings of Atlantic history through the British animated character “Robinson Charley,” who personified the “North Atlantic” community during World War II and the subsequent Cold War. João José Reis reconstructs the story of Manoel Joaquim Ricardo, who left Hausaland in 1806/7 and, after gaining his freedom in Brazil, became a wealthy merchant and slaveholder who traded in West Africa. Lloyd S. Kramer follows the path of David Dorr who traveled from North
America to Europe during the 1850s. Similarly, Roquinaldo Ferreira studies Francisco Gomes, a merchant and colonial official in the Angolan seaport of Benguela, who in the early 1820s was accused of plotting a rebellion to free the colony from Portuguese rule. Gomes was born in Rio de Janeiro, possibly as a slave; in 1800, he was exiled to Benguela as a criminal.

Inevitably, a few caveats are warranted in measuring the success of this volume. Vincent Carretta repeats his well-known arguments about the methodological issues concerning the reconstruction of the life of Gustavus Vassa, whom he prefers to call Olaudah Equiano without exploring whether the individual in question was known, or preferred to be known, by that name at the time. Unfortunately, his methodology does not take into account either recent research of others or previous criticisms of his own work. Lisa Lindsay examines the mythology of “tribal marks” in her investigation of James C. Vaughan’s Yoruba background without raising questions about the meaning of facial and body scarification and the inappropriate use of the term tribal in discussing its significance. Nor does Lindsay question the application of the ethnic name Yoruba in the context of Egba history and its relationship to the collapse of Oyo.

Jane Landers applies ethnic terminology from the Americas, specifically Mandinga, to ethnicity in West Africa, where the term was not used, without fully comprehending the antiquity and centrality of Islam in the Senegambia region of West Africa. She does not explain who the “Muslim converts” were in the Gambia; in the early eighteenth century, Muslim identity in Senegambia had more to do with the emerging age of jihad than with matters involving conversion to Islam per se.

Reis is incorrect in claiming that kola was made into a drink when it was chewed. He also overlooks the practice of murgu in West Africa in the “hiring out” of slaves in Bahia. His subject of study was not “probably” enslaved during jihad; no other explanation is even plausible. Like Landers and Scott/Hébrard, he fails to place jihad in its proper context. Hence, on the one hand, these explorations in life histories reveal interconnections within the trans-Atlantic world, but, on the other, they sometimes betray weaknesses in comprehending the historiography of Africa during the period of Atlantic slavery.

Paul E. Lovejoy
York University

Mandela’s Kinsmen: Nationalist Elites and Apartheid’s First Bantustan. By Timothy Gibbs (Woodbridge, James Currey, 2014) 208 pp. $64.00

When I first began research in South Africa in the mid-1980s, I came across a subversive, and probably illegal, comic book lampooning homeland chiefs as apartheid stooges. The townships had just erupted into violent resistance, and state repression was careening the country toward civil
war and, ultimately, to a negotiated end of apartheid. Journalistic coverage tended to be heavily biased toward events in urban areas, and political discourse generally pitted modernizing urban activists against rural, tribal, collaborators.

Most scholars knew better, even if much of the historiography stressed urban politics. The country’s history of migrant labor intertwined rural and urban in powerful and complicated ways. Political elites, especially from the African National Congress (ANC), often hailed from tribal leaders. Nelson Mandela grew up among Thembu royalty. Gibbs, however, moves far beyond these facts to a sustained analysis of the rococo history of the nationalist elites and their relations who ruled South Africa’s largest Bantustan—the Transkei. In doing so, he offers a corrective to the urban bias in much South African scholarship. More importantly, he sheds considerable light on the contemporary resurgence of tribalism and the continuing importance of rural South Africa in the country’s contemporary politics.

At one level, much of what Gibbs argues is not surprising. Dynastic families produce dynastic politics. At times, these politics devolve into decades-long internecine disputes, most famously between Mandela and his relative Kaiser Mantanzima, the corrupt, autocratic, and long-serving leader of Transkei. Privilege begets privilege. The children of rural tribal elites had access to the best education and economic opportunities, and, as collaborators, to the apartheid state’s largesse. These legacies continue today; they help to explain the disdain that many of South Africa’s political elites have for their impoverished citizens.

Gibbs, however, offers one of the few sustained discussions of nationalism and rural politics in South Africa, from the beginning of apartheid during the 1950s to the politics of chieftainship and tribalism today. Based on archival research and oral interviews, he reconstructs the political web connecting Transkei politics to nationalist struggles and the South African state. He demonstrates how allegiances were created, maintained, reworked, and at times ruptured. He also demonstrates the continuing power of a rural idyll in the imagination of many South Africans, including people like Mandela and the current president Jacob Zuma.

Early chapters recount the making of the Transkei Bantustan state. More interesting are Gibbs’ discussion of the educational institutions that helped to sustain the region’s most powerful families. *Mandela’s Kinsmen* reveals how small South Africa is, how the children of leading families went to school together, married one another, and together shaped the country’s political culture. Monarchy and modernity often went hand-in-hand, even as some young elites criticized their “traditional” elders, especially when they sided with the apartheid government.

Later chapters reconstruct Transkeian politics in the crucial period from the late 1970s through South Africa’s first democratic elections in 1994. Gibbs ends with the contemporary re-assertion of tribalism that
bodes poorly for a democratic future. Gibbs argues that tribalism offers a way for rural areas, all desperately poor, to make claims on the central state—an obvious conclusion. Gibbs avoids discussing the rampant theft of state resources, leaving open the more controversial history of politicians hiding authoritarian tendencies behind a thin veneer of democratic politics.

Clifton Crais
Emory University


In the year of his death, Patrick Chabal, a leading scholar of modern African history, politics, and literature, wrote the forward to this edited volume, which celebrates the everyday resilience, strength, and global consciousness of the continent’s citizenry. His contribution is a testament to the work’s scholarly importance as a beacon of interdisciplinary synergy that promotes ongoing dialogue and understanding by paving empirical pathways that lead to the facts about African resistances. Chabal praised the book’s scope—“the myriad ways ordinary people cope with and undermine the politics of hegemony pursued by the political elite” (xv)—as well as its approach: “It is because the exercise of power in Africa is largely informal, that we need to turn to the informal if we are to understand what resistance means” (xvi).

Obadare and Willems bring together eleven chapters that each draw on critical theory to bridge the humanities and social sciences by reimagining “resistance by tracking its ‘parallel infrastructures’, i.e. the subtle ways in which it is mobilised, plotted and enacted” (2). They abandon the dichotomous trope of domination and resistance often enacted in the scholarly debates about structural violence. Instead, through a selection of interdisciplinary, contextually grounded case studies from South Africa (Bettina von Lieres, Innocentia J. Mhlambi, Grace A. Musila, and Daniel Hammett), Angola (Bettina von Lieres), Kenya (Ilda Lindell and Markus Ihalainen), Nigeria (Basile Ndjio and Jendele Hungbo), Cameroon (Ndjio), Rwanda (Susan Thomson), and Mali (Dorothea Schulz), the editors and contributors bring to light “informal modes of civic agency” that illuminate how everyday political action in *Africa Works* (4–5).1 Not only are the people in these cases studied outside institutional settings, with attention being paid to everyday lives rather than formal civil society, but the nation-state is also decentered and deconstructed as the object of

1 See Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Bloomington, 1999).
resistance; the chapter authors oppose power in many forms, what the editors label “fractured sovereignty” (6–7).

The chapters in Civic Agency in Africa exemplify this social action in a number of creative ways. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, for example, engages “coloniality as a global power structure that dilutes, truncates and influences the direction of resistance away from direct confrontation with global imperial designs” (28). Postcolonial Africa is rife with tensions or latent resistance that has the potential to manifest outwardly as direct resistance, as seen in the Arab Spring. Von Lieres discusses “mediated forms of citizen action” in both Angola and South Africa as a way to mobilize society or “deepen democracy” (50, 52). Lindell and Ihalainen’s chapter explores the logic of subaltern urban hawkers in Nairobi, Kenya, to show the processual and emergent nature of “space-making from below” (66). Ndjio’s study focuses on Nigerian and Cameroonian conmen who refashioned the conventions of global capitalism, supplanting Weber’s Protestant-based ethics with new forms of African capitalism.

Thomson’s chapter exposes an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the Rwandan state’s handling of reconciliation after the genocide. She presents various opportunities for resistance that instill political consciousness, such as one of her interviewee’s ability to speak out and inspire the voiceless because she is classified as abasazi (foolish). In her words, “In Rwanda, everyone is broken so no-one pays attention to people like me” (116). Mhlambi’s, Musila’s, and Hammet’s chapters discuss “Cultural sites of opinion-making” in South Africa (127), analyzing, respectively, how neoliberal commercialization has stunted satire, how comedic ambivalence has created spaces for social commentary on race and sexuality, and how controversial political cartoons have been used as a form of dysphemism to re-engage public dialogue and debate. In his chapter, Hungbo offers a compelling argument about African music’s contribution to a popular ideological struggle through interpretive textual analysis. Finally, Schulz surveys the proliferation of local radio programs in Mali that attempt to establish imagined communities. Schulz employs the concept of “resonance” to elucidate “the working of the ‘forming forms’ of music broadcasts, that is, how they inform listeners’ recognition, and contestations of certain broadcasts as their ‘truly own’ tradition” (198).

Critically, Chabal points out that “agency is usually understood as directed, meaningful, intentional and self-reflective social or political action” (xv). But he suggests that “it is not just the reflex opposition, a mere ‘re-action’ to the actions of the agents of the state” (xv–xvi). The reader must ask if the “arts of resistance” presented in this volume are embodied conscious choices or reflections of an already extant and embedded

---

2 See also Max Gluckman, Custom and Conflict in Africa (Oxford, 1965).
structural system of violence. Only the former has implications toward real societal transformation.

Brandon D. Lundy
Kennesaw State University


This thoroughly unfortunate book purports to be a kind of intellectual history of Central Asia from early in the common era to the end of the Timurid period, with emphasis upon the pre-Mongol Islamic era; but it covers only what Starr regards as valuable and significant—and only what he could learn from secondary literature—with an aim of lamenting Central Asia’s decline from its engagement with what Starr’s Eurocentric approach to cultural and intellectual history frames as the good, the true, and the right.

We might hope that despite the profoundly flawed concept and approach underlying the book, the substantive research presented in it might redeem it, at least as a sourcebook on Central Asian intellectual history, but this is not the case (we might also hope to say that the bibliography, at least, is valuable, but there is none). The book shows no sign that Starr has consulted any primary source in the original language; it is built upon translations and secondary literature in English, Russian, French, and German, and is thus, in terms of research, entirely unoriginal. With regard to translations, Starr regularly admits to having altered the wording from the publications that he cites, leaving us without anything solidly rooted in a primary source.

To be sure, studies based chiefly on secondary literature can have value as syntheses or surveys or critical reviews; such value depends on fresh insight, critical perspective, or original vision, as well as on analytical talent rooted in direct engagement with primary sources. But Lost Enlightenment comes up short in this regard, too. Its entire argument is framed around facile dichotomies of reason vs. faith, science vs. religion, progress vs. backwardness, and positive vs. negative, without any attempt to reach a more nuanced understanding of even these categories as manifested in actual historical experience.

The work’s basic contention is that Central Asia, as a participant in, and indeed an instigator of, the flowering of Muslim scholarship during the ninth through twelfth centuries was blessed with a golden age of


See John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures* (Syracuse, 1995).
enlightenment that the region’s people frittered away in the dark centuries that followed. The book has some novelty in extending its coverage of the “golden age” all the way to the end of the Timurid era (rather than accepting that the Mongol conquest alone shut it down), but the chapters about the Mongol and Timurid periods seem to be afterthoughts, marked by even more of the errors of fact, unsustainable interpretations, unjustified extrapolations, and significant omissions that mar the rest of the work.

In any case, this premise cements the book within the lamentable “tradition” of the study of Central Asia—and of the Islamic world more broadly—that glorifies the pre-Mongol era and denigrates subsequent periods as times of decline, corruption, obscurantism, and the rejection of all that is good and noble (that is, Starr’s “enlightenment”). This tradition has yielded a host of accounts of Central Asia’s historical “background” that leap from the fall of the Timurids to the appearance of the jādīdīst “reformers” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, on the absurd assumption that the intervening years offer little that is or can be known, and/or little of interest. Most students of Central Asia will not be fooled, though less serious readers may be misled by a book of this sort. Starr’s reliance on secondary literature leaves the period from the sixteenth century through the nineteenth century essentially off-limits to him; most of the information about this period can be assessed only through primary sources. Yet without having consulted these primary sources, Starr is nevertheless certain that nothing would be found in them that would pass muster as even a spark of his enlightenment. We need not belabor the simplistic nature of his criteria in order to recognize that by contrasting a misconceived “age of enlightenment” with an era presumed to be intellectually stagnant—though not actually known to be thus, since the sources remain mostly untapped—the book perpetuates a vicious cycle, discouraging readers from venturing into the darkness of the later periods and mapping the terra incognita of those sources. Starr’s belief that his golden age came to an end is thus not based on evidence, but it discourages inquiry just as much as the strictures of faith that he decries throughout his book.

This brings us to the culprit blamed by Starr for stifling Central Asia’s enlightenment and tarnishing its golden age—religion, especially Islam. The key points argued in the chapter about the Arab conquest of Central Asia, for instance, are (1) that the Arabs and Muslims were destructive jāhidīs and (2) that whatever was good about Muslim civilization came from Central Asians. The steady drumbeat of Central Asian “boosterism” in the work is excessive even for this reviewer, but it only partly masks Starr’s subtext of anti-Arab, and indeed anti-Islamic sentiments. There is no subtlety at all, however, with regard to Starr’s hostility toward religion, especially the Sufi variety, which he blames for causing the engine of his age of enlightenment to grind to a halt. His disaffection for religion may be a blessing, however, inasmuch as when he does venture into discussions of religious issues, he is entirely at sea (he garbles the role and significance of ḥadīth scholarship; his treatment of juridical issues misses the mark on
all fronts; and his comments on Sufi history are simply ludicrous and best ignored).

In its hostility toward religion and its simplistic juxtaposition of enlightenment and backwardness, the book is most reminiscent of Soviet scholarship about Central Asia, which trumpeted the region’s scientific legacies while disparaging its political and religious heritage, for obvious reasons. Indeed, Starr has made much use, mostly uncritical, of this scholarship, which was heavily developed in Central Asia itself. Highlighting contributions to science was, in Soviet times, an acceptable expression of national pride in the Central Asian republics, and such Soviet-era scholarship thus stokes Starr’s eagerness to insist that Central Asians were behind every positive thing in the Muslim world (he even swallows modern nationalist fantasies about Central Asians returning to their homeland rather than dying in distant Baghdad).

At the same time, the book’s rhetoric about the lost golden age also recalls the kind of triumphalist, colonial Western scholarship that sought to “explain” and decry the backwardness of the contemporary Middle East, or the Muslim world in general, by glorifying the ancient achievements of various peoples while disparaging the cultural failings of their more recent descendants. Such scholarship went out of fashion during the 1950s and 1960s, though it has lately made a comeback for the Middle East, with the rhetoric of identifying “what went wrong.” It is hardly surprising, given the dismal state of Central Asian studies in the United States, that such rhetoric has found a refuge in this field, as evident in Lost Enlightenment.

In short, Starr’s book advances a simplistic and untenable argument that is polemical rather than scholarly, and it uses sources in a manner that fails to meet minimal scholarly standards. It is reasonable to assume that books bearing titles hailing an “Age of Enlightenment” or a “Golden Age” of this or that will turn out to be shaped more by the needs of marketing, politics, and polemics—or simply by a quaint romanticizing nostalgia—than by sound scholarship. This book does nothing to dismiss that assumption. It is disappointing to see a work of this sort published by a respected university press.

Devin DeWeese
Indiana University