Bulliet’s interest in Middle Eastern modes of transport in history has resulted in a number of well-received studies, most notably his monograph, *The Camel and the Wheel* (New York, 1975). Forty years later he returns to the wheel, now with the aim of piecing together the nature of its first invention and introduction, as well as following its history over subsequent centuries. Bulliet is therefore on largely familiar ground, and he uses to good effect his experience in applying archaeological evidence—even of the most incomplete sort—to working out seemingly impossible puzzles.

Bulliet’s technical, as well as archaeological and historical, erudition are on display throughout *The Wheel*. At the outset, he alerts readers to certain technical distinctions that any student of the wheel must observe. Most important is the differentiation between independently rotating wheels (wheels that revolve around a stationary axle), wheel sets (wheels that are attached to rotating axles in pairs), and casters (wheels that rotate independently on an axle, which in turn are free to pivot, typically at right angles to the axle). This differentiation is important to Bulliet because his history depends on distinguishing the stories of the three types from each other, allowing him to be much clearer about how the specific functions of wheels in particular applications must be understood to make sense of the evidence.

Bulliet traces the most important area for the wheel’s early development to the areas north and slightly west of the Black Sea. He uses both archaeological and linguistic evidence to suggest that particular circumstances promoted the development of the first carts, especially for moving heavy loads within and from mines. Homes on wheels, war chariots, and other variations followed, and Bulliet examines the circumstances promoting (and often later demoting) each one of them. The symbolic significance of wheels, and their appearance in devotional and funerary items, as well as their depiction in early illustrated or carved representations, allows Bulliet the opportunity to examine (or, at least, infer) the changing status of wheels in addition to their functions.

Using a similarly wide range of evidence, Bulliet takes his story all the way into the twenty-first century. Along the way, the rise and fall of war chariots, the feminization of wheeled transport, and the ascendancy of carriages occupy entire chapters. Bulliet is careful to avoid making his discourse too culture-specific; he at least raises the questions that others have asked about the general lack, or diminished significance, of wheeled transport in many parts of the world—from the Americas to sub-Saharan Africa to the Far East. Bulliet effectively punctures the often-facile answer, that many of these cultures had little or no access to draft animals, with an extensive discussion of the persistence, in both wheeled and unwheeled cultures, of human-powered transport. Bulliet, however, tends to turn the question around, asking what special circumstances would
make the advantages of wheels most compelling. In some cases, as in the early mining examples, this tactic works, whereas in others—for example, why chariots were popular in some areas and not in others—this approach is less convincing.

Bulliet’s work is a fine contribution to the history of transport. Nonetheless, readers may be disappointed that a book entitled *The Wheel* pays almost no attention to wheels not connected specifically to transport. Bulliet makes a quick reference to potters’ wheels and a couple more to wheeled toys but mainly to dismiss them as irrelevant to his core concern. He has a point, but he might have given a little more attention to the psychological significance, on numerous levels, of wheels in human culture. The wheels of geared machines, of lathes and pulleys, and of mills—hand, animal, water, and wind—all shape human ideas about motion and the possibilities of motion, and they too had different fates in different cultures, shedding yet more light on both the differences and similarities in human encounters with roundness.

Robert Friedel
University of Maryland

_Treasure in Heaven: The Holy Poor in Early Christianity_. By Peter Brown (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2016) 162 pp. $22.95

This book presents the James W. Richard Lectures, which Peter Brown delivered at the University of Virginia in 2012. In recent books, Brown has explored themes of wealth, poverty, and charity in Christian communities in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. This time, the “poor” that Brown studies are not the involuntary or working poor but “the holy poor,” persons who willingly abandoned normal means of self-support for religious reasons and thus relied on others for their material well-being. Recognition of, and charity to, the holy poor raised questions about labor and the nature of the Christian community, issues about which Christians did not always agree. The New Testament had left them conflicting messages. “Give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven,” Jesus exhorted (Matthew 19:21). Yet Paul commanded, “Anyone unwilling to work should not eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10), while also suggesting that some, so to speak, professional Christians deserved financial support: “If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits?” (1 Corinthians 9:11). This complicated legacy of the first century (Chapter 1) laid the basis for the growth of a church-supported class of bishops and teachers during the second and third centuries, which, rising on the basis of religious expertise, provoked the suspicion of traditional elites (Chapter 2).

Brown traces the emergence of two basic approaches to the holy poor among Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries. On the one
hand, Christian sources from Syria depicted labor as a burdensome penalty for the fall of Adam and Eve: Ascetics who lived like angels, free from earthly labor, represented the transcendence to which all Christians aspired (Chapter 4). The Manichaean division between the ascetic Elect and their supportive Hearers represented a stark version of this two-tiered community model (Chapter 3). On the other hand, literary sources constructed an ideal image of the Egyptian monk as a self-supporting laborer who worked with his hands (Chapter 5). This self-sufficiency suggested solidarity between the monk and fellow human beings who must work for their food; it also enabled lay donations to monks seemingly above being bought (Chapter 6). If we widen our view to include Buddhist and Manichaean communities farther to the east, the clash of these Egyptian and Syrian models becomes “the western end of a debate on wealth, labor, and monks that was as wide as Asia itself” (116).

Brown has been a pioneer in the interdisciplinary study of late antiquity, drawing especially on sociology and anthropology. In these chapters, which retain the brevity and conversational style of the original lectures, his interdisciplinary sophistication remains primarily implicit (except in his discussion of the sociology of Buddhism [xii], and of the irrelevance of Max Weber’s distinction between charismatic and bureaucratic authority [104, 109–110]). Instead, readers profit from an innovative historian telling a fascinating story with clarity, grace, and insight.

David Brakke
Ohio State University


Brenner asks why, and when, polities that are fundamentally different in “behavior and unit structure” from most of the other polities in the international system emerge (40), whether such novel polities exhibit patterns of behavior, and how the existing international system responds to them. His theoretical approach draws primarily from political science—relying heavily on neorealism, constructivism, and the English school—while also incorporating elements of social psychology. Brenner illustrates his arguments through detailed comparative historical case studies about the Nizari Ismailis (the Assassins), the Mongols, the Barbary states, and al Qaeda.

Brenner argues that radically distinct polities are more likely to emerge when the international system is in flux, particularly during periods of great power decline. In other words, changes in systems lead to changes of systems. Although his discussion leaves the exact connection between great-power decline and the rise of new types of polities slightly
underdetermined, his cases draw distinct parallels between great-power decline and the emergence of radical polities. These new polities are destabilizing; they generate considerable uncertainty in the international system, which causes existing states and international society to see them as both physical and ontological threats. Faced with such threats, existing states and international society either engage in extreme alienation of the new polities, portraying them as illegitimate malefactors, or attempt to squeeze them into existing normative frameworks to lessen the ontological challenge despite the obvious misalignment. Being vulnerable to physical violence, new polities, rather than imitating the behavior of existing states, typically engage in innovative behavior while simultaneously making a few adjustments in an attempt to conceal their intentions, the nature of their identity, and even their physical location if possible to protect themselves. These new norms and behaviors, arising from the actions of, and reactions to, the new polities further the process of systemic change.

Brenner’s argument would be enriched by considering two complications. First, he uncritically accepts neorealist assumptions that the international system is characterized by anarchy and that states rely on self-help for survival. Although such assumptions are widely held in political science, they have been questioned by historians and political scientists alike. Second, Brenner considers only polities that differ significantly from existing states in their outward form. Yet, states with radically distinct internal structures, such as revolutionary France or the Soviet Union, have, like the objects of Brenner’s study, provoked hostile reactions because of their being perceived as physical and ontological threats to the system.

Had Brenner been willing to extend his premises and consider additional states that ontologically threaten both the international system and its units, he might have uncovered a wider range of behaviors. That said, the book raises important questions and provides provocative answers. It should prompt further research about systemic change and the interactions between international society and the diverse political entities and behaviors that constitute it.

Zachary C. Shirkey
Hunter College
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*Desertion in the Early Modern World: A Comparative History.* Edited by Matthias van Rossum and Jeannette Kamp (New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016) 213 pp. $112.00 cloth $29.95 paper

Until relatively recently, deserters in past times, with the exception of runaway slaves, have generally received bad scholarly press. Why? Acts of desertion—the abandonment of “duty” without permission—often suggest moral dereliction, and, thus, the repudiation of widely valorized
qualities, like loyalty and faithfulness, that are integral to, and privileged by, the family, organized religion, and the state.

During the last few generations in the United States—beginning with the war in Vietnam—views of deserters and desertion have become both more complex and more indulgent, if not forgiving. Indeed, today the U.S. Army—to cite but one institutional example—rarely takes desertion cases to court, preferring to handle them in less fraught ways. Scholars have also changed their approaches to the study of desertion, viewing it in less value-laden and more deeply contextualized ways. They are more apt to see it now as an expression of, or a response to, institutional relationships of one form or another—whether familial, occupational, statal, or parastatal—deemed unbearably challenging or arduous.

Desertion in the Early Modern World is an exemplar of this new approach. The contributors to the volume, which was ably edited and introduced by Van Rossum and Kamp, treat desertion in the context of labor relations, defining the act as “unpermitted absence from work” (5). The authors conceive of work and labor relations broadly; individual chapters describe desertion for a disparate group of “workers”—soldiers and military personnel, merchant seamen, serfs, slaves, indentured servants, convicts, and contract laborers—all over the world during the early modern period. Six of the eight chapters included in Desertion in the Early Modern World are case studies, focusing largely, though not exclusively, on desertion/deserters operating in Dutch and Dutch colonial arenas. The other two chapters (one by Alessandro Stanziani and the other by Marcel van der Linden) attempt to sketch in a preliminary way the broader patterns informing desertion qua global phenomenon during the period. Although the synthetic essays and the case studies make a number of important points, two are especially noteworthy: (1) the persistent pattern of relatively high levels of desertion among social groups in a variety of work settings throughout the early modern period and (2) the connection between the pervasiveness of desertion and the extremely high levels of coercion and exploitation characteristic of labor relations in many economic activities during the same period.

Many of the questions relating to desertion and deserters during this period still remain open, but this short volume represents an important first step in structuring and advancing our understanding of the key issues involved.

Peter A. Coclanis
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Rethinking Colonialism: Comparative Archaeological Approaches. Edited by Craig N. Cipolla and Katherine Howlett Hayes (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 2015) 266 pp. $79.95

Rethinking Colonialism attempts to bring New World and Old World archaeology into dialogue, exploring past practices as well as contemporary
consequences in the study of colonialism. It represents a significant step forward within the discipline of archaeology by releasing colonialism from the traditional geographical and temporal boundaries that often characterize conventional research. Furthermore, the book has the additional benefit of revealing the unintended consequences of traditional ideas about the past on contemporary peoples. Its comparison across geographical and temporal regions, along with its emphasis on the contemporary impacts of archaeological research, is a valuable contribution in its own right.

The methodologies that the contributors employ include analyses of material culture, built heritage, grave markers, geography, ethnography, and historical records—depending on their specific interests and specialties. For example, Cipolla examines grave markers, built heritage, material culture, and written documents to explore the reasons for changes within the Pequot and Brothertown communities. In contrast, Lúcio Menezes Ferreria and Pedro Paulo A. Funari provide a primarily narrative account of slavery in Brazil and the development of a long-term archaeological project to study Maroon identity in the country.

Beyond demonstrating the many ways in which methodologies and data sets can enter into investigations, the authors’ approaches per se do not necessarily cover any new ground; the multitemporal and multiscale incorporation of data sets is a long-standing practice within the archaeological discipline. Some of the conceptual frameworks in the book, however, challenge habitual perspectives: Paul R. Mullins and Timo Ylimaunu use the presence of silverware in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Finland to demonstrate that wealth/poverty cannot be established solely by the presence/absence of prestige goods. Katherine H. Hayes uses Indigenous and African-American archaeological findings in the United States to highlight misapprehensions regarding the concept of diaspora in many Indigenous contexts. Stephen A. Mrozowski, D. Rae Gould, and Heather Law Pezzarossi’s careful look at the New England Praying Indian communities reveals complex daily lived experiences instead of the stark colonial trajectory that often underpins academic research.

Richard Hingley’s ethnographical study of what Britons now think of Hadrian’s Wall examines the issue of indigenousness and the role that mythical and public histories play in shaping public understandings and historical research. The novel critiques and standpoints within this volume are broadly applicable, having the potential to serve as discussion points across disciplines.

Overall, Cipolla and Hayes have compiled an interesting and engaging collection that encompasses a variety of topics and geographical/temporal areas. The book’s methodologies and data cover the traditional stamping grounds of archaeological research, but the ideas that underpin the research should be of interest to researchers who study colonialism throughout history, anywhere around the globe.

Matthew Beaudoin
Timmins Martelle Heritage Consultants, Inc.
Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789–1848. By Katrina Navickas (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016) 332 pp. $105.00

Following Parliament’s rejection of the Chartist petition in 1839, activists in the north of England organized Sunday processions to parish churches. The crowds occupied space in the churches, overturning established hierarchies and “sitting in the ‘wrong’ seats—that is, the paid for pews at the front of the church” (282–283). These church invasions form a mere footnote in the well-mapped history of radical political activity in the first half of the nineteenth century. Yet in analyzing these, and many other, incidents, Navickas deftly illustrates how activists contested control of space, challenged definitions of inclusion and exclusion, and combined tradition and innovation in claiming their place in the political and social life of northern towns and villages. Navickas blends the detailed archival investigation of social history with theoretical approaches drawn from historical geography to rewrite the history of popular protest during the decades before 1850.

Throughout the period under consideration, authorities sought to constrain popular movements by denying them spaces, indoors and outdoors. Private development and enclosure restricted access, legislation outlawed political activities, and loyalist crowds attacked radicals. Despite these challenges, radicals and socialists asserted claims to public space. They carved out new sites of popular protest and developed their own dedicated facilities for educational, religious, and political activities. Navickas argues convincingly that the use of space formed a central focus in radical and socialist struggles to reform the political and social order. Claims on space shaped ideas of inclusion and the body politic and helped to define radical programs and rhetoric.

Navickas’ approach moves beyond existing frameworks in the study of these social movements. She is not particularly interested in tracing the leaders of these movements, the social background of those involved, nor the rhetoric that they applied. She analyzes the materiality of buildings, streets, and open spaces, and how the struggle for them shaped and generated the practice and meaning of protest. This strategy encourages an expansive and useful notion of protest, including leisure activities such as musical performances, tea parties, and roaming along footpaths. It also allows her to draw out the continuities in radical political activity across the period.

These continuities lead her to reject what she describes as a “progression model” of protest, associated with Tilly and Thompson (251).1 Her narrative, however, shows change as well as continuity. Swing riots reveal the persistence of custom in (rural) protest, and the response of urban radicals to waves of repression and constraint reveal new repertoires of collective action. Navickas describes various forms of rioting,

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1 See, for example, Charles Tilly, Popular Contention in Great Britain 1758–1834 (Cambridge, Mass., 1995); Edward P. Thompson, Customs in Common (London, 1991).
processions, “monster” mass meetings, and the development of dedicated spaces for protest and education in the 1830s (236). Many of these forms built on, and explicitly embraced, earlier radical activities; they also represent innovations in the use of space and in the formula for making claims on those in power.

Navickas’ argument complicates broad narratives of changing popular protest, without replacing them entirely. Nonetheless, her ability to blend geography and social history effectively explains developments in radical protest during this key period. Navickas’ argument for the centrality of place in these struggles is both insightful and innovative.

Andrew August
Abington College
Penn State University

New Directions in Slavery Studies: Comodification, Community, and Comparison. Edited by Jeff Forret and Christine E. Sears (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University, 2015) 272 pp. $47.00

Edited collections come in various flavors—curated collations of teaching-oriented chapters, compiled (and hopefully refined) conference papers based on a particular topic, useless mishmashes, and festschriften that celebrate and comment on the themes explored by a senior scholar. Luckily, this volume, edited by two excellent scholars represents the fourth and not the third option. Although not formally a festschrift, this volume reflects on themes commonly associated with Peter Kolchin, who wrote comparative studies that examine slavery and emancipation in the United States, on the one hand, and serfdom and emancipation in nineteenth-century Russia, on the other. Notwithstanding their debt to him, the contributors to this volume also manage (as the title promises) to lay out their own agendas for future research and publication.

Like Forret’s chapter about violence and theft in slave communities and Sears’ chapter about Christian sailors whom “Barbary Pirates” enslaved in North Africa, many of the contributions investigate areas in which Kolchin was a trailblazer—for example, the idea that context is everything. As a case in point, Sears’ work argues that the urban character of a particular type of North African slavery actually stabilized the institution in certain ways, whereas scholars of North American slavery have traditionally seen city life as the solvent of bonds.

Forret explores another theme that originated in Kolchin’s work—the argument that ever since the appearance John Blassingame’s The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South (New York, 1972), scholars have been exaggerating the extent to which horizontal social links and shared cultural values were able to create a united “slave community.” Forret concludes that an extensive record of slaves who committed violence against, and stole from, other enslaved people suggests
that life in the quarters was not founded entirely on trust or solidarity. In the same vein, though more theoretically oriented, Anthony G. Kaye’s chapter on the concept of “autonomy” in slavery studies continues his own critique of the “liberal slave” formulation, according to which Africans attempted to defend or attain rights that would enable them to resist nonconsensual social obligations.

Most of the chapters collectively make a case—if such were needed—for Kolchin’s abiding influence on the study of slavery in the United States. Witness Karen Ryder’s well-researched and clearly written chapter about slave insurance, which suggests that the depth of risk protection available to investors in human beings as property created greater risk for enslaved people. Similarly, Bonnie Martin’s excellent chapter investigates the extent to which enslavers were willing to mortgage enslaved Virginians in the nineteenth century.

The most impressive contribution, however, is Enrico Dal Lago’s piece about nineteenth-century modernization and nation-building in the U.S. South, Cuba, and Brazil, which brilliantly incorporates Kolchin’s directive that scholars should look at “other Souths” if they want to understand the U.S. South. Dal Lago views the independence and/or secession movements in these three contexts as part of a broad expansion of slavery that supplied ever-growing floods of raw materials to the Industrial Revolution. This expansion led in each case to the emergence of elite economic entrepreneurs who sought to replace old political formations with new ones to protect their power, wealth, and productivity. Da Lago’s discussion of the details that distinguished the strategies of the slave-holding elites in the U.S. South, Brazil’s Rio Grande do Sul, and Cuba’s eastern provinces is especially elucidating. It is a fine tribute to the ongoing influence of Kolchin’s scholarship.

Edward E. Baptist
Cornell University

_The Great Leveler: Capitalism and Competition in the Court of Law._ By Brett Christophers (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2016) 348 pp. $45.00

For Christophers, capitalism is always poised on a knife edge “between the contradictory forces of competition and monopoly, and perennially in danger of lapsing too far to one side or the other” (9). Capitalism avoids disasters by deploying law—antitrust law (“competition law” in Europe)—to reduce monopolization to a tolerable level, and intellectual-property law to encourage innovation. These areas of law are intimately related conceptually, because intellectual-property law confers the power to prevent others from exploiting patents or trademarks, thus creating monopolies with respect to its subject.
Christophers paints with a broad brush, though, in passing, he concedes that he has simplified certain areas for purposes of clarification. Mapping large-scale economic developments from the late nineteenth century to the present and focusing on the United States and Great Britain, he identifies three periods of pendulum-like cycling (214). From the late nineteenth century to around 1946, a combination of strong intellectual-property rules and weak antitrust enforcement led to excesses of monopolization. The next period, lasting until the 1970s, saw antitrust law strengthening, followed by a reversal into the present period. Christophers notes as well that the modern emphasis on intellectual-property law has ascended to the international level through such instruments as the TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement.

Part I of *The Great Leveler* develops Christophers’ position on controversies within contemporary Marxist theory, engaging extensively with positions developed in the work of Harvey. Part II presents Christophers’ historical overview. The breadth of the brushstrokes makes evaluation difficult, though the description of the three periods seems roughly accurate. Emphasizing law as an equilibrating mechanism to preserve capitalism is a promising approach, but Christophers’ exposition raises questions. Although the reciprocal relationship between antitrust and intellectual-property law is correct on the conceptual level, intellectual-property law might not be able to do everything that Christophers claims for it. He lists the Dow Jones Index’s component companies to support the claim that many large companies rely on patent and trademark protection to secure their positions (159). Yet, plausible as his claim is regarding patents (for, say, pharmaceutical companies), it is less plausible for trademarks, which provide substantially weaker “monopoly-like” protection. In supermarkets, for example, branded items sit right next to house versions that duplicate them in everything but name. Christophers’ list includes numerous companies that have assets that are probably due to trademarks rather than to patents. Stronger evidence is necessary to support the idea that trademarks are as important as patents in maintaining market position for companies in general.

The mechanism by which antitrust and intellectual-property law perform their equilibrating function also deserves greater attention. Christophers clearly maintains that these domains of law perform as they do for capitalism because they have to do so. Representative statements are: “The law largely reinforced monopolizing tendencies...because it had to” (124); “it happened because it had to” (169); “once more, the law was called upon to come to capital’s aid” (218). Functional accounts of law may be familiar, but they are exceedingly difficult to develop in detail, because the agents who actually articulate and implement the law somehow have to enter into the equation, threatening its objectivity.

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1 See, for example, David Harvey, *Seven Contradictions and the End of Capitalism* (London, 2014); *idem, A Companion to Marx’s Capital* (London, 2010).
Christophers gestures toward a more concrete account, with only occasional references to “perceptions” (141) and “opinions” (177)—“opinions” being elaborated most explicitly in connection with the rise of Chicago-influenced antitrust law in the United States (217). It would have been helpful to have some examples of how ideas about intellectual-property law contributed to the pendulum-like effects.

Attempting to connect the conceptually related areas of antitrust and intellectual-property with broad developments is an ambitious enterprise. Christophers might well be on to something. Yet, the most that can be said about The Great Leveler at this point is “interesting, maybe correct, but not proven.”

Mark Tushnet
Harvard Law School

_Clio’s Battles: Historiography as Practice_. By Jeremy Black (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2015) 323 pp. $85.00 Cloth $30.00 paper

How should history be presented to the public in an increasingly demotic age of movies, television, and YouTube? Are images now replacing words? To what extent have the bitter academic disputes of recent decades shaped or warped popular views of the past? Have journalists, pundits, and politicians been more successful? These and other issues constitute Black’s stunningly erudite attempt to bridge the gap between traditional historiography and public history, most notably by explicating how history has been used to unite and to divide as well as to justify and discredit views of the present.

Black begins with the observation that governments have been increasingly shaping the past, especially in the 120 new states founded since 1945. But established nations have done the same thing. Witness Japan’s elites overlooking Japanese atrocities committed in China during World War II or, more ominously, China’s leaders refusing to acknowledge the murderous regime of Mao Zedong or the 1989 massacres in Tiananmen Square. George Orwell famously quipped that those who control the present also control the past, though even he might be shocked by the extent to which historical scholarship has fallen prey to state power or, in the West, to simplistic popular renderings interested more in narrative than truth. Moreover, within the academy, professional approaches have been challenged by institutional funding, bureaucratization, and political correctness.

Black devotes the first third of his study to a historiographical survey from antiquity to the present. Although the account covers well-trodden ground, it reminds readers how ancient historians such as Thucydides focused primarily on human agency rather than omens to explain the past. During the Middle Ages, historical writing combined with religion both to explain God’s purposes and to predict the end of the world. At
the same time, Anglo-Saxon monasteries meticulously evoked history to protect themselves against the Normans, a tradition pursued later by English monks to resist the authority of the Holy Roman Empire. With regard to China, Black pays due attention to Sima Quin, the father of Chinese historiography, though he neglects to discuss Sima’s meticulous use of sources and emphasis on the “known world.” Black takes pains to stress that historiography during the Tang and Song dynasties was not as static as Western commentators have claimed. Nevertheless, he stresses that China’s emphasis on cultural superiority and on controlling the past is a “longstanding one, although not without direct linkage between imperial and Communist days” (37).

After dismissing Islamic historiography as “assertion,” Black turns his attention to the early modern period. His account hardly breaks new ground, but he makes the worthy points that the Humanists relied on documents, that English historical identity was both presented and bolstered by the plays of William Shakespeare, and that the religious wars of the seventeenth century were “in large part fought out by means of historical works” (45). Much more incisive is Black’s treatment of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment’s rejection of history, at least in its radical form, by the philosophes—an interpretation with much merit, given the horrors of the French Revolution. Nonetheless, as Black notes, Voltaire was a major exception to the trend. Across the Channel, historical writing flourished, primarily because the freedom to write and publish combined with a market economy to meet popular demand. Although authors—such as Edward Gibbon in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788)—wrote from the top down, most scholars had extensive interests, most notably in widely read newspapers engaged in political debate. Furthermore, their writing may not always have been philosophical, but it was vigorous and clear.

During the nineteenth century, traditional and academic history converged with the emergence of scholarship that followed the practices of Leopold von Ranke and the founding of research universities. In some of the most stimulating pages of his study, Black deftly shows how professional scholarship enriched historical writing, notwithstanding the sanguine faith in progress propounded by Thomas Babington Macaulay and the Whigs. Black underlines his disdain for the loss of documentary and linguistic skills in our contemporary audio-visual world by stressing that university-trained scholars, such as Jacob Burkhardt and Johan Huizinga (whom he does not mention), wrote for an educated public. These trends continued well into the twentieth century, though historical writing became more adversarial following the rise of ethnic nationalism and racial antisemitism.

After World War I, new authoritarian states in Eastern Europe, as well as new regimes in China, Mexico, the Soviet Union, and Turkey, sought a complete break with the past; for its part, National Socialism severely twisted and perverted historical scholarship. Even in the West historians became more dependent on governmental support, although
freedom of debate persisted. In the 1960s, however, historians became obsessed with theory and linguistics, sparking bitter disputes about how history should be presented. In Black’s judgment, the results have been mixed, though more negative than positive. On the one hand, the new social history has opened new vistas, most strikingly in gender studies and, more recently, in climate research. On the other hand, the shift has been at the expense of political, diplomatic, legal, and military history, compelling professional historians to turn inward or focus on recondite subjects. As a consequence, a public yearning for knowledge now relies increasingly on narrative accounts presented in movies, television, popular histories, and the internet.

In surveying non-Western historiographical literature, Black convincingly argues that, more often than not, the depiction of the past comes in the form of “historicized grievance” (216). He provides numerous examples of contestation, adumbrated in his introduction, regarding China, Japan, and Korea. But he also shows that Indian historians have ignored those who supported the Raj as well as Hindu atrocities committed against women and children. Even more contentious has been the historiographical terrain in Israel, a state that seeks legitimacy in the sufferings of the Holocaust, while overlooking the expulsion of 760,000 Palestinians or the role of Jewish terrorists in winning independence. At the same time, the Holocaust itself has become a subject of intense interest and scholarly research, most strikingly in the United States, where it served as a “moral catharsis” following the Vietnam War. Black demonstrates how six television miniseries in the 1980s underlined the international dimension of Adolf Hitler’s genocide, provoking debate about “Jewishness” within a society in which Jews have long been assimilated.

The Holocaust has also become a topic of debate in post-Communist Eastern Europe. Hungary and Poland have had to confront a recrudescence of antisemitism, while simultaneously seeking to memorialize the victims of Soviet oppression, which has raised questions about wartime collaboration and about whether Joseph Stalin’s mass murders also constituted genocide. Elsewhere in Europe the exhumation of mass graves in Spain has re-awakened regional and social divisions of the Spanish Civil War that have been hotly contested, primarily on the internet.

For all his shrewd insights, Black concludes his study with a number of obvious predictions—for example, that Chinese and Indian history will garner more attention, particularly in the world wars; that religion will receive intensified scrutiny; and that audio-visual sources may supplant, or at least challenge, traditional research techniques. Yet, although there may be no single way to understand history, the most accurate approach must be an empirical one “that notes the ambiguities of the past, the diversity of motives, and the complexity of causation” (276).

Evan Bukey
University of Arkansas
The likely origin of the blood libel may be glimpsed within a late twelfth-century text—the hagiography that Thomas of Monmouth composed for a boy named William who was murdered just outside Norwich in 1144. A Benedictine monk at a cathedral that attempted repeatedly to foster a cult around the dead youth, Thomas is notorious for disseminating a narrative that was to cost hundreds of Jews their lives. Rose has carefully re-evaluated Thomas’ story, contextualizing its events in light of East Anglia’s contemporary social and economic perturbations. Combining literary techniques (close reading and persuasive story telling) with history’s demand for diligent archival work, Rose argues that the ritual murder plot was invented by Bishop William Turbe during his legal defense of a knight in his service.

Having murdered a Jewish banker, Simon de Novers hoped to free himself of debt incurred to finance participation in the disastrous Second Crusade. Thomas’ text contains an imagined account of Turbe defending Novers in front of the king, in which the bishop declares that William was tortured to death by local Jews. This innovative argument, Rose writes, worked to prevent Simon from being held accountable for killing the banker, unleashing a pernicious narrative that would in other cities and later times accomplish great harm. The blood libel was deployed thereafter for varied political and economic gain. Whereas other scholars have emphasized affective piety and the catalytic power of hatred, culpability in Novers’ case and the boy-martyr cases to follow (in Gloucester, Blois, Bury St. Edmunds, and Paris) resides squarely with scheming elites who did not possess any great animus against Jews.

Ritual-murder narratives have mainly been studied as part of Jewish history. For Rose, they are part of a Christian Middle Ages full of a careful, and deadly, strategy. Financial and political constriction led repeatedly and logically to violence, even mass murder. Yet because her archive does not contain the actual details of such calculation, sometimes Rose must take the truth of Thomas’ assertions on faith; sometimes she has to discount what he describes; and sometimes she has to imagine scenes that seem as though they are drawn from his vivid text. In one vignette, Novers is described as sitting by a peat fire in damp Norwich after his return from the failed crusade, realizing that murdering his Jewish banker will improve his sorry lot. No extant document actually ties Simon to participation in the Second Crusade, but combined with a carefully constructed portrait of contemporary aristocratic life and the decline of the Novers family, the scene works affectively as well as intellectually.

Rose depicts a world that turns against Jews through decisions described as “lucid,” “cogent,” “rational,” “thoughtful,” and “debated,” vis à vis the “irrational,” “bizarre,” “literary,” and “mob” fervors that have
elsewhere been invoked to explain anti-Jewish violence. Hers is not an account of emotions, xenophobia, or transhistorical phenomena. Rose deliberately chooses never to use the terms “anti-Semitism” and “anti-Judaism.” Yet the question remains whether faith, passion, and hate are not more a part of the story than she allows. To explain the origin of the blood libel as the result of an unfailingly rational economic calculus that strove to maximize monetary considerations without regard to the victims removes emotion (specifically, hate) as a catalyst to human violence. Only the common people—who do not make much of an appearance in this book—are motivated by affect. The elite actors whom Rose describes are shrewd and pragmatic manipulators, coldly indifferent to Jews, rather than people who might take irrational pleasure in the destruction of non-Christians. Readers may well be left wondering why the notion of a blood libel persisted so passionately, long after the Jews had been expelled from England.

*The Murder of William of Norwich* is a well-written, carefully researched, provocative, and supremely important book, offering a new and necessary starting point for anyone interested in the origins of medieval Christian violence against Jews.

Jeffrey Cohen
George Washington University

*Distributing Status: The Evolution of State Honours in Western Europe*. By Samuel Clark (Montreal McGill–Queens University Press, 2016) 520 pp. $49.95

This impressive book makes a persuasive case for the importance of state honors in dealing with several modern issues—the growth and increasing complexity of the state and the need for innovative methods to win public support, the changing relations between aristocracy and middle class, and the effort to accommodate growing individualism in motivating political and social initiatives. Clark also assesses the relationship between the evolution of honors and changes in the nature and extent of military activity in the three nations involved. The results of this meticulous study will interest not only historians but also political scientists and sociologists, from whose disciplines the author draws widely.

Although Clark is a sociologist, and uses terms like modernization more fluently than many historians would, the study is deeply historical and informed by wide scholarship in the field. The first section explores various facets of causation in modern societies to explain why state honors changed and expanded from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries onward. The rise of the bourgeoisie, and particularly the overlap between a modern and an aristocratically dominated political order, figure strongly in this section, but Clark also gives attention to changing
definitions of merit. Moreover, all of this discussion arises from a carefully constructed background of earlier systems of honors that provide a baseline for assessing subsequent change.

The second main section addresses change from the standpoint of, not society in general, but the state officials who awarded honors, seeing expansion and change resulting from the need to legitimate state actions (including military actions) and communicate more clearly as populations soared and social complexity increased. This section also introduces more comparative distinctions between the three regions under examination, within a common framework, focusing primarily on specific honors categories, like the French Legion of Honor, and an array of medals and badges.

The ensuing chapters deal with the role that honors assumed as societies moved from corporate to more individualistic structures and thus required new methods of reward and discipline. Section 4 follows the transition from aristocratic to bourgeois social prominence more specifically, along with the growing competition for status, and examines how changing patterns of state honors linked to this complex and gradual process. A final section explores the consequences of honors, both for individual recipients and for society at large—a key part of the overall argument.

Although the book is organized in terms of large themes, a host of individual details enlivens and supports the presentation. Thus we learn why, rarely, individuals were ejected from consideration, how the tastes of particular monarchs affected the distribution of honors, or how religious minorities (and on rare occasions, even working-class concerns) factored into the process. Quantitative analysis also features strongly, illustrating larger patterns and the tendency both to expand and diversify.

Given Clark’s primary interest in grand trends, distinctions among regional cases receive less attention than might be desired, though the final chapter lays out future comparative possibilities on a more global scale. Overall, the book offers a challenging approach both to the uses of honors themselves and to broader patterns of political and social change in the emergence of modern Europe.

Peter N. Stearns
George Mason University


Wrigley is deservedly renowned as both an indefatigable collector and as an insightful analyzer and synthesizer of primary data. All of his skills are amply demonstrated in this brief volume. The title, and particularly the subtitle of the volume, announce a broad intention to document
the unique change in human societies—the simultaneous attainment of unprecedented increases in material welfare and population growth—that began in early modern Britain and reached fruition in the late nineteenth century. A hallmark of that Industrial Revolution was the extensive use of energy from fossil fuel in the form of coal. Wrigley sees this move from dependence on organic processes as the defining feature of the transition to sustained growth. As he notes in his final paragraphs, current concern about the impact of fossil fuel on global climate gives this focus a modern relevance.

The volume revolves around the process by which society largely replaced and greatly augmented the limited flow of energy available from plant photosynthesis. Wrigley gives the long history of the replacement of organically based energy with fossil fuels considerable attention. First, the widespread use of coal for domestic and industrial heat liberated land from managed woodland. Wrigley sees the creation of mechanical energy from coal as a particularly significant part of the transformation to an inorganic economy. Accordingly, he gives the origins of the steam engine and railway a place of prominence. This work is not, however, a history of technological invention but focuses on broader themes. As such, it deserves to find a place as an excellent overview of the social processes that transformed Britain from Queen Elizabeth I’s time to Queen Victoria’s. The theme of feedbacks provides an organizing framework. It is predominantly negative for the organic economy in the Malthusian unequal race between population and land resources but more likely to be positive for the inorganic energy regime, given the Smithian benefits of specialization, enlarged markets, and induced technological change.

It is surprising, given the underlying significance of the organic economy’s limitations in Wrigley’s scheme, that much of his discussion before the Industrial Revolution chronicles the organic economy’s successes. In particular, Chapter 4, about urban growth and agricultural productivity, documents the remarkable rise in British agricultural productivity during the early modern period, which occurred entirely within the framework of the organic economy, supporting a remarkable increase in English urbanization (particularly in the size of London). This development was an exceptional episode of positive feedback within the organic economy. Specialization and exchange engendered technological advance. Similarly, although hardly surprisingly in a work by Wrigley, the European marriage pattern is given a central role in England’s success within the early modern organic economy.

Although the volume will serve as an excellent textbook for understanding the British Industrial Revolution in a long perspective, it goes well beyond an inspired synthesis of available literature. Specialist readers will find much of interest in it. Throughout the book, Wrigley presents detailed regional breakdowns of population change and occupational status to illuminate his arguments. These data, from censuses and earlier sources that he has been instrumental in presenting for decades, allow
him to provide information distinguished by regions with differing economic characteristics. Thanks to Wrigley, this information is now available at the sub-county level, usually at the hundreds’ level but at times as finely grained as the individual registration district.

In Chapter 5, Wrigley explores the change in occupational structure by economic regions from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, leading him to argue that it warrants a more optimistic assessment of changing real wages than many studies suggest. Chapter 8 offers an examination of the information about occupational structure in the 1831 census that permits an unusually close geographical analysis. Specialists will appreciate the valuable data and the suggestions for additional research.

This volume has much to recommend it. It is an outstanding introduction to the emergence of growth in Britain. It also continues Wrigley’s long career of unearthing, collecting, and analyzing important data at an extraordinarily detailed level.

C. Knick Harley
University of Oxford


Urdank’s book addresses several questions that have interested historical demographers of Britain but that are notoriously difficult to answer: Did the demographic lives, and especially the birth rates, of British Nonconformists (who dissented from the established Anglican Church) differ significantly from those of the religious majority? What was the relationship of religious affiliations and identities to the economic and demographic changes in Britain during the Industrial Revolution? Whereas previous studies of Nonconformists’ demographic experience centered on groups such as the Quakers, who were pioneers in family limitation, Urdank’s new work studies a set of Baptist communities of Gloucestershire during the “long eighteenth century.”

The book’s chapters appear to be separate analytical experiments. The author vaunts his use of narrative and quantitative approaches, which include a “textual” analysis of individual parish-register records and a variety of multivariate methods. The “narrative” sections reconstruct the reproductive careers of a small number of couples and offer ad hoc speculations on why these careers proceeded as they did. The quantitative portions include approaches such as discrete-time event history and path analysis. Urdank summarizes main findings at the end of each chapter and in the conclusion of the study, but sorting out their significance or robustness is by no means easy. Some results suggest a positive relationship between evangelical religious conversion and
fertility, but the impacts are often small and the results unstable across different samples, analytical designs, and genders.

Urdank has made it challenging for readers to accept his findings with much confidence. He neglects one of the most important traditions of historical demography—the systematic critique of sources. He dispenses information in piecemeal fashion about them and about the samples that he has taken from them, scattering totals and percentages of cases between chapters and between text and notes. Counts of individuals included in various analyses often do not match, leaving little certainty about the size of his various data “samples.”

The study fails to reveal whether Baptists constituted a well-defined community, which would allow historical demographers to use Baptist membership to predict reproductive behavior, or whether they constituted an open and fluid community, which would threaten the whole point of comparing Baptist and Anglican demographic rates. On the one hand, in certain analyses, the study distinguishes between levels of belief—between Baptist church members and mere “hearers” who attended chapel services. Yet the author also suggests that local Anglicans showed some of the same evangelical sensibilities as their Baptist neighbors.

The book lacks the social-historical background to enable understanding how the communities under study fit into the various hypotheses that test the relationship between industrialization and demographic behavior. For this information, readers should consult the author’s previous publications. Finally, the volume is marred by a misuse of standard demographic terminology, confusion between tables and figures, repetition of wording in multiple places, and a lack of proofreading. The author does not seem to have had the patience to present his study in a manner that would allow readers to appreciate his findings or their possible importance to the field.

Katherine A. Lynch
Carnegie Mellon University

*Domestic Culture in Early Modern England.* By Antony Buxton (Rochester, The Boydell Press, 2015) 302 pp. $120.00

Despite its expansive title, this book has at its heart a study of 188 probate inventories from seventeenth-century Thame, a small market town in Oxfordshire. Parts of the book concern this local study: Chapter 1 provides the social and economic context of early modern Thame. Chapters 3 to 5 examine in detail the domestic objects recorded in Thame’s probate inventories under the themes of “foodstuff provisioning, processing and cooking,” “commensality and conviviality,” and “rest and security.” Chapter 7 looks at particular examples of Thame households. However, other sections of the book do something much more innovative, exploring and developing an interdisciplinary concept of “domestic culture.”
The introduction provides a dizzying tour of approaches from philosophy, anthropology, archaeology, and ethnology, as well as history, to the house and household, before settling predominantly on Bourdieu’s idea of the “habitus” combined with Geertz’s “thick description” of a small community. Chapter 2 focuses on the multiple facets of early modern households, and Chapter 6 about “the practice and domestic culture of the Thame household” applies the ideas developed to the inventory evidence about room use. The wide range of interdisciplinary ideas brought into play is the great strength of the book.

Other aspects of the study are less effective. Despite aspiring to “thick description,” the evidence base deployed is decidedly thin. For the majority of the book, the documents analyzed consist primarily of a small collection of probate inventories, Gervase Markham’s The English Housewife (1615), and woodcut illustrations from ballads. Wills, court documents, and parish records appear only in Chapter 7 and then simply to provide biographies of particular households. Buxton makes little attempt to compare the findings from Thame with other studies of early modern probate inventories to establish their wider context. Although the weaknesses of inventories are rehearsed in the introduction, the fact that small and cheap artifacts, such as wooden spoons and trenchers and small pottery items, are rarely listed is forgotten in the analysis, and no reference to the archaeological evidence of such goods is made.

Even more problematical is the lack of depth in the research into the processes and activities described. Food processing, diet, dining, and cloth production are all discussed without reference to any key works on the subject, ignoring a rich literature about consumption and material culture in early modern England. Moreover, any analysis of domestic culture surely requires a careful consideration of gender issues. Gender is considered in this study, but Buxton’s comments are limited by the fact that inventories reveal relatively little about the subject. Again, an extensive literature is ignored in favor of quotations from Markham and outdated anthropological views (one being that women’s roles were determined by childbearing).

In short, this is a wonderful idea for a book, and the ideas that Buxton parades in the introduction and conclusion show flashes of brilliance, but his analysis fails to bridge the gap satisfactorily between theory and historical evidence.

Jane Whittle
University of Exeter


This monograph is an ambitious work of literary criticism focused on Renaissance England that draws from the history of humanism, the history
of science and medicine, and the history of esotericism. Eggert suggests a new interpretation of early modern history wherein authors responded to intellectual shortcomings within humanist learning by employing alchemy to explore and test the boundaries of knowledge. The text includes discussions of literary authors, playwrights, and poets—including John Donne, William Shakespeare, George Herbert, and Ben Jonson (among many others)—alongside John Dee, Francis Bacon, Thomas Norton, William Harvey, and a plenitude of other physicians, alchemists, and natural philosophers. Eggert argues that these many authors were united by a knowledge practice gained from their common humanist education, which she dubs “disknowledge” (2–3). This neologism has various meanings and inflections that she expounds throughout the text, but the general signification is “a conscious and deliberate setting aside of one compelling mode of understanding the world—one discipline or theory—in favor of another” (3).

The first chapters propose that this use of disknowledge arose out of an epistemological crisis in late humanism, that alchemy and humanism were wed by similar goals and practices, and thus that tropes from alchemy could be used in the act of disknowing in literature. The remaining chapters focus on three domains in which such intellectual and literary acrobatics were at play—transubstantiation, Kabbalah, and human reproduction and generation. Eggert’s historical epistemology extracts from ignorance studies (agnotology) and the sociology of knowledge to yield potentially helpful insights about alchemy in English literature. This strategy is most successful in Eggert’s examination of works that openly satirize alchemy as the domain of charlatans and frauds, such as Jonson’s *The Alchemist* (1610).

Nevertheless, problems arise when the discussion turns to the history of science and medicine. The discussion of Harvey and generation is illustrative. Eggert claims that Harvey displayed a “determined and contingent misogyny” in *De Generatione* (1651) by intentionally ignoring theories of reproduction—namely, Helkiah Crooke’s in his *Microcomographia* (1615)—that maintained, contra Aristotle and Galen, a major role for females. Harvey’s “willed ignorance,” she writes, is “disknowledge in its worst possible form” (161). Her only evidence that Harvey was in dialogue with Crooke regarding generation, however, is that they use similar language to describe how the cervix closes so tightly in pregnancy that it will not admit even the point of a needle (305–306, fn. 50). Eggert avers that Harvey was more likely to have read this statement in Crooke than to have shared a common source with him, but this conclusion is almost surely wrong since the original claim occurs in Galen’s *De usu partium*, one of the most widely read and quoted texts in the history of medicine.1

1 Galen (trans. Margaret Tallmadge May), *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* (Ithaca, 1968), II, 15.7, 672: “[During pregnancy] it is impossible to introduce even the head of a probe into the neck of the uterus.”
Moreover, the argument simply assumes that Crooke’s view was obvious in light of empirical evidence, when no such thing could have been known at the time. Indeed, Harvey made clear in his discussion of conception that it was a “dark and obscure business” and that his word ought not be taken as if “pronounced by an Oracle.”

The critique of Harvey shares the same fundamental problems with Eggert’s concluding analysis of alchemy. In answering the question of why “groundbreaking geniuses” such as Newton and Boyle remained “enamored of alchemy,” Eggert implicitly takes a position similar to earlier positivist historians: In short, alchemists and physicians should have known (or actually knew) better (243). This hermeneutic relies on a sometimes uncharitable psychoanalysis and dismisses—or rather, unknows—the complexities of underdetermined evidence, as well as one of the major conclusions of historians of alchemy in the last three decades—that alchemy and its various theories not only provided rational explanations of phenomena but that such explanations were often perfectly sensible in the context of early modern intellectual culture.

Joel A. Klein
Columbia University

Vice and the Victorians. By Mike Huggins (London, Bloomsbury, 2015)
201 pp. $112.00 cloth $34.95 paper

Unlike its counterpart virtue (the word that Margaret Thatcher really meant to revive, instead of value), vice is one of those terms that feels like it went out with the Victorians. For that reason, at least partly, it has rarely been studied in depth. As Huggins shows, the subject is more typically handled piecemeal—by studying alcoholism or prostitution, or the illicit pleasures on offer in cities like London—and through the eyes of those who left detailed records about trying to curb it. Little consensus exists about which of the many nineteenth-century vices constituted the worst and for whom. To some extent, the difficulty comes from the fact that the general issue cuts across distinctions of class, region, religion, or party affiliation; various constituencies vied to draw attention to what they saw as the vices of others. The Victorians, as we are increasingly coming to know them, were far less monolithic than we used to think. Complicating matters further is the presence of those who defended individual vices on the grounds of civil liberty, profitability, or simply the inability to see anything wrong in them. What was a hardened vice for some people, or at some period, was a harmless pleasure or a legitimate

2 William Harvey, Anatomical exercitations concerning the generation of living creatures . . . (London, 1653), 539.
market opportunity for somebody else—one reason for the absence of wholesale legislation (on the model of American Prohibition) in Victorian Britain and lots of local skirmishes instead.

To his credit, Huggins has wrestled with all of these problems in a book that is comprehensive and at the same time highly readable, aimed at an undergraduate audience. His early chapters set out the problems facing any efforts to synthesize an account of Victorian vice from a bewildering range of primary and secondary sources. Issues of class are at the forefront, particularly since vices tended to be the problems of somebody else. *Vice and the Victorians* adeptly weaves together familiar narratives of proletarian dissipation and aristocratic decadence, as well as problems of middle-class disrepute that surfaced less often than their class counterparts at both ends of the social scale. Not surprising, considering the enormous profits to be made, the question of money also conspicuously emerges. People barely felt any contradiction between reaping benefits from brewing or horse racing while also viewing alcoholism and gambling as twinned sources of working-class pauperization.

At the heart of his book, Huggins focuses on the holy trinity of Victorian vices—drink, gambling, and sex. The book is a little uneven at this point as it struggles to balance the specificities of the case-study approach with the more general insights with which it began. The chapter about betting and gaming is the most successful; the one about sexuality, prostitution, and pornography (which admittedly has enormous ground to cover) is the least so. Crucial topics like the Contagious Diseases Act or the trials of Oscar Wilde receive little space, relegated to capsule summaries that miss much of their complexity. It is certainly disheartening to read that Wilde was “addicted to young working-class male prostitutes,” a rare moment when Huggins adopts the Victorian language that he is analyzing (144).

When the book shifts to the nodes of anti-vice campaigning, it dwells heavily on single issues, before making a welcome return to a more general level of analysis in the closing chapters. Campaigners tended to share common goals and backgrounds even when they addressed different issues, and Huggins is particularly convincing about some of the obstacles that they faced—most notably exhaustion and collapse in the face of political intransigence. He also deftly tracks their common and changing tactics, including savvy forms of media manipulation and more direct forms of pressure. Ultimately, however, he concludes that their results were “relatively limited,” undermined in part by their own tactical flexibility, which made it difficult to determine whether progress was to be measured at the level of the state or the individual (171). Then, as now, politicians across the spectrum grew adept at lip service, probably recognizing that the vast majority willingly indulged in activities that only a few would have defined as vices. In this sense, Huggins’ book might be seen as coming full circle in the end, by showing why it has been so easy to neglect or
dismiss a subject that was seemingly so critical for many of our Victorian ancestors.

Simon Joyce
College of William and Mary


The participant lists and locations of the most recent International Congresses of Psychology (Cape Town, 2012, and Yokohama, 2016) indicate that academic and applied psychology has been spreading rapidly in Asian, African, and Latin American countries. Yet, even though psychology has gone global, substantial research about the history of psychology has lagged behind in areas outside Europe and North America. Hence, Linstrum’s study of the British psychologists who applied psychological concepts to, and tests on, colonized subjects in the British Empire during the first part of the twentieth century is an important contribution to the understanding of current psychological activities as well as to imperial history.

Linstrum has skillfully divided an enormous amount of archival material from the cities of five continents—including London; Akron; Washington, D.C.; Accra; Nairobi; Lusaka; Melbourne; and New Delhi, among others—into the three categories “Minds,” “Tests,” and “Experts.” “Minds” begins with the psychological activities of the Torres Strait expedition, led by William H. R. Rivers and continues with Charles G. Seligman’s work on dreams. “Tests” deals with missionaries’ and educators’ enthusiasm for the new intelligence tests, also covering the application of aptitude tests for the army and colonial labor markets. “Experts” describes the various psychological activities employed to suppress the growing independence movements and examines psychological mechanisms for the continuation of Western hegemony in the former British colonies.

The photographic reproductions are a valuable asset in Ruling Minds, often showing a British researcher standing in the limelight with the colonized subjects on the margins. Like the photographers of these images, Linstrum sheds most of his light on the ambitions of European men. Nonetheless, although not the focus of the book, the psychological activities and orientations of the subjects under British rule are not completely overlooked. The various attempts that colonial people made to liberate themselves from a mindset of subjugation and to develop psychological research agendas and work practices to serve their own ends are discoverable in Linstrum’s passing statements and footnotes. Similarly, Linstrum provides a modicum of information about the larger colonial political and economic contexts in which the various specific activities of the British psychologists were embedded, but he refrains from discussing them in detail.
Unfortunately, Linstrum’s claim on the jacket that “psychology did more to expose the limits of imperial authority than to strengthen it” is insufficiently substantiated. Moreover, the findings from the different parts of the book deserve a more expansive conclusion than just the two pages that they receive. The book’s use of archives to study psychology is an effective and fruitful, if not particularly innovative, methodology. In this case, however, it has resulted in an important precedent for further site-specific research about the complex psychological dimensions of colonialism, postcolonial hegemony, and neoliberal forms of globalization.

Christiane Hartnack
University of Vienna

Gender, Rhetoric and Regulation: Women’s Work in the Civil Service and the London County Council, 1900–55. By Helen Glew (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016) 265 pp. $105.00

November 9, 2015, marked Britain’s “Equal Pay Day”—the day by which men’s average year-to-date earnings equaled those earned by women in a full calendar year. The persistence of a “gender pay gap” in British (and international) society means that British women, on average, earn 81 pence for every pound earned by men. Prejudice in promotion and hiring, inadequate family-leave policies, and other hidden barriers continue to keep wages down for today’s women workers, but working women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries faced even more explicit and invidious discrimination. Glew documents the history of this discrimination in the British civil service and in the London Council Council (LCC) in the years before the government’s decision to begin the gradual process of establishing equal pay for equal work in the civil service. Glew traces the history of women in government employ from the 1870s, when women first joined the General Post Office in large numbers as typists, clerks, mail sorters, and telegraph and later telephone switchboard operators. She notes that women were initially segregated “horizontally” into female-only posts, which were usually tedious, low-skilled, and low-paid. This policy was justified on the grounds of “women’s supposed natural aptitude for working in one place and on one specific task” (18).

Eventually, as women workers proved themselves, they were allowed to compete for jobs previously considered exclusively as “men’s work,” a trend that increased dramatically after World War I, when exigency compelled many branches of the civil service and the LCC to fill posts with women workers. Yet, even as the horizontal segregation of men’s and women’s work disappeared, men’s and women’s career streams remained vertically segregated. Notwithstanding a few exceptions, women in the civil service, as well as in the LCC (unless they were
in the elite Second Division), received smaller salaries than men did. On average, women’s pay was between three-quarters and five-sixths of men’s. Women were also subject to the “marriage bar,” which forced them to resign their posts when they wed—a policy perversely used to justify their low wages. Since women had to resign because of marriage, they were not worth the same long-term investment in human capital as their male counterparts. The idea was that men had to earn a “breadwinner wage,” or a salary large enough to provide for a family, whereas women were erroneously assumed not to have dependents. Alongside this argument about the “wastage” of married women, the government also contended, despite evidence to the contrary, that women were less efficient than men.

Glew charts the decades’ long campaign by civil-service unions (women’s and mixed-sex) to overturn such assumptions, although she notes that many men were keen to secure equal pay not out of solidarity with their female coworkers but because they feared losing their jobs to cheap female labor. In the final chapters, Glew explores the political and social questions that arose due to the marriage bar, which lasted until World War II. How should the government deal with women whose husbands had deserted them, women whose husbands were mentally or physically incapacitated, or women who sued their husbands for divorce? Such questions made officials at the Treasury (which oversaw civil service hiring) and the LCC into moral arbiters, who often based their decisions about whether to employ women on subjective assessments of their moral character or their larger circumstances. Hiring discrimination by gender in the allegedly merit-based civil service opened the door to a series of other discriminatory hiring practices, wherein a woman’s purportedly undesirable character could be used to disqualify her objective educational and career merits.

Laura Beers
American University


It is difficult to imagine a term that is more fraught with meaning and conflict than the word _bourgeois_. Ever since Karl Marx depicted the bourgeoisie as the class that tore asunder the feudal order and came to dominate the capitalist phase of history, social scientists have been debating its significance, most of them focusing on the economic and political realms. Johnson takes a different approach in his impressive new book by exploring how family life and kinship networks contributed to the “rise” of the bourgeoisie. A work of microhistory, Johnson’s study focuses on one family, the Galles, throughout several generations,
relying mainly on letters to gain access to their private lives and kinship strategies. In 1670, the Galles were recently arrived Welsh immigrants to the Breton city of Vannes, where they ran a print shop. By 1888, the men of the family had held a wide variety of high-level governmental and military positions. Based upon decades of research in the private papers of the Galles family and their allies, as well as broader quantitative research about bourgeois kinship practices, the book offers a wealth of valuable new insights into modern European notions of class, gender norms, and kinship practices; it thus makes important contributions to a variety of historiographical areas.

One of the methodological questions raised at the beginning of the book relates to the use of letters as sources of information about emotions, practices, and experiences. Exploring private correspondence has become increasingly common among French historians, despite the continued reluctance of families to deposit their papers in archives. The authors of an influential book published in France twenty years ago warned against the pitfalls of taking letters literally. They argued that such correspondence does not permit direct access to the emotional lives of families since these collections always come to us after family members have purged them. In addition, letter writers were so imbued with rules of form that the contents of their letters can serve as evidence only of a ritualized bonding system for family members, never true expressions of feeling. Johnson, however, insists on the value of his source base for understanding the emergence of class and gender identities. In addition, he found that the letters in his source base frequently expressed intense emotions. He explains that his method is to allow the letters to speak for themselves as much as possible in the hope that the book reads like an eighteenth-century epistolary novel. Quoting a personal communication with Joan Scott (5), Johnson explains that in letters people represent themselves as they wish to be seen: “Letters construct a persona as much as they express one” (5). Johnson’s book thus analyzes his subjects’ self-representations, including their emotions, and how they understood and built relations with others.

According to Johnson, bourgeois identity formation was a long-term process that is best understood in terms of practices and lifestyles. To construct this argument, he relies upon a number of interdisciplinary approaches, most visibly Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus as a set dispositions and “structuring structures” and Sahlins’ theory of the “performative.” He also refers to Barthes’ view of the bourgeoisie as a class that never names itself, which inspired Maza to define the French bourgeoisie

as a mythical construction. Johnson disagrees with Maza and her reading of Barthes, insisting that the Galles’ story demonstrates the existence of a self-conscious bourgeoisie whose values and practices became national norms in the nineteenth century (248). Kinship practices, most notably the prevalence of consanguineous marriage between “sibling-cousins,” allowed the Galles family, and others like them, to pool their resources and evolve from locally known artisans into a nationally prominent and unquestionably “bourgeois” family.

In addition to questions of class identity, Johnson’s study contributes to debates about gender in the nineteenth century. For example, he found that women often played a prominent role in the “rise” of this family, helping to run the family business in its early stages, shaping marital strategies and alliances, and even determining the educational options and career paths taken by the men. Thus, women could wield substantial power both inside and outside the family. Johnson also underlines the fact that the private sphere was not purely female; men devoted significant energy to the family and childrearing.

The book chips away at our assumptions about a period and a class that seem to epitomize “separate spheres.” It convincingly demonstrates the importance of studying the inner life of a family—“its taken-for-grantededs, its habitus, and within the grid of kinship that provides the bedrock of class solidarity” (299). It is also a delight to read. Following a dense introduction explaining the book’s historiographical and theoretical contributions, the narrative structure of the remaining chapters pulls readers into the story of real men and women—their emotional lives, their aspirations, and their disappointments. Becoming Bourgeois is a remarkable achievement.

Denise Z. Davidson
Georgia State University

Liberty or Death: The French Revolution. By Peter McPhee (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2016) 488 pp. $35.00

McPhee is one of the doyens of Australian historical writing and an eminent historian of the French Revolution, a field that is well established in Australia and New Zealand. The works of Lyons and Rose about Napoleon Bonaparte and Gracchus Babeuf and the Enragés are classical references. McPhee’s Liberty or Death is in that tradition: It is a clear and eminently readable account of an event, the coming of which was widely expected and of which the dénouement shocked everyone.


1 See, for example, Martyn Lyons, Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution (New York, 1994); R. B. Rose, Gracchus Babeuf: The First Revolutionary Communist (Stanford, 1978).
The particular talent of this book is to move easily and at every turn from the particular to the general, with often surprising results. McPhee is as comfortable writing about the Aude and the Pyrénées, a part of France that he knows perfectly well, as he is writing about Australasia. Witness his narrative of the French expedition of 1791 under Bruny d’Entrecasteaux, which was sent to search for the explorer Jean-François de Galaup, comte de La Pérouse, who had vanished somewhere near Botany Bay with all hands (alas, without Bonaparte, who for a while had considered joining La Pérouse but eventually decided against it). In McPhee’s vivid telling, all of d’Entrecasteaux’s crew and passengers were in patriotic agreement when they left, and in fierce disagreement by the time they had reached Java in 1793.

Some of McPhee’s themes are less pointed than they might be (as in the memory of Jansenism and the future of nationalism), but many others are new and on target, as is his re-appraisal of Maximilien Robespierre. All in all, McPhee shows himself to be a historian who understands, knows, and loves the history of France completely. The appeal of Liberty or Death lies in the wealth of evidence that he marshals to make his points. Both the text and the bibliography, which is unusually rich, will be of great service to all historians of the French Revolution.

Patrice Higonnet
Harvard University

Natural Interests: The Contest over Environment in Modern France. By Caroline Ford (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2016) 296 pp. $49.95

Documenting the richness and variety of environmental ideas and initiatives in modern France, Natural Interests aims to restore pride of place to the formative era from the French Revolution to World War II. Although Ford thankfully does not seek the absolute origins of environmental ideas, her book amply demonstrates “the emergence of an environmental consciousness” in the period under review (193). Her book showcases and interprets a range of environmental thought within metropolitan France, the role of France’s colonies as important terrains of environmental experimentation, and the multiplicity of political persuasions among those who articulated environmental ideas, an important point in situating the larger cultural context of environmentalism.

The scope of this monograph extends to the following topics—concern for the protection and expansion of France’s forest cover, largely revealed through the writings of François-Antoine Rauch and Rougier de La Bergerie; the genesis of preservationism in France, its aesthetic ethos, and its framing as “heritage”; France’s leading role in international nature protection, with an emphasis on the preservation of particular landscapes in the French colonies and the specifically French idea of the réserve naturelle intégrale, a protected area designated for purposes of scientific
research; the drive to reforest Algeria, undertaken in the interests of settler colonialism; and the “greening” of Paris, at best a relative achievement, centering on the visionary plans of architect Eugène Hénard, as well as the implementation of the English garden-city ideal as the cité-jardin in the suburbs of Paris.

Ford draws mostly from the cultural and institutional strands of environmental history. She also explores a variety of scientific debates that took place during the decades treated, mostly pertaining to forests and their relationships to flooding, climate, and agricultural productivity. Scientific data itself receives little treatment, an exception being her analysis of the extraordinary number and intensity of floods in nineteenth-century France. Her protagonists are largely social elites—the scientists, engineers, cultural figures, and governing officials who crafted treatises, proposals, and laws. Although Ford gives attention to the roles played by a broader public, or civil society, in forging and communicating environmental ideas, full evidence comes forth only in Chapter 3, “The Torrents of the Nineteenth Century,” which successfully demonstrates the place of floods in the imaginaire of nineteenth-century France. Anxieties about floods, not to mention the basic desire to document them, emerged through painting, photography, popular imagery, and literature.

In her zeal to document the importance of her chosen era and the leading international role of France, Ford at times succumbs to labored lists of organizations and laws.

The book’s strengths, however, outweigh its weaknesses: It delineates vigorous debates and initiatives undertaken by individuals largely forgotten by all but a handful of specialists, and it issues a needed corrective to the typical emphasis placed on the post–World War II incarnation of environmentalism.

Tamara L. Whited
Indiana University of Pennsylvania


Modern Paris owes its shape to Georges Haussmann and Napoleon III, who collaborated to reshape the city’s spatial fabric. This duo’s effort to renovate the city was driven from above and financed with municipal dollars. Yates begins her study of the emergence of a property market in Paris in 1872, at a moment when the city was recovering from physical and fiscal ruin, the result of a Prussian siege and an uprising by the city’s residents. When peace was restored to Paris, one of the most pressing issues confronting the municipal government, the city’s residents, and Paris’ commercial community was how to rebuild the city to

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meet the needs of multiple stakeholders. As Yates shows, in contrast to the earlier Haussmann era, this period of rebuilding was fragmented, undertaken by multiple actors, and financed by private funds, driven by the imperatives of the market.

In taking this time of crisis as her starting point, Yates demonstrates how “housing and property came to be considered, and to act, as commercial objects” during the last third of the nineteenth century (8). This process was extraordinarily complicated, requiring not only the combined action of multiple parties to conceive of, build, finance, and sell these commercial objects but also a new conception of buildings not simply as spaces defined by their functions but also as circulating, exchangeable consumer products with a value defined by how much they could fetch in the marketplace. The transition from one measure of value to another fostered the emergence of entire groups of professionals devoted to building a private real-estate market.

Yates’ approach emphasizes the combined work of property developers, lenders, real-estate agents, and others, all of whom sought to create the housing and public facilities that Paris desperately needed while seeking a handsome return on their investment. Each chapter is loosely organized around one of the actors in the emerging Paris property market. This approach has the merit of allowing Yates to explore the ways in which developers, architects, and other parties responded to one another and to changing market imperatives in an attempt to maximize their profits. Yates uses an impressive array of primary sources—advertisements, tax rolls, legal texts, court depositions, notarial contracts, and sales agreements—to demonstrate the complexity of this process. The only voice that is surprisingly mute in her telling is that of the national government. In Yates’ view, the development of Paris was largely a local affair, negotiated primarily by the municipal and departmental government on the public side. A deeper consideration of the role of the national government would have enhanced this work.

That point aside, Yates book deftly weaves together rich archival material and challenging theories of market creation, finance, and capitalism to present a compelling explanation of how Paris’ real-estate market emerged in the nineteenth century.

Janine Lanza
Wayne State University

*Postwar Germany and the Holocaust*. By Caroline Sharples (London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016) 238 pp. $112.00 cloth $29.95 paper

Few modern states have started their existence under the cloud that attended the birth of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). To examine how the two German states and German society dealt with the legacy
of the Holocaust, Sharples has adopted an appropriately interdisciplinary approach. The engagement with Germany’s past took place on the level of legislation, state finances (for example, reparations and restitution), prosecutions of alleged war criminals, diplomatic relations with formerly occupied states and with Israel, fine art and popular culture, memorials and monuments, religious discourse, and interpersonal relations. Although not all of these aspects receive equal attention in Sharples’ book, she strives to provide a wide-ranging view of how Germany coped with this burdensome inheritance.

The interweaving of the political and social elements is critical to understanding Germany’s nuanced, developing confrontation with its past. Both German states sought legitimacy through a contrast with the Nazi regime, but they also sought support from their citizenry through potentially exculpatory rhetoric or rhetoric that broadened the scope of wartime “victims” to include many beyond those directly persecuted by the Nazis. After all, the persecution of the Jews in prewar Nazi Germany affected the ordinary lives of millions of non-Jewish Germans; the Holocaust was simply part of soldiers’ wartime experience, especially in Eastern Europe; and the war itself came home to German civilians by 1944 and 1945. As a result, memory of the Holocaust, and Germany’s wartime actions more broadly speaking, permeated postwar German society. Sharples’ broad examination critically illuminates specific aspects of the story, such as the churches facing their own history under the Third Reich and re-examining their relationship to Jews and Judaism, and debates about monuments and former concentration-camp sites. Notwithstanding the adage that the winners write the history books, in the case of post–World War II Germany, the losers built the memorials to their victims, in the process revealing the way that they wished to remember the past. Not neglecting popular culture, which likely reached and influenced more Germans than did the Holocaust memorials, Sharples looks at film and television representations of the Holocaust and the place of the Holocaust in secondary-school education.

A strength of the book is Sharples’ exploration of the different ways in which East and West remembered the Holocaust, which naturally reflected their own self-image and their ideologically tinged view of German history. Yet, she overstates the novelty of her conclusions regarding Holocaust memory in communist East Germany, a subject that has already undergone a thorough analysis. Moreover her book, which throughout its eight chapters maintains an ongoing dialogue with a voluminous scholarly literature, seems directed more toward an academic audience than a general readership. It will certainly appeal to scholars looking for an introduction to this complicated subject.

Jay Howard Geller
Case Western Reserve University

Popular and academic discourses about business–government relations in the United States have long revolved around a forced and historically inaccurate binary: Business interests “oppose” governmental regulations, whereas reformers wish to “constrain” the operations of free enterprise. Although scholars have challenged such a narrow and bipolar framing for decades, the notion persists, too frequently dominating public discussions of issues from education and infrastructure to welfare, taxation, and social justice.

In Roaring Metropolis, Amsterdam joins a burgeoning community of scholars who challenge and subvert that duality by combining compelling historical research with a sophisticated understanding of the complex nature of “businessmen” as historical actors. This deeply researched book explores the pivotal role that economic elites played in urban policy making during the decade following World War I. Through precise case studies of Atlanta, Detroit, and Philadelphia, Amsterdam exposes how business leaders “turned to government-sponsored social policy” to build what he describes as a “civic welfare state” (1). Distinct from traditional conceptions of the “social welfare state”—which involved “policies that threatened to interfere with employers’ ability to determine workers’ wages, hours, working conditions, and fringe benefits”—the civic welfare state focused on such local public initiatives as parks, schools, museums, and public health (3). Thus, rather than stress business leaders’ rejection of the modern state, Amsterdam convincingly argues that business leaders in the 1920s worked to redirect social policy, most dramatically through their support of municipal bonds. By focusing their attention on civic functions, these elites managed to use the government to “address a host of urban social problems,” while avoiding the fundamental problems of poverty and economic inequality (178).

Amsterdam’s focus on the civic activities of key business leaders and organizations, including local chambers of commerce and elected officials, departs from earlier scholarship that highlights business leaders’ embrace of “welfare capitalism” as an alternative to heavy-handed government regulation. He acknowledges the strategic significance of “the provision of fringe benefits like pensions, stock options, sick pay, and other programs . . . that in part promised to increase workers’ economic security” (144). Yet his careful attention to on-the-ground lobbying and political strategizing by local industrial elites in his three chosen cities shows that business leaders conceived of the public sphere, as much as the private confines of their companies, as an appropriate and fruitful ground for social policy. Business–government relations on the local level, he shows, can best be seen as “an opportunistic amalgam—a mixture that melded private and public action in sometimes mutually reinforcing ways” (145).
From the perspective of interdisciplinary methodology, Amsterdam succeeds in retaining the historians’ keen eye for detail and nuance while skillfully deploying analytical frameworks from sociology and political science. In particular, he analyzes the social welfare state through the Marxian-informed prism of efforts to “decommodify” labor, thus establishing an effective contrast between the “civic” welfare state of the 1920s and the structural anti-poverty policies that would emerge under the New Deal order (181).

Most significantly, Amsterdam deploys a methodology that successfully situates “the businessman” at the center of the story. His analytical framing continues the vital work of historians to reject the tendency, too common among many social scientists, to see economic elites as uncomplicated profit-maximizers whose interests, preferences, and strategies can be easily inserted into models of social and political behavior. By deeply engaging with the men behind the models, Amsterdam uncovers often conflicting impulses, such as concerns about working-class radicalism juxtaposed with the problems of urban poverty and vice, that belie the image of business leaders as straight-forward opponents of government-led social progress. Such a focus not only provides a clearer vision of the “business-friendly strain of reformism” that flourished in American cities during the 1920s (13). It also provides a valuable lesson for today’s activists who wish to redress the problems of economic insecurity by stressing the importance of understanding the complex vision of social policy that capitalism engendered.

Benjamin C. Waterhouse
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Just Another Southern Town: Mary Church Terrell and the Struggle for Racial Justice in the Nation’s Capital. By Joan Quigley (New York, Oxford University Press, 2016) 368 pp. $29.95

A combination of biography and legal and political histories, Quigley’s book recounts the story of Mary Church Terrell’s career of antiracist activism in Washington, D.C. Recovering Terrell’s leading role in devising the District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson case against restaurant segregation in the capital—one of those cases enfolded in the litigation culminating in Brown v. Board of Education—Quigley reminds us that “Washington was just another southern town in its treatment of African Americans” (19), especially after President Woodrow Wilson implemented segregation. Thus, symbolically and legally, “to overturn Plessy [v. Ferguson] . . ., the Court had to start by upending government-sanctioned segregation in Washington” (160). Best known as the founding president of the National Association of Colored Women, Terrell has long been a famous but obscure figure. Quigley’s greatest and most fascinating contribution is the reconstruction of Terrell’s reflections, friendships, family life, and
relationship with her husband Judge Robert Terrell through heretofore un-accessed diaries and correspondence.

Quigley’s book is an enjoyable read, but for students of U.S. history, especially of civil rights, it is significantly limited. Relying on an impressive range of primary documents but a small set of textbooks, legal histories of segregation case law, histories of Washington, and biographies of presidents and Supreme Court justices but almost none of the excellent histories of the long civil rights movement published in the last two decades, Quigley offers a top-down political history that proceeds from an outdated premise. She neglects the insights offered by historians such as Honey—whose works are set in Terrell’s hometown of Memphis—Biondi, Sugrue, Gilmore, or even Ransby—whose biography of Ella Baker could have provided a model. Instead, Quigley inserts Terrell and the Thompson case into the popular misperception of a decade-long civil rights movement that began in 1954 with Brown v. Board and ultimately vanquished a segregation that was a purely southern phenomenon. From this narrow vantage point, Terrell certainly might be understood as the “radical” that Quigley names her rather than the liberal proponent of black Victorianism that she was.

Certainly, as Quigley argues, Terrell’s lifetime of activism from her coming of age in the 1890s to her death in 1954 demonstrates that African Americans continually fought for full freedom and that black women were key leaders in the struggle. But these are well-established findings. Furthermore, Quigley’s characterization of the effects of segregation as primarily “indignity” and “shame”—words that she uses repeatedly—buries the historical interventions accomplished by at least one generation of scholars who detail the economic devastation, violence, and psychological and legal dehumanization that Jim Crow wrought in every region of the nation, as well as the truly radical visions and courageous feats that African Americans and their allies undertook to only partially dismantle it.

Although Quigley certainly augments our understandings of a pivotal black woman and of the intricate legal battle against segregation, her book fails to grapple with the complexity of the civil rights movement. Thus, it falls short of helping us to wage the ongoing struggle for a wide-ranging, revolutionary social justice.

Erin D. Chapman
George Washington University

Historians have certainly been aware that during the era of Jim Crow in the South, almost every institution, from factory floors to telephone booths, was segregated. Public libraries, belying their name, were likewise arenas of contestation and segregation. Although many scholars have stated this fact, few of them have looked into the matter further. This oversight has now been addressed in Knott’s engrossing and detailed study that explains how these segregated libraries were created; what materials they contained; and, most importantly, how African Americans fought to gain access to these facilities from which they were routinely barred. As a result, African Americans themselves sought to establish their own public libraries.

Knott quotes John Hope Franklin’s wry comment about the “imaginative” tactics of segregation: “The supply of ideas for new ways to segregate whites and Negroes seemed inexhaustible” (52). Indeed, denying African Americans access to public spaces was an idea older than the republic. What additional light Knott brings to the discussion is the part played by certain venerable institutions in this process. The role of the Carnegie Corporation in creating public libraries is well known. But what is less well known, and what Knott explores, is the Foundation’s role in creating libraries in the segregated South. Although Carnegie’s Corporation did not challenge local racial practices excluding African Americans from libraries, it tried to ameliorate this exclusion to some extent by building Colored Carnegie Libraries. Knott also details how the federal government, through the Works Progress Administration, supplied books and personnel to poor white and black communities in the South while maintaining the racial status quo.

The one library-building institution that deserves special attention for its refusal to accept Southern mores is the Rosenwald Foundation, named for magnate and philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, best known for contributing to the construction of more than 5,000 school buildings for African Americans in the South. In addition, they built public libraries that were truly public in that they were mandated to serve both the white and black communities without discrimination. As Knott observes, “The Rosenwald Foundation officials required demonstration libraries to provide equitable service to all county residents” (89).

Knott provides an excellent description of how African Americans fought to gain library privileges. What made their fight especially difficult were the scarce resources earmarked for books and the kind of materials that many controlling library boards would not allow black libraries to order, such as books praising racial and social equality or showing white people in a bad light. African Americans faced an immense struggle attempting to establish black libraries or even to gain access to white ones. A delegation of African Americans, led by
W. E. B. Du Bois, met in 1904 with the board of the Carnegie Library in Atlanta, seeking permission for African American to use the facilities. The board objected, arguing that if blacks gained access to the library, no white person would want to use it. The board was willing, however, to ask Carnegie for funds for a separate black branch. Carnegie assented, but nothing happened. In the 1950s, Du Bois recalled that “he had pointed out to the board members the unfairness and absurdity of the situation: the books he had written were in a library he himself was not allowed to enter” (79). Not until the 1960s, following sit-ins at dozens of libraries across the South, combined with the legal remedies supplied by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, did the segregated library doors finally open.

Knott’s study goes beyond the mere outlines of the segregation of American libraries under Jim Crow. It offers a detailed account of how these institutions were constructed by entities that were putatively working against segregation (such as the Carnegie Corporation and the federal government). Knott concludes her study by describing the final destruction of these segregated library spaces as testimony to the agency of a people who knew that knowledge was key to their betterment.

Kenneth W. Goings
Ohio State University


Memories of Madagascar and Slavery in the Black Atlantic is a brave attempt to analyze the historical documentation relating to the movement of Malagasy slaves to Virginia and the recollections passed down among descendants of those captives. The specific focus is recondite to an extent, because the flow of slaves covered in the book was relatively small in scale and is not usually associated with histories of Virginia. Madagascar, as one might suppose from its location, mainly supplied slaves to the Indian Ocean world. However, between 1670 and 1698, an unknown number of Malagasy slaves were dispatched to New York, and between 1716 and 1721, around 1,500 Malagasy captives were shipped to Virginia and sold there. This latter cohort forms the basis of this book’s analysis regarding memories of the Malagasy slaves’ presence in Virginian society. The book later broadens its remit to discuss the possible Malagasy impact on the United States between the American Revolution and the Civil War. Wilson–Fall’s methodology is to divide each of her six chapters into two parts, the first consisting of a summary of the written information on these Malagasy captives and the second drawing upon collective memories of their lives in North America. This
approach is intended to allow for “some cross-pollination from one perspective to the other” (152).

Although the existing documentary material about slavery and the slave trade in Madagascar in relation to the Indian Ocean world is plentiful, the amount of written material about Malagasy slaves in Virginia is decidedly thin. Wilson-Fall does not hide this fact: She notes that “after 1721 there are no . . . official written records known at this writing that speak of arrivals from that island [Madagascar] until after the Civil War” (144). Wilson-Fall does her best to pull together the written evidence, scouring the Chesapeake archives for relevant documents. She cites, for example, material from the account books of the planter John Baylor—located in the University of Virginia library—about sales of Malagasy slaves during the early 1720s. No other significant archival sources for information about the Malagasy slaves appear to be available. The sparse documentary evidence compelled Wilson-Fall to deploy more general material about the Atlantic slave trade and Virginia, which is abundantly disseminated in the scholarly literature.

Wilson-Fall’s strengths lie in her perspectives as an ethnologist. The recollections from which she draws in the book are based on family genealogies, oral testimony, and field research. Using information taken from telephone conversations, e-mail exchanges, fieldwork in Madagascar, and thirty personal interviews, she documents the collective memories preserved about the presence and legacy of Malagasy people in North America during the past three centuries. Some sections of the book—such as Chapter 5, dealing with the role of Malagasy people in the nineteenth-century United States—derive from virtually no direct written documentation, deploying instead information from collective memories of the illegal shipment of Malagasy slaves to North America’s eastern seaboard.

Wilson-Fall hopes that the dual presentation of material from written records and oral testimony will illuminate the Malagasy presence in the United States. This methodology is problematical, however, for two reasons: (1) The historical issues covered by the documentary sources and oral testimonies are often distinct in each chapter; they do not provide an overarching, interconnected argument. In Chapter 2, for example, very little of the written material cited deals with the slave trade between Madagascar and Virginia, and the oral testimonies cover different aspects of the topic, such as the kidnapping of captives in Madagascar and the ability of Malagasy slaves to distinguish themselves from enslaved people of other African origins. (2) As suggested above, Wilson-Fall allocates too much space in each chapter to well-known general matters relating to the slave trade, with only scrapings and shavings included about Malagasy captives. She would have done better to discuss all of the written documentation about specific Malagasy—North American slave connections in an initial chapter. Then she could have devoted the remainder of the book to the insightful (if unverifiable) oral testimonies from which she sensitively teases out interesting information about
lineage, family narratives, and the separateness of the Malagasy cultural and racial heritage from that of the African continent.

Kenneth Morgan
Brunel University London

*A Nervous State: Violence, Remedies, and Reverie in Colonial Congo.* By Nancy Rose Hunt (Durham, Duke University Press, 2016) 353 pp. $94.95 cloth $26.95 paper

In *A Nervous State*, Hunt argues that the violent history of the southern Equateur area, part of the former notorious Congo Free State, has contributed to a “catastrophic logic” (1)—elsewhere often described as Afro-pessimism, exemplified by the uniformly dire news reported from Africa. As a way of complicating this negative perspective, which is reflected in historical accounts of the Congo Free State (1885–1908) and later the Belgian Congo (1908–1960), she considers various forms of what she calls latitude—“sizing up, navigating, manipulating the milieu” (253). In her introduction, she lays out her main arguments about both the nervousness of colonial rulers, who used medical and demographic oversight as a way of maintaining control over their colonial subjects, and of the ingenuity of Congolese women and men—evidenced by their movement, imagination, and creativity, their “bantering, jesting, deriding, daydreaming,” and their “biting song” (249)—in the face of these constraints.

In the following chapters, Hunt examines different aspects of these intersecting dynamics of biopolitical repression and creative resistance, using an inventive range of historical evidence and disciplinary methods. In Chapter 1, she employs literary and archival sources to examine the Congo Free State. In addition to consulting a range of social criticism—for example, Mark Twain’s *King Leopold’s Soliloquy* (Boston, 1905), Edward D. Morel’s *King Leopold’s Rule in Africa* (London, 1904), Joseph Conrad’s, *The Heart of Darkness* (New York, 1999), and Adam Hochschild’s *King Leopold’s Ghost* (Boston, 1998)—she also documents memory essays written by Congolese students, such as François Bompuku, for a school contest in 1953/54. Furthermore, she draws upon large archival collections of photographs, such as those taken by Alice Harris, who documented the atrocities associated with the Congo Free State rubber trade. Although some anthropologists question the legitimacy of photographs as ethnographic evidence on the grounds that they reflect colonial interests, Hunt uses the shock value of these images to her advantage, as exemplified by the book’s cover.¹ She also seeks to emphasize acoustic evidence, arguing that “the field of sound” and “the nearness of listening” merit close

attention (31). Citing a report by Roger Casement, she notes his attention to noises—including voices, weeping, and gunshots—associated with rubber-trade technology.

In Chapter 2, Hunt relies upon a concatenation of evidence—oral history, government reports, house paintings, photographs, and songs—to document the spiritual and anticolonial actions of Maria N’Koi, a charismatic Congolese woman, whose increasing following led to her arrest and exile. In Chapter 3, she considers the interactions of Congolese subjects and Belgian colonial officials, using journalistic accounts of Congolese dance as well as colonial administrators’ assessments of religious movements, which came under the increasing scrutiny of nervous officials. In this chapter, Hunt refers to the medical reports of colonial doctors to depict the intersection of medical and political control. She considers this connection further in Chapters 4 and 5, which focus on colonial concerns with infertility, based on censuses, research reports, and documentation about the Congolese healing movement Likili by Ekonyo, a Congolese schoolteacher.

In Chapter 6, the final chapter, she shifts to a discussion of motion, epitomized by the stylish flaneur, “strolling the equatorial milieu” (208), and a look at the social lives of Congolese men and women as glimpsed through song and dance, nightlife and cinema, and books and advertisements, as recorded by Graham Greene in In Search of a Character (New York, 1962). As in her previous work, Hunt demonstrates how her use of interdisciplinary methods—archival, oral historical, literary, and ethnographic—and unconventional materials provides provocative insights into the colonial history of the Congo.

Elisha P. Renne
University of Michigan


Cleveland closely details and analyzes the recruitment, movement, work experiences, and repatriation of generations of diamond miners (with their families) employed by the Angolan corporate giant Diamang from its founding in 1917 to its closure after the military coup that ended colonial rule in Angola in 1974/5. His subtitle, “Corporate Paternalism and African Professionalism,” conveys his core arguments about the incremental changes in the relations between workers and the company.

A key point regarding the methodology is that Cleveland actually managed to conduct his intended research design. Diamang’s uncataloged archive was stored in a Universidade de Coimbra shed overseen

by the Anthropology Department’s Museum. Material in Luanda’s national archive was cataloged, but notoriously difficult to access. Even more difficult was conducting archival research and extensive oral interviews in and around Diamang’s former headquarters in the conflict-plagued region of Lunda Norte, Angola. Cleveland collected fresh archival material and interviewed scores of Angolans and Portuguese between 2004 and 2006. He appropriately and generously acknowledges the many people who shepherded him through these challenges, but, in the end, his own patience and determination were crucial for the appearance of this remarkable work.

The book has seven chapters, an epilogue, helpful notes, a bibliography, and a fine index. The single map reveals the astonishing reach of Diamang’s privileged concessionary status. Cleveland carefully inserted photographs, dating from 1927 to 1966, throughout the book as well as a wealth of quantitative information about recruitment, families, food, and revenues in tables. Chapter 1 introduces Cleveland’s concepts of paternalism and professionalism. Chapter 2 paints Lunda’s lively and diverse economy and society from the 1870s to the 1970s. The next five chapters are rich considerations of recruitment, labor processes, worker strategies, leisure time, and decisions about repatriation or renewal of mine-labor contracts from the early promising aluvial strikes until 1975 when Diamang essentially closed. Throughout, Cleveland draws from the treasury of oral narratives that he collected, interrogating their perspectives and contexts and remaining attentive to gender implications.

Cleveland carefully charts the company’s foundation, its early dependence on Katanga mining expertise and international capital, its growing revenues and enhanced influence, and its power over the Portuguese colonial administration. He emphasizes the pragmatism, or expediency, of actors, from the sobas and cipaes who accomplished the recruitment to the recruits and overseers. In a myriad of ways, Diamang realized that making life better for recruits and workers served the company’s best interests. Its incremental and pragmatic strategy to attract and hold a labor force in the sparsely populated Lunda region of Northeast Angola succeeded.

Although the narrative is repetitive at times, Cleveland ably illustrates the choices that the company and the workers made, describing them as incremental “paternalism” and “professionalization,” respectively. Echoing Karl Marx’s point that men make their own history but not under conditions of their own choosing, workers increasingly chose not to desert enroute to Diamang because the recruiters would return to punish the soba in their village and conscript a replacement, perhaps from their own family. Furthermore, deserters were often left to wander the bush “living like goats” (61). Workers and their families were not so much becoming “professional” in their behavior as accommodating a coercive regime that they could not escape. Pragmatism shaped the behaviors of all parties to this story, but the company obviously had a greater range of choices than the recruits and workers.
The epilogue returns explicitly to history and memory, drawing contrasts in black and white. Local people contrasted the security and predictability of work in the “time of Diamang” with their insecure and unpredictable present. Cleveland reminds us that by 1974, Angola’s white population was the largest on the continent outside South Africa. Whites who fled to Portugal from 1974 to 1977 were nostalgic about the idyllic lives that they once enjoyed in Diamang’s garden city with its pools and tennis courts.

It is telling that Diamang’s paternalism and the black workers’ professionalism never extended to allowing blacks into the ranks of engineers and managers. The upshot was that when whites fled in the mid-1970s, the mines soon closed. It is also telling that Diamang’s paternalistic whites were so fearful and distant from their professional workforce that they claimed to prefer being shot to living in Angola under black rule (214).

Jeanne Marie Penvenne
Tufts University

The Experiment Must Continue: Medical Research and Ethics in East Africa, 1940–2014. By Melissa Graboyes (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2015) 350 pp. 79.95 cloth 34.95 paper

Hunt recently urged Africanists to write new kinds of histories for new publics; students committed to “global health,” in particular, needed to learn about the long and troubled record of expatriate medical interventions.1 Graboyes’ imaginative new book takes up Hunt’s challenge.

Two introductory chapters orient readers to several East African sites that have long been hotbeds for medical research and interventions. Subsequent chapters then move through four key moments in research encounters—the arrival of researchers, the interactions that surround consent or coercion to participate, the balancing of benefit and risk, and the conclusion of the experiment. Graboyes illustrates each moment with a pairing of two case studies from East Africa, one historical (mostly from the 1950s), and one contemporary (mostly since the millennium). These narratives provide insight into the issues at stake in large-scale research projects. The innovative structure, not chronological but thematic, draws out continuities through its vivid depictions of the difficult dilemmas faced by potential participants and members of the study team. Readers are left unable to hew to any comfortable progress narrative that would pit “bad old days” of colonial research against enlightened modern-day practices.

The Experiment Must Continue draws from Graboyes’ interviews and archival work, primary sources gathered by others, and secondary

1 Hunt, Suturing New Medical Histories of Africa (Berlin, 2013), see esp.11, 34–39.
scholarship to support four major arguments. First, East Africans typically understood research differently than did scientists; many of them were unaware that they were participating in experiments at all. Second, both participants and researchers frequently discussed research as a process of exchange. Third, expectations for what constituted a fair exchange often differed and could escalate into open conflict, whether between researchers and participants or within European research teams; frequently, those in the field wanted to do more for participants than did their supervisors. Finally, a form of everyday syncretic “field ethics” developed, negotiated among European researchers and African participants. Such binaries are sometimes drawn too sharply: The case studies provide some examination of the experiences of African fieldworkers but largely omit African scientists.

Nonetheless, Graboyes’ arguments are critical for contemporary researchers who must understand how the “residue” of each experiment alters the course of the next. At several points, for instance, she introduces stories about angry villagers who accused researchers of sucking blood or killing children. Scientists readily dismiss such accusations as preposterous, but Graboyes shows that a little archival legwork reveals them to be reasonable interpretations of previous interventions.

Graboyes’ book, which does not presume knowledge of the history and ethnography of medical research in Africa, is written in engaging and jargon-free prose. Although it will be of interest to historians of Africa and of medicine, it is clearly aimed at a nonspecialist audience. A short bibliographic appendix directs readers to other scholarship about global medical research; a wonderful online study guide asks students to come up with their own answers to a range of questions raised by primary sources. This book is certain to prompt lively classroom discussions about global health, African medical research in colonial and postcolonial times, and the history of medicine.

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