
Was Charles Foster Kane’s “Rosebud” a thing or a symbol? It was both a symbol of the overweening ambition and avariciousness of Kane in Orson Welles’ 1941 film Citizen Kane and Kane’s childhood possession. Rosebud was a thing that he desired and a subject of his desire. This tension underpins the study of material culture and provides the intellectual foundation of the masterful Tangible Things: Making History through Objects. The objects that humans create, collect, preserve, and destroy provide evidence of the kind of people that they are.

A highly successful synthesis of interdisciplinary scholarship about museums and knowledge, this book provides a methodological approach that, if adopted by museum professionals and scholars, would revitalize the use of museum collections in exhibition practices. The production of this volume bears the marks of institutional history. In 2002, two of the four co-authors (all self-identified historians who work in interdisciplinary ways) developed a series of research seminars based on Harvard’s seventeen museum collections and millions of objects. The project became a 250-student lecture/discussion course, a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and an interconnected, multi-gallery exhibit. This book presents the themes explored in the courses and the exhibit in four sections, with short essays in each section flagged with their respective authors. With chapters titled “Things in Place,” “Things Unplaced,” and so on, the book reflects the displacement of artifacts within collections, asserts the continuing importance of provenance and origination to understanding objects, and persuasively argues for the relevance of museums as scholarly institutions.

A photo essay suggests the strategic investigative role of photographers in exhibit productions. The consistently entertaining captions for the 165 images are substantive and well-written, supporting the authors’ stated desire to move beyond the limited use of things and images that many scholars employ. The objects highlighted in the short single-author essays range from scientific equipment to insects to medical bottles to gymnasium uniforms. Each essay, focused on a single item or group of items, is well developed, and the collection of essays is consistent in method and argument.

Ironically, given the authors’ interest in upending museum taxonomies and categories, Harvard University is often posited as the supposed center of the universe of objects, power, and thinking. Its holdings are awesome; the sheer numbers of artifacts and the extraordinary uniqueness of objects contribute to this bias. Because the book is an ancillary to several other projects, it has some redundancies. The introduction, a reconsideration of what objects are and how they work as historical evidence, bears the marks of a group project with multiple authors. But as
such, it strengthens the argument that museums are accretive, complex, and contradictory. Readers learn about the collecting activities of the past and the collections from which objects are drawn, as well as about individual things. The authors sustain this extraordinary feat throughout the book. Paying attention to specific and general matters—objects in and out of context, as well as collections and singular objects—the authors explore what artifacts mean physically and psychically. Like Welles’ fictional Rosebud, sometimes a sled is just a sled, but usually it is both a thing and an idea. The authors of this volume recognize this duality in their successful exploration of the multitude of things that they discuss.

Helen Sheumaker
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The explosion of publications about human rights is earsplitting; the number of books in English with “human rights” in the title increased 1600 percent between the decades 1945 to 1955 and 2004 to 2014.1 Roberts aims to cut his way free from the tangle of competing interpretations by recasting human rights as “basic representations of human relationships that emerge from struggle” (14, italics in original). Recognizing that this approach might not sound exceptional, he insists that he can uncover the previously overlooked actors by focusing on “People,” who are “the empirical entry point to the study of rights” (189, italics in original). The account offered is methodologically conventional, yet nonetheless illuminating because it is based on a wide range of documents that track the development of resistance in the United States to applying human rights at home, especially economic and social rights. The United States did not ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1966, until 1992; it has never ratified the companion International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In his effort to “unearth the full story” (73), Roberts focuses on two controversial issues for the United States regarding the International Bill—the “colonial clause,” which gives the British and French governments the final word in the application of the Covenants to their colonies, and the “federal-state clause,” which prevents the federal enforcement of human rights that infringe on states’ rights, such as those maintaining segregation

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1 To derive this number, I did an “advanced search” of WorldCat of books in English that had human rights in the title published between 1945–1955 and 2004–2014 (conducted April 30, 2015).
in the southern United States. Particularly telling is the analysis of the shift in American opinion from enthusiastic internationalism in the immediate postwar period (by 1949, twenty state legislatures had passed resolutions in favor of a world federation of governments) to the complete rejection of any attempt to give priority to international standards of rights. Important as these matters are, however, they do not justify Roberts’ categorical conclusion, “By the early 1950s, the prospect of human rights within the United States was crushed” (121).

“People” in this account turn out to be political leaders and opinion makers, if not states; states “are the key actors in recording the overall struggle in international treaties” (227). Yet only one state is really in question, the United States. To uncover the full story would require more attention to French support of the colonial clause; the focus for Roberts is mainly on the United States’ decision to back the British, not on the machinations of the imperial powers as they grudgingly accommodated to the tide of decolonization. Finally, despite a brief consideration of Mohandas K. Gandhi’s skepticism about rights, Roberts pays little attention to the smaller, non-Western states whose delegates pushed the United Nations forward to the completion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two Covenants.

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The Merchant Republics—Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Hamburg, 1648–1790.
By Mary Lindemann (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2015)
356 pp. $99.00

The monograph under review is an exercise in comparative history. Its interdisciplinarity is found in Lindemann’s effort to reconcile political history with cultural history (histoire de mentalité), through a comparison of the commercial and republican nature of Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Antwerp in the period between 1648 and 1790. It is, in the Lindemann’s own words, “not an economic history” (4)—a claim only partially true. Although not an economic history in the strictest sense, the book challenges a classic economic interpretation of the rise and fall of European commercial centers through its strong focus on perception and identity. Lindemann has written a history of the positioning of commerce in urban self-fashioning and political functioning. It is based on a rich consultation of secondary literature, showing Lindemann’s excellent command of the historiography about the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany, but she relies to a great extent on her own interpretation of primary sources—mainly plays, pamphlets, treatises, and diaries.

The book is divided into six chapters. The first chapter offers a political topography of Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Hamburg. The second chapter takes a closer look at the dynamics of politics. Rather than providing a dry institutional history, Lindemann focuses on the people
involved—politicians and merchants—a choice that turns out well given the richness of her source material. Chapter 3 deals with daily practices and discords in politics. Chapter 4 is crucial, demonstrating how “merchants and republicans” created the identity of the merchant republic.

Lindemann’s discussion of how good burghers distinguished themselves from imposters is highly original, enabling her to relate to a number of key themes—the attitude toward nobles, the presence of antisemitism, and the importance of personal trust. She relates some of this material to the commercial sphere in the following chapter, in which she describes how new commercial practices were perceived within the light of the merchant republics. The part on John Law, however, illustrates the difficulty of discussing the commercial mentality without the benefit of an international context. The final chapter, which deals with bankruptcy from a legal point of view, connects intellectual ideas about virtuous trade with political practice in settling problems between merchants.

Although Lindemann’s thematic division works well, she might have tied together a number of issues that she disperses throughout different chapters, such as her discussion of imposters in Chapter 4 and problems of trust in Chapter 5. This shortcoming, however, does not obscure Lindemann’s attempt to merge an analysis of the inner mechanisms of government in Hamburg, Amsterdam, and even Antwerp—a comparative study of politics and trade—with an analysis of the mentality and self-fashioned identity that allowed these cities to be branded as “merchant republics.”

Although the idea to combine these two approaches is innovative and worthy, it invites a certain lack of analytical focus, which is exacerbated by a time frame that saw the economic realities of these cities undergo considerable change. Furthermore, the effort to give Antwerp, a city under direct Habsburg rule, the same political label as the more self-ruling entities of Hamburg and Amsterdam, sometimes appears forced. It does not, however, endanger the main conclusion of the book—that Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Hamburg, despite the eventual passing of mercantile primacy, all remained strongly commercial in identity, governed by people who identified public good with commercial good—for which Lindemann has provided ample evidence.

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_The Coming of the Terror in the French Revolution._ By Timothy Tackett (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2015) 463 pp. $35.00

Why did the French Revolution, carried out in the name of “liberty and equality,” generate the violence of the Terror? For Tackett, the answer lies neither in circumstances nor ideology, but rather in the “evolving mindset” of revolutionary leaders and in the revolutionary process itself (5). To trace this dynamic, Tackett has produced a masterful, overarching
narrative of the Revolution in both Paris and the provinces, paying particular attention to how specific incidents and new political practices influenced the psychology and emotions of revolutionaries. “We must seek to understand how it was that the Terrorists themselves felt terrorized” (7). Fear—especially obsessive fear of counterrevolutionary conspiracy—engendered a mentality enabling the Terror. Tackett focuses on political elites, on the men who joined political clubs or held national or local office. To build his case, he draws artfully from the diaries and letters of several representative revolutionaries, including a bookseller, an estate agent, a mathematician, and a deputy’s wife.

These people enable Tackett to personalize his tale of Revolution as emotional whirlwind. Although optimism and exhilaration frequently share the stage with uncertainty and apprehension, the account overall continually tips the balance toward the darker, more worrisome impact of revolutionary innovation. For example, the new electoral politics in towns and villages across France created opportunities for thousands of new men to hold office and exercise local power, but this decentralization of state power also resulted in a “fracturing” or “breakdown of authority” that inevitably yielded divisiveness and anxiety (Chapter 3).

Tackett stresses the early roots of the Terror, whether psychological or institutional. The institutions of 1793—the Revolutionary Tribunal, the representatives on mission, the surveillance committees, the Committee of Public Safety—all had been prefigured after the Flight to Varennes or in the weeks following August 10 in national decrees or local improvisations (277). Likewise, fear-producing panics, beginning with the Great Fear of 1789, were endemic to the revolutionary process. Certain practices, such as denunciation or the Manichean rhetoric of journalists on the left and right, began as early as 1789, increasingly reinforcing the spiral of trepidation.

Tackett’s emphasis on distress and fear in so many contexts across the early Revolution has both disadvantages and advantages. It runs the risk of becoming a litany, and at times makes it hard to understand why many people felt so committed to the Revolution. But it also powerfully reveals the long-term roots of evolving anxiety and makes conspiracy fears believable. To be fair, Tackett’s account also highlights surprising moments of optimism: In the winter of 1792/93, the new Republic and momentary victories in the war with Austria injected high-flown confidence into the revolutionaries, making the military losses and counter-revolution of spring 1793 all the more suspicious and terrifying.

Counter-revolution—both real and imagined—played a pivotal, emotional role. In the early 1790s, aristocratic émigrés made only laughable attempts to foment counter-revolution. But, as France’s traditional military leaders, they appeared threatening at the time. By 1793, larger opposition movements in the Vendée and the federalist cities produced panics that built on earlier fears. Pressure from Parisian militants intensified the mood of paranoia. Alarm also stemmed from the repeated betrayals by leaders, including Mirabeau (Honoré Gabriel Riqueti), Louis XVI,
Lafayette (Gilbert du Motier), and Charles François Dumouriez. In addition, from the king’s flight onward, factionalism between political groups exacerbated fears of internal conspiracy. Although other historians have underscored these same factors leading toward the Terror, Tackett does far more than reiterate circumstances or revolutionary dynamics. With his nuanced portrait of revolutionary mentalité, he renders the terrorists’ own terror more real and inserts a crucial new interpretive layer that helps to overcome the stale debate about whether “ideology” or “circumstances” spawned the Terror. He also demonstrates the analytical power of the “history of the emotions” when grounded in deeply textured evidence and context.

Suzanne Desan
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**On the Importance of Being an Individual in Renaissance Italy: Men, Their Professions, and Their Beards.** By Douglas Biow (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) 311 pp. $55.00

The question of individualism has long bedeviled studies of the Italian Renaissance. For Burckhardt, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, fifteenth-century elites “discovered” the firm identity of the self-controlled individual who crafted the Renaissance state “as a work of art.”1 Most recently Ruggiero turned Burckhardt’s famous thesis on its head, arguing that the period crafted the individual as a kind of work of art and discovered the idea of the state.2 Among the many others who attempted to answer the question are Greenblatt, who sees the autonomous individual as an illusion created by the process of self-fashioning, and Martin, who considers Renaissance individualism a myth.3

These different interpretations derive, in large part, from the assumptions of the more literary disciplines tending to hold onto a Burckhardtian notion of the individual more ardently than social or art historians.4 Biow breaks through these disciplinary barriers with a truly interdisciplinary method that examines how men (and only men) in Renaissance Italy conceptualized their identities through art, literature, humanist discourse,

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medical treatises, and how-to books. Although close textual readings are his forte, he fully engages the life experiences of his subjects, including, for example, Leonardo Fioravanti, the notorious maverick physician, constructed himself through print.

The strongest readings in the book concern the professions—the manner by which Renaissance writers, such as Baldassare Castiglione, Benvenuto Cellini, and Niccolò Machiavelli, among others, tried to codify the rules for becoming a successful courtier, sculptor, or prince. Biow shows with considerable elegance, however, how the secrets of individual professionals—that peculiar combination of personal attributes and technique (arte)—remained a mystery to these writers. The recurring theme in these texts was the nescio quid, the “I don’t know” answer to what made a professional successful, that ineffableness of his “prudence,” “grazia,” “sprezzatura,” or “virtù.” To be a professional was to repudiate aristocratic privilege by acquiring a certain arte, but how to sculpt like Cellini was always complex, extremely difficult, and ultimately indescribable.

Biow makes an intriguing case about the fashionable beards that elite men in sixteenth-century Italy grew, as shown in portraits, to create their identities. He argues that this recourse to facial hair was a manifestation of anxiety about the loss of political independence during the Italian wars and the need to adapt to a court society in which discretion and the disguising of raw emotions became essential. The witty, clever courtier, who was a master of words rather than the sword, created a new way to demonstrate masculinity while masking his vulnerability. These “reflections,” as Biow calls them, offer a new answer to the old question. The male individual, who was mysteriously “marked by a peculiar striking character” through his professional actions, his distinctive beard, and his self-performance, became one of the greatest inventions of the Italian Renaissance (17).

Edward Muir
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Experimental plastic surgery, spas featuring detoxes and bottled mineral waters, and sexual biostimulants to revive a flagging male libido—the remedies described in Finucci’s book, in which she devotes each chapter to a particular cure—evoke downtown Los Angeles, 2015. Although the cult of the beautified, time-defying self may be something that we associate with late-capitalist haute bourgeoisie, Finucci shows us a formative moment in its prehistory, the princely world of late Renaissance Italy. Finucci’s protagonist, Vincenzo Gonzaga (1562–1612), Duke of Mantua, patronized artists from Torquato Tasso to Peter Paul Rubens to Claudio Monteverdi, and Finucci contends that he turned his aesthetic sensibilities and his pursuit
of refinement upon himself as well, in an effort to invigorate a body that proved to be ineluctably human.

That sovereign but fragile body is the departure point of the book’s four chapters; indeed, all of them launch with a variation on the same baroque sentence. One after the next, the chapters reveal in astonishing detail (thanks to the infinitely gabby Gonzaga archive) the triumphs and defeats of Vincenzo’s physiology. The book moves quietly but methodically toward a diagnosis of the duke’s most serious afflictions—according to Finucci, most likely tuberculosis and possibly syphilis or gonorrhea. But the ducal body, despite its nominal centrality, often fades from sight for pages at a time in an engaging examination of its medical context. Readers will not regret that shift of focus, since these contextual digressions establish the bulk of Finucci’s argument, as well as her interdisciplinary contributions.

Part of the reason that Finucci often makes this lateral move—away from the duke and toward his environment—is to highlight just how fertile in intellectual fruits Mantua had become by 1600. Famous for music and fine arts, Mantua also fostered research in natural philosophy at a moment when scientific method was pursuing questions “ex vivo, although not yet in vitro” (123). Near neighbor to Padua, one of Italy’s hubs of medical inquiry, the duchy was never far from those currents. To Finucci’s credit, she puts medicine on an equal footing with other arts, investigating its patronage relationships and knowledge structures, and coaxing out fresh streams in its intellectual history that lead to Italian, neo-Latin, Arab, Norman, and antique fonts. Hers is a deeply sensitive reading of medicine, alive to the cultural embeddedness of medical ideas of both practitioners and patients. The chapter about rhinoplasty (a procedure that the duke did not undergo, though he was the dedicatee of Gaspare Tagliacozzi’s treatise on it) offers a remarkable appraisal of the significance of the nose in premodern society. Readers will find a rewarding diversity of sources cited in the endnotes. Medical, literary, historical, and art resources interact evocatively.

Compulsively readable and even darkly funny, the book deserves to circulate through a variety of settings. The initial chapter about the genital exams undergone by Vincenzo and his first, ultimately discarded, Farnese bride Margherita will productively confront even advanced students of gender. The last chapter, on a trans-Atlantic quest for a Viagra-like stimulant, will teach lessons about the global trade in materia medica. Most importantly, the book may well provoke conversations about retrospective diagnosis. Aware that her audience could include both humanists and curious scientists, Finucci does not shy away from answering the questions that doctors often ask: But what was that disease? Did the medicine really work? At the same time, she frustrates positivistic prying through her constant attention to Renaissance perspectives, descriptions, and preoccupations. Her epilogue elegantly acknowledges the limits of interpretation in such cases.

At the heart of the book is an absent body; the duke’s corpse has yet to be located. His remains may, someday, come to light and respond, “More
exams?!” when confronted with the endless tests of modern medicine. Until that time, the duke’s sentient seventeenth-century body, as represented in language, remains our only source. But Finucci has brought it, and its therapeutic world, to vivid life.

John Gagné
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*German Colonialism in a Global Age.* Edited by Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley (Durham, Duke University Press, 2014) 419 pp. $99.95 cloth $29.95 paper

This set of sixteen chapters covers a wide range of topics relating to German colonialism from approximately 1884 through 1945. Two major themes emerge from, even if they are not systematically pursued by, the various authors—first and most prominently, the links between occupation of overseas territories and other forms of German “colonialism” and, second, the resonances of territorial colonialism within domestic German political, economic, and cultural life.

Steinmetz (in a work not related to his contribution to this volume) uses the German case to make a widely cited distinction between overseas “exotic” colonies and the expansion of state boundaries within Europe. However Eley in the opening chapter, offers “a far more capacious concept of colonialism” (24), including such issues as Weltpolitik (general international power assertion), emigration, and German control over East and East Central Europe. In this spirit, the book contains only five chapters about African and Asian German colonies and two about overseas ventures (naval battle fleets and Germans living in Iran) that have no connection to territorial control by Germany.

The real engagement with the role of overseas colonies in larger issues of German expansion comes in two chapters that focus on Slavic peoples and their territories under German rule. The first, by Sebastian Conrad, addresses Polish populations within the Wilhelmian Reich. These people, as Conrad points out, were not to be confused with “colonial subjects”; they were fellow Europeans with established national aspirations of their own and/or (in the case of residents as opposed to migrants) claims to full German citizenship. They even shared an antagonism, the anti–Catholic *Kulturkampf,* deeply rooted in European history and (as Conrad fails to note) directed as much at ethnically German “Papists’ as Poles. Conrad’s discussion of racist anxieties about Poles, “germanizing” education policies, and projects (never close to realization) of replacing Slavic migrant workers with African or Chinese labor do not make a convincing case for treating Germany’s erstwhile eastern provinces as

1 George Steinmetz, “‘The Devil’s Handwriting’: Precolonial Discourse, Ethnographic Acuity, and Cross-Identification in German Colonialism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* XLV (2003), 42–43.
“colonies.” Birthe Kundrus pursues the notorious “continuity” question by asking, “How Imperial [that is, how inspired by, or analogous to, overseas colonialism] was the Third Reich?” Although Eley insists on the connection (39), Kundrus tends to deny it. Hitler, she points out, despised Wilhelmian colonialism, and Nazi policies toward newly conquered Slavic peoples were too violent to allow any possibility for an enduring multicultural empire in this region.

The chapters about how colonialism shaped Wilhelmian German society at home—a major issue in postcolonial studies as well as in Eley’s contribution—focus upon overseas territorial rule, with an almost universally skeptical slant. In the most insightful of them, David Ciarlo shows how, in the advertising of various consumer commodities, “colonial fantasies” (not always tied to actual colonies) represented “less the politicization of commerce than the commercialization of politics.” Jeff Bowersox indicates that the inclusion of tropical studies in the German school curriculum was more the result of an autonomous pedagogical movement to reform geographical learning than a program of promoting colonialism. Moreover, colonialism did not map easily onto German antisemitism (Christian Davis) or the core, Europe-centered conceptions of proto-Nazi Pan-Germanism (Dennis Sweeney). John Phillip Short argues that even after the partial defeat of the Social Democratic Party in the 1907 Hottentot election, the German working class did not follow its “revisionist” leadership in supporting colonialism.

This review’s focus on what appear to be the central issues of Naranch and Eley’s volume does not do justice to the richness of the individual chapters. Even if they do not ultimately make a convincing case for an expanded presence of colonialism in Germany’s Aussen- or Innenpolitik, the authors of this remarkable collection provide valuable accounts of such issues as Germany’s role in colonial medical projects (Deborah Neill), the ambiguous coastal “semicolyony” of Kiaochow in China (Klaus Mühlmann), and pre–World War I German and American naval strategy (Dirk Böhner).

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_Broad Is My Native Land: Repertoires and Regimes of Migration in Russia’s Twentieth Century._ By Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Leslie Page Moch (Ithaca, Cornell University Press) 421 pp. $29.95

Although human mobility has been among the themes of several major monographs in Russian history during the last decade (see, inter alia, the work of Brown, Gatrell, and Sunderland), the field has lacked a comprehensive study of migration in all of its forms.¹ In _Broad Is My Native

¹ Kate Brown, _A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland_ (New York, 2005); Peter Gatrell, _A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I_
Land, Siegelbaum and Moch join forces to offer just such an account. The work is chronologically ambitious—spanning the entire twentieth century and covering three different political systems—and thematically comprehensive, with chapters devoted to resettlement, seasonal migration, urbanization, various forms of professional movement, refugees, deportees, and a broad category of “itinerants.” Although the authors acknowledge that such thematic separation obscures what was, at times, the mutual constitution of different forms of migration (8), such an approach allows them to trace continuity and change clearly among different political systems.

The book’s argument is structured around two key concepts invoked in the title: migration regimes—that is, state behavior, “policies, practices, and infrastructure designed to both foster and limit human movement” (3)—and repertoires—“migrants’ own practices, their relationships and networks of contact that permitted adaptation to particular migration regimes” (5). The history of migration in Russia, for the authors, is a story of mutually evolving and reinforcing repertoires and regimes, a dance between state interest in human movement and the individuals who actually did the moving. If this relationship was, at times, profoundly asymmetrical, nonetheless, “people were not putty in the hands of the state” (392). Thus, although resettlement, for example, was crucial to both tsarist and Soviet plans for economic modernization and resource extraction, in practice moving settlers depended on their own networks, economic practices, and the preferences that emerged from them (47). Specialists in higher education during the Soviet period, though required by law to work at an assigned site (sometimes isolated or otherwise undesirable) for five years, often used a process of informal negotiation to live where they wished (180–183). Even ethnic deportees and special settlers, subjected to some of the worst conditions that the Soviet system had to offer, counted among their repertoires escape and emotional adaptation, salvaging a narrative of pride from inhumane circumstances (296–297, 309). These examples by no means exhaust the richness of the volume, but demonstrate the robustness and versatility of the authors’ conceptual framework.

At the broadest level, this work is a new way of telling an old story, as the authors themselves imply in describing migration as a “barometer” of political, social, and economic conditions (5). The dichotomy of repertoires and regimes is basically consonant with a revisionist understanding of Russian and Soviet history, which acknowledges the significant ambition and coercive power of the state while also noting individuals’ ability to avoid, shape, or adapt to the state’s onerous demands. But the authors’ contribution remains significant. They walk a fine line, emphasizing for Russianists the importance of mobility throughout the twentieth century, while employing the familiar typologies of migration

(Bloomington, 1999); Willard Sunderland, Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe (Ithaca, 2006).
studies in an effort to bring Russian history into that field fully, not simply as a stereotypical locus of coerced movement (392–393). Most importantly, by bringing a plethora of life stories into what could easily have been a dry, state-centric narrative, they provide a deeply human history of migration—the lives that it made, the lives that it changed, and the lives that it destroyed.

Ian W. Campbell
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Building the Nation: N. F. S. Grundtvig and Danish National Identity. Edited by John A. Hall, Ove Korsgaard, and Ove K. Pedersen (Montreal, McGillQueen’s University Press, 2015) 453 pp. $100.00 cloth $34.95 paper

Centuries ago, Denmark ruled from Greenland to Russia and northern Germany, including the later countries of Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Iceland. It was the major European power. Then it lost wars and territory, first relinquishing Sweden (and Finland) in the sixteenth century, and, having been on the wrong side in the Napoleonic wars, forfeiting Norway to Sweden in 1814. Finally, Prussia took the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein in 1864, and Denmark became the small, compact country that we know today.

Along the way, the Danes became a singular nation with impressive social cohesion, high levels of reciprocal trust, and miniscule amounts of corruption. But it supported an absolute, if benevolent, monarchy from 1660 to 1849. Several of its most important nineteenth-century political thinkers assert, however, that because Danish kings ruled for, and on behalf of, their people (rather than by divine right), that they listened to the voices of their people (their constituents), and that they consciously sought to “do good” rather than to be rapacious, monarchical traditions actually contributed positively to the successful state that Denmark has become.

These influential nineteenth-century Danish thinkers argued that the country’s identity was established only after the Napoleonic wars, as more and more of Denmark’s core inhabitants began to converse in Danish, to receive their education in Danish, to worship in Danish, and to consider themselves a collection of persons and estates with common interests, all belonging to a single community, not as subjects of a king. The peasant estate, reasonably content under a succession of kings, spawned a new political party after 1849, and soon controlled the new Danish Parliament.

This book is profoundly about how many of Denmark’s finer attributes emerged from profoundly nondemocratic roots, and how the retreat from major territorial hegemony to provincial and peripheral autonomy proved fundamental to the nation-building enterprise. Admittedly, Prussia (and Otto von Bismarck) coveted Jutland as well as the north German duchies, compelling the Danes to strengthen their
embryonic internal political mechanisms and accelerate nation-building. By the 1860s, the Danes were also educating themselves intensively, creating novel folk high schools, developing Protestant congregational and evangelical forms of worship alongside the established state church, trading openly and widely, shipping grain profitably to the United States, and developing their nascent democracy.

This intricate and unique story adds measurably to the literature on national identity formation. It also helps significantly to explain why Denmark and the other Nordic nations have been ranked the globe’s least corrupt polities since such measures were first compiled and published in 1995. Building the Nation, especially its most engaging chapters, focus on Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig’s massive contribution to these major accomplishments as something of a founding father. Grundtvig was a thinker, a writer, and a polemicist, as well as a Lutheran preacher and a compiler and composer of hymns, who became a member of the Danish parliament after 1849. He was also, by turns, a monarchist and a reluctant democrat, a conservative theorist, and a modernizing activist. Grundtvig wrote a number of influential books that extolled the Danish people’s Nordic heritage, articulated a growing sense of “national” sensibility, and helped to merge the “estates” into a people.

This book is neither especially methodological nor intrinsically interdisciplinary, but it contains twenty-three thoughtful chapters by political scientists, political theorists, sociologists, social historians, economic historians, and theologians—predominantly Danish—who each enrich our understanding of how and why Danish exceptionalism emerged and how and why little Denmark became a paragon of governance virtue in the twenty-first century.

—R. I. R.

Death and the American South. Edited by Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2015) 304 pp. $95.00

Some of us can remember the excitement, now more than three decades ago, when a few historians offered examples of how to re-think the goals, methods, and language of historical scholarship. Leading historians such as Ariès, LeRoy Ladurie, and others associated with studying mentalités, urged a re-thinking of what we were accustomed to do.¹ The goal was not simply to pay greater attention to everyday life but to examine the basic assumptions and categories with which people in the past understood life and death. Those works were, and still can be, profoundly moving for their discoveries, their innovative questions, and, above all, their

aesthetics and their methods. When at their best, they allowed us to think and feel along with people from centuries past.

That movement still influences scholarship, but it has faced significant criticism and scholarly discomfort for at least two related reasons. Certain critics worried that many of its works created an exotic past so incongruous with our own that we were drawn to it by its apparent wildness and weirdness. Others worried that its histories—its questions and methods more than its arguments and goals—de-emphasized issues of power, separating the study of private and public life to the point that laws and governments fell out of the picture. The idea is that history must be able to integrate a topic such as death into a broader, fuller picture.

On this score, the eleven chapters that comprise *Death and the American South* are replete with intellectually stimulating and thorough research about everything from the specific ways by which colonists killed each other and displayed bodies in the early South to the conflicting strategies that the tourist trade has adopted to exploit the deaths of Native Americans. There are no weak links. Two approaches that this book does not take stand out. First, as the editors themselves observe, the book, unsurprisingly, does not seek a central theme or distinctively southern feature about death and dying in southern history. Central themes and regional distinctiveness are not popular pursuits in today’s academia. More interesting, the chapters do not return to the methodology of Ariès and company, who understood death as a broad category with its own history. Instead, these chapters address death in its relationship to an array of crucial, if hardly path-breaking, topics—colonial empire-building, Anglican-evangelical tensions, Revolutionary-era political elites, nation-building, slavery and claims about paternalism, antebellum urbanization, Confederate soldiers, sex, religion and respectability, modernization and consumer spending, lynching and the civil-rights movement, and recent cultural tourism. If the subject of death were removed from the chapters, the book would become a successful survey of southern history with those topics as chapter headings.

The great strength of the collection is that each chapter contextualizes death in its own way. In Friend’s contribution about colonial violence, death is a brutal form of warfare as well as a communication about power and the issue of belonging. Peter N. Moore uses debates about what constitutes a good death to analyze disputes between Methodists and Anglicans. Glover shows the extent to which narratives about the deaths of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison served as fables about republican leadership. Jewel Spangler explains how public grieving tied many southerners together in moments of national crisis during the early 1800s. Jamie Warren analyzes slaves’ claims to the bodies of fellow slaves as part of the process of negotiation with paternalism. Jeff Strickland reports the deaths of Irish immigrants by yellow fever that went unnoticed by elites in antebellum Charleston. The extraordinary incidence of death and depression during the Civil War, as
discussed by Diane Miller Sommerville, led to new debates about whether suicide was an acceptable way to end one’s life. Kristine McCusker analyzes the strange distancing from death that mass-produced condolence cards created. Jason Ward shows how civil-rights leaders portrayed the murder of Emmett Till as part of a longer history of racist violence. Andrew Denson’s concluding piece examines the issue of remembering the Cherokee dead.

Death has many causes throughout this book—war, epidemics, murder, suicide, and old age—and the bodies of the dead matter in numerous ways. The contributors may have been so intent on linking death to other topics, however, that sometimes they appear to miss one of death’s most unique features—its potential for mystery. In that vein, Donald G. Mathews’ impressive narrative of the mysterious suicide of Lundy Harris is slightly anomalous. Mathews does not draw a quick and certain conclusion about Harris’ suicide, but he adroitly traces the complex tensions and pressures that certainly contributed to it—Harris’ religious despair, his marriage to a successful writer, his troubles with alcohol and prostitutes, his pursuit of African-American women, his professional failures and embarrassments, et al. Although Matthews’ chapter does not represent a return to mentalités scholarship, its analysis is reminiscent of it. But by integrating the subject of death into the whole history of the South, the entire collection is a success on its own terms.

Ted Ownby
University of Mississippi


In late 1758, the British Empire’s relationship with one of its most important allies—the Cherokee Nation—collapsed. Settlers killed several Cherokee warriors as they returned from helping the British against the French in the Ohio Valley. When kinsmen of the slain men retaliated, Gov. William Henry Lyttelton of South Carolina escalated a war that continued until 1761. Tortora skillfully narrates this story with a particular focus on the disastrous consequences that reverberated for many years after the conflict: Numerous backcountry settlers were killed or captured; Cherokees suffered terrible casualties from British invasions that left survivors homeless and hungry; South Carolinian leaders became divided and anxiety-ridden as real and imagined slave resistance increased; and British officials became perplexed as South Carolina’s elites remained dissatisfied with the accomplishments of the war and resented efforts to bring peace and order to the frontier that appeared to favor indigenous peoples over colonists.
It is on this last point—what Tortora touts as a “bridge to the rich scholarship on the southern campaigns of the American Revolution” (3)—that Carolina in Crisis stands out. Other historians have written about the Anglo-Cherokee War, but all of them have come up short in connecting it to larger historiographical debates regarding the rupture of relations between American colonists and imperial officials. The Anglo-Cherokee War indeed has proven to be a sideshow to the larger Seven Years’ War drama between Great Britain and France. Tortora’s analysis, however, points to a new and refreshing direction in understanding the importance of the conflict as setting the stage for the American Revolution in South Carolina.

Tortora draws from an impressive array of primary sources. Other than John Oliphant, in Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier, 1756–63 (Baton Rouge, 2001), no historian, to this reviewer’s knowledge, has examined Major General James Grant in the Ballindalloch Papers and Lord Jeffery Amherst Papers to the extent that Tortora has. By doing so, Tortora is able to illustrate the tensions and animosities that existed between British military officers and provincial elites. Readers interested in an interdisciplinary methodology, however, will not find one in Carolina in Crisis. The work builds on a traditional set of sources to connect military and political history; it delves into neither the ethnohistory nor the historical memory of either Euro-Americans or Cherokees. Tortora, however, does not claim to take an interdisciplinary approach, and its absence does not detract from his accomplishments.

Tortora answers a question that has previously proven to be an enigma: Why should historians outside of the few who write about Cherokees care about the Anglo–Cherokee War? The book adds to a growing body of literature on the frontier dimensions of the American Revolution’s origins, including Woody Holton’s Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia (Williamsburg, 1999) and Patrick Griffin’s American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier (New York, 2007). Much more work needs to be done on this broader subject, but Carolina in Crisis makes a significant contribution to this larger effort.

Paul Kelton
University of Kansas


Like most historians of the early American republic, military historians have typically depicted this era as one of profound change, in which evolving military institutions helped to transform the scale and meaning of the union. Three themes predominate within this literature—the
military’s role in expansion and domestic nation-building; the rise to preeminence of a professional, national military establishment; and the consequent decline of a militia tradition central to national identity. Historians of the U.S. Army, in particular, have cast the army and the militia in almost antithetical terms—not as complementary components of an integrated defense establishment but as competing paradigms representing divergent views of the nation and military virtue.

In *For Liberty and the Republic*, Herrera turns this historiography entirely on its head. He argues that the era bounded by the Revolutionary and Civil Wars (1775–1861) was characterized less by change or competition than by extraordinary continuity in the moral domain of military thought. More remarkably, at the core of this continuity was a political ideology supposed by many scholars to have faded by 1830s—republicanism. As a multigenerational military ethos, “republicanism provided a vibrant, durable, and long-lived set of interrelated concepts that gave order to and made sense of Americans’ military service for nearly a century. Despite the passage of time, this ethos did not change” (24). In five thematic chapters, Herrera convincingly establishes (1) citizen soldiers’ preoccupation with demonstrating republican virtue, (2) their commitment to maintaining the conservative legacy of the Revolution and advancing its progressive agenda, (3) the ways in which American military culture resolved (or did not resolve) the tension between the republican ideals of individualism and civic-mindedness, (4) a pervasive sense of providential destiny, and (5) soldiers’ obsession with earning individual distinction.

Any historical work that asserts continuity over change and commonality over heterogeneity opens itself to criticism; *For Liberty and the Republic* is no exception. Herrera relies on the broadest possible definition of republicanism, which at once allows him to see commonalities that have eluded other historians and, on occasion, to downplay important differences. This breadth and ambiguity allows Herrera to pitch a large republican tent, under which he is able to fit all manner of American citizen soldiers—regulars, volunteers, militiamen, Yankees, Rebels, officers, and enlisted men—and find among them common republican convictions even where they and other historians have not.

Notwithstanding citations of writings by political theorist R. Claire Snyder, sociologist Morris Janowitz, and political scientist Samuel Huntington, *For Liberty and the Republic* is distinguished not for its interdisciplinary innovations but for the depth of Herrera’s archival research. Generally eschewing memoirs and reminiscences, he sought “greater authenticity and truthfulness” in unpublished letters, unit records, diaries, and journals scattered across more than 40 archives and nearly 300 collections in twenty-three states (xi). But the book offers much more than lush endnotes and an exhaustive bibliography. Especially valuable for its nuanced treatment of citizen soldiers’ “contract ethos” and the exclusive “voluntary associations” that supplanted the organized militia during the nineteenth century, *For Liberty and the Republic* complements and
complicates other recent works in the field to provide a composite portrait—at once impressionistic and compelling—of the American citizen soldier.

John W. Hall
University of Wisconsin, Madison


Jacksonland is an American story that reads like a Greek tragedy. The expulsion of the Native American tribes living within the southern states was an inevitable fate replayed across the globe in collisions between white settlers and aboriginal peoples. What made that outcome different in the United States was that one of the doomed tribes—the Cherokee Nation—sought to persuade public opinion and the courts that they were entitled to their lands in Georgia. Jacksonland captures this failure in vivid detail, though at times Inskeep strains to fashion heroes and villains from ambiguous people.

In a nod toward Plutarch’s “Parallel Lives,” Jacksonland examines this slice of history through a profile of two charismatic leaders. Andrew Jackson was the driving force behind the acquisition and conquest of tribal lands in the South, first as a general and then as president. John Ross was the head of the Cherokees who realized that the tribe’s only hope for survival in its ancestral homeland rested with adopting the manners and political tactics of its white antagonists. Ironically, Ross served in General Jackson’s militia during the War of 1812, when the Cherokees helped the United States to make war on the tribes that allied with the British. Ross attempted to invoke this relationship to obtain a compromise with President Jackson but failed. After his retirement, Jackson referred to Ross as a “scamp” who should be “banished from the notice of the Administration” (332). In describing the struggle between these two men, the book renders a complicated debate with many moving parts into what is probably the best account of the events that led to the Trail of Tears.

To the extent that Jacksonland goes astray, its sin is in overstating the moral distinctions between Jackson and Ross. For example, Inskeep takes pains to describe Jackson’s pre-presidential efforts to line his pockets by using his official authority to buy Native American lands for pennies on the dollar, whereas he mentions Ross’s ownership of slaves as briefly as possible. Likewise, at the beginning of the book, Inskeep dwells on Jackson’s decision to execute John Woods, an alleged mutineer in his War of 1812 militia, to set a brutal example of discipline, but he glosses over the murder of Ross’s opponents within the Cherokee Nation in a single sentence: “It is reasonable to suppose that some part of the Cherokee leadership endorsed the coordinated assassination” (343).
The good guys (in American stories, anyway) do not own slaves or slay their associates. Inskeep’s desire to report what happened to the tribe, as represented by Ross, as a matter of clear-cut right and wrong, is understandable. But life, especially political life, often does not lend itself to such straightforward characterizations—a truth that Jacksonland resists but must recognize nonetheless.

Gerard N. Magliocca
Indiana University School of Law


Historians are generally skeptical about the “legality” of Andrew Jackson’s incursion, in the spring of 1818, into Spanish Florida, territory belonging to a nation at peace with the United States. The invasion lacked the sanction of any constitutionally mandated process, and it subjected persons of African, British, and Indian descent to summary execution, with scant regard for due process. Americans condemned or defended these actions according to a variety of criteria that they could draw from natural law, the law of nations, legal positivism, and racially based ideologies about the attributes of “civilized” and “savage” peoples. Jackson’s gambit worked, however. Neither Great Britain nor Spain broke relations with Washington, and the United States gained undisputed title to Florida while strengthening its control over the African and Indian peoples residing along its southern borderlands.

The great value of Rosen’s new study of this episode is its illumination of the complexities, which she analyzes in terms of legality, as Americans understood it at the time. She describes the episode as a turning point in both the building of the American nation-state and the formation of an American national identity. The United States began to move away from its formative identity as a federal republic, constituted by inclusive and universalistic notions of law, to become a more exclusionist sovereign state willing to advance its interests aggressively in the name of exceptionalism and nationalism. Rosen presents this case with thoroughness and skill, relying largely on evidence drawn from Congressional debates and voting patterns and incorporating a range of insights derived from recent developments in cultural, intellectual, and legal history.

Rosen’s contribution is an important one, though at times her arguments both clarify and distort the meaning of the events. The transformation that she describes was less the result of a distinct turning point in 1818 than of a crystallizing moment—only one of many—in a much longer process that began before 1818 and did not reach full fruition until the imperial expansionism of the 1890s. Rosen understands this process well enough, but students of American expansion would do well to
recall a remark attributed to Jackson by John Quincy Adams that does not appear in her book. It speaks volumes about Jackson’s regard for legal propriety: “Damn Grotius! Damn Pufendorf! Damn Vattel! This is a mere matter between Jim Monroe and myself!” Legalities be damned indeed!

J. C. A. Stagg
University of Virginia


A century ago, historians conceptualized the Civil War as a conflict between the modern, industrialized, free-labor economic system of the North and the slave-based, agrarian, pre-modern aristocratic plantation system of the South. Dean argues that because Republicans had become, by the War’s outset, the majority party in the North, and because northern victory in the War was followed by the Industrial Revolution of the Gilded Age, the Republican Party of the Civil War era became falsely associated with industrialization. In this book, he centers the Republicans’ ideology in rural agrarianism—as evidenced by the party’s critique of slave-based agricultural land use, its policies for rural development in the West (as exemplified by its homestead, land grant, and railroad legislation during the War), its reconstruction program, and its (more internally divisive) role in the movement to create national parks.

Free Soilers and, later, Republicans maintained that free labor produced better land management than did slave labor. Thus, they fused the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian ethos of a producerist, agrarian republic of sturdy, independent, egalitarian farmers with the Whiggish ideal of proper land use and development as indicative of “civilization” and progress. Antislavery politicians argued that slave-based labor prevented agricultural diversification, exhausted the soil, and led to economic and social decay.

Dean supports his argument well. As Gienapp has shown, Republicans in the 1850s fared best in prosperous rural communities and small towns with a fairly equitable distribution of wealth, whereas northern Democrats were strongest in either the more isolated, stagnant, and impoverished rural areas or in the larger cities where the extremes of wealth and poverty were prevalent.1 Because southerners had come to dominate the party by the late 1850s, and slaveholders were opposed to western development for fear of creating more free states, Democrats lost

1 See Henry A. Wise, Seven Decades of the Union: The Humanities and Materialism, Illustrated by a Memoir of John Tyler, with Reminiscences of Some of His Great Contemporaries: The Transition State of This Nation, Its Dangers and Their Remedy (Philadelphia, 1881), 132.

their earlier advantage among rural voters in the North. Moreover, the largest northern manufacturing magnates—among the last of the Whigs to join the Republican Party—were far more receptive than were rural northerners to calls for compromise with the South during the secession crisis.

Dean’s argument is not entirely new. In his seminal Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War (New York, 1970), Eric Foner portrayed a Republican Party with a free-labor ideology that appealed to both the rural and urban middle classes, based on a critique of southern society as backward, stagnant, shiftless, and undemocratic that is certainly compatible with the Republican attacks on slave-based agriculture presented in Dean’s book. But whereas in Foner’s hands, Republican sympathy with the free-soil movement blended genuine ideology with an expedient co-option of Jeffersonian agrarianism, Dean, given his occasional overemphasis of the contributions of Frederick Law Olmstead and George Julian to the party’s ideology, sees nothing but sincerity in the Republicans’ agrarian-based antislavery worldview.

Certainly original is Dean’s inclusion of the West in the Republicans’ postwar reconstruction program. Republicans did not seek to industrialize the South and the West. Instead, they planned to “civilize” each region and strengthen loyalty to the union through the widespread land ownership of yeomen white farmers, former slaves, and Indians (whom they hoped, in vain, would give up their indigenous form of life and embrace farming, thus making more land available for white settlers). For Dean, the ill-fated Dawes Act of 1887, which encouraged, and sometimes coerced, Native Americans into abandoning their tribal form of government, should be considered an integral part of Reconstruction. Dean’s emphasis on the Republicans’ program of family farming also sheds light on the commitment of a sizable number of congressional Republicans (though by no means a majority) who favored the dissolution of southern plantations for distribution to former slaves (at least until the losses in the 1867 off-year elections).

The Republicans’ rural outlook was expressed most imaginatively in their pioneering efforts to create nature parks; they saw in the appreciation of pastoral beauty, and the accessibility of the country’s natural wonders to all Americans, another tool in furtherance of democracy, national pride, and civilization. The result was the creation of Yosemite (initially under state control) and Yellowstone national parks. Whereas historians have tended to view conflicts about the creation of parks as pitting conservationists against developers, Dean instead makes more of the internal clash within the party between, on the one hand, proponents of private land ownership and states’ rights and, on the other, those who favored public use and, especially, federal control of parks. Those who opposed the creation of Yosemite Park and the sacrifice of claimants’ pre-emption rights in that area considered themselves the defenders of the Republicans’ commitment to liberal homestead policies.
Although this book might receive criticism for making too much of an ideology that faded and ultimately failed to live up to its utopian promise (a view that Dean anticipates), Dean rightly points out that emphasis on the Republicans’ agrarian worldview makes the policies that they favored before, during, after the Civil War more comprehensible as a whole, demonstrating that even with the Industrial Revolution of the late nineteenth century, America still remained a predominantly rural nation.

Lex Renda
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Agriculture and the Confederacy: Policy, Productivity, and Power in the Civil War South. By R. Douglas Hurt (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2015) 349 pp. $45.00

Considering how many trees have been felled over the years in the service of books about one or another aspect of the American Civil War, it is surprising how little has been written about the agricultural sector during that horrendous conflict. Indeed, over the course of the last half century, only one full-scale book on the subject has appeared—Paul W. Gates’ Agriculture and the Civil War (New York, 1965). To be sure, there is plenty of relevant journal literature on agricultural concerns of one type or another, and John Solomon Otto devoted a chapter to the war years in Southern Agriculture during the Civil War Era, 1860–1880 (Westport, 1994). But scholarship about this sector is nonetheless paltry in comparison to, say, that concerning the First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas). It is the southern portion of this gap that Hurt seeks to fill in Agriculture and the Confederacy.

Hurt’s quality as a straightforward scholar comes through clearly in his latest book, in which he is concerned, first and foremost, with tracing the uneven but increasingly unrelenting decline of the South’s agricultural sector between 1861 and 1865. This decline occurred for a variety of reasons and played out in sundry ways in different parts of the region, but by 1865, the entire sector was in ruins. Ironically, even though agriculture was viewed by most white southerners as a source of strength on the eve of the war, ultimately it helped to ensure the Confederacy’s undoing.

The author’s “death by a thousand cuts” interpretation of the southern agricultural sector’s decline and fall is generally convincing. Given all of the factors impeding the sector during the war years, it is in some ways surprising that it performed as well as it did for so long. For starters, production was often disrupted by fighting armies. The markets for cotton—the South’s principal cash crop and the most important U.S. export by far in 1860—were closed off. Transport facilities in the region, already inadequate when the war started, were further degraded during the protracted conflict, and many of the South’s leading grain-producing and
meat-producing regions were either cut off from intraregional trade or overrun immediately by Union forces. Confederate policies regarding food production and distribution—most notably, the impressment of crops and draft animals, taxing in kind, and mandated below-market pricing of agricultural products—caused additional problems, as did accelerating inflation and the erosion of slavery as the war progressed. For these reasons and others, it was apparent by 1864—that is to say, well before the end of the war—that the once powerful sector could not survive much longer.

Hurt treats all of the above developments in close detail in *Agriculture and the Confederacy*, tracing the farm sector year by year in both the eastern and western theaters. In so doing, he makes a significant contribution to our understanding of both the problems plaguing southern agriculture and the reasons for the Confederacy’s defeat.

Peter A. Coclanis
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill


On the Oberlin campus last fall, a student demonstrator protesting police brutality created an uproar when he labeled another black student who declined to walk out of class to join a march an “Uncle Tom.” Such episodes, Starkey demonstrates in his simultaneously fascinating and frustrating study of blacks’ historical use of that epithet, have persisted since Frederick Douglass first used the term as part of what Starkey views as a vital effort to create norms in the black community to police racial loyalty. In this descriptive and prescriptive study, Starkey lays out the bold argument that what he calls “constructive” social norms must be enforced within the black community in order to bolster a racial solidarity that is “vital in promoting collective legal interests and ability to affect public policy” (3). This book—which he describes as a “biography of Uncle Tom” (2)—both analyzes the epithet’s meaning in three distinct eras of racial policing (1865 to 1959, 1960 to 1975, and 1976 to today) and assesses when it has been hurled destructively at African Americans “in situations devoid of even a whiff of duplicity” (5).

The result is a work that offers the odd combination of a fascinating historical compendium of seemingly every utterance of “Uncle Tom,” as recorded in newspapers and organizational records, and an openly didactic tract that implores blacks to deploy the epithet more responsibly or risk losing a powerful tool to advance racial loyalty. The great strength of the work lies in Starkey’s exhaustive survey of the epithet’s use in the period since the Civil War. In a fascinating chapter, Starkey explains how “Uncle Tom” morphed into a symbol of racial duplicity, transforming the suffering martyr in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s*
Cabin (Boston, 1852) into a happy, loyal slave through minstrel shows based on the novel. By the 1860s, black leaders began to use “Uncle Tom” to describe the servility and obsequiousness of blacks toward whites. Tracking “Uncle Tom” in the decades thereafter, Starkey shows how blacks wielded the epithet effectively during the Jim Crow era to compel other blacks to join the struggle against white supremacy and to punish those who aided segregationists.

Starkey argues that since the 1960s, the slur of “Uncle Tom” has become increasingly vindictive, stigmatizing behavior deemed to be racially inauthentic, like intermarrying. According to Starkey, this use of “Uncle Tom” impedes black solidarity and unfairly narrows the range of acceptable behavior for blacks. He dedicates much of the book to lengthy and careful explorations of whether or not certain historical figures—such as Booker T. Washington, Jackie Robinson, and Clarence Thomas—deserve the label of “Uncle Tom.”

Starkey’s extensive historical research is compelling, although he might have devoted more analysis to why norm management has changed in recent years and why the insult of “Uncle Tom” is routinely aimed at people who are not guilty of what Starkey sees as racial betrayal. Moreover, Starkey is on far stronger ground when revealing how blacks employed the term than he is when claiming its political effectiveness. He also might have paid more attention to gender; most of the “Uncle Toms” in the book are men. Starkey does not discuss the ways in which the label has affected the regulation of gender behaviors within the black community. But his many examples of the changing perspectives on “Uncle Tom” are a rich resource, and his insistence on the need for blacks to rehabilitate the label for the sake of “policing racial loyalty through social norms” should spark debate among cultural and political critics today (321).

Renee Romano
Oberlin College


From the time of Rank Ladies: Gender and Cultural Hierarchy in American Vaudeville (Chapel Hill, 1999), Kibler has contributed greatly to our understanding of American popular and mass cultures. The distinction between “popular” and “mass” as modifiers is worth preserving, as often objectionable live performance in the early twentieth century—ethnic-based melodrama, the appearance of “Paddy” and “Hebrew” comics on the variety stage, and the residual attractions of black-face minstrelsy—found a keen competitor in an emergent cinema.
The first chapter of Censoring Racial Ridicule describes responses to the minstrel show and musical-comedy “melee,” which “featured different races together in rollicking comic scenes that often erupted into fights on stage” (21). Other potentially incendiary cultural forms also receive attention—the “legitimate” theatre, for example, including J. M. Synge’s The Playboy of the Western World, the premiere of which incited rioting in Dublin’s Abbey Theatre in 1907 and elicited a similar response from American audiences a few years later, and the less-accomplished theatrical version of Thomas Dixon’s The Clansman (1905). In the second half of Censoring Racial Ridicule, efforts to restrain an ethnically insensitive mass culture—D. W. Griffiths’ The Birth of a Nation (1915); silent-film adaptations of The Merchant of Venice in 1914, 1916, and 1923; and even nickelodeon features—seize the limelight from these earlier texts. Some of the book’s most incisive moments occur when Kibler pauses to read scenes in McFadden’s Row of Flats (1896), a melodrama adapted from a widely read comic strip, juxtaposing them with such vaudeville performances as James and John Russell’s “The Irish Servant Girls” (1904). The result is a portrait of a raucous stage Irishwoman—manly, promiscuous, and often inebriated—vastly different from the chaste “colleen bawns” of Dion Boucicault’s earlier Irish plays, frequently seen in America from the 1860s into the new century.

But the grander ambitions of Kibler’s project require a more multi-foliate archive than play texts, reviews of live performance, and newspaper accounts of “ructions” (a useful Irish expression) in the theatre, punctuated by noisy disruptions and the heaving of rotten eggs stageward. In her introduction, Kibler states her intention of providing a “new chapter in the history of the so-called culture wars in the United States” (9). In this case, the newly expanded history includes early twentieth-century efforts to respond to, and effectively contain, what is today commonly termed “hate speech.” She argues further that the “legal terrain” of the now infamous proposed Nazi march in Skokie, Illinois, in 1976 had “direct roots in the Irish, Jewish, and African American struggles seventy-five years before the Nazis set their sights” on this northern suburb of Chicago with a significant number of Holocaust survivors in residence (17). Later chapters about Jewish and African-American censorship campaigns against insensitivity in motion pictures and about the work of Jewish censors in Chicago reveal the value of the legal archive that runs throughout the book, complementing and deepening Kibler’s summaries of more organized responses to offensive portrayals than the throwing of a tomato or an egg.

In Censoring Racial Ridicule, Kibler demonstrates the rich interpretive results of not only utilizing a broad archive of both cultural and legal texts but also of combining the analogous struggles of several ethnic groups in America to overcome prejudice. The result is an estimable new chapter indeed in the history of the great American social experiment.

Stephen Watt
Indiana University

Tyrrell has authored a number of books casting American history in a transnational context. He has explored, for example, the relationship between the expansion of American power internationally and the growth of women’s rights, the idea of American exceptionalism, and the idea of America as a force for a humanitarian good. This volume continues in the same vein, exploring how the development of conservation during the Progressive Era both shaped and was shaped by the simultaneous growth of an American empire. President Theodore Roosevelt plays a central role, but this book is more than biography, tying Roosevelt’s famed interest in nature with his vigorous nationalism, faith in expertise, sense of morality, and, most importantly, the social and economic transformations that crossed national boundaries and made the industrial world more competitive. A complex milieu of factors created a “mutual relationship” that tied imperialism and conservation together across the world (17). One should not be understood without the other. In demonstrating the intersection of international relations, environmental history, and domestic policy and politics, Tyrrell has crafted an excellent piece of interdisciplinary scholarship that provides new insights about a subject already well-covered in historiography.

Tyrrell begins by describing the “growing sense of alarm” that accompanied the publication of Rudolf Cronau’s Our Wasteful Nation: The Story of American Prodigality and the Abuse of Our Natural Resources (New York, 1908), from which Tyrrell extracted his own title (9). Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, head of the Division of Forestry, embodied a widespread sentiment that the United States had wasted its diminishing natural resources—including wood, minerals, water, and soils—and needed efficiency and wise management. It was, Tyrrell stresses, a sentiment hardly unique to America. At the same time, colonial competitors were seizing or otherwise controlling key sources of raw materials abroad. Defining *empire* broadly, therefore, Tyrrell sees American foreign involvement not in the lens of “Open Door” but mercantilism. Mining and the race for fossil fuels, an aesthetic concern for nature, worries about public health, marketing and commercialization, irrigation, and even eugenics, among other factors, all play out in this broader context. Although his book contains considerable discussion of domestic politics, Tyrrell illustrates the real birth of environmental diplomacy, especially efforts to call a World Congress on Conservation. Not surprisingly, the tropics and the rare resources that they provided are critical to Tyrrell’s tale. Roosevelt and Pinchot play the most important roles, but Tyrrell includes a long list of politicians, diplomats, scientists, activists, and others who shaped public perceptions and policies.

Tyrrell maintains that conservation and imperialism worked together to define America’s sense of nationalism and progressivism, its definition of
self. Despite the changes during the 1920s that appeared to undermine both conservation and internationalism, Tyrell nonetheless traces a degree of continuity in America’s dynamism. Roosevelt’s legacy persists, sure to re-emerge given the “power of contingency.” It remains a “benchmark for the future” (261).

Well-researched, including almost 100 pages of citations, the book is surprisingly short for its breadth. Tyrrell could have delved more deeply into the distinctions between the wise-use conservation that lies at the core of this book and the preservationism that grew with it; indeed, a deeper exploration of this preservationism in the same broad geopolitical context might add new perspectives. Regardless, however, this volume is sufficient to its task and is a welcome addition to the literature.

J. Brooks Flippen
Southeastern Oklahoma State University


Most historical accounts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) emphasize either its colorful G-Men crime fighters or its shameful role in the domestic political treatment of radical and civil-rights activists. Pliley explores a new angle on the FBI and its role in federal state making—the policing of sexuality under the 1910 Mann Act. Plumbing the FBI’s extensive white slavery files between 1910 and 1940, she shows how much the FBI’s early history was shaped by the surveillance of female mobility and sexuality and the agency’s attempts to shore up patriarchal gender relations at a time of rapid social and sexual change.

Pliley begins by tracing the emergence of the transatlantic movement against white slavery—generally understood as the sexual exploitation of young white women by swarthy foreign-born procurers and traffickers. As reformers successfully pushed for laws to exclude and expel foreign-born prostitutes through the machinery of the Immigration Bureau, an equally vigorous enforcement campaign grew out of the Mann Act, which outlawed the internal transport of women over state lines for prostitution or “any other immoral purpose.” Although conceived as a measure to protect women and girls against forced prostitution, the “immoral purpose” clause allowed the FBI to expand its purview to include cases of voluntary prostitution, bigamy, adultery, and fornication. This changing scope of enforcement had to be “puzzled out” over time—a term that Pliley borrows from Heclo—in response to growing immigration, war, depression, and changing social mores and judicial rulings.1

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1 See, for example, Hugh Heclo, _Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden: From Relief to Income Maintenance_ (New Haven, 1974).
Pliley skillfully demonstrates the ongoing tension between the protection and the policing of women in the FBI’s enforcement efforts. Significantly, attempts to protect women from coercive or forced sex were limited to young, white, and previously chaste women; black women—widely assumed to be promiscuous and immoral—were either ignored by the FBI or prosecuted for sex crimes. Increasingly, however, criminalization became more common for all women; by the end of World War I, the policing approach had become dominant. Pliley argues that these policing efforts dramatically expanded the personnel and geographical reach of the FBI and stimulated state-level vice prosecutions. This part of the argument, however, is not entirely persuasive given the large number of white-slavery agents who were volunteers, the multiple organizations involved in wartime anti-vice activities, and the later downsizing of the FBI in the 1920s.

After the war, the FBI used its expanded powers under the Mann Act to pursue noncommercial sex cases, responding to appeals from families to retrieve errant daughters, adulterous wives, and others who rebelled against traditional family and gender roles. Pliley draws from rich case files of the 1920s to illustrate how Mann Act investigations worked to shore up conventional gender relations at a time when modernization and sexual liberalism were challenging patriarchal values. This sexual conservatism would become a hallmark of the FBI in later years, when Director J. Edgar Hoover used his agency’s power to expose sexual behavior as a tool against political adversaries.

Policing Sexuality convincingly argues for the importance of sex and gender in understanding the history of the FBI and the pitfalls of anti-trafficking efforts that elide the issue of women’s consent. In her conclusion, Pliley shows how such assumptions continue to influence anti-trafficking efforts today, penalizing the very women whom such efforts are intended to help while ignoring their male customers.

Marilynn S. Johnson
Boston College

Feeling Mediated: A History of Media Technology and Emotion in America. By Brenton J. Malin (New York, New York University Press, 2014) 308 pp. $79.00 cloth $25.00 paper

Can machines feel? This is one of the several intriguing questions that Malin explores in this thoughtful and informative cultural history of the social-scientific investigation of human emotion in the twentieth-century United States. Malin’s topic is broad; to render it manageable, he zooms in on examples of human–machine interaction that are of particular interest to media scholars. The social-scientific investigation of photography, of sound recording, of radio, and of motion pictures each gets a separate chapter. Medical imaging is treated only in passing; lie
detectors are ignored. Although Malin has interesting things to say about various topics, including the changing character of love letters, the ethics of neuroscience, and the history of emotions, his primary quarry is the experimental tradition in corporate-funded “administrative research” that flourished in several U. S. universities in the opening decades of the twentieth century. Among the key figures in this tradition were psychologists Seashore and Ruckmick at Iowa and Scripture at Yale. Their research program predated by several decades Lazarsfeld’s empirical investigation of radio audiences at Columbia University, a project that is often regarded as the opening chapter in communications research in the United States.

As has become customary for media scholars, Malin carefully investigates the rhetoric that his subjects deployed and the arguments that they made. Thankfully, his interests extend beyond mere discourse. Researchers, Malin laments, did not ask “tough questions” about ethics. As a consequence, their investigations were shaped by “media physicalism,” which he defines as the presumption that researchers can answer basic philosophical and moral questions about human emotion by devising instruments to monitor the physiological response of an audience to a specific stimulus.

Like art historian Crary, Malin is much more interested in assumptions about reception than about reception itself. Media physicalism presupposed a mechanistic “transmission model” of the communicative process, a concept that Malin borrows from Carey. This model favored the movement of information over its content, a bias with origins that lie in the wider society: “The rhetoric of media physicalism was an emerging blend of cross-disciplinary academic perspectives, the promotional claims of commercial media producers, and larger public discussions of technology and emotion”.

Although Malin’s main focus is on social science, he notes in passing how media physicalism has shaped a variety of media-related phenomena. The Communications Act of 1934 was a victory of nationally oriented broadcasters wielding a “rhetoric of technological sublimity” over localistic champions of a more diverse media ecology: “A good media system was one that transmitted meanings in an effective manner.” The preference of radio broadcasters for an emotionally restrained, and invariably masculine, “cool” presentation style drew from research.

4 James Carey, Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society (Boston, 1985).
documenting the “supposedly hyperemotional, primitive, exotic speech of indigenous peoples and women” (154).

Administrative research, Malin concludes, “generally eschewed questions about the history, politics, and economics in favor of more limited questions about the bodies’ immediate physiology or behavior” (214). Malin is not the first communications scholar to question the priorities of what has long been an influential tradition in the field; this critique, as his notes reveal, is almost as old as the field itself. Yet by locating administrative research in a broad cultural setting, and, in particular, by characterizing it in a novel way as “media physicalism,” he helps to explain how an influential tradition in American communications studies took the form that it did.

Richard R. John
Columbia University

Why You Can’t Teach United States History without American Indians. Edited by Susan Sleeper-Smith, Juliana Barr, Jean M. O’Brien, Nancy Shoemaker, and Scott Manning Stevens (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2015) 335 pp. $29.95

This exceptional set of chapters explores what should be common sense—that American Indians cannot be either completely ignored or carelessly added when teaching U.S. history. Additionally, the many stories cannot be disregarded for eleven months each year only to have teachers attempting to cover all things Indigenous, from Penobscot to Pima and from the Trail of Tears to the Trail of Broken Treaties, in a single “Native American” month (November). Sleeper-Smith, Barr, O’Brien, Shoemaker, and Stevens have brought together impressive scholars from a broad range of fields to reflect on the fact that there would be no U.S. history were it not for American Indians.

The editors of this volume recognized the need to go beyond the usual retelling of U.S. history to incorporate the added dimensions that come with interdisciplinarity. All of the scholars focus on Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) within their fields, which include environmental studies, education, law, anthropology, and English. These backgrounds inform their discipline-specific research methodologies. For example, Miller, a law professor, revisits the Doctrine of Discovery and its use to justify Manifest Destiny in the United States. Both conceptions have been precariously balanced against American Indian rights, international and U.S. law ensuring that the U.S. government would always be in the winning position.

Acknowledgment of the broad range of disciplines that are relevant to NAIS is important not just to the content of the volume but also to inform readers that American Indians should not be relegated to the fields of history and anthropology. As a result of this limitation, many
people look at American Indians only in retrospect. The contributors do a wonderful job of explaining the problems with this perspective and challenging the ways in which we consider the larger themes of U.S. history. For example, John J. Laukaitis provides an alternative understanding of self-determination during the civil-rights movement, noting, “A rethinking of how one approaches history—from learning facts toward analyzing the past—needs to take place” (198). Attempting to teach U.S. history, particularly at the college level, without including an analysis of the past provides students with a redacted version of history. Not only were American Indians the first inhabitants of this country; they did not leave in 1492 or 1776 or 1812. Ignoring their continuing presence shortchanges all students.

Sleeper-Smith et al. are not the first scholars to call attention to the fact that most of the teachers of U.S. history provide little/no information (or, worse yet, misinformation) about American Indians peoples. They are, however, the first for whom the stated goal is to be “a resource that should help college teachers see the connections between American Indian history and the entirety of American history and enable them to recast their survey history classes from that vantage point” (1). To accomplish this goal, the volume is organized, like many survey courses, chronologically. It includes sixteen chapters divided between pre- and post-1877. Three additional chapters address settler colonialism, federalism, and global indigeneity. They offer ideas about how to build American Indian history into a particular segment within the larger narrative of American history.

Many of us who grew up in the United States learned little in school about American Indians. The fact that events such as the Sioux Uprising and the Trail of Tears might have been mentioned but not placed in their proper context demonstrates the importance of reaching K-12 teachers while they are in college. This volume serves that purpose by removing American Indian history from the vacuum in which it is often placed. For example, its discussions of the Sioux Uprising (Stevens) and the Trial of Tears (Adam Jortner and Jeffrey Ostler) provide details that rarely make it into the history books.

This volume can serve at least as a starting point for educators seeking a more relevant and accurate portrayal of American Indians. It illustrates the implications of continuing to ignore a more accurate version of history, particularly at the college level.

Kathleen A. Brown-Pérez
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

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Sea of Storms explores how for the past five centuries, people have understood and responded to hurricanes in the Greater Caribbean—the diverse island and coastal societies centered in the Caribbean Sea and linked by Atlantic histories of colonialism, slavery, and nation-making. The book’s sweeping coverage, together with its focus on shared environmental conditions and hazards, is an effort to overcome the linguistic, cultural, and political boundaries that typically frame histories of the region. Schwartz’s primary concern is the social dimensions of hurricanes—the changing concepts of nature and the divine that have shaped perceptions of storms and efforts to deal with them, and the social and political conditions that have influenced the impact of hurricanes in distinct locales and across time. Toward that end, Schwartz offers transnational comparisons and interconnections rather than discrete local or national histories, and he draws from the latest meteorological and oceanographical research to enrich his narrative and inform his methodology.

Using modern averages, Schwartz estimates that the Caribbean has experienced between 4,000 and 5,000 hurricane-level storms since 1492, a stunning number that alone justifies rethinking the histories of colonization, state formation, empire, slavery, and emancipation in the region. As the sheer number of Caribbean storms makes any comprehensive study of their influence impossible, Schwartz turns to the Saffir–Simpson Hurricane Scale—the modern meteorological scale used to rank storms according to their speed, intensity, and potential to inflict environmental and property damage—to identify periods of especially intense storms associated with the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon, and to narrow his analysis to key disasters. This process of selection was no doubt made easier by Schwartz’s extensive knowledge of the social and political history of the Greater Caribbean.

With this innovative approach, Schwartz joins environmental historians in treating nature as a dynamic entity that has always been interconnected with human society, and he profits from documentation of disasters that reveals spaces and mentalities that might otherwise remain hidden from view. Interestingly, if nature and society have always been entwined, Schwartz’s longue durée analysis shows that the relationship has not always been conceptualized as such. The problem of anthropogenic climate change, for example, echoes the early modern view that human sin and moral failure caused hurricane disasters. Later scientific views, by contrast, construed storms as normal risks in an environment for which humans bore little responsibility. An emphasis on human error has since returned to the analysis of natural disasters, but the focus is on human decisions and policies rather than on sin or moral failure.

By tracing the historical continuity of hurricanes in the Caribbean, Schwartz finds persistent arguments for and against government aid to
victims of disaster. Responses to hurricanes have always been conditioned by the fear of social unrest; ideological concerns have been paramount. In the aftermath of the hurricane San Ciriaco that struck Puerto Rico in 1899, shortly after the United States occupied the island, authorities were eager to demonstrate enlightened governance, but feared that public assistance would foster dependency and sloth among the destitute masses. Hence, they channeled recovery aid to Puerto Rican business leaders who shared the view that the island’s non-white majorities needed discipline and control, not social welfare.

Schwartz also details community solidarities that formed in response to disasters, when a greater awareness of shared vulnerability engendered cooperation. Such responses resonated deeply with the hurricane Katrina, which Schwartz examines in the final chapter to highlight the racial prejudice and conflict of ideologies that have always shaped encounters between hurricanes and societies in the Greater Caribbean. Sea of Storms is a book of Braudelian ambition by a master of the trade. The story is as engrossing as it is momentous.

Jordan E. Lauhon
University of California, Davis

The Vanguard of the Atlantic World: Creating Modernity, Nation and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Latin America. By James E. Sanders (Durham, Duke University Press, 2014) 339 pp. $94.95 cloth $25.95 paper

In the tradition of “Americas” and Atlantic history, Sanders challenges us to take seriously the central role of Spanish American nations in the evolution of democracy and modernity in the nineteenth century. Inspired by the recent literature about nation formation in Latin America, he presents a counter-argument to the more recognizable and standard narratives of democracy as beginning in Europe and extending to other parts of the world. Highlighting the originality of Latin American political thinkers, such as the Colombian David Peña and the Chilean Francisco Bilbao, and basing himself on Bilbao, he argues that the discourses and practices of democracy in Latin America were deeper and more significant than the written principles of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, which in any case were not observed consistently. Ultimately, he argues, the democratic practices of Latin American nations were overtaken and marginalized by the development of capital and European industrial modernity, and republican citizens were transformed into “workers for capital” (179).

Sanders’ call to take seriously the democratic discourses and practices of Latin American nations and intellectuals is an important corrective to Eurocentric narratives of democracy. His hemispheric perspective helps us see the political struggles in different parts of the hemisphere, including the United States, from a different angle. His combined analysis of the French Intervention and the U.S. Civil War is especially illuminating.
(144–145), bringing to the fore speculations from Latin American analysts that Britain and France, for economic reasons, supported the Confederacy.

Sanders’ broad-sweeping hemispheric narrative, however, leaves some questions unanswered. One example is his use of the term *subaltern* to refer to people without political power. The generic nature of this term tends to prevent us from understanding more fully who these people were; what differences might have existed, say, between indigenous, peasant, and Afro-descendant communities; as well as what divisions might have existed within or between communities with the same identity. In fact, part of the argument in favor of the term *subaltern*, as Sanders is well aware, was developed by Guha—subaltern studies’ intellectual leader—in order to appreciate the diversity of power relations within communities.1

The issue goes beyond simply a methodological splitting of hairs. Unless we take into account the diversity of each political side and identify it carefully, we cannot fully understand the line of causation from democratic hope to conservative, even reactionary, outcome. The endpoint of Sanders’ argument, which involves the perhaps inevitable democratic declension that results in a world dominated by industrial capital, suggests that the line of causation comes essentially from capital itself—that industrial capitalism is responsible for the erosion of democracy and the plight of the working classes. I am not convinced, however, that the only cause of the erosion of democracy was the development of industrial capitalism. According to the research of this reviewer, Porfirio Díaz’s dictatorship in Mexico was more the result of class, cultural, ethnic, and regional differences among distinct factions of his own allies than of capitalism. Although Porfirio Díaz’s effective negotiations with foreign capital were crucial to the consolidation of his rule, they were not the main cause for his dictatorship, nor of its hardening toward the end.2

One of Sanders’ greatest strengths—the breadth and capaciousness of his coverage—is also something of a weakness. Although the ample reach of his analysis helps us to understand the important connections, across the nineteenth century, between the Americas more broadly and Europe, it also tends to preclude his ability to delve deeply into any one case. He is most comprehensive about Colombia, the location of his earlier research, and vaguer about Mexico. When dealing with Argentina and Chile, his analyses of individuals and their intellectual production is a great deal stronger than his analysis of the overall context.

Sanders’ sweep also incurs methodological costs. In his strategy of stating “a common argument” and then countering it, he usually does not identify who first made an argument nor the context in which it occurred.

2 Mallon, Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru (Berkeley, 1995), 129–133.
In addition, his use of “the public sphere” as an anthropomorphized subject rather than a relationship or political arena is confusing. Finally, even though his refusal to dismiss popular petitions as simply the work of tinterillos (minor clerks, or pencil pushers), as other scholars do, is important, he might have investigated how illiterate people work with petition writers to fashion an argument, particularly in the case of Sebastiana Silva, who petitioned Popayán’s government for the return of her son, who had been taken from her and forced to work as a servant (125). This more finely grained analysis would offer a more complete understanding of the political impact of conflicts within regions, nations, communities, and subaltern groups.

Ultimately, The Vanguard of the Atlantic World’s most important contribution is its passionate inclusion of nineteenth-century Latin America in the discussion about democracy and nationhood. We will, however, need to look further than the rise of industrial capital if we are fully to comprehend how and why Latin American democracies were so difficult to build in the nineteenth century.

Florencia E. Mallon
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The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of the Kongo
By Cécille Fromont (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2014) 283 pp. $45.00

Meticulously researched, beautifully written, and lavishly illustrated, The Art of Conversion is one of the best books ever published about Central African religious history. Chief among Fromont’s methodological approaches are art history and archival historiography. She executes both with mastery, working comfortably across several languages. The author also expands the book’s horizons through a careful consideration of the relevant anthropological literature, which helps to inform her interpretative analyses of cultural artifacts from the Christian era of the Kingdom of the Kongo (1491–1891). Spanning the globe to study representations of such artifacts housed in an impressive array of archives, libraries, and museums, Fromont has left virtually no stone unturned to portray the era’s extraordinary visual culture. The end result is a top-rate piece of scholarship.

After the Portuguese introduced Christianity to West Central Africa toward the end of the fifteenth century, the Kingdom’s elites soon embraced the “new religion” enthusiastically. Fromont underscores that this embrace was not a side effect of colonial domination. The Kongo were genuinely interested in Catholicism, and the Portuguese did not then colonize the region. The treasure trove of material discussed and depicted in the book includes imported and locally created crucifixes and clothing, rosaries and coins, ceremonial staffs and royal insignia, missionary watercolors, and battlefield regalia and weaponry. The book’s
strongest interpretive offerings involve Fromont’s stimulating illumination of how the Kongolese worldview transformed contact-cultural religion in the Kingdom into a distinctive Central African Christianity, creating what Fromont suggestively calls throughout the manuscript its own “spaces of correlation.”

Regrettably, because most of the artifacts under analysis belonged to Kongolese elites who were deeply invested not only in Catholicism but also in their own political and social station, the reader is afforded little glimpse into the religious thought and practice of the Kingdom’s subaltern subjects. Although Christianity in the Kingdom of the Kongo evidently trickled down to the masses, the degree to which it did is difficult to measure, remaining the subject of some debate among historians. This deficiency, however, belongs to the archive, not to Fromont. The archive, after all, is in this case the product of one sovereign power acting to preserve the artifacts of another. That almost all of the material items considered by Fromont are today located in places like Brussels, Copenhagen, and New York, and not in Luanda or Kinshasa, serves only to accentuate this mettlesome postcolonial point.

The Art of Conversion demonstrates what careful and informed attention to visual culture in the anthropology and history of religion in general, and of African religion in particular, can accomplish. It is a compelling exemplification of the old adage that “a picture is worth a thousand words,” especially when the discerning eye fully grasps a picture’s historical context.

Terry Rey
Temple University

A World of Their Own: A History of South African Women’s Education. By Megan Healy-Clancy (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2014) 328 pp. $29.50

Inanda Seminary, the focus of Healy-Clancy’s latest book, was an American missionary institution founded in the mid-nineteenth century to produce suitable wives for new African clerics. Over time, Inanda became a virtual factory for turning out women of unprecedented achievement; its alumnae often rose to the highest possible positions allowed to black women in South Africa’s industries. At the time of Healy-Clancy’s writing, 140 years after Inanda’s founding, the Seminary wore its historical significance confidently, even as the plaster on its walls gave way to time and neglect.

Healy-Clancy’s book proceeds as a study of Inanda’s persistence, largely as an independent school, despite facing several threats of closure. It survived the apartheid state and the formation of the Bantustans, when the school came under Zulu governance. It survived the era of black consciousness, when schools went up in flames in protest against the Bantu education laws. It even survived the end of apartheid, when de-segregation...
meant, along with other things, that schools like Inanda would no longer
have a monopoly on attracting the brightest black students.

Methodologically, the book creates its portrait of Inanda’s social his-
tory through a wide range of sources—missionary documents and re-
cords from the Seminary’s own archives, governmental material from
the larger region of KwaZulu Natal where the school was situated, new-
papers, and family archives. Healy-Clancy also interviewed individuals
involved with the school in one way or another—including former stu-
dents, teachers, and staff—for their life histories. Appreciation for the
school’s historical significance, which is actively cultivated through rituals
and reunions on Inanda’s campus, has generated an assiduous written re-
cord that gave Healy-Clancy access to the voices of students and staff from
times past. One of the key challenges that historians face is recovering the
voice of youth through the filter of adult memories. Oral histories may be
an imperfect tool, but Healy-Clancy’s use of life histories, in conjunction
with Inanda’s archival records, manages to tease out what it meant for
multiple generations of young South African women to come of age at
the school.

A World of Their Own is a valuable addition to the history of young
people in Africa largely because it does not omit girls from its purview.
Girls are often absent from the history of South African youth, let alone
that of Africa in general. South African youth histories grounded in the
apartheid era usually focus on male student activists or on young men
who resisted the apartheid system by taking to the street and joining
gangs—the heroic and anti-heroic youth of the revolutionary era. Long-
standing fixation on these subjects has produced a distinct gender bias in the
literature because, as Healy-Clancy’s book amply demonstrates, girls
tended to be located elsewhere, in schools like Inanda, where they found
some success, albeit for the complicated reasons that A World of Their Own
ably dissects.

Abosede George
Barnard College—Columbia University

Foodways & Daily Life in Medieval Anatolia. A New Social History. By
$55.00

Foodways touch on many aspects of daily life—agriculture, cuisine, diet,
health, religion (including fasting), and trade. Trépanier’s engagingly
written study of fourteenth-century Central Anatolia is based primarily
on passing references in contemporary written sources that are relevant
to these subjects—narratives (hagiographies and chronicles) and waqfiyas,
which, as legal documents that established charitable foundations, were
preserved and sometimes recopied. Trépanier mines these sources, taking
into account how social relationships of the writers and presumed audi-
ences may have biased the information contained therein. A smattering
of archaeological evidence informs some of the discussion. The study provides a detailed analysis of textual sources, but it does not reach broader conclusions.

Having chosen a topic that is admittedly limited by time, space, and available documentation, Trépanier teases out information from documents the original purpose of which bears little relationship to the subject of interest. He asks, for example, did a food item or culinary practice receive mention because it was common, because it was odd and noteworthy, or because it was simply a literary convention? His method is to compare sources to determine whether or not such mention reflects a medieval reality. Unfortunately, Trépanier occasionally leaves readers “to conjecture” and “imagine” what “no source ever mentions”; the documents, for example, are “all but silent” about the effect of plundering armies on peasants’ means of production (60). Nevertheless, such authorial modesty invites confidence in Trépanier’s more assertive interpretations, such as when he makes the surprising discovery in the written sources that alcohol consumption was not uncommon, at least among the Muslim upper classes (101). Even a seemingly fanciful story about a cat that fasts to death in mourning for its master provides insight, in this case about the custom of distributing sweets at a funeral (13).

There are only a few archaeological sites in Central Anatolia with fourteenth-century excavations, and most of the findings from them are not widely known, even to archaeologists. Trépanier consults this evidence primarily to document the presence of particular crops and domestic animals, and, to some extent, to describe the way in which they were managed. Although he discusses the relative importance of mutton and beef in both texts and archaeological deposits, he misses a recent botanical report from Gordion, which documents the presence of summer crops of rice, cotton, and foxtail millet (84). The material evidence of summer crop cultivation suggests that inhabitants practiced summer irrigation, even if no document mentions it.

In principle, archaeological evidence would be able to provide answers to some of the questions that Trépanier raises in the text. For example, animal bones from a rural settlement could confirm or refute the apparent absence of shepherd dogs in the texts that Trépanier consults (36). Similarly, amphora and residue analysis could deepen our textual understanding of who had access to wine (79). Archaeology excels in the interpretation of features in space. Trépanier discusses a few pyrotechnical installations (73), but further excavation might eventually resolve his question of whether medieval Anatolia had professional bakers (67); the distribution of ovens could distinguish commercial and domestic production. Given the importance of home and hearth, more archaeological research will improve understanding of these socially salient features. At a

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larger scale, the size and wealth of domestic remains might show whether rich people and poor people lived in the same neighborhoods, and whether “houses belonging to the urban elite . . . [had] their own stock-piles” of food (67).

Medieval archaeology has the unrealized potential to complement the documentary sources. As more excavations become available, we can only hope that archaeologists will apply their reasoning with as much nuance and love of subject as Trépanier has done.

Naomi F. Miller
University of Pennsylvania Museum

The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy. By Nicolas Tackett (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Asian Center, 2014) 298 pp. $49.95

The question of why clans that had figured among the politically dominant elite of Chinese states and empires for centuries suddenly disappeared from the record in the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries has occupied historians for a long time. The transformation of the political elite has become part of survey histories, usually recounted as part of the larger economic and demographic changes that took place between the eighth and twelfth centuries, spanning the reigns of the Tang and Song dynasties. By and large, historians agree that Tang China was ruled by an aristocratic elite based in the capital. During the eleventh century, the ruling elite began to rely on examination degrees rather than family pedigree but remained predominantly metropolitan until the following century, when Song political elites tied to the center via the examinations settled down in counties across the southern Chinese territories. In The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy, Tackett proposes to revisit previous explanations for the first step in this process on the basis of new sources and new quantitative methods.

Tackett gathered data about the residence, official careers, and marriage relations of individuals based mainly on 3,329 epitaphs—inscriptions on stone that commemorated the lives of those whose families could afford to pay for them; the wealth associated with epitaphs provides the definition of elite status in this book. Most of the epitaphs included in the accompanying database date to the ninth century, which is also the book’s chronological focus. On the basis of an analysis of marriage networks and the spatial distribution of the offices and residences of those mentioned in the epitaphs, Tackett argues that Tang China was ruled by a metropolitan elite of old aristocratic families who had migrated to the capitals of Luoyang and Chang’an, as well as the area between them. A small number of elite families dominated both the central government and its provincial offices until the final decades of the Tang; the power of provincial elites did not transcend the local level. The status of the “national” elite families
was dependent upon bureaucratic office, but it was also perpetuated through intermarriage.

Tackett’s analyses offer additional data and greater clarity to previous accounts. Apart from the general insights into “the capital elite” that the study affords, the data could also lead to a further analysis and exploration of the role of particular cliques and patrilines in the power structure of the capital regions and the larger empire and to further comparative analyses. Tackett constructs a visualization of the marriage relations and interprets this representation as a “dense” capital network, but he does not measure, compare, or explain density. As Tackett notes, the network consists of two cliques with a different structure. Analysis of the data within this representation finds that one-quarter of the edges represent a single marriage between patrilines, and the clique around the imperial family collapses when this family is removed. The other clique, which is constructed around a handful of families in Luoyang, also tends to dominate officialdom. Hence, density of marriage relations applies only to a few patrilines, and, by extension, opportunities for upward mobility by this means may have been even more restricted within the elite who set up epitaphs than the general interpretation admits.

Does the new evidence and methodology lead to revisions of previous scholarship? Tackett argues that the two institutions traditionally considered to be factors in the demise of the aristocracy—the civil-service examinations and provincial posts—played no significant role. The civil service did not lead to upward social mobility, and the provincial posts continued to be dominated by scions of prominent patrilines. The demise of the aristocratic families was not a peaceful process; it was a “destruction,” a physical elimination. The second major revision regards the timing of this destruction. Tackett’s data show that aristocratic families did not disappear following the An Lushan Rebellion; rather, they disappeared from the scene suddenly during the last two decades of the ninth century when the rebels led by Huang Chao decimated the population of the two capitals, and a broader civil war ensued.

Tang historians will probably feel that the first case is overstated. Few of them would claim for the civil-service examinations today what Tackett considers to be “frequent observations,” and standard accounts give due consideration to the re-centralization efforts of Tang emperors that led to the re-instatement of aristocrats in provincial offices following the An Lushan rebellion. They may also take a long-term view of the Tang–Song transition, noting the impact of post–An Lushan developments (such as military organization) that shaped the fate of court and capital elites thereafter. Tackett’s emphasis on the role of the Huang Chao rebellion in the transformation process is, nevertheless, important. It underscores the critical importance of the rebellion in the eradication of a century-old aristocratic power structure, thus laying the foundation for new power structures to emerge in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Tackett’s book is a great work of synthesis and the best account of the first stage in the social transformation of Chinese political elites between the
eighth and twelfth centuries, a key turning point in subsequent Chinese history. The author is to be commended for sharing the database on which the graphs, tables, and narrative are based. He has included not only all data but also the database queries for the illustrations. The work is a model for other historians to follow.

Hilde De Weerdt
Leiden University


This book is the first in a three-volume set that seeks to “redefine conventional understanding” of the vast Asian continent by focusing on specific years, from 1501 to 2008, in diverse regions extending from Yemen to Japan. By asking the contributors to select unconventional dates that indicate “important processes and movements throughout the region,” the editors want to “question the adequacy of conventional dates and spatial conceptions” (6). All of the eleven contributors skillfully place their chapter within this stated framework and make a concerted effort to underscore the importance of the specific year that they have chosen to analyze.

The year 1501, which marks the founding of the Safavid dynasty, is highlighted as a great political and religious transition in Iranian history. The “synchronized revivals” of politics in Burma, Russia, Japan, and India made 1555 a notable year (65). The Ming court granted Macau to the Portuguese in 1557, a “year of some significance” with regard to China’s engagement with the global economy. The years 1636 and 1726 are described as critical for the expansion of Yemini commercial networks dealing in coffee beans and the year 1683 as an important watershed for Vietnamese Zen/Chan/Thi n Buddhism. Indian Ocean connections are showcased with the year 1745 as a staging point. The jump in the Japanese tea trade with America in 1874 and its consequences are examined as a prelude to the developments of the twentieth century.

The next two chapters deal directly with European colonial rule and its related discourse in Asia: In 1900/01, an Indian soldier in the British forces who participated in the attempt to quell the Boxer uprising in China remonstrated about European imperialism. In the same vein, the “high-point” of Dutch rule in Sumatra, Java, and Borneo came in 1910 (227). The chapters about the years 1956 and 2008, each written by an anthropologist—depicting Tamil–Kannadiga divides in Bangalore and changes in the United Arab Emirates’ immigration policy affecting Filipino migrants, respectively—round out the volume.

Although the collection is well written and innovative, and the individual chapters make important contributions to the field in their own
ways, the issue of the efficacy or appropriateness of “Asia” as a unit for research is never adequately scrutinized. None of the dates selected pertains to Asia as a whole; as a result, the contributions are often unable to extend beyond subregional analysis. Moreover, notwithstanding the contributors’ different disciplinary backgrounds (eight historians, two anthropologists, and one art historian), the chapters themselves are not overtly interdisciplinary, and the decision to begin the study in the sixteenth century exaggerates the importance of Asia’s (more precisely, subregional Asia’s) connections with Europe and the Americas. Hence, the volume inevitably, and probably unintentionally, perpetuates the problems of “too small” or “too large” in defining Asia as a region or as a field of study rather than resolving them (3).

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The Ecology of War in China is an ambitious book that delivers an intense vision of the tremendous hardships faced by the people and environment of the central Chinese province of Henan throughout a dozen years of Anti-Japanese Resistance, widespread famine, civil war, and, finally, recovery. Central to this history is the 1938 decision of Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), the Republic of China’s leader, to breach the dikes of the Yellow River, popularly known as China’s Sorrow even before this barbarism, thus perpetrating “perhaps the most environmentally damaging act of warfare in world history” (2). Muscolino shows how Jiang’s devastating wartime “strategy” and Japanese responses to it were distinctive forces of environmental change that were paralleled by the environment’s own impact on subsequent war and famine. In seven compelling chapters, Muscolino guides readers through his methodological approach before examining the Yellow River flood, various armies’ rapacious quest for energy that exhausted and overwhelmed communities, and the enormous environmental consequences. Detailed and well-placed maps help to clarify what happened and where.

Although Muscolino situates his study within several fields of scholarly work (including environment, gender, and war), his main theoretical approach centers on energy—measuring energy transfers between the environment, social groups, and military forces (7). This analytical framework, based on the notion of social metabolism, proves particularly conducive to revealing the deeply rooted connections between war and the environment, as well as the ways in which militaries acquired energy with significant human and environmental ramifications. Muscolino argues that the metabolism of militaries and societies shapes the choices of commanders, the fates of communities, and the course of environmental
change” (5). His commodity-chain analysis demonstrates how energy that might have been devoted to Henan’s socioeconomic health or environmental sustenance was diverted for military purposes and catastrophically depleted, often with unanticipated results.

Throughout World War II, Chinese and Japanese military leaders sought to manipulate nature’s energy and deploy its power against their adversaries (11). Long before those years, the Yellow River had already become as much a human-engineered technology as a “natural” environmental feature, and it proved a lethal weapon in war (23). For centuries, dikes had been constructed to contain the river; their efficacy was seen as a reflection of a ruler’s degree of virtue. Jiang’s decision signified a grave deficiency: Breeching the dikes killed more than 800,000 people in Henan, Anhui, and Jiangsu; death tolls in some areas surpassed those of battle zones (31). In Henan alone, floods displaced more than 1 million of Jiang’s fellow citizens. From 1937 to 1945, about 43 percent of the province’s pre-war population lived as refugees for a while at least (4). After the flooding, the area became one of the war’s most important frontlines.

To compound the devastation, famine killed between 1.5 and 2 million people in 1942 and 1943, forcing an additional 2 to 3 million to flee (87). By 1945, the damage was so broad and deep that the relationship between the civilian population and the military was, not surprisingly, “utterly hollow” (113). The Republican government’s record of failures and lack of empathy for Hunan’s rural population grew so weighty in the devastated region that the communist victory in 1949 was all but inevitable.

Muscolino’s social-metabolism approach is especially effective at demonstrating that “social processes can never be divided from natural ones” in his analysis of how the region’s energy sources were harnessed (88). Human and nonhuman elements combined during the war in ways that precipitated devastating famines, underlining the necessity for historians to “focus on the interactions between human actors and a dynamic environment that changes in unpredictable ways even as anthropogenic forces act upon it” (89). Muscolino shows that the Nationalist and Japanese ecological policies were similar, despite their diametrically opposed political and military aspirations.

One of the most effective sections of the book is “Disaster and Gender,” which details the plight of a subaltern woman and her family trying to survive insurmountable hardship in an environment where wild dogs fed on dead children’s bodies (149–155). Such countless individual experiences meld with larger environmental, social, and military forces to demonstrate the savagery and devastation of the wars. Yet even as human populations were decimated, the book demonstrates that vegetation and animals were able to make comebacks in areas left abandoned and forsaken. In fact, Muscolino continues his examination past the beginnings of communist rule to demonstrate the capacity of the environment to recover from human-induced tragedies via the redirection of energy.
Muscolino does a masterful job of demonstrating the pivotal role that the Yellow River and the larger environment played in Chinese history, in this case Henan’s anti-Japanese resistance and civil war. Yet although adversaries sought to control the river and deploy it against their opponents, “they never bent the river to their will” (141). Their efforts did, however, tear the province’s social and environmental fabric apart. Using sources from China, Taiwan, the United Nations, and the United States, Muscolino delivers a timely reminder of the importance of historians’ access to information; the book underlines the dangers inherent in the ever-constricting availability of relevant sources in China today. *The Ecology of War in China* is one of the most powerful studies in recent years to demonstrate why, in the aftermath of such monumental disorder, the Chinese might seek to avoid any turmoil that could possibly revert to the inhumane traumas that lie only a few generations back.

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