Pimentel’s book about a rhinoceros and a giant fossil sloth is an astute account of scientific imagination at work. Pimentel draws from a broad range of seamlessly integrated disciplines, ranging from biology and geology to archaeology and paleontology, to create an engrossing and meticulous historical analysis.

In 1515, a rhinoceros named Ganda spent four months caged in a ship’s hold, sailing from Goa in India to Lisbon—a gift from an Indian sultan to Alfonso de Albuquerque, the governor of the Portuguese Indies. Symbolic, lavish gifts like Ganda were part of a long tradition of keeping exotic animals in captivity. King Manuel I, who became Ganda’s master, decided to pit him against an elephant (Ganda won), before sending him, seven months later, to Italy as a gift to the son of Lorenzo de Medici, who had just become Pope Leo X. After being exhibited before the French monarch at Marseilles, Ganda perished in a shipwreck off the Ligurian coast.

Rhinoceroses were well-known creatures, said to be hostile to elephants, who were at the pinnacle of ancient zoology. Ganda and his ilk, described and named by the Greek geographer Strabo, were considered marginal creatures. Pimentel guides us adeptly through the intricacies of medieval allegories and through the observations of Pliny and Marco Polo. The artist Albrecht Durer drew a definitive portrait of a rhinoceros from secondary sources. He never saw one, but his image communicated far more than merely the horn and armor that had fascinated earlier spectators. The history of Ganda, an armored beast, is a testimony to the power of an engraving, created by human technology to color human perceptions. These chapters of Pimentel’s book discuss the strength of the human imagination and creative genius.

Another huge vertebrate traveled in a hold, this time from South America to Madrid in 1789, but in seven wooden crates—a collection of fossilized bones discovered near Buenos Aires. Manuel de Torres, a Dominican friar, extracted the complete skeleton of the enormous beast from soft alluvial deposits. The disarticulated bones were drawn, then provisionally reassembled, showing a small skull and a full length of four-and-a-half meters. It looked like a chimera, a mythical monster that combined parts of different animals. Pimentel describes the intricate researches that led to the identification of the mysterious beast as the Megatherium—a long-extinct giant sloth—by Jacques Cuvier, a French paleontologist and catastrophist, in 1796. Cuvier’s identification came as the study of fossils advanced by leaps and bounds; the exotic creatures of the remote past, like the rhinoceros, first had to be accommodated to the Scriptures, the word of God. Pimentel analyzes Cuvier’s lifelong researches into fossils and his preoccupation with comparative anatomy, taxonomy, and the once-living creatures behind silent fossils.

Reviews

Richard Owen, a nineteenth-century British anatomist, took over where the Frenchman left off. He provided the great sloth “with a skin and a history, an identity and habits—a life” (283). He also showed that animals of the distant past did not necessarily behave the same way. Megatherium never dangled from branches like modern sloths. It used its strong limbs to rear up to forage leaves high off the ground.

Ganda and the Megatherium appear to have very different histories, but, as Pimentel points out, both have very deep roots in the past. One brought the wonders of the Orient to the west, whereas the other brought those of remote geological time. They must indeed have seemed almost extraterrestrial, prodigies of nature, chimeras. These two extraordinary creatures expanded both the frontiers of what was zoologically real and what was possible to imagine.

Pimentel tellingly asks in his engrossing account of Megatherium, “What is more fascinating than the history of how we came to know what we know?” (262). This question distills the essence of his skilled, beautifully written (and superbly translated) essay. Pimentel must have had great fun writing what may well become a classic work about the intricacies of scientific research.

Brian Fagan
University of California, Santa Barbara


This exciting, informed global history covering a great span of time and place will appeal to scholars who want a survey text about war and society after 1500 that is firmly non-Eurocentric; its points of detail and interdisciplinary methodologies will interest specialists. Although the book under review is a history, it draws from geography, sociology, anthropology, and economics, not least by way of Sandberg’s use of a variety of methodological approaches to explore the complex dynamics of early modern warfare. These approaches pivot on “military revolutions” and technology diffusion, “encounters” with biological exchanges and migrations, “new imperial histories” of colonial trade routes and conflict generation, “connected histories” of transnational economic networks, and “state development” studies of the changing administrative and financial techniques supporting early modern warfare. These embedded methodologies emphasize differing historical explanations, helping to make sense of the changing relationship between war and society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Sandberg challenges the accepted periodization that world wars emerged only after the French and industrial revolutions, instead placing the early modern period center-stage for our understanding of war as a global, cultural phenomenon and arguing persuasively that war had
transformed as such by 1700. War accompanied European cultural and economic expansion; only mountainous inland areas escaped the direct touch of European traders, functionaries, missionaries, and soldiers. This is not a radical new thesis, but Sandberg’s work usefully synthesizes scholarship about the subject, enhancing existing paradigms of conflict and change in the early modern era.

The book’s non-Eurocentric approach is welcome, but it struggles to escape the gravitational pull of emerging European power and the mobilization of new technologies after Christopher Columbus and Vasco de Gama kick-started the European age of “discovery” in the 1490s. Sandberg argues that “technological developments were not exclusively European in nature, nor were technology transfers unidirectional” (302), but it is doubtful that the world would have become “global” in the way that it did without the driver of European expansion. That said, Sandberg’s focus on transnational and global themes brightens the text, not least with his many examples of dynamic non-European reactions to this changing world. Tellingly, only the last chapter examines conventional “territorial” warfare. In this chapter, as in all his chapters, the book introduces many non-European examples to develop debates. The fact that Europe initiated much of the warfare during the early modern period does not mean that the story must be told from a European perspective, as this book proves.

The point that, in a Weberian sense, the states in this period never had a monopoly on violence is well taken. It allows discussion of what Sandberg calls an “organized armed violence” from 1500 to 1700 that assumed many forms—the violence of warrior elites, peasant revolts, tax disputes, vendettas, dueling, piracy, and raiding warfare, among others. Meanwhile, regional officials conducted their own violence, mobilizing troops at the local level. “A stunning array of individuals and organizations orchestrated military activity during the early modern period” (3). Sandberg aptly demonstrates that the modern post-Enlightenment nation-state, with its control of violence and its mobilization of citizens, emerged into a world that was truly global, formed by the radical transformations that occurred after 1500.

Matthew Hughes
Brunel University


“As we know,” Foucault announced in a famous 1964 lecture, “the great obsession of the nineteenth century was history: themes of development and arrest, themes of crisis and cycle, themes of accumulation of the past, a great overload of dead people, the threat of global cooling . . . The present age may be the age of space instead. We are in an era of the
Influenced by Foucault’s work and powerfully echoing the latter’s claim that “space itself, in the Western tradition, has a history,” Maier sets out in this insightful book to trace the rise and fall of a particular political space that he calls “a territory.” Though his main concern is with notions of bounded political spaces and their evolution from 1500 to the present, this book will interest not only political scientists and historians of the modern state system but also seasoned readers of Bachelard, Lefebvre, Deleuze, Guattari, Kern, Soja, and any number of other authors associated with the “spatial turn.” Maier explicitly encourages such a reading of his work. “Without our ascribing any simple one-way causality,” he writes in a crucial passage of the book, “it remains the case that the construction of analogous spatial frameworks advanced in different domains at the same time. The construction of territory was an encompassing activity” (288).

The book is based on an influential essay that Maier published in the American Historical Review (AHR), in which he challenged common periodizations of the twentieth century, calling for the identification of a new historical period stretching roughly from 1860 to 1980. This period, Maier claimed in his essay, possessed particular spatially anchored structures of politics and economics. Earlier periods were characterized by the porous contact zones of empire, and the present day is one of accelerating globalization. The period 1860 to 1980, however, was dominated by the centrality of the strictly bounded political space.

The book’s six chapters expand on this original thesis by tracing the emergence of the basic characteristics of modern political territories, starting with the “invention” of the fortified frontier in France around 1700 and continuing with the rationalization of the countryside by French Physiocrats, their allies, and their imitators; the “filling” of national space through the railway and the telegraph; the obsessive colonial scrambles for territory around 1900; and the struggle for global dominance during the Cold War. Maier concludes with an arresting description of the present state of territoriality. In this chapter especially, Maier reveals himself as a Foucauldian historian through and through: His main aim is to historicize

---

Maier’s genealogical, present-oriented approach to the history of territoriality both enlightens and obscures. Once he reaches the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (the heart of his argument in his original AHR piece), Maier is in his element. His analysis is erudite and extraordinarily insightful. Less successful, on the other hand, are the early chapters of the book, which often suffer from factual inaccuracies (the Confession of Augsburg was not signed in 1542; [73]); topsy-turvy causations (long before the fortification of the French borders by Sébastian Vauban, French kings were busy defortifying the state’s interior [Chapter 2]); and self-defeating statements (“The Roman structure lasted centuries but proved unsustainable” [25]). Most importantly, the earlier chapters often fail to employ Maier’s own historicist approach, the very source for the later chapters’ many revealing insights. Characterizing premodern China as “fragmented” (25), the Holy Roman Empire as “a federation” (73), or eighteenth-century Castile as “a hodgepodge” of levies and immunities ignores how inhabitants of these polities viewed them. As such, it amounts to an imposition of a modern, territorial logic on political frameworks that did not possess it—exactly the argument of this otherwise very fine book.

Yair Mintzker
Princeton University

A Century of Transnationalism: Immigrants and Their Homeland Connections. Edited by Nancy L. Green and Roger Waldinger (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2016) 280 pp. $95.00 cloth $24.50 paper

This collection of nine essays about immigrants’ transnational engagements in their home countries covers a wide range of groups—Italians, Portuguese, Mexicans, Japanese, Chinese, Arabs, Jews, and Indians—in different countries/world regions examined in different time spans. The book is divided into two parts, one devoted to the role of sender and receiver states in shaping immigrant transnational pursuits, and the other to the importance of the temporal contexts of these engagements for the forms that they assume and the directions in which they evolve.

In the introduction, the editors announce the collection’s fourfold contributions: (1) to provide a better understanding of a heretofore under-investigated role of sending and receiving states in triggering or constraining immigrants’ transnational engagements; (2) to offer insight into the changing circumstances and practices of immigrant transnational pursuits throughout a longue durée, which reveals far more complicated historical trajectories for this phenomenon than researchers usually acknowledge; (3) to highlight the importance of the period between the conventional “now” (present-day immigrants) and “then” (previous great-wave travelers), not recognized in scholarly studies of émigré transnationalism; and (4) to
challenge the assumption that migrations by the highly educated, and the kinds of transnational involvements that they generate, are a recent phenomenon by demonstrating nineteenth-century precedents. That the book is able to deliver on these promises makes it an asset for immigration historians, as well as for those interested in comparative studies of ethnic groups, times, and geographies.

A few regrets are worth noting. The first two are methodological in nature. The collection would have benefited from a conclusion that identifies the main “complexities” of immigrant transnational involvements across time and space, which, as announced in the introduction, are evident in the individual chapters. Such a conclusion could have drawn some general lessons from these findings to help comparatively inclined researchers to pursue further investigations. Without such reflections, readers are left to their own devices in trying to find those guideposts.

Furthermore, a historically oriented sociologist (such as this reviewer) would have preferred the essays to engage more explicitly in an interdisciplinary conversation. The chapters about the “periodization of transnationalism” (not the most felicitous title)—authored by historians and a geographer—demonstrate the cognitive gains derived from paying attention to time(-ing) in analyzing immigrant transnationalism, which is certainly welcome in view of social scientists’ notorious disregard of this dimension of social life. However, except for a few passing comments in Houda Asal’s discussion of the vagaries of political mobilization of Canada’s Arab minority, the various discussions do not consider the methodological implications of the presented evidence. Despite the different fields of interest among the contributors, A Century of Transnationalism largely replicates the standard faux “interdisciplinary” regimen—an assemblage of essays by representatives from different disciplines without any reflections to connect the agendas, conceptualizations, and modes of analysis with which they approach their common issues.

Finally, an important issue that is underexplored in studies of immigrant transnationalism, and not addressed in Green and Waldinger’s book either, deserves attention in future publications. A volume devoted not just to the effect of states on immigrants’ transnational engagements, as is this study, but also to the effect of immigrants’ transnational activities on states, both those sending and those receiving, would be desirable.

Ewa Morawska
University of Essex

Medieval Europe. By Chris Wickham (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2016) 335 pp. $35.00

Wickham, one of the leading historians of the European Middle Ages, offers his own unique perspective on the period in this lively survey,
which squeezes an extraordinary amount of information into a modest 257 pages of text. The book treats the Middle Ages as traditionally defined—namely, the years from approximately 500 to 1500 A.D.—in a well-balanced fashion, conferring roughly equal coverage to the early, central, and late medieval periods. Geographically, the work is also even-handed. Wickham’s expertise in the Italian peninsula is evident throughout the book, but this region in no way dominates the narrative. The traditional foci of medieval history surveys—England and France—are also well represented, alongside the German kingdom, Byzantium, Russia, Scandinavia, and numerous other parts of Europe.

Wickham’s aim is not to provide a thorough description of events. As he explains, his study is intended to be an interpretation of the Middle Ages, not a textbook. For that reason, he does not force readers to trudge through vast thickets of dates, places, kings with Roman numerals after their names, and other confusing facts. Wickham is judicious in his use of details to add nuance to his main points without ever descending into minutiae. To his credit, no paragraph, nor indeed even a sentence, in this book feels gratuitous. The treatment of secondary scholarship is equally sensible. Wickham provides a narrative that owes a great deal to current literature; he includes occasional references to leading scholars while also giving overviews of the most important debates in the field. Yet, he avoids unnecessary namedropping or the rehashing of outdated scholarly arguments.

Because this book represents Wickham’s interpretation of medieval history, rather than a textbook approach, the heart of the work is a wide-ranging narrative about political and socio-economic structures. Wickham emphasizes the significance of fiscal developments—for example, the decline of Roman taxation systems in the early Middle Ages and the appearance of new forms of tax collection in the later Middle Ages—as well as other important general trends, including urbanization, the expansion of literacy, and the changing nature of warfare. For Wickham, the period around the year 1000 is crucial to understanding the decline of older structures (including the public, political culture of Carolingian-era assemblies) and the emergence of the highly localized society of the central and late Middle Ages—though this society always maintained connections between its discrete localities. The recurring metaphor that Wickham employs for Europe after the year 1000 is a corporeal one of cellular structures and capillaries. Local communities were distinct “cells,” but cultural, social, religious, economic, and political currents continuously linked them through “capillary” networks that helped to ensure the existence of a common European framework.

Most medieval historians will probably not find their general perceptions of the Middle Ages altered significantly by the account that Wickham offers. Nevertheless, his excellent, up-to-date survey provides broad interpretations that are immensely useful for anyone looking to understand the medieval period as a whole. Wickham’s emphasis on political and socio-economic developments is refreshing in this day and
age when cultural and intellectual history tend to dominate narratives of the Middle Ages. It is equally refreshing to read a largely positive account of the later medieval period that effectively draws from recent scholarship in order to discredit the stubbornly persistent arguments about decline in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Wickham’s interpretation of the European Middle Ages is one of vibrancy and dynamism, a welcome reminder of why many people find this period fascinating.

Jonathan R. Lyon
University of Chicago

Legal Plunder: Households and Debt Collection in Late Medieval Europe. By Daniel Lord Smail (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2016), 326 pp. $39.95

Smail is highly regarded for his detailed and evocative work on medieval Marseilles. Legal Plunder, which focuses primarily on how the local courts in Lucca seized the goods of debtors, demonstrates what happens when a historian changes his archives. In the shift, Smail found a rich resource in the literally thousands of fourteenth-century Lucchese records of household goods that were taken for non-payment of debts. Having done so, he then returned to his Marseilles’ material from approximately the same period to re-examine his ideas about consumption and material goods. Bringing the two cities together, he offers exciting insights into what constituted household wealth, particularly for the very poor.

Smail creates a fascinating picture of the lived experience of debtors at the most precarious points in their annual credit cycles, when personal promises to repay were no longer sufficient. Promises were almost always backed by pledges, such as the rings, textiles, or silverware stored in chests or the tools found in sheds. Where there were no obvious household valuables, barrels of oil, sacks of grain, or even an oven door might suffice as eventual payment.

The use of material goods to oil the wheels of commerce in a world without sufficient coinage has been well told by, among others, Muldrew and the Material Renaissance research group. But it is not only the lack of bullion that made the difference; trustworthy systems of exchange were needed to translate a cloak into cash, and then back again. Second-hand dealers filled this gap alongside regular public auctions of pawn pledges, the goods of bankrupts and rebels, or simply the furnishings of unfortunate orphaned families who needed to re-invest in their capital. These public assessments of value allowed urban citizens in such places as Lucca and Marseilles (and many other towns) to check the price of the

1 Craig Muldrew, The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England (Basingstoke, 1998); Michelle O’Malley and Welch (eds.), The Material Renaissance (Manchester, 2007).
goods in their homes on a regular basis. This knowledge allowed creditors to accept mirrors, hoes, barrels, and even manure as a form of exchange, not simply a mechanism for barter.

Smail’s contribution to this important debate about how material goods underpinned the medieval and early modern economy lies in his careful exposition of how this process took place. The seizure of *preda*, translated as “plunder,” was judicially sanctioned and carefully organized. Bailiffs or crier-sergeants were duly authorized to enter homes and take an appropriate amount of goods to satisfy a debt. Smail’s use of the term *repo men* for these crier-sergeants may be anachronistic, but his description of their daily lives is evocative nonetheless. He considers their annual cycle of business and the serious question of how, when ordered to collect wagon loads of manure, the officials managed the process. He is equally sensitive to the maneuvers that the poor could take to protect their possessions, from claiming that they were someone else’s (usually a wife’s dowry) to hiding them elsewhere. Mostly, however, he gives a sense of how richly colored and highly decorated the medieval homes and wardrobes proved to be. Even lowly servants would fight hard to retain their bright ribbons and white linens, not just because they represented a store of cash value but also because these items signaled the position of a respectable, credit-worthy household member.

By placing scrawled, barely legible inventories at the heart of this study, Smail offers an important window into the material lives of medieval families and individuals who used their linens, woolens, tables, chairs, pots, and pans (in fact anything that could be moved) to manage their consumer and their credit relationships. From its fascinating information that beds were exempt from seizure to the deeply textured details of household wardrobes, this book is a welcome addition to our understanding of the stuff that backed up the pre-industrial economy.

Evelyn Welch
King’s College London

---

*Galileo’s Telescope: A European Story.* By Massimo Bucciantini, Michele Camerota, and Franco Giudice (Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press, 2015) 352 pp. $35.00

“This is a crime story” opens this impressively researched and enjoyable book (4). Readers might be forgiven for assuming that the criminal is Galileo, who was issued a warning by the Church in 1616 and charged with “vehement suspicion of heresy” in 1633. But in this whodunnit (plot-spoiler alert!), the detectives are not inquisitors but historians, and the crime is not Galileo’s but the Church’s.

Bucciantini, Camerota, and Giudice wrote their history like a film noir thriller: Sections often begin like police procedurals or movie storyboards (“Bologna, April 25, 1610, a Sunday”), and the crime itself unfolds.
slowly and visually. Not until the final page does what was really at stake all along become clear—religion’s restraint on modernity, understood as scientific liberty. The approach of Galileo’s Telescope to this familiar conclusion is, however, anything but teleological. The account is structured geographically. Each chapter charts the transformation, movement, and agency of its main actors—variously Galileo, the telescope, and his 1610 book the Sideraeus Nuncius—all of them announcing to the world the terrestrial nature of the moon, the existence of satellites orbiting Jupiter, and (by an analogy doubtful to many contemporaries) the planetary nature of the earth.

The story moves from The Hague, where the first spyglass was demonstrated; to Venice and Padua, where Galileo assembled the skills to become an expert at grinding new kinds of lenses; to Bologna, where he failed to replicate his observations before a group of peers; to Prague, where Johannes Kepler accepted them without replication; to Wales and England, Paris, Provence, Milan, Florence, and Rome; and, ultimately, in a too-brief final chapter, to China. Central to this inquiry are the ways in which Galileo’s observations, mainly as described in the Sideraeus, were contested in different places: Some people merely could not see what he saw; most people did not understand what they saw in the manner that he understood it.

The authors effectively use a wealth of new documentation to tease out the philosophical, political, and theological rivalries motivating the resistance against which Galileo had to maneuver and shove. They show us the impressive depictions of early telescopes by Pieter Breughels and shopping lists of lens-polishing equipment. They take us into archives that rarely have figured in previous accounts of this story and make new discoveries in those thought to be exhausted. But they also miss a few opportunities; for instance, they make no mention of Needham’s recent census of copies of the Sideraeus that reveals much about its early distribution.¹ They also make a few mistakes: William Gilbert does not praise Paolo Sarpi in his De Magnete (1600), which is erroneously ascribed to Sarpi in the index (35). Galileo’s account of demonstrating the telescope “reads more like the screenplay for a Chaplin comedy than an actual report” for good reason (38–39); it probably is not authentic. Most likely, the Sideraeus did not “sell out” in six days (84); it was on its way, wholesale, to the Frankfurt book fair. The book contains no “engravings,” only etchings and woodcuts.

A larger problem concerns the book’s subtitle—A European Story (the authors report that they thought of calling the book Another World: Galileo’s Telescope: A European Story [5]). But what happened to the rest of this world? The final chapter gestures toward a larger context in its fine reconstruction of the Jesuit channels of information that led to the announcement of Galileo’s observations in China, the Tian Wen Lüe

Similar case studies, however, might have followed the telescope to Isfahan (1612?), Hirado (1613), Brazil (1614), Peru (1615), Jahangir (1615), Sumatra (1619), Bermuda (1620), Havana (1626), Istanbul (1631), Haiti (1635), Cairo (1635), and other destinations. Granted, some of these iterations were maritime, not astronomical, telescopes, but the point still holds that Europe is not an adequate framework within which to analyze an instrument that changed the very nature of space and earth’s place in the universe.

Nick Wilding  
Georgia State University


In this admirable study, Hasse demonstrates the significant position of Arabic writings among Renaissance philosophers, physicians, astrologers, and scholars. He targets the belief that Renaissance humanism’s turn to antiquity entailed the wholesale rejection of Avicenna, Averroes, Mesue, Rhazes, and other luminaries of the Arabic medieval tradition, who were attacked for their supposedly barbarous prose and their deviations from classical authorities. Despite humanists’ anti-Arabic polemics and ecclesiastical attempts at suppression, Italians who were associated with universities readily printed and translated Arabic works, incorporating them into understandings of medicine and nature. Hasse, going beyond the rhetoric of Renaissance authors, is more concerned with what they did with their sources than what they said that they did with them. Accordingly, he finds that anti-Arabic purists’ calls for the Hellenization of knowledge were impractical and, despite their proliferation in the 1520s and 1530s, went largely unheeded.

The volume is valuable in numerous ways. The research is profound, based on extensive philological, philosophical, and historical analyses. The argumentation is sober yet revelatory. The appendix, which lists Renaissance Latin editions of Arabic natural philosophical, astrological, and medicinal works, is an indispensable research tool. The book proceeds through comparative diachronic analysis based on case studies of Renaissance discussions of biography, translation, botany, philosophy, and astrology.

The biographical tradition about Avicenna reveals that attempts to improve historical accuracy were impeded by a lack of reliable Arabic sources (Leo Africanus’ De viris illustribus [c. 1527] is not an entirely trustworthy source) and shifts to humanist histories more concerned with establishing chronology than recounting lives. Hasse’s examination of Renaissance translations shows that scholars applied humanistic philological techniques to the writings of Arabic authors with mixed results.
Andrea Alpago’s revised translation of 1527, based on Arabic manuscripts, made small improvements to Gerard of Cremona’s twelfth-century Latin translation of Avicenna’s *Canon* (c. 1025). Yet, the philological acumen of medieval translators, like Gerard, still compares favorably to many of the new attempts.

In the field of medical botany, Renaissance discussions of the plant senna, still used as a laxative, demonstrate the failings of those who desired to trace all knowledge back to the Greeks. Pietro Andrea Mattioli, in his 1565 commentary on Dioscorides’ *De materia medica*, rightly chas-tised Jean Ruel for misidentifying senna in his 1536 *De natura stirpium* in an attempt to make it correspond with a plant known by the Greeks. To the contrary, Mattioli highlighted the usefulness of the *Opera* of Ps.-Mesue (probably compiled in the thirteenth century), which provided better pharmacological information than did humanists, who were intent on dropping Arabic sources.

Averroes’ notorious position, in his *Long Commentary on the De anima* (second half of the twelfth century), regarding the unicity of the material intellect was widespread among Northern Italian philosophers. Despite ecclesiastical attempts at suppression beginning in the 1480s, it died a slow death; no one openly promoted the unicity thesis after the 1560s. Nevertheless, Averroes’ commentaries remained central to interpreting Aristotle for decades thereafter. Finally, Renaissance reformers of astrology, relying on Ptolemy and a skewed image of ancient practice, rejected some forms of prognostication associated with Arabic writings but had little effect on the doctrine of great conjunctions, which Giovanni Pico della Mirandola had attacked in his *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (posthumously printed in 1504). In fact, the use of great conjunctions flourished in the seventeenth-century astronomical histories of Johannes Kepler, contained in his *De trigono igneo* (1666) and *Epitome astronomiae Copernicanae* (1618), and of Giovanni Battista Riccioli, found in his *Almagestum novum astronomiam veterm novamque complectens* (1651), among other works.

Proceeding through these case studies has the merit of unfolding the fine details in the debates surrounding Arabic writings. The risk of case studies is in offering exceptional rather than typical examples. Hasse’s choice to analyze the influence of Averroes’ theory of the unicity of the material intellect may not be the best one to show his centrality to the Renaissance thought. This theory, along with the eternity of the universe, were the only doctrines of Averroes that were censured by the Fifth Lateran Council (1513). Emphasis on the fate of this doctrine, which was besieged by ecclesiastical attacks, potentially skews the understanding of his legacy, as Averroes remained influential in many ways even after philosophers discarded his understanding of the material intellect. A case study of a less controversial teaching might reveal an even greater role for Averroes’ thought. His theory of mixtures was endorsed throughout the sixteenth century. Moreover, early seventeenth-century opponents, such as Daniel Sennert, adopted a version of Avicenna’s theory in its place.
Hasse’s view that Renaissance scholars not only used but also revived Arabic learning to a certain degree is convincing. Readers of this volume will be forced to reject the view that Renaissance thought transformed solely from an engagement with classical antiquity or through the discovery of ancient texts. Champions of Renaissance humanism must now also recognize its limitations and the darker sides of its ideology of linguistic and cultural purism.

Craig Martin
Oakland University


There have been surprisingly few attempts to draw out the connections between the Enlightenment and the contemporaneous transformation of agriculture. In an important new book that seeks to remedy this situation, Jones suggests that, in the light of the currently dominant conception of the Enlightenment as a purely intellectual movement, his project might be regarded as “somewhat unusual, perhaps even perverse” (5). But as he rightly points out, the majority of Enlightenment figures did not see their work in that way. Equally important, from the perspective of this journal, the world of knowledge that they inhabited had not yet been divided into a series of arbitrarily defined disciplines. To take only the most obvious example, the political economy associated with Adam Smith is not “economics” as currently practiced (whether or not we consider it a “science”); it also contains elements of what would now be included in economic history, social geography, politics, and even psychology. Part of Jones’ achievement in this book is therefore to recreate the “pre-disciplinary” eighteenth-century world through an “interdisciplinarity” capable of encompassing theoretical debates about, say, physiocracy (17–20), as well as the seemingly more germane contribution of animal manure to soil fertility (181–184).

Agricultural Enlightenment does not claim to be a total history of the Enlightenment in the manner of Israel’s recent work. Rather, as the title and organizing principle (“research paradigm”) suggest, it seeks to understand it as something in the way of a social movement, albeit a diffuse one, intent on changing agrarian practice. For those who were enlightened, this orientation involved “a concern for attainable, incremental improvements in day-to-day conditions of living” that also opened up potential benefits for states: “Governments interpreted the phenomenon of Enlightenment as both an opportunity for and as a guide to the

extraction of wealth from the land” (217). Jones also makes clear that agriculture during the Enlightenment involved shifts in culture and belief in addition to changes in technique or ownership. In many respects, the book is constructed as a critical endorsement of Mokyr’s argument for incorporating the role of “useful knowledge” into our understanding of agrarian growth after 1750 (6, 214–215).

Jones’ previous book, Industrial Enlightenment: Science, Technology and Culture in Birmingham and the West Midlands 1760–1820 (Manchester, 2008), was in many ways a major departure from his previous work as a specialist in the last stages of France’s ancien regime and early revolutionary era. In the current book, Jones works within a similar, but slightly broader, time frame, 1750–1840 rather than 1760–1820, concluding at the point when countries at the leading edge of development had overcome the technical limitations to agricultural growth. But his geographical sweep is much wider than in the preceding work, encompassing Western and Central Europe. He is justifiably skeptical of claims by Pomeranz and the California school that the more advanced areas of the Chinese Empire and Europe—the “East” and “West”—showed no significant differences in productivity, though he lapses into the inadequate shorthand about it that everyone else often does. As he notes toward the end of his book, “If the West succeeded in bringing together in a unique combination the ingredients for sustained agriculture and industrial growth, it began doing so long before the start of the nineteenth century” (228).

In his attempt to demonstrate the West’s priority in agriculture, Jones carefully avoids two misleading extremes into which earlier analysts have fallen. One, to which the California school is prone, refers to an undifferentiated “West” (meaning, in this case, Europe and its North American extensions), which misleadingly implies that countries like, for example, England and Portugal, were always on the same plane. The other approach, associated with Brenner and especially his followers, like Wood, is problematic for the opposite reason, claiming that England alone experienced endogenous capitalist agricultural development. In contradistinction to both views, Jones is suitably attentive to the unevenness across the continent, particularly in relation to the role of the state (Chapter 2), while showing an appreciation of English, and ultimately British, distinctiveness.

Jones is fully aware of the difference between England and Britain. He devotes one of two case studies to Scotland and the other to Denmark (147–160). These useful discussions demonstrate that the two countries underwent much more rapid and intense development than most of the rest of Europe, though under different state forms, and that agricultural

---

enlightenment there overlapped most closely with the process known by the much more venerable term of “agricultural revolution.” Jones defends the use of this term only if it is not intended to convey that the process was inevitable (even where agricultural enlightenment had taken place) or relatively quick, as many previously thought. Outside his case studies, Jones moves confidently across a range of different countries (as might be expected, his discussion of France is particularly strong [46–51]).

Like any work covering a wide geographical and chronological expanse, this one has occasional errors. The most startling one is the claim that Thomas Malthus was a “Scottish economist” (133); the clergyman was born and worked most of his life in Surrey, England. A more serious issue is the inconsistency with which Jones deals with the political contexts of the agricultural enlightenment. He provides background about the Prussian agrarian reform during the Napoleonic Wars, for example, but not about the considerably more decisive crushing of the Jacobite movement in Scotland after 1746, which rendered feudal agriculture unsustainable and led directly to some of the changes that he analyzes. Overall, however, this major contribution to our understanding of the history of both ideas and economic development casts welcome light on a number of related themes, ranging from the role of technology to attitudes about the natural environment.

Neil Davidson
University of Glasgow


Peakman collects eight previously published articles and book chapters, plus two new articles based on earlier shared material, in this new volume of her writings. The work, all produced in the last fifteen years, combines to paint a portrait of British sexual culture in the eighteenth century as various and shifting. “There was no one coherent attitude to sex in the eighteenth century,” Peakman argues (147). Old and new beliefs, the enlightened and the bawdy, the normative and the perverse coincided and competed.

Peakman’s focus on sexual culture leads her to explore a wide range of sources, which in turn substantiate her argument about the diversity of eighteenth-century attitudes. Individual chapters examine whores’ biographies, courtesans’ memoirs, erotic gardens, medical texts, manuscript letters, and pornography. Peakman describes her work as taking a “multi-disciplinary approach,” although all the chapters fit comfortably within the framework of cultural history (xiii).

Despite the diversity of the chapters, certain themes recur throughout the text. Peakman is centrally concerned with the role of gender in
eighteenth-century sexual culture. Her analysis emphasizes the agency of eighteenth-century women. “Far from being meek inhabitants of an ideological straightjacket of gendered roles, eighteenth-century women did on occasion use opportunities to secure new forms of power and authority,” Peakman argues, concluding that women engaged in a form of “practical feminism” even in the absence of feminist rhetoric (51). This approach frequently leads her to counter arguments that diminish women’s power. She rejects those literary critics who have dismissed the genre of courtesans’ memoirs as written by men for men’s titillation, insisting instead that the works capture “the world of female sexuality as understood by the women themselves” (82). In another example, whereas Trumbach reads scenes of female tribadism in pornographic literature as instructional to readers at a time when no conception of lesbianism existed, Peakman argues that these narratives drew from readers’ extant knowledge of female same-sex sexual practices. While Peakman takes a broad view of women’s agency, she balances that approach with clear recognition of the misogyny of the era under study. Her chapter about women’s defloration, which discusses the period’s fetishism for bloody devirgination, makes for tough reading.

If the collection has a weakness, it is that the chapters seem a little cobbled together—unsurprisingly for a book that began as separately published articles and chapters. The book also contains some repetition and lacks a consistent voice. Nonetheless, it is a fun read that should have wide appeal. There’s great pleasure to be had from reading Peakman’s knowledgeable explorations of whores’ biographies, or her insights into the intimacies of Emma Hamilton and Queen Maria Carolina of Naples. This collection has appeal for lay readers and undergraduates, not just specialists.

Rachel Hope Cleves
University of Victoria


In this short book, Razzell presents the case for autonomous shifts in mortality as the key driving force in moving England from a population of marginally more than 2 million in 1500 to one of 16.5 million in 1851. He is skeptical of the use of parish registers for historical demographic research, at least in the manner employed by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, and by those who have adopted its methodologies to study this enormous body of data relating to baptisms, marriages, and burials. He, unlike the Cambridge Group, is

1 Randolph Trumbach, _Sex and the Gender Revolution. I. Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment_ (Chicago, 1998).
confident that changes in fertility were of limited significance in driving demographic growth. In one of the longest sections of the book, he pur-
tports to show that after the almost-universal marriage of women during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a decline in marital incidence left increasing proportions of women unmarried by the nineteenth century.

The book concludes with a brief discussion of how a surplus work-
force created by autonomous mortality change enabled the emergence of a capitalist economy based on cheap labor. Furthermore, Razzell argues that this model of demographic change, which emerged first in England, has been recurrent in large parts of the world; mortality declines arising from autonomous medical changes enabled a population growth that also facilitated the growth of global capitalism through the exploitation of demographically generated labor surpluses.

After an initial chapter in which Razzell attempts to demonstrate the unreliability of parish registers for the generation of demographic data, there follow two chapters dealing specifically with infant and early child-
hood and adult mortality. To construct a measure of infant mortality, Razzell takes pains to account for the death of children who shared a fore-
name with a sibling but had no burial record of their own. Razzell is confi-
dent that this strategy is a powerful means of correcting defective burial registrations. He estimates infant mortality to have fallen slightly in the early seventeenth century before rising to a peak by 1740 and then de-
clining through the last two decades of the eighteenth and first two decades of the nineteenth century. The trend that he creates for early-childhood mortality is less clear-cut, but it retains remarkable stability at 105 to 107 deaths per 1,000 from c. 1660 to c. 1780 before displaying a modest drop.

What is remarkable, and not noted by Razzell, is that the Cambridge Group’s estimates of the same demographic parameters follow a strikingly similar chronological course. The worsening of infant mortality during the first four decades of the eighteenth century, and its fall in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, are features common to both bodies of research. However, whenever comparisons can be drawn, the supposedly inferior registers and methods of the Cambridge Group—
afflicted, according to Razzell, by missing deaths—generate higher levels of infant and childhood mortality than Razzell’s methodology can detect for most periods.

Razzell avoids use of burial registers per se to estimate adult mor-
tality. He prefers to employ evidence relating to fathers being present when daughters married or when sons were apprenticed to derive an alternative indicator of mortality risks among adults. He gleans from this evidence a substantial reduction in adult mortality during the eighteenth century, but this improvement for adults occurred earlier in that century than it did for the youngest age groups. Again, the work of the Cambridge Group replicates this finding about life expectancy, using completely dif-
f erent evidence and methods. The Cambridge Group also drew attention to a rise in adult life expectancy starting in the early eighteenth century, when varying mortality levels and trends across all age groups render the
conventional use of model lifetables problematical. Razzell and the Cambridge Group appear to be in basic agreement about the course of mortality change during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Razzell’s findings diverge most starkly from the Cambridge Group’s in Chapter 4. He dismisses the evidence relating to their marriage-age estimates, which proposes a substantial fall in age at first marriage, principally because it relies on a reconstitutable minority of couples whose immobility makes them unrepresentative. He favors instead a variety of approaches based on marriage licenses; residential listings that report women by marital status; registers that give the marital status of women at burial; and, especially, documents that recorded the marital status of female witnesses in church courts by age. Razzell argues that his data point to a 200-to-250-year trend of decreasing marital incidence, culminating in more than 10 percent of women never marrying by the mid-nineteenth century. He barely considers the issues surrounding the data in all of these sources, such as the accuracy with which marital status was recorded in early listings, particularly for women older than forty-five; the possible bias against single women acting as deponents in church courts; or the representativeness of the women who wed by acquiring a relatively expensive marriage license.

Razzell largely ignores the burgeoning literature that discusses the biases in parish-register-based analysis of marriage age. In fact, his limited engagement with historiography is a feature of the book in general; Razzell buttresses a good deal of his argument solely by reference to his own publications. To take just one example, he cites none of the many articles in the journal *Local Population Studies*—a primary outlet for much of England’s demographic history derived from parish registers—that he did not write himself. As a result, readers will be hard-pressed to gain a sense of the relevant scholarly debates.

In emphasizing the autonomy of mortality change, Razzell makes some useful points about the absence of major class differences in mortality before the nineteenth century. Yet he seems oddly reluctant to discuss the role played by human agency in it—not least regarding the decrease in smallpox fatalities during the late eighteenth century, a theme that occupied much of his earlier research. Likewise, he evinces little desire to note the striking demographic changes associated with England’s urbanization and population mobility, which were not matched elsewhere in Europe. England’s urban sector, represented by settlements of 5,000 or more, rose from 8 percent to 28 percent of the total population between 1600 and 1800.

Furthermore, in his brief discussion of economic change, which he views as largely downstream of demography in the causal accounting, Razzell acknowledges none of the considerable changes that occurred in occupational structure during the seventeenth century. From 1600 to 1700, the primary sector declined from nearly two-thirds of the male labor force to less than 50 percent, while the secondary sector rose from 28 percent to 42 percent of the male working population. All of the
The stakes of regulation: Perspectives on bread, politics and political economy forty years later. By Steven L. Kaplan (New York, Anthem Press, 2015)

427 pp. $130.00

In his landmark study, Bread, Politics and Political Economy in the Age of Louis XV (The Hague, 1976), Kaplan argued that in the 1760s, the French government unleashed the first great experiment in economic liberalism by dismantling regulations governing grain supply. The policy, predicated upon a faith in self-regulating markets to achieve lower prices and a more plentiful distribution of goods, unleashed a crisis with profound political, economic, moral, and cultural effects. In The Stakes of Regulation, published as a companion volume to Anthem Press’ new edition of Bread, Politics and Political Economy (New York, 2015), Kaplan reflects on how scholarship pertaining to his interests has evolved during the past forty years. The result is an impressive historiographical and interdisciplinary discussion of scores of issues raised by the study of markets, food, and economic liberalism.

Kaplan addresses questions of methodology, definitions of key terms, underlying assumptions governing historical interpretations, and accuracy of facts on a wide range of topics. He is wary of ahistorical treatments of the market that abstract its operation from the social conventions in which it is embedded. To this end, he favors sociologists who study “concrete markets” empirically rather than those who treat markets as theoretical constructions (42). He looks into French agricultural output as a way to assess whether inadequate harvests, as opposed to factors like government policy, were responsible for dearth. He probes the question of social justice by revisiting the familiar concept of the moral economy, as well as the role of collective action and perceptions of the nature of the “people.” In chapters treating traditional political history of the old regime, he reviews the debate about whether the parlements and royal ministries were agents of progress or obstruction. New perspectives on the intellectual history of political economy illustrate ways in which historians have attempted to explain the social context within which liberalism emerged, and how it was related to pressing issues of social trust, patriotism, reform, and privilege. He ends with a discussion of food
security in international perspective. In his appraisals, Kaplan cites works of economists, sociologists, and political scientists, as well as historians of culture, politics, and society.

Although Kaplan is primarily concerned with reviewing works about the old regime, his interest in theoretical, methodological, and comparative approaches leads him into discussions that transcend the particularities of the French situation per se. He is equally at home assessing the relevance of concepts like Foucault’s “governmentality” or Sen’s “food entitlement” for understanding government policy and liberalism as he is in discussing the eighteenth-century minister Jacques Necker’s critique of deregulation.¹ He addresses the culpability of governments in causing famine by reference to Maoist China as well as to liberalizing France.

There is a drawback to the book’s organization. Because Kaplan treats scholarly works in terms of his own interests, he often does not summarize the theses of the authors themselves before subjecting them to his critique. Hence, some of the authors that he considers might feel that they have been misrepresented or that their work has been taken out of context, without a chance to respond. Even though Kaplan states that his goal is to encourage debate, his tone, at times, verges on hectoring.

Nonetheless, anyone interested in debates about the topic of regulation, and historiographical approaches more generally, will find rewarding material in this book. Kaplan’s case is persuasive because most people in the old regime lived in a continual state of fear of hunger (as do many people in the world today); the stakes of regulation versus deregulation for meeting human needs were (and are) enormous. In the great debate about whether free markets made provisioning more abundant or more precarious, he argues that the evidence of the eighteenth century pointed overwhelmingly to deleterious effects: “Liberalization revealed how grim, brutal and inhumane liberty could become in the hands (and minds) of those who seemed indifferent (or loftily, even scientifically resigned) to its impact on the majority of consumers” (393). It is an important perspective to have, and to continue to probe.

Gail Bossenga
Elizabethtown College


Goltermann traces the almost endless arguments in German psychiatry, compensation administrations, and courts about the long-term

psychological effects of World War II on German soldiers. Based on extensive research not only in government archives and various publications but also on careful analysis of, and extensive quotations from, medical records, Goltermann explores a subject hitherto largely neglected in the literature about the war and about postwar Germany. She first appropriately reviews the decision to treat soldiers for what was often called “shell-shock” during World War I in military hospitals near the front instead of sending them home, as well as the assumption that good food and relaxation were adequate remedies for this psychological condition.

As it turned out, the many German prisoners of war who returned to a divided and heavily damaged Germany after World War II had far greater problems adjusting to life than did those discharged from the German army who returned to an essentially undamaged country after World War I. Furthermore, those who in subsequent years, especially the 1950s, were released from imprisonment in the Soviet Union suffered even worse from the hunger and general deprivation that they had endured both prior to and during their internment.

Goltermann properly stresses, and covers in substantial detail, two of the ways in which the problems of the returnees defied the then-current official and generally accepted professional view. In the first place, substantial evidence indicated that the vast majority of soldiers’ mental and physical problems were not simply attributable to hereditary deficiencies. Although she does not press the point, most readers will ascertain that this peculiar medical notion betrays the continued influence of racist thinking in Germany’s professional circles.

In the second place, Goltermann covers in considerable detail the discovery that those who had survived the Holocaust and other forms of Nazi persecution in Germany and other German-occupied countries often suffered from, and claimed reparation for, long-term traumatic mental effects. Ironically, the competition between German soldiers and survivors of persecution for compensation was not the reason why, by the end of the 1960s, professionals had come to recognize the legitimacy of post–traumatic syndrome. Instead, international pressure to compensate the victims of persecution led to better treatment of the returnees—even those who had been perpetrators of horrors while in the military before their capture.

The central theme of this book is the reluctance and internal squabbling with which German officials dealt with the difficulties of the returning soldiers and their families over time. Goltermann rarely mentions the specific ordeals that the men had discussed in the interviews that she cites. She leaves the “war in their minds” as a generalized experience of combat, occupation, or imprisonment. The book’s bibliography is certain to be helpful to anyone interested in its subject, though the absence of Stephen G. Fritz, *Endkampf: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Death of the Third Reich* (Lexington, 2004) is regrettable. The notes include extensive discussions about some of the sources. In some cases, such as n. 10 (319), Goltermann would have been better advised to incorporate the information in the
main text, but the novelty of much of this work justifies the copious annotation.

The emphasis on the integration of millions of German expellees from German territories that the Soviet Union, Poland, and other countries confiscated after the war, as well as of those who fled from East Germany to West Germany before re-unification, has led to a neglect of the millions of German soldiers who had to be re-integrated into German society and their own families. Goltermann’s book is an excellent, thought-provoking study of a critical element in that process.

Gerhard L. Weinberg
University of North Carolina

*Amsterdam’s Atlantic: Print Culture and the Making of Dutch Brazil. By Michiel van Groesen (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) 265 pp. $48.00*

Van Groesen uses early seventeenth-century Amsterdam, then one of the largest European commercial and political centers, to demonstrate the rise of participation in news consumption and politics among previously marginalized sectors of the population: “I take the Dutch Atlantic out of the customs houses and into the coffee houses” (10). He demonstrates the coeval rise of a print culture, especially news sheets. Officialdom made an attempt at censorship, but in this case, the increase in literacy and the increase in printed materials were linked.

The story begins with the increased interest in the Atlantic world that corresponded with the founding of the Dutch West Indies Company, which was hoped to rival the powerful Dutch East Indies Company. During the years between 1578 and 1622, the population of the city more than tripled. When a peace treaty with Spain expired, the Dutch regarded Brazil as a potential colony. After a Dutch fleet captured Bahia in 1623, Brazil quickly emerged as a major topic of popular interest. The West Indies Company, which had begun to manage the news, turned the event into a major triumph. Bahia was celebrated in poetry, as well as in Reformed Church sermons. But Spain’s recapture of Bahia failed to create much of a stir, as did the subsequent seizure of Recife and Olinda by the Dutch in 1636. As van Groesen puts it, “The media frenzy surrounding the first invasion was missing” (72). A lesson had been learned, but despite the grim living conditions in these remote locations, a glimmer of hope remained that colonial expansion and a sugar industry would thrive. To general satisfaction, Count Johan Maurits of Nassau became governor general of the Brazilian holdings in 1637.

Despite expansion in Brazil and Africa, news and popular sentiment began to show signs of conflict. Slavery and religious tolerance attracted heated debate, and the issue of free trade sparked “one of the most bitter pamphlet wars of the Dutch Golden Age” (118). Confidence in the
economy flagged, and share prices fell during the 1640s, inflicting heavy losses on investors. Maurits was recalled, and a revolt against Dutch rule in Brazil led to surrender in 1654. “The print media suddenly fell silent” (128). Denial and disbelief throughout Holland soon turned to a search for culprits. The West Indies Company shouldered some of the blame, for being too greedy, as did the Jesuits and the Portuguese for violating a truce. Everyone suspected widespread corruption. In the general furor, van Groesen observes, “Brazil vanished as rapidly from public debate as it had arisen” (155).

Chapter 6, “Recollection,” treats the ways in which the past of Dutch Brazil was reconstructed. Maurits emphasized the tolerance and cosmopolitanism in Recife society under his administration, claiming that the decline and loss of the colony took place after his departure. What van Groesen brands as “exoticism” was common in paintings and literature. Heroes such as Piet Heyn, a Dutch privateer and eventual director of the West Indies Company, became almost mythical figures. Van Groesen believes that a society dominated by intense discussion “simply spun out of control” (189).

Van Groesen’s analysis of Amsterdam and its society is convincing, his material about other nations less so. Iberian interest in both the Caribbean and the broader Atlantic was intense early in the sixteenth century, and the Elizabethan pirates, slavers, and explorers were also aware of the wider Atlantic. Van Groesen’s attempt to highlight the Dutch significance in early Atlantic history is certainly worthwhile. But he might have at least presented a comparative overview, especially from Brazilian writers, of how the Dutch conducted themselves in Brazil. Nonetheless, the book makes valuable contributions to several fields of study. Van Groesen shows the development of popular participation in politics and the rise of interest in mass psychology, and he offers an early example of the emergence of print media and official attempts to control it. He joins a modern interest in people creating a mythology of a national or local past—and much more.

Murdo J. MacLeod
University of Florida


In 1761, the biggest adventure in mercantile finance since the South Sea bubble was underway—in Sweden. Two parties in the Riksdag, the Hats and the Caps, had battled back and forth for twenty years, much of the fifty-year span of Swedish history known as “the age of freedom.” The Hats favored vigorous promotion of a nascent industrial revolution through easy credit—paper-money mercantilism similar to that of
John Law’s Banque Royale fifty years before. Domestic prices had risen far above parity with prices in gold. The Hats ascribed high prices to the trade deficit. The Caps attributed inflation and currency depreciation to the reckless issue of paper money. They favored a sharp deflation back to old gold parity.

Enter Pehr Niklas Christiernin, (1725–1799), a contemporary of Adam Smith, professor of law at university of Uppsala, and the author of *Lectures on the High Price of Foreign Exchange in Sweden* (1761). Though a Hat by virtue of his position, Christiernin accepted the argument of the Caps, but warned that deflation would produce massive unemployment. Instead, he recommended stabilizing prices at current levels by tightening monetary policy. Sure enough, when the Caps came to power in 1765 and cut prices in half, the big depression Christiernin had predicted ensued. The Hats returned to power, but nothing was resolved until a coup in 1772 replaced parliament with an absolute monarchy. Convertibility at existing prices was restored in 1777.

Christiernin’s was the first clear theory of paper money, a big advance over the notions of John Law, the architect of the South Sea bubble. The same controversy would be repeated during the bullionist controversies in Britain, 1797–1810, when the same lessons were learned. Even though he had anticipated David Hume and Henry Thornton, Christiernin left no trace in the literature until he was rediscovered and introduced to readers of English, in 1963, by Robert V. Eagly. The story is laid out by Jürg Niehans in *A History of Economic Theory, Classic Contributions 1720–1980* (Baltimore, 1990), from which the foregoing account is largely drawn.

The episode is mentioned in this review because the Christiernin *Lectures*, along with contributions by various Swedish economists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are part of the foundation on which the authority of the newest Nobel prize is thought to rest, at least by those involved in its creation. Offer and Söderberg do not mention it in their book. Authors are entitled to write what they want, and *Nobel Factor* contains much that is new and interesting. It is framed as a discourse about large twentieth-century trends in historical views that saw “market liberalism” largely displace “social democracy” after 1970. This “market turn”—a worldwide change in fundamental attitudes, in which metaphors of buying and selling between individuals replaced social democratic norms of obligations to family, group, class, and nation—is left unexplained, except insofar as the authors view the prize in economic sciences as mainly a marketing campaign. The prize was added to the original five, in 1969, by the Nobel Foundation and the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

The authors examine the role of Assar Lindbeck—twenty-four years on the prize committee as well as an extensive career in Swedish public affairs—and conduct a study to document what they consider as two deliberate omissions from the list of prizes given (Joan Robinson and John Kenneth Galbraith). But the heart of the book is an archive-based
account of where the money for the prize came from—a gift of the Swedish Central Bank, derived from earnings on its open-market operations, designed to commemorate the tercentenary of its founding. According to the authors, Governor Per Asbink mainly sought to buttress the independence of monetary policy from the government’s centralized wage bargaining. The endowment of the prize was “an afterthought, a whimsy almost . . . something of a farce” (67). The context of the prize’s origins is said to be “more telling than the prize itself.”

What the book does not contain is any discussion of the opposing point of view—the conviction, widely shared by economists, that their discipline has learned much about the world since the founding of central banks in the seventeenth century, and that during the middle years of the twentieth century the field crossed a threshold to become a fledgling science. The fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the economics prize is looming. This book, which apparently owes its genesis to George Soros’ Institute for New Economic Thinking, is the first of what will surely be several others (Philp Mirowski hived off from this project to write his account). Archives apparently will open gradually to historians after 2019.

David Warsh

Economic Principals (http://www.economicprincipals.com/)


In late 2015, a new law went on the books in Russia that allowed individual citizens to file for bankruptcy. The law applied to all types of loans, from consumer and car loans to mortgages and borrowings in a foreign currency. Previously, in post-Soviet Russia, only legal entities such as companies and business partnerships could file for such protection. This change takes us back to the imperial era when private credit and personal bankruptcy were common.

Antonov’s fascinating new book sheds light on the little-studied subject of bankrupts and usurers in nineteenth-century Russia. It joins a recent revival of the legal and administrative history of Russia represented in works by Burbank about peasant legal practice, Pravilova about property law, and Kotsonis about taxation and citizenship.¹ Like these other authors, Antonov builds his study on a strong foundation of social

¹ Jane Burbank, Russian Peasants Go to Court: Legal Culture in the Countryside, 1905–1917 (Bloomington, 2004); Ekaterina Pravilova, A Public Empire: Property and the Quest for the Common Good in Imperial Russia (Princeton, 2014); Yannis Kotsonis, States of Obligation: Taxes and Citizenship in the Russian Empire and Early Soviet Republic (Toronto, 2014).
history and rests his arguments on detailed cases of actual usurers and bankrupts.

Antonov accompanies his impressive survey of credit and the law in imperial Russia with frequent comparisons to developments in Europe and the United States. His purpose is to demonstrate that Russia should not be viewed as “backward” in its moneylending practices. A culture of credit that included commonly accepted values, practices, and laws, he argues, was well developed in Russia at all levels of society long before the Great Reforms of the 1860s that overhauled the judicial system. He criticizes writers who idealize Western rationality and compare it to Russia’s supposed lack of rationality and adherence to the rule of law. His study, he claims, “undermines the view that the reforms were imposed on a population whose legal culture had no use for these innovations” (16).

The book is divided into two parts—the culture of debt, and debt and the law. Part 1 offers a series of stories about lenders who charged abusive rates, who were seen as usurers, and whom the police sought to curb in order to protect profligate nobles from ruining their families. But the authorities also had to weigh this objective against the need to keep the flow of credit open even for some high-risk borrowers. Antonov notes that private credit “greatly exceeded state credit operations” and therefore was vital to economic growth.

He also points out that improvident nobles were not the outsized problem that is portrayed in Russian literature. Government banking operations did not subsidize the nobility, as is often thought. On the contrary, writes Antonov, the Moscow Board of Trustees bank, which granted loans to the nobility, was paid back more than it lent and “enjoyed a significant positive balance in its accounts.” Commercial credit showed the same level of responsible borrowing. Merchants usually paid off their loans to the Commercial Bank of Saint Petersburg, bad debts being a small part of the picture. Antonov analyzes the social position of borrowers and lenders, the role of friends and family in lending, and cases of swindlers and conmen. Part 2 looks at the role of mediators such as lawyers, scriveners, and government officials in facilitating loans and settlements. Antonov also treats the question of debtors’ prisons and the work of charitable societies in assisting debtors.

At times, Antonov strains to make what sounds like a strawman argument, writing, for example, that “my research contradicts the myth that pre-reform law was dysfunctional to the point of not deserving to be called law at all and that Russians possessed no culture of using the courts in a rational and efficient way to promote and protect their property interests” (285). On this point, and in the book generally, Antonov is working against a body of literature produced by jurists in the late imperial era who exaggerated the inadequacies of pre–reform legal practice in an effort to defend the 1860s judicial reforms against attempts by conservatives to undo them. Although those older views may still enjoy currency in some fields of judicial history and in literary studies, the best social and institutional
histories have moved away from such negative assessments of pre-reform practice. We should nevertheless be grateful for the enlightening and richly detailed look that Antonov takes into a little-studied aspect of Russian social and economic history.

David L. Ransel
Stanford University

The Soviet Gulag: Evidence, Interpretation, and Comparison. Edited by Michael David-Fox (Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh University Press, 2016) 434 pp. $49.54

The past several years have witnessed a resurgence of interest in the Soviet penal system, commonly known by its Stalin-era acronym, Gulag. Announcements for new books, articles, special journal issues, and conferences appear regularly, and scholars are taking advantage of newly available archival documents and thousands of published and unpublished memoirs, among other materials. This edited volume, much of which was already published in “The Soviet Gulag: New Research and New Interpretations”—a special issue of Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History, XVI (2015), 469–728—is just the latest in a flurry of recent scholarly activity.

The chapters in this volume are broken into two sections, the first containing seven chapters of “Evidence and Interpretation.” Major themes include sickness and mortality, along with the blurry line between “the Gulag and the non-Gulag,” to borrow Oleg Khlevniuk’s chapter title. Just a few of these chapters go beyond traditional historical research. Dan Healey’s chapter about the “biopolitics” of the Gulag, for instance, applies a Foucauldian lens to the Gulag medical establishment. Acknowledging the challenges of using Foucault’s ideas in the socialist setting, he finds that medical authorities engaged in systematic surveillance of their labor “inventories,” continually shifting work details and even establishing separate camps for those inmates who were exhausted and disabled (72). In running this system, they borrowed tactics developed in ordinary Soviet society and often used explicitly medical terminology, such as work “dosages” (81). The Gulag was thus part of the larger Soviet biopolitical effort to adjust socialist bodies to the productive apparatus.

In contrast to this Foucauldian interpretation, Emilia Koustova’s article employs ethnographic research about former “special settlers” (who were isolated in camp-style facilities but usually not subjected to the same level of confinement or abuse as Gulag inmates). Her subjects recalled varied experiences in detention, and widely differing levels of adaptation

1 For Foucault’s discussion of surveillance, see Michel Foucault (trans. Alan Sheridan Smith), Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (New York, 1979).
to the new conditions. Moreover, Koustova finds that interviews conducted with Lithuanians and Ukrainians who remained in Russia after their period of detention largely follow narratives constructed by ethnic Russians sent to similar fates, with an emphasis on individual suffering that is largely devoid of politics. Those who returned to Lithuania or Ukraine after their detention, however, present a more coherent and detailed narrative of collective national suffering. This fusion of ethnography with the history of memory is an important methodological contribution to the study of the Gulag.

The most innovative section of this volume, however, is not the one containing the traditional research chapters; rather, the second section, “Comparison,” is what gives this volume its intellectual heft. Correctly noting that the comparative history of the Gulag is “at a nascent stage,” David-Fox included two chapters that place the Gulag in the broader context of pre-Soviet and post-Soviet Russian penal systems, and four chapters that compare the Soviet Gulag to Nazi, Chinese, North Korean, and British colonial camps (9). The level of comparative analysis varies in these chapters—from Daniel Beer’s contribution, which offers nothing in way of explicit comparison to the Tsarist past, to Dietrich Beyrau’s balanced comparison between Nazi and Soviet camps—but all of the chapters grapple with the question of Soviet exceptionalism.

The most provocative chapter is Aidan Forth’s comparison of British colonial camps with the Gulag. Forth argues that British repressive practices “helped foster the structural and conceptual preconditions for the development and management of camps” in the modern world. Ultimately, however, “liberal ideology and an open public sphere” prevented British camps from approaching the scale and deadliness of the Gulag (200). Nonetheless, the two systems shared ideologies of rehabilitative labor and rehabilitative discipline. Both at times presided over excessively high mortality due to over-exertion and malnutrition (rationing was tied to productivity in both cases), and both closely monitored inmates for political dissent. Thus, the practices of “liberal” regimes in the colonial setting bore a close “family resemblance” to later Soviet repression (200).

Despite Forth’s important contribution, missing from the volume’s comparative treatment are the prison systems of Western Europe and the United States. The Gulag may have been a system of camps, but it was also, as several historians of the Gulag have recently emphasized, a penal system. Much is to be learned from comparisons with Western penitentiaries, especially those in the U.S. South that used chain gangs and other repressive labor practices. Penal systems in the postcolonial world of the global South would also provide an interesting point of comparison, owing to economic underdevelopment and recent political regime change. Historians of the Gulag would do well to take into account a wider array of penal systems, remembering that the Gulag itself comprised various types of institutions, including traditional prisons.
This critique notwithstanding, *The Soviet Gulag* has much to recommend it. As an edited volume it holds together remarkably well. More importantly, it jumpstarts the methodological discussions that lay the groundwork for a coming generation of Gulag scholarship.

Jeffrey S. Hardy
Brigham Young University


Silverman’s deeply researched, vibrant work explores how, from the beginning of European exploration to the close of the “frontier,” Native peoples in North America embraced firearms and sought to control their trade. For readers of this journal, the most significant aspects of *Thundersticks* are the connections that it highlights between gun technologies and developments in Native politics and cultures, particularly in diplomacy and conflict among Indian groups.

*Thundersticks* begins with the Iroquois’ embrace of the newly invented flintlocks manufactured by the Dutch in the 1630s, and their development of tactics and techniques that allowed them to dominate the Northeast for most of the century and raid as far west as the Great Lakes. But other Native groups also obtained guns, from the French as well as the Dutch, creating a regional arms race and a rising spiral of violence. Similar dynamics operated in the Southeast where the English gave firearms to Native allies to raid Spanish Florida for slaves, and neighboring communities formed defensive confederations and went slaving to obtain guns.

Silverman highlights the political and technological ingenuity that enabled Native groups to resist colonial power by stockpiling munitions, fixing weapons, and obtaining firearms from many sources. Although the Puritans gained victory in King Philip’s War by enlisting Iroquois warriors to prevent Metacom’s access to guns and ammunition, Natives around the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley were usually able to resist colonial forts and farms because “their sophisticated multilateral diplomacy and economic influence” allowed them to obtain firearms easily from “rogue traders” (153). Similarly, Yuquots and Tlingits in the Northwest used the guns obtained from Americans and British not only to extend their power but also to deter aggressive Russians and, later, traders when they became troublesome. Seminoles resisted efforts to push them out of Florida to “Indian Territory” by capturing guns from U.S. troops or buying them from Cuban fishermen and even Americans at treaty negotiations.

Finally, *Thundersticks* shows how tribes on the Great Plains reshaped their politics to control the firearms trade often hundreds of miles from Euro–American sources—including the nomads whose embrace of horses
and guns to hunt bison shattered the region’s economic and social diversity. In the 1820s, the eastern Natives “removed” to the Southern Plains gained an upper hand because they had flintlock rifles, which were superior on this terrain; later, U.S. agents supplied new gun technologies like the Sharps repeating rifle. Meanwhile, far to the north, the Blackfeet “developed a full-fledged political economy of firearms” (250), playing American and Canadian fur companies against each other to obtain a nearly limitless supply of smoothbore muskets that they used less to hunt than to fight the Cree and the Crow.

Silverman’s argument is that, regardless of these many variations, firearms served Natives as critical tools to defend and expand their territory and power, not as a Trojan horse leading to their subordination. Furthermore, he acknowledges the often-described terrors and carnage of firearms and their trade, including the epidemics brought by traders and the blowback of intensified warfare often driven by the desire to monopolize access to the deadly weapons. Thundersticks also suggests re-interpretations and new avenues of study: It concludes with members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) flaunting AK-19s at Wounded Knee in 1972, suggesting that guns became potent symbols for Native peoples. Although we usually think of Native Americans attacking forts, nearly every chapter of the book depicts Native communities building sophisticated and effective ramparts, some featuring small cannons.

The book has a few noticeable gaps. To name two, it offers few discussions of the social changes that resulted from gun culture, particularly for women, and it includes no maps to aid in navigating the text. But aside from such blips, this strongly written account will appeal to a wide readership and offer new interpretations and future avenues for scholars.

Daniel Mandell
Truman State University


Since the early 1990s, and the publication of Hall’s and Usner’s pioneering books on colonial Louisiana, the French colony has attracted the attention of a rising number of historians of early America.1 One reason for this interest is the availability of rich primary sources. Historians of French Louisiana thought that they had located all of the existing documentation, but the re-discovery and purchase of the travel account

written by Marc-Antoine Caillot—a clerk in the service of the Company of the Indies in New Orleans between 1729 and 1731—by the Historic New Orleans Collection in 2004 was a pleasant surprise. Although scholars could already rely on the travel accounts of a few military officers, a ship’s captain, a nun, or a director of the Company’s plantation, Caillot’s memoir offers an original perspective on French Louisiana society because of the author’s background, profession, culture, and style.

While working on the edition of Caillot’s manuscript (A Company Man: The Remarkable French-Atlantic Voyage of a Clerk for the Company of the Indies), Greenwald, curator of the Historic New Orleans Collection, decided to use Caillot’s account to “[examine] Louisiana in a new way—as a colony of the French Company of the Indies—and [place] the development of the colony within the context of the company’s global trade network” (2). The result is this small but well-crafted book. Divided into six chapters that follow Caillot’s journey from Paris to New Orleans, it constitutes a detailed contextualization of an extraordinary primary source.

Marcel Giraud’s five-volume, monumental A History of French Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1953–1991)—the last three volumes of which are devoted to the period 1717–1731—paid great attention to Louisiana as a colony of the Company. Yet, since the early 1990s, most non-Francophone historians of Louisiana have neglected Giraud’s contribution, failing to reflect thoroughly enough upon the impact of the Company’s trade monopoly on the government, economy, and society of Louisiana. In that regard, Greenwald, too, might have written more about this subject. Her two short chapters about the time that Caillot spent in the colony do not engage with a new historiography seeking to analyze the specificity of American colonies run by proprietors and companies.

Contrary to what the book’s title seems to imply, the Company of the Indies was not a purely commercial enterprise. The purpose of the trade monopoly that was granted to the Company in Louisiana was not only intended to suppress economic competitors; it was also conceived as a privilege designed to serve colonial development. The Company was under the obligation to populate and settle the colony. Because its monopoly involved both trade and property, it was a vassal to the monarch, empowered with kingly rights and prerogatives. The Crown, moreover, closely supervised and controlled the Company and the colony. Sovereignty ultimately belonged to the king in theory as well as in practice. In Louisiana, the Company in no way constituted a “company-state” that functioned as a political authority and community on the model of the East India Company.

Greenwald does not participate in the ongoing debate about the existence of a genuine early French empire. Yet, Caillot’s career took him from Paris to Louisiana and then to India. One of his relatives worked for the Company in the Parisian headquarters, and two others sought their fortune in Saint-Domingue. At stake is how family connections and the circulation of administrators contributed to the construction of an empire. The Company’s operations were re-oriented toward the Indian Ocean.
when Caillot left New Orleans for Pondicherry. But even before 1731, the Company’s domain already extended from the Americas to Asia. In that light, the question is whether scholarly analysis of French colonization and trade in the eighteenth century should be confined exclusively to the Atlantic world or whether it should be expanded to a global scale. A more direct treatment of these crucial historical and historiographical issues would have given greater scope to Greenwald’s book.

Cécile Vidal
École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales


Spero’s *Frontier Country* is an ambitious book that aims to revise our understanding of early American frontiers using the history of colonial and revolutionary Pennsylvania as a case study. Spero poses a bold challenge both to the traditional, Turnerian view of the frontier as a safety valve and to more recent conceptions of it as a borderland. He argues that these analytic categories fail to account for eighteenth-century conceptions of the frontier as “a zone that people considered vulnerable to invasion,” where settlers “feared onslaught from imperial rivals and other enemies” (6).

In the ten chapters that follow, Spero analyzes just how the frontier as defensive zone worked in practice by offering a detailed, chronologically based examination of key events in Pennsylvania’s eighteenth-century history. His examples range from small, anecdotal incidents of violence between settlers and Native peoples, which he unpacks as mini-case studies, to larger-scale, sustained episodes of violence, including Pennsylvania’s various eighteenth-century border wars with Maryland, Connecticut, and Virginia; 1760s uprisings of Paxton Boys and the Black Boys (which he elevates to a rebellion); and the American Revolution and Whiskey Rebellion. In each case, he demonstrates how either violence or the threat of violence, mostly from outsiders and particularly from Native Americans, inspired bifurcated responses. When settlers and Native peoples felt threatened, they most often demanded protection from the government in the form of intervention—most often military intervention. Those governing the colony and state, meanwhile, generally tried to respond, but they did so mostly to advance their own agendas to make policy, establish the rule of law, and claim territory.

Spero’s research is grounded mostly in traditional print and manuscript collections. Given the geopolitical focus of his work, his reliance on the colony’s official published records and the many unpublished collections of writings by political, military, and diplomatic leaders makes perfect sense. His primary interdisciplinary methodologies are the digital text-mining techniques that he employs to trace the frequency of the word *frontier*[s] and map its occurrence over time and space. Four charts and three maps (all but one appearing in the book’s coda), offer visual representations of the data, which Spero uses to situate Pennsylvania’s history in a broader geopolitical and global context. A small, generally unimpressive companion website, mappingfrontiers.com, duplicates the book’s charts and maps and provides more detailed representations of the data. Spero also shares his data sets in downloadable Excel spreadsheets on the site.

*Frontier County* represents an enormous amount of research and analysis. Spero has done admirable work in the archives, locating new materials that revise our understanding of Pennsylvania’s early history, particularly events like the Black Boys’ Rebellion. By narrating Pennsylvania’s early history from the vantage point of its frontiers as defensive zones where fears ran high and violent conflict was always near, his book puts the final nail in the coffin of the long-standing idealized portrait of William Penn’s “Peaceable Kingdom.” As with any ambitious work, however, some loose ends remain. Spero makes a strong case for frontiers as defensive zones in Pennsylvania, but he confines his discussion of Pennsylvania’s representativeness to his introduction and coda. Although he also goes a long way toward debunking Turner’s notion of frontier as safety valve, he does little to challenge Turner’s emphasis on the primacy of the white male frontiersman. To be sure, Native peoples are definitely agents and victims in *Frontier Country*, and a few women also make an appearance, but the focus of this book remains on the white male frontiersmen and the provincial and state leaders who made Pennsylvania into a keystone of a white male republic. Nevertheless, anyone interested in early Pennsylvania or the history of the American frontier will find much to admire in this important book.

Judith Ridner  
Mississippi State University


In *Unfreedom*, Hardesty seeks to move beyond the familiar dichotomies of slavery and freedom by examining slavery as part of a “continuum of unfreedom” in the early modern Atlantic world, grounding his analysis in the social and cultural history of colonial Boston. “In this hierarchical,
inherently unfree society,” Hardesty observes, “slavery must be put in the context of a larger Atlantic world characterized by a culture of dependence” (2). Mid-eighteenth-century Boston, a bustling provincial seaport, was a world of nested hierarchies headed by an unseen God, a distant king, and an array of local elites. It was also a world of household governance in which husbands ruled over wives; parents ruled over children; and “masters” ruled over apprentices, bound servants, and slaves. At the center of Hardesty’s analysis is a specific conception of freedom, independence, and rights. Eighteenth-century Bostonians, he argues, did not believe in “universal” human rights; rather, they believed that individuals held certain customary rights commensurate with their rank and social position (3). Slaves may have been at the bottom of this social order, but they were part of it nevertheless. Like other early modern people, enslaved Bostonians did not single-mindedly struggle to overthrow the social order or to achieve an idealized state of absolute freedom. They strove to learn the prevailing social system and to manipulate it to their own advantage (6).

This important insight leads to Unfreedom’s most productive methodological strategies and analytical discoveries. As Suzanne Meirs and Igor Kopytoff observed decades ago in Slavery in Africa (Madison, 1977), the modern Western ideology of “freedom” implies a false opposition between slavery and individual autonomy. For many slaves, the pursuit of “freedom” lay in the protections and rights afforded by successful attachments within a well-defined social hierarchy. Hardesty’s Boston was much like Meirs and Kopytoff’s Africa, where “the antithesis of ‘slavery’ is not freedom qua autonomy but rather belonging” (17). Taking advantage of extensive research in legal records and other sources, Hardesty develops this argument in a series of thematic chapters.

Hardesty begins with an engaging and illuminating analysis of the origins of enslaved Bostonians. He concludes that many of these people had experiences as slaves in Africa or in the West Indies that shaped their strategies for entering the social world of colonial Boston, seeking protections, and demanding rights. He then explores the households that these men, women, and children inhabited. Gleaning patterns from thousands of mid-eighteenth-century probate records, Hardesty shows that most of the enslaved Bostonians were owned not by gentlemen at top of the social hierarchy but by working men of the middling ranks (such as artisans and mariners) or by widows. In such households, one or two slaves comprised a large portion of their owner’s total wealth and constituted a crucial form of productive property (50). Moreover, Hardesty’s survey of newspaper advertisements for runaway servants reveals the range of other unfree workers—many of them Irish, Native American, or English—who labored alongside slaves. At this time, children were routinely separated from their families and bound out to masters: Middling parents apprenticed their sons to masters who could train them in a craft or trade, and local governments bound out the children of paupers to avoid the cost of their support (63).
Living and working alongside other servants and laboring people, enslaved Africans sought to define their relationships with their masters in terms of rights and reciprocal obligations—ranging from the right to be protected from physical abuse and the right to form a family to the right to work on one’s own terms and to live away from one’s master (67). But, how successful were they? From Hardesty’s analysis it is hard to tell. His principal interest is not so much in the balance of power as in the efforts of slaves to assert themselves and lay claim to various forms of social honor, meaning, and belonging. He convincingly argues that the most important bargaining chip that slaves possessed was the value of their own labor (134–135); his interest lies in how they used it. Hardesty maintains that the colonial culture of dependence created spaces in which enslaved Bostonians could form families, find independence in the workplace, protect themselves from slavery’s worst abuses, achieve a measure of autonomy, expect fair treatment from the law, and use their status as Christians to assert claims (180–182). He goes on to argue that this culture gave slaves distinct advantages; but his framework does not allow him to fully develop this sort of comparison with other slave societies.

If Hardesty’s view of colonial slavery seems a little rosy, his view of the Revolutionary era is decidedly unromantic. In a brief afterword, he casts the end of slavery in Boston as an ideological battle that began during the imperial crisis of the 1760s, when slaves appropriated the language of universal rights and personal liberty, and ended long after a series of court cases confirmed that slavery was incompatible with the state’s new constitution (165). But freedom was not the same as equality: “In this new world of freedom, old obligations and duties fell to the wayside, leaving newly freed slaves out in the cold, without a safety net, and unprepared to confront the racial structures formed around emancipation” (11). In a world of independence, black Bostonians would have to fight simply to assert their right to belong.

John Sweet
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill


In this book, Kelly deftly brings together, in admirably lucid prose, a range of objects, institutions, artists, and contexts that are not often successfully combined. Her aim is to contribute a new understanding to the ways in which “the American republic of taste promised women and men a new and better way of being in the world,” even as it commodified and thus eroded the hierarchies that structured it (244). Kelly’s central thesis is posed in two questions: “Did an early national vocabulary of
taste, with its privileged visuality, register beyond the debates over the ratification of the Constitution? Did it truly extend beyond political and politicized discourse to inform the imaginative structures and material forms of everyday life?” (5).

Showing a keen eye for novelistic detail, Kelly is at her best when using texts to illuminate how taste figured in the lives of everyday individuals, including largely forgotten artists (particularly female ones), academy students, and museum-keepers. In a chapter dedicated to aesthetized performances of taste and sensibility in early national academies, for example, we learn that unfortunate slouchers in Elizabeth Way’s school for girls in Delaware, for instance, were punished with “necklaces of Jamestown-weed burrs” for neglecting the physical grace that gentility demanded (32).

Ironically, although connoisseurship is vitally important to Kelly’s argument, it is less important to her methodology. Thus, the personalities that she summons from original archival sources sparkle, but her analysis of paintings and other material objects is sometimes less compelling. For instance, two ivory portrait miniatures—one of a freed African-American woman named Elizabeth Freeman (or “Mumbet,” as she was called) by a daughter-in-law of the Sedgwick family who employed Freemen, and the other a self-portrait by an obscure female artist from Connecticut—strain under the weight of Kelly’s excessive biographical and technical details. Though fascinating, the information does not connect easily to the miniatures themselves, or to such intriguing insights as the notion that the Sedgwicks doubly appropriated Freeman’s likeness, first by painting it and then by overtly racializing it.

Indeed, Kelly’s true quarry are not the mute objects or abstract practices of looking but the garrulous people and the political institutions that they embodied. Hence, Kelly often couples her ambition to tell the story of taste in early national America in glittering and expansive detail with a synthesis of the earlier work of art and architectural historians. In a chapter about the studied apoliticism of William Hamilton’s Philadelphia estate, the Woodlands, which the author convincingly argues was designed to deflect attention from thornier problems of his loyalism, Kelly “leans heavily” on a history commissioned by the National Park Service, as well as various master’s theses and doctoral dissertations (267). The intersection of political economy with biography, rather than with art history, seems to be the true animating focus of Kelly’s book.

Although visuality is a key term for Kelly’s project, she does not engage the kind of critical theory, such as that of Jay and Crary, that informed de Bolla and Bellion’s inquiries into the place of perception

---

in Anglo-American culture during the long eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{2} Her work therefore extends, rather than revises, our understandings of the importance of seeing for the period as a whole. Nevertheless, the book deserves the close attention of scholars who study the literary, political, and visual cultures of early national America precisely because of its impressive breadth and liveliness.

Catherine Holochwost
La Salle University

*The American Dream in History, Politics, and Fiction.* By Cal Jillson (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2016) 368 pp. $45.00 cloth $22.95 paperback

The thesis at the heart of this learned romp through American history and literature is that the nation’s great authors have never bought what its politicians were selling. On sale has been the “American Dream,” “the promise that . . . hard work and fair play will almost certainly lead to success” (6). In careful summaries, Jillson shows that America’s great novels doubt the Dream’s attainability for reasons of psychology, culture, gender norms, and racial bias. Although fully acknowledging the hurdles that these tales illustrate, Jillson prescribes a re-dedication to a version of the American Dream as a remedy.

Substantive chapters are organized chronologically, each describing the events of an era, the political thought of its leading politicians, and summaries of select novels of the time (or, in some cases, novels about the time). These chapters are bounded by the observations of social scientists at the beginning and the end of the book. An introduction summarizes and comments about major intellectual and cultural interpretations of the United States, and the final chapter presents findings about social mobility, American attitudes about opportunity, and the effects of race and gender on life prospects. The scope of the book is a tremendous undertaking, offering the temptation to pick at its edges for errors of omission or disputable literary interpretations. But such nitpicking would be a disservice to the book’s challenging view that writers and critics sometimes present a bleak picture of American life to compensate (or even over-compensate) for the routinely hollow promises of politicians.

Jillson demonstrates that the American Dream is also not a single concept. It has meant different things to different individuals, and it changes through time. Benjamin Franklin first articulated a basic version. The concept has endured throughout the centuries by employing three

compelling metaphors—the shining “city on a hill . . ., the balance between the dollar and the man, and the fairly run footrace” (262). Jillson admires the more inclusive and aspirational versions of the American Dream, which he attributes to the American founders and to Progressive-era intellectuals like Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann. Unfortunately, however, although “the American Dream still beckons our well-educated elites, it mocks most others” (287). Jillson offers a few policy suggestions as a corrective, but such is not the stock in trade of the book, which is rhetoric and cultural belief.

Jillson’s American Dream is worth a read even if only to gain a greater understanding of how American literature has dealt with the social and economic aspirations of the American people. That the book moves well beyond this subject to present a rare, unified theory of American politics and literature is what makes it special. As with any book so ambitious questions remain. Is there really something particularly American in the promises of our politicians, or are such promises endemic to electoral politics? Likewise, is American literature more fraught than that of other nations, or does great literature inevitably deal in pathos and unmet struggle? At issue is just how distinctive a tale is told in this book and whether there is a direct relationship between what politicians say and what novelists write—matters that lie outside the scope of this work. Nonetheless, Jillson’s literary and political history of the United States, with its plea to re-imagine a more humane American Dream, is an impressive piece of work.

David J. Siemers
University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh


In Designing Gotham, Logel provides a service by reminding us that New York City did not build itself. Histories of the city are inclined to focus on the political and economic forces instrumental in the growth and development of the nation’s leading metropolis. One obvious exception is David McCullough’s The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge (New York, 1972), a work celebrating heroic engineering on a massive scale. As Logel states, “While much of this urban transformation has been documented, the role of individuals educated at the U.S. Military Academy on the ‘S’ turn of the Hudson River remains mostly unexplored or unnoticed in New York history” (3).

Concentrating on West Pointers, especially in their civilian roles, Logel is particularly interested in demonstrating West Point’s production of “a body of experts who advanced science, technology, and engineering
throughout the nation, most notably through the Army Corps of Engineers (4). A rich history of the Corps already exists, especially through the auspices of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers History Office, but Logel’s book is much more urban in its focus and more assertive in its claim that West Point engineers through human relationships “forged uniquely American ideas in the development of engineering, professionalism, and civic administration” (5). Such a claim assumes a much deeper role for these engineers than mere construction, edging toward a central authority in city/regional planning and urban decision making. Logel wants to connect the work of his West Pointers to movers and shakers like William Marcy Tweed and Andrew Haswell Green (a little early for Robert Moses), who received more headlines for making the city than did the engineers.

Logel comes close to crossing a line that equates his engineers with the historically familiar city builders, but he never really crosses it. He justifiably accepts Crackel’s view that the military academy’s history reflected the nation, and that the individuals discussed shared a West Point experience that “shaped their actions and influence in the city” (7). But making the West Point engineers central to the study—to the exclusion of a broader context for the city—may overstate the case. Designing Gotham, therefore, should be viewed as a complementary study rather than as a corrective to our understanding of city building.

The eight chapters systematically lay out the players, their influences, and their actions. Chapter 1 outlines West Point’s influence in “Victorian Gotham”—helping to develop the American Society of Civil Engineers, setting urban development and public-works standards replicated through the country, and establishing relationships between technical professionals and political leaders. This useful structure would have been made stronger, however, by greater attention to New York City history itself, especially for events leading to consolidation in 1898. Chapters 2 and 3 tread familiar ground by discussing the education imparted at West Point, although the information is necessary to underline Logel’s major arguments.

Chapter 4 focuses on the early growth of New York City, the professionalization of civil engineers, the significance of the Croton Aqueduct (providing the city with its water supply), and the introduction of key participants. Logel makes a solid connection between the West Point system and important early features of the city’s growth, carefully explaining the extent of the engineers’ power in bringing about change. Chapter 5 turns to Central Park, opened in 1858. This topic usually focuses on Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, but Logel instead gives primary attention to Egbert Viele, the park’s chief engineer, who was replaced by Olmsted in May 1858. In one of the most interesting parts of the book, Logel follows Viele from Central Park through sanitation

---

1 See Theodore J. Crackel, West Point: A Bicentennial History (Lawrence, 2002).
reform to mass transit and elevated railroads, thus resurrecting an important figure worth further study.

In Chapters 6, Logel explores how engineers fulfilled or modified Green’s vision of New York. A lawyer, planner, and civic leader, Green is regarded as the “Father of Greater New York” for his contribution to the development of Central Park, the New York Public Library, the Bronx Zoo, and the various steps leading to the city’s consolidation in 1898. In Logel’s mind, the engineers helped with the process of physically consolidating the boroughs of the city that began with Green. Chapter 7 discusses issues in the post–Civil War years, including engineers as city managers and as political links between the antebellum city and the modern metropolis. Chapter 8 puts a cap on the story, suggesting, “In New York, perhaps, West Point’s engineers made their greatest contribution to the nation” (190).

Designing Gotham departs from the norm by giving the work of technical experts, in this case engineers, a closer look in nineteenth-century city building. Many studies deal with the building process itself and the role of civil engineers in producing essential infrastructure; some of them even treat engineers as urban decision makers. Yet, Logel’s efforts to link the vision of city building to the training and perspectives of engineers bears further examination. Logel took on a Herculean task in relating New York’s early history with West Point. Although his discussion of key episodes in the city’s history is often sketchy, given his divided subject matter, his overall argument merits serious consideration. Can his engineers rightfully cross the line from technical experts to urban visionaries?

Martin V. Melosi
University of Houston

Schooling in the Antebellum South: The Rise of Public and Private Education in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. By Sarah L. Hyde (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2016) 212 pp. $42.50

Hyde has produced a well-researched and clearly written history of education and schooling in the Gulf States before the Civil War. Too often, she claims, scholars have overlooked the extent to which southerners valued education. By 1860, the three Gulf States had mandated state systems of public schools for white children, reflecting a wider regional commitment to intellectual improvement. Schooling in the Antebellum South argues that, contrary to the writings of many historians of education, white citizens in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama embraced learning.

Historians of education have eclectic research interests. Most of them study institutions such as schools while some focus on the wider sources of learning. Hyde explores both formal and informal arenas of
instruction in the antebellum South, confirming some well-known themes. The wealthiest families, including the planter class, often hired tutors and sent their daughters to privately run academies and their sons to college. Middle-class families also patronized academies, which were sometimes subsidized by state government. Moreover, white parents from various social backgrounds frequently taught their children basic literacy at home. In rural areas, pupils sometimes attended one-room schools; in certain towns and cities, the poorer children attended charity schools. New Orleans was exceptional in this respect. Influenced by New England’s example of tax-supported education, the city received national acclaim for its (all-white) public schools. Compared with urban centers, the countryside had a weaker tax base and scattered settlement, but school enrollments in the Gulf States grew over time, reinforcing Hyde’s thesis regarding southern support for education.

Schooling in the Antebellum South explores the rise of schools and the varied experiences of pupils in rural and urban settings. As Kaestle emphasized in his influential scholarship about the origins of public schools, northern educational activists before the Civil War urged rural citizens to emulate towns and cities. Hyde discovered a similar dynamic in the Gulf States. Urban-based reformers, whether in Boston or New Orleans, Philadelphia or Natchez, championed the leading innovations of the day—age-graded classrooms, uniform text books, and high schools. Adopting these reforms in rural communities without a dense concentration of pupils proved challenging if not impossible, a common problem throughout the nation and especially in the South.

Although she acknowledges that the Gulf States’ investment in public school systems lagged behind that of the North, Hyde demonstrates that key southerners championed a well-funded, comprehensive system, albeit exclusively for white children. Governors in the Gulf States generally supported greater financial support for public schools, but legislators frequently rejected it, especially after the Panic of 1837 emptied state coffers. Governors invoked claims, often heard in the North, that ignorance and freedom were incompatible, that the republic’s survival rested on an informed citizenry, and that public schools were essential. Although the evidence is murky, Hyde asserts that “Jacksonian democracy” strongly motivated whites to champion public schools. Aware of the greater educational advantages available in cities, rural residents demanded the same treatment. But if all of this enthusiasm was real, why did legislators often fail to raise taxes for schools when economic conditions allowed or to approve binding laws to fund and maintain them? Did the fear of slave revolts and the specter of a rising abolitionist movement temper their support for schools? How did the idea of white supremacy shape the ideology of the champions and opponents of public schools?

1 See, for example, Carl F. Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780–1860 (New York, 1983).
Hyde based her study on an impressive array of archival sources—diaries, manuscript collections, and school and legislative records. She brings to life the experiences of school children poring over their lessons, attending public examinations, and confiding in their diaries. *Schooling in the Antebellum South* exaggerates its claim that historians too often ignore how much southerners embraced learning and education. Nor does New England hold the center of attention among historians of education as it did a generation ago. But Hyde rightly reminds readers that education occurs in a variety of settings and that all the world is not Boston.

William J. Reese
University of Wisconsin, Madison


In *All the Facts,* Cortada seeks to enlarge our thinking about information and its role in the broad sweep of American history. In this ambitious project, Cortada tracks the growth and cumulative effects of information in business and industry, government and education, and work and home life throughout a period of 150 years. He treats each of these domains in turn, using World War II as a chronological fulcrum. The narrative is encyclopedic. Studies of bureaucracy and information technology sit alongside discussions of cookbooks and baseball box scores. In addition to focusing on textual information—reports, surveys, manuals, newspapers, and books—Cortada also emphasizes the role of informal networks—civic, professional, and religious organizations—as embodied conduits of knowledge sharing and community building. The history of information, in Cortada’s telling, includes both management consultants and the Boy Scouts.

At a basic level, *All the Facts* documents the sheer volume and variety of information that flooded the United States after the Civil War. The book is filled with tables illustrating undeniable patterns of multiplication. Yet “more information” is only part of the story. As Americans became habituated to information, Cortada argues that they also became increasingly dependent upon its use. Corporate managers relied on filing systems and accounting; farmers turned to new agricultural science; government officials consulted statistics; academics chased after the latest research in new journals; and citizens looked to a growing array of guidebooks for instruction in the care of their homes and children. Defining information as an instrumental resource, Cortada’s history is primarily concerned with the application of useful facts and data to practical problems. According to Cortada, information ecosystems in every sphere of life “thickened,” and new ecosystems emerged,
as Americans pursued economic prosperity, technological advancement, and self-improvement.

Cortada’s effort to capture the totality of America’s long information revolution is well organized and often insightful. Sections about office work, industrial research, management, computing, and the internet display his prodigious knowledge. Strangely, however, this book largely ignores three of the twentieth century’s most potent information-disseminating technologies—film, radio, and television. Although millions of Americans have spent countless hours in movie theaters, around radio sets, and in front of their televisions, Cortada has little to say about how these media added to the nation’s information ecosystems. He acknowledges television’s outsized influence (“it would be difficult to overstate the significance of television in creating shared identities, experiences, and collectively known information” [379]), but devotes only three pages to the topic. Likewise, he neglects to examine advertising, one of the most pervasive features of the American information environment, despite his charitable view of promotional messaging as a genre of information rather than propaganda (304).

A more serious problem, however, is the book’s lack of engagement with power relationships. Framing the book rather benignly as a descriptive “catalog of the American experience” (xvii), Cortada avoids wading into debates surrounding the politics of gender, race, and class. Despite paying lip service to social disparity—women relegated to the home, African Americans lagging behind whites in literacy and education, and income inequality worsening—he tends to ignore, or brush to the side, gender dynamics, discrimination, and structural barriers in the larger story of forward motion and plentitude.

Social and cultural historians will find much to dispute in this account, as Cortada correctly anticipates. In a book that attempts to cover so much material, Cortada could certainly be forgiven for bracketing certain sub-topics and themes. But power is not ancillary to information; it is fundamental to it. Political, economic, and ideological commitments determine what information is produced and how that information is distributed and deployed. Because information is never apolitical, histories of information cannot be apolitical either. All the Facts offers an expansive account of institutional and technological change, but its buoyant narrative of progress and informational enrichment conceals as much as it reveals.

Josh Lauer
University of New Hampshire


Carruthers acknowledges that her impressive, data-driven new book about the experience of American soldiers during occupation after World War II
testifies to a renewed interest in the subject. The demarcation between war and peace is rarely clear. All wars have far-reaching societal consequences, affecting the psychologies of both the defeated and, as we learn from Carruthers, the victorious. This point is no more evident today than in Iraq, which she uses as a foil for discussing “successful” military occupations (10). Success, she points out, is not easily measured. This book therefore aims to show how the morally ambiguous behavior of American soldiers during occupation transformed into the “good occupation” of national legend (10).

Despite her overarching focus on the construction of the myth surrounding American occupation, Carruthers’s exposé of the soldiers’ psychological repercussions may well be the book’s most important contribution. She explores not only the collective forgetfulness about the American experience of occupation, which helps to explain the formation of the national legend, but also the gritty realities and challenges that the soldiers themselves had to endure, which she reconstructs using thousands of their letters and diaries.

The book does not take a didactic interdisciplinary approach to explain the psychological effects of military duty during the occupation. Carruthers instead weaves a nuanced analysis of soldiers during occupation in locations from North Africa and Okinawa to Germany and Japan around an elegant chronological narrative. The soldiers in her account are recognizably human. They had both high-minded ideals and selfish proclivities. They were often conflicted, especially regarding their treatment of people in occupied countries. At times, the soldiers were respectful, but they could also be derisive, racist, and abusive, often toward the same groups—as Carruthers demonstrates in Chapter 5’s discussion of American relations with Displaced Persons (DPs—for example, Jews [171–179]). These complexities highlight the soldiers’ mixed feelings about their dual role, as agents of control and providers of aid.

This picture challenges the self-laudatory accounts, though Carruthers is not the first to confront such narratives. Her discussion of crimes by American soldiers, including black-market exploitation, assault, and rape, complements a growing literature describing the harsher realities of American military rule. But she does not stop at further revealing occupation’s seedy underbelly. She also traces how an initially critical home-front press and citizenry, with little time for the moral relativism of state-building, eventually erased the occupation soldiers’ anxieties, travails, and misdeeds from collective memory. This narrative gambit was part of a longer cycle in American history that Carruthers astutely identifies. At the outbreak of World War II, an anti-imperialist vision of the United States completely overwhelmed the facts regarding the extensive prior occupations of foreign territory in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This willful amnesia re-emerged after World War II. Legends abounded about heroic GIs subduing the evils of caricatured Germans and Japanese, and a new mythos of American generosity to former enemies expunged the ugly parts of the occupation along with its necessary, though unglamorous, work.
In the end, Carruthers sifts through the murk of popular fantasy to display the genuine experience of occupation soldiers, placing them in a broader context of American narrative construction. The picture is rarely flattering. But, as Carruthers notes, for a proper understanding of why the post–World War II occupations succeeded, we need to appreciate the moral ambiguity that surrounds them, as well as the psychological toll that they placed on soldiers. Thus, Carruther’s book is an important, and eminently readable, addition to the postwar literature.

Thomas J. Kehoe  
Swinburne University of Technology

_Generos de Gente in Early Colonial Mexico: Defining Racial Difference._ By Robert Schwaller (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2016) 304 pp. $35.95

Schwaller’s _Generos de Gente_ divides into two parts. “Ideology and Law” tracks the etiology of early sixteenth-century Spanish royal degrees, revealing not only the historic processes that shaped the appearance of socioracial vocabularies, such as mestizo and mulato (15), but also how these vocabularies became entrenched into “Indies Law” (_derecho indiano_) (55). Schwaller’s second emphasis, “Lived Experience,” probes Inquisition records (1545–1599) through a novel methodology, eschewing evaluation of the cases themselves (85). Instead, his analysis concentrates on prosopography, collecting “substantial personal information suitable for qualitative analysis” to provide details concerning the lives, connections, and cultural identities of sixty slaves, natives, mestizos, and mulatos (115). The focus is on how these people “experienced life” in the early decades after the conquest (6). Both sections produce revisionist interpretations.

“Ideology and Law” tracks how legislation concerning mestizos and mulatos evolved. First, through petitions and complaints, elites as well as mestizos or mulatos “educated the monarch and his councils” about issues concerning the population mixes developing in the Indies, thereby defining “new categories of difference” (50, 51). The official response was to issue royal decrees copied directly from these documents that “perpetuated and entrenched” those socioracial “categories within colonial legal codes” (50). The Crown seldom issued blanket legislation for all the Americas at the same time. Schwaller notes how “royal legislation . . . in response to a particular problem in one jurisdiction of the Indies could be held as valid in other areas where similar problems existed” (54). The result was that elite calls for a law concerning mestizos in Peru might later be recopied for other jurisdictions in the Indies. What started as “popularly constituted social categories of difference,” such as mestizo and mulato, thus transformed “into juridical categories capable of regulation and enforcement by the legal system”
In effect, Schwaller provides a creative tracking of the origin of the casta laws.

Perhaps even more revisionist is Schwaller’s account of how people lived. He detects subtle differentiations in what historians have now recognized as the situational nature of socioracial status, dependent on a multiplicity of variables. His case histories detail how “the attribution of the mulato label followed a logic distinct from that of mestizo” (110), owing to the “greater consensus” about mulato identity and the greater “mutability” of the mestizo category (115). Most innovative is Schwaller’s focus on the role of “Afro-indigenous mulatos within the social order” (114), particularly given more recent understandings that they “may have accounted for as many as half of New Spain’s mulatos during the sixteenth century,” a percentage conceivably approximated elsewhere in other Indies locales (12).

The book is not always clear about the unique dynamics that might have promoted such African–Native mixings. Not until two-thirds of the way through it does Schwaller inform readers that the Spanish medieval law code, the Siete Partidas (1256–1265), provided male slaves with a stupendous option to free the next generation from bondage. If a mother possessed a “free womb,” the state of her reproductive organ rather than that of the slave father determined the status of offspring. Strikingly, only two of the sixty individuals in Schwaller’s research included links between slave mothers and free males; the rest involved links between slave males and Native or, later, black or mulato free-womb mothers and thus the subsequent birth of free sons and daughters (179, 196).

Nonetheless, Schwaller breaks new ground in probing the consequences of such Afro-indigenous mixes. He documents how slave fathers evinced “familiarity with both Hispanic and indigenous cultural beliefs and practices” (127), whereas their sons and daughters continued to maintain “strong multigenerational ties to indigenous kin that were often based on their acculturation to indigenous ways of life” (12). Such an approach is a stark reminder that scholars have focused too much on the development of post-conquest society through a Spanish lens—the ways in which conquistadores and later settlers viewed Natives, classified and created mixtures, or constructed laws.

This monograph raises compelling questions, some of them left hanging and some of them awaiting further research. What were the similarities and differences in how Native groups treated various African slaves and their mixed descendants, how did the multiplicity of Africans engage with different groups of Natives, and what assimilations did or did not occur? Schwaller’s pioneering research uses archival sources to probe beneath the surface, uncovering important new dimensions for scholars to explore.

Ann Twinam
University of Texas, Austin
The Gun in Central Africa: A History of Technology and Politics. By Giacomo Macola (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2016) 249 pp. $80.00 cloth $32.95 paper

Macola’s new book about the history of guns traces the diverse ways in which societies of the central African savannas domesticated or rejected foreign technology in pursuit of local concerns between the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Scholars have long recognized that guns were essential trade goods in the nineteenth century, but Macola argues that debates about guns’ relative historical significance often suffer from a technological determinism, focusing on the values imagined by European gun producers rather than African gun users. In contrast, Macola selects several well-documented regions to demonstrate the range of engagements with guns over time—the instrumental value of guns within Msiri’s violent Yeke trade polity, Nguni warriors’ rejection of guns in favor of long-standing technologies of honorable warfare, Kaonde communities use of guns in hunting as well as social payments, and the incorporation of guns into the growing symbolic repertoire of the recently restored Lozi monarch. The African relationship with guns later changed in response to colonial regulations about hunting and gun ownership, as well as opportunities to join colonial police forces and militias.

In tracking the history of guns in late precolonial and early colonial history, Macola deftly draws on concepts from science, technology, and society (STS), consumption, and material-culture studies, placing African history in conversation with those fields. He musters an impressive number of nineteenth-century sources: early colonial and missionary records and publications (from archives in five countries), published travelogues, interviews in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, published collections of oral traditions and songs, African-language dictionaries, and communications with other scholars (including interviews from their personal papers). Although these kinds of sources are standard fare, two achievements stand out. First, Macola’s topic and comparative approach required him to collect numerous short references to guns across scores and sometimes hundreds of sources for each case study. Second, Macola worked with materials in at least five European languages and three regional African languages.

Macola could have pushed the non-documentary evidence further. He studied guns held in museum collections in Europe and Africa, but his analysis of the objects was often relegated to brief captions. Macola also studied vernacular lexicons. ChiLuvale speakers, for example, transferred terms that originated in archery to guns: *Buta* (bow) was applied to *gun* and *lukusa* (bowstring) was applied to *trigger* (61). These names illuminate “perceived structural similarities”; for example, “flintlocks . . . belonged to the same category as preexisting hunting tools” (61). Pressing the evidence further, Luval speakers thought of guns not as *any* hunting tool but as akin to a tool for shooting projectiles, a tool for specific kinds of hunting and warfare. KiKaonde speakers also connected gunnsmithship and archery
Macola’s discussion of the Nguni allows him to probe the distinction between projectile weaponry and technologies of close, face-to-face fighting (with spears and knobkerries) and to distinguish the Nguni reaction to guns by age and gender (Chapter 5). His evidence suggests that the distinction between projectiles and close weaponry was widespread, opening the possibility for a more nuanced story of gun adoption that takes into account the transferability of skills (for example, sighting and stillness in shooting) across particular technologies (gunmanship and archery) and calls into question an assumed universal skill in gun use. Macola effectively argues that guns were implicated in performances of Luvale and Kaonde masculinity, although the opportunities to demonstrate manhood were not necessarily evenly distributed.

These critiques should not distract from Macola’s considerable achievements. In his final chapter, Macola connects his story to recent histories of violence, intercontinental trade, and armament in central Africa, demonstrating anew that precolonial African history is both accessible in, and essential to, understanding contemporary Africa.

Kathryn M. de Luna
Georgetown University


This book provides a distinctive perspective on Chinese history that delves deeply into the economic activities occurring on the Qing dynasty’s frontiers, which Kim places within the changing global economy and relates to the status of Turkestan within the Qing polity. It offers a persuasive account of the different economic interests of Muslims in the region, moving beyond the conventional ethnic taxonomies that other historians have used to explain events there. In the eighteenth century, this area (today part of northwest China) was affected economically by global flows of silver as well as by the international market for ginseng that held great value for the imperial household.

Kim links the economics of the area to the political interests of the Muslim beg (or beig) leadership and the Qing court. The local Muslim economic elites needed Qing military force to ensure their new claims, including the displacement of older claims on common lands with privatization using a variety of labor forms. Qing officials were committed to a form of agrarian economic development for which the Muslim beg leadership became the local beneficiaries. The Qing state consolidated its political position in the area by making the new forms of economic exploitation beneficial to both the begs and themselves.

This book argues for the linked nature of the expansions of empire and of capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, thus integrating
Qing history into global history in ways that complement and qualify earlier scholarship. The complementarity concerns both the politics of incorporation into empire and the economics of frontiers in a globalizing economy. Kim’s claim that this development of Turkestan/Xinjiang connects Ming and Qing history is cogent. It distinguishes the Qing from earlier dynasties—in a way that the proponents of the “New Qing History” have failed to recognize in their enthusiasm for the Manchu nature of the Qing—and makes its agenda seem more similar to that of other early modern empires than to its own past. Finally, the book largely misses the opportunity to contrast the fiscal character of military mobilization for this region with the usual arguments about European state-making that highlight a particular kind of fiscal history tied to European military expansion.

R. Bin Wong
University of California, Los Angeles