Climate Change in Human History. By Benjamin Lieberman and Elizabeth Gordon (New York, Bloomsbury, 2018) 236 pp. $26.95

As the pace of global warming accelerates, scholars in different disciplines work together to identify climate changes in the preindustrial past. Historians and anthropologists have argued that these changes repeatedly influenced the fortunes of sprawling empires and hunter-gatherer communities alike. As this “climate history” grows in popularity and legitimacy, teachers and professors have sought to incorporate it within high school and introductory college courses. Yet many quickly found that the field’s most important publications are either too technical, too dense, too narrowly focused, too expensive, or too dated for junior students. What they lacked was a slim survey that synthesized in plain language the most cutting-edge scholarship of humanity’s experience with climate change throughout history.

Enter Climate Change in Human History, a collaboration between Lieberman, a wide-ranging twentieth-century historian, and Gordon, a geoscientist. In just 193 pages, Lieberman and Gordon take students from the end of the great Ice Ages to the manufactured controversies that surround present-day climate change. They draw exclusively on secondary sources, although the voices of historical actors struggling with climate change in literate societies occasionally add some color.

After a brief introduction that lightly touches on a selection of key concepts in climate history, the book proceeds chronologically. Its first chapter explains how climate changes on the grandest scales shaped the evolution and migration of Homo sapiens. The second chapter traces the consequences of the frigid Younger Dryas 12,000 years ago and then describes how warming set the stage for the emergence of agriculture. The chapter explains how regional and, at times, global climatic fluctuations influenced the emergence of complex societies and the heyday of the Roman and Han Empires. The fourth chapter focuses on decline and disaster in the cooler Little Ice Age, ending with the calamitous explosion of Mount Tambora in 1815. The sixth chapter explains how industrialization and the energy revolution freed a growing share of humanity from the constraints of climate. The seventh chapter surveys the worldwide consequences of anthropogenic global warming, and the eighth briefly describes climate models, projections, controversies, and international agreements.

At its best, Climate Change in Human History provides clear, succinct, and remarkably nuanced summaries of case studies that draw from diverse, multidisciplinary scholarship. For example, its treatment of the disappearance of Norse settlements in Greenland—a classic story of collapse amid the onset of the Little Ice Age—outlines the subsistence and economic strategies of the Greenlandic Norse, describes the regional consequences of climatic cooling, surveys Norse adaptation strategies, and contrasts different explanations for the Norse disappearance—all in three pages!
The best use of *Climate Change in Human History* will be to introduce, rather than replace, other landmark publications in climate history. The book occasionally falls into the trap of simply listing one big event after another, and its ambitious (maybe over-ambitious) scope leads it to skip lightly over some of the most important topics in climate history. It ignores the controversial consequences of the Mount Toba eruption 74,000 years ago and scarcely mentions the extinction of Neanderthals in the face of climate change and human competition. It largely omits the outcome of research into the resilience of prehistoric communities in the face of abrupt climate changes, such as the chilly “8.2k” event. It devotes one short paragraph to the volcanic eruptions of the 530s C.E., and the subsequent cooling of the so-called “Late Antique Little Ice Age.” It ignores the Spörer Minimum—arguably the first great cold phase of the Little Ice Age—and it barely mentions the ability of Tokugawa Japan and the Dutch Republic, among other societies, largely to withstand the seventeenth-century nadir of the Little Ice Age. The growing scholarship about the influence of global warming on the recent instability across the Middle East receives only the briefest attention.

The book covers so much ground that it must occasionally abandon its otherwise impressive subtlety to offer bridge sentences that ensure us, for instance, that “the shift to a relatively warm period in Europe between 1500 and 1550 helped boost population” (114). More importantly, the book’s brief introduction would have benefited from a clear description of Earth’s climate system, and the role of, for example, the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) and the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) within it. It could have also used a concise overview of the more or less direct causal pathways by which climate change influences human communities. This stratagem would have prepared readers for the case studies that come later. Readers might also have benefited from more consistent footnoting. Time and again, arguable claims drawn from major publications go unsourced.

Nevertheless, *Climate Change in Human History* is an important publication. Despite occasional and, in some cases, unavoidable shortcomings, it offers a clear, concise, and frequently sophisticated introduction to the environmental history of climate change—an introduction that has been a long time coming. As such, it should revolutionize how climate history is taught.

Dagomar Degroot  
Georgetown University


By the turn of the twenty-first century, mutual insurance seemed all but forgotten in the Western world. Both the expansion of the welfare
state and the ascent of commercial insurance during the course of the
twentieth century had eclipsed mutual insurance as a means to cover the
basic risks of life. Yet, now that the welfare state is retreating and com-
mercial insurance is becoming more and more inaccessible, mutual in-
surance is once again on the rise. The growing popularity of mutual
insurance merits a closer look at its history. How and why did it work?
Can it still work today? With these “simple questions” in mind (4), Van
Leeuwen explores the history of mutual insurance from the mid-sixteenth
century to the present.

Van Leeuwen defines mutual insurance as “insurance run by the
insured” (5), effectively linking the guilds of the sixteenth century
with nineteenth-century friendly societies and modern forms of micro-
insurance. The study takes the Dutch experience as a case in point, with
brief comparative discussions in each chapter touching upon the situation
in Great Britain, the United States, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. Van Leeuwen
is aware of the limitations of this choice; he explicitly claims that he does
not want to “argue that the Dutch mutual experience can be taken to rep-
resent the global experience” (11).

The study is organized chronologically, from the era of the guilds
(1550–1800) through the age of friendly societies (1800–1900) and the
rise and decline of modern trade union insurance (1900–1965) to the
new initiatives (1965–2015). The first three chapters are strong examples
of Van Leeuwen’s trademark approach—combining quantitative data
about funds, their longevity, membership, benefits, and conditions with
illustrative examples about their internal organization. All of this expo-
position is firmly rooted in a broad knowledge of welfare economics and
welfare history. The fact that the first three chapters are updated and
reworked versions of previously published papers has its drawbacks.
One of them is that Van Leeuwen does not always seem to have been
aware of recent publications while reworking them. Granted, keeping
up with the seemingly unending stream of new publications can be dif-
ficult, but much more was published after 2012 than the included list of
references seems to suggest, especially about the role of mutual insurers
in health care.

These are, however, minor annoyances that only a specialist would
notice. The real letdown of this study is Chapter 5, which feels like a
rush job. Pretending to discuss the period from 1965 to 2015, the chapter
actually deals only with the period after 2005, highlighting the laudable
but extremely marginal phenomenon of “bread funds” (broodfonds) and
the “exportation” of mutual health insurance to Tanzania and Ethiopia by a
Dutch nongovernmental organization (NGO). Furthermore, Van Leeuwen
makes some bold (and popular) but untenable claims—for example, that
health care is now being dominated by commercial insurers who are able
to block people from going to a physician or hospital (235–236). Both
claims are verifiably untrue. Oddly enough, enterprises such as UberPop
and AirBnB receive praise (242), but Van Leeuwen does not make clear
what they actually have to do with mutual insurance in the first place.
Fortunately, the study is redeemed by its closing chapter, which offers an insightful and well-informed discussion about what five centuries of mutualism can tell us about the principles and practices of mutual insurance. Van Leeuwen convincingly argues that the Dutch case reveals valuable lessons, especially about what mutual insurance can contribute to today’s global challenges concerning access, coverage, and sustainability of insurance arrangements. Is mutualism a viable alternative for state-run social security or commercial insurance? Opinions differ, but according to Van Leeuwen, in some cases and for some groups, it just might be. Throughout history, mutual insurers have found sometimes ingenious ways to combine what is necessary (insurance) with what is fun (sociability). “Would it not be wasteful,” Van Leeuwen ponders in the closing paragraph, “to allow the tradition of mutualism to come to an end?” (279). It would be.

Robert Vonk
Maastricht University


For a famously elite pastime, opera of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (never mind the nineteenth) sometimes seems strangely fixated on the progress of social equality—not because back then its appeal extended further across the classes (although here and there it might have) but because of its origins in court culture and, especially, its function as an arena for debate about the most important topical issues. This function is Cohen’s object of study, which he pursues through a rich network of texts: philosophical tracts, literature, political pamphlets, and private correspondence, as well as librettos. But he ignores almost completely its literal, physical embodiment, the reception of opera by audiences in the theater.

This absence of “live” reception is understandable; the relevant sources are scarce, uneven, and/or unreliable. But it is certainly something of a drawback. Cohen’s discussion of his methodology, which he idiosyncratically places at the end of the volume, considers at some length the importance of immediate historical context for his interpretative enterprise, but that context surely consists in ongoing social practices as much as specific events or more general contemporary mentalités. The nuances of group and performance dynamics in opera reception were thought significant enough to have been frequently represented in the other arts, notably the nineteenth-century novel, and they have long been a concern of historical musicology too. Cohen’s refusal to consider them means that he is unable to penetrate deeply into the different levels of meaning that an opera could have beyond those of contrived plot and real political background at the time of the first performance. Many of
the most important conduits of opera’s meaning have to do with the music and the singing, about which he has disappointingly little to say. Of all opera’s constituencies—from audiences who listen and spectators who watch to courtiers and socialites who mainly talk—he is interested in what might reasonably be considered the least important, its readers.

When Cohen does attend to musical detail, moreover, the argument often feels schematic. Certainly, opera’s successive public debates (the querelle des bouffons, the querelle des Gluckistes et des Piccinnistes, and so on) may—perhaps must—be read as more than musical. Just as important, all of those historical disputes over primacy—of melody over harmony, of words over music—and recurring cycles of decadence and reform are suggestively susceptible to metaphorical, or at least inter-discursive, treatment. But in this book, they tend merely to furnish material for long passages of (often brilliant) close comparative reading that are repeatedly brought up short by knowing parentheses. Often the punctuating phrase is “who rules?,” as if all genre-specific or other ostensibly parochial questions must necessarily not only reflect but also illuminate the changing political landscape. Metaphors that often seemed ready to open new vistas of socio-aesthetic symbiosis instead are abruptly reduced to mere wordplay.

The few more technical sallies (variously to do with horizontal and vertical reading of scores, key relations, the politics of sonata form, and, of course, the possible meanings of “harmony”) are sometimes even more jarring, and occasionally downright misleading. To take just one example, Cohen repeatedly designates the overture of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Don Giovanni as being in D major. It actually begins in D minor, before moving to D major and returning to D minor for the dinner scene music at the end; some would say that this bimodal scheme is just a small part of the work’s bracing challenge to its stated genre of opera buffa. At the very least, such moments appear awkward alongside Cohen’s fluent handling of the rest of his material. But they are also some of the most interesting. Terms of art need to be available for judicious interrogation outside that art; this re-reading is a predicate of genuinely interdisciplinary work. Cohen’s re-readings of those terms may not always be judicious, but they are always provocatively questioning.

Cormac Newark
Guildhall School of Music & Drama


Polity’s Press’s “What is History?” series asks leading practitioners to summarize the principal methods, findings, and interventions of important sub-disciplines in the historical field. Rosenwein and Cristiani’s welcome volume addresses the currently thriving sub-discipline of the
history of emotions. Rosenwein, a prominent contributor to the field, and her co-writer offer four succinct chapters, framed by a concise introduction and conclusion, creating a helpful “map,” as they describe it, for anyone seeking a general introduction to the field.

After briefly tracing the relatively recent emergence of “emotions” as a specific category of analysis in the nineteenth century out of such older conceptions as the passions, Rosenwein and Cristiani’s first chapter treats the principal scientific theories that were developed to explain them—from those of Darwin and James to the more recent interventions of social constructivists and social-affect theorists. To a large extent, historians must still reckon with these theories even as they develop their own approaches; the authors treat them accordingly, introducing readers to the questions that drive their work: Are emotions innate or acquired, universal or culturally constructed, cognitive or performative, instinctive or instrumental? Biologists, psychologists, sociologists, and historians have developed their own responses to such questions; examining them occupies the bulk of the second and third chapters. The authors clearly present the most influential approaches—“emotionology” pioneered by Peter and Carol Stearns, Reddy’s theory of “emotives” (or emotional expressions) and emotional regimes, Rosenwein’s own conception of overlapping emotional communities, and the recent view of emotions as performances—illustrating them with numerous examples from the literature. Even more creatively, the authors put those approaches into practice, examining a key historical text, the American Declaration of Independence, from the perspective of each of these four main methodological approaches.

The various readings are more suggestive than exhaustive, but that is precisely the point. The authors seek to show how different approaches yield different responses, and how innovative historians might draw on multiple methodologies in the history of emotions to yield new and creative readings of familiar texts. The chapter about “bodies” makes a similar point, underlining just how much the history of emotions has drawn from the innovative approaches of other sub-disciplines—from the history of medicine, gender, and sexuality to the affect theory and the study of space and material culture as practiced recently by literary theorists and scholars in cultural studies. The history of emotions, in turn, has given as good as it gets, infusing these various approaches with its own insights, while placing emotions on the agenda of a wide range of scholars.

Historians, as a rule, are better at describing the past than looking toward the future, and Rosenwein and Cristiani are no exceptions. Their final chapter about the future prospects of the discipline is less compelling than the others. They describe the history of emotions, despite its early interdisciplinary promise, as having turned inward to some extent, speaking increasingly to members of its own guild, a victim of its own success. At the same time, the authors observe, “We (in the West) live in an age fascinated with emotions,” and they lament that more people don’t look to historians for guidance. “It is time for educators, politicians, religious leaders, parents, and media creators to consider the history of emotions,” they conclude. Fair enough, but to do so means reaching out—and not just in the West, where the history of emotions has largely been confined. This volume has little to say about emotions elsewhere. Researchers could begin by venturing farther afield but also by seeking to provide a historical explanation for our current fascination with emotions. That is a labor of the future that students of the past are well-placed to perform.

Darrin M. McMahon
Dartmouth College


Not long ago, global histories commonly began with an explanation as to why a history of such scope might be possible and how any author could claim to address so much while omitting so much more (including a great deal that other historians emphasized). Nowadays, the case for global perspectives is familiar, along with recognition that history seen from the West, with its assumptions of progress, tends to slight the costs and miss the global connections that reveal how human history has actually worked. Patel and Moore do not feel the need to justify a global perspective in this concise, stimulating work, which is well suited to the American classroom, where the concept of global history has already won a place. Yet their introduction is this book’s longest chapter, since the book’s carefully contrived framework requires explanation.

This History of the World in Seven Cheap Things seeks to explain how capitalism has shaped modern history rather than to present a chronological narrative. Each chapter centers around one of the “cheap things” on which capitalism in effect insists—cheap nature, money, work, care, food, energy, and lives—and each chapter begins with Spain’s fifteenth-century intrusion into the American hemisphere, quickly finding in each of capitalism’s inexcusable demands the seeds of twenty-first-century crises. This is very much a work of our time, with its troubled attention to environmental disaster, subjugation of women, concentration of wealth, and
reliance on war. For a history of the world, it is also surprisingly present-oriented and Eurocentric. Each of the seven cheap things gets a chapter. Written in lively prose, these engaging chapters use well-chosen instances and striking data to illustrate their broader and sometimes tendentious points. The essay about cheap nature emphasizes the drive to strip forests, overwork the land, and pollute the atmosphere. Cheap money is about the priority given to profit. Cheap labor rests on systems that compel work and regiment workers. Cheap care is possible because society requires women to provide it without pay. Monoculture and unhealthful nurture underlie cheap food. The need for vast amounts of cheap energy creates pollution and harms the environment. Because human beings in every era resist these practices, laws and governments are required to enforce them and provide cheap lives.

The work’s passion is one of its strengths, leading the authors to draw upon studies in a wide range of fields (the bibliography is one-sixth of a relatively short book and unusual in the large proportion of its citations to articles in less well-known and specialized journals). Consistently critical of the evils of capitalism, Patel and Moore’s elaborately contrived framework aspires toward becoming a theory while also being consistently provocative. Even readers not convinced by the interpretation set forth in it (probably most of them) will find a lot to reflect on, including how much of world history is omitted. The authors have little to say about the millennia before 1500 or histories of the worlds not shaped by European imperialism. They include none of the optimism that marks Steven Pinker’s widely acclaimed, The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined (New York, 2011). Depredations in the past seem instead to forecast an apocalyptic end in the not-too-distant future. Nor do achievements in the arts or sciences matter much in this world history; it pays scant attention to philosophy or religion or to claims of progress in civic life, standards of living, or conceptions of human rights. Nevertheless, readers are likely to emerge from this book with a fresh outlook on, and deeper interest in, the history of the world, as well as with a firmer idea of how to vote in the next election.

Raymond Grew
University of Michigan


This highly intelligent and sophisticated work is primarily a discussion of three commentators on capitalism, two British and one Hungarian, although Polanyi wrote The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time (New York, 1944) after coming to Britain.
A good number of other significant figures also appear in the book: Karl Mannheim, F. R. Leavis, T. S. Eliot, Evan Durbin. Anthony Crosland. Ernst F. Schumacher, and Maurice Dobb. Oddly, Rogan has little to say about John Maynard Keynes’ attempt to preserve capitalism and create a better life for all through such entities as the Arts Council.

At present, the dominant intellectual assumption seems to be that capitalism is here to stay and its chief problem is a vast disparity of income. The three earlier critics featured in this book were far more skeptical about the system itself. Although Karl Marx was clearly important in their thinking, they tended not to follow him in believing that the system should be totally overthrown. In a way, the title is misleading. These men were not so much economists as critics of capitalism, in the sense that it did not produce a “moral economy” and did not treat those who lived within it fairly. They wrote fully in the British tradition, trying to steer a middle course between the excesses of individualism and collectivism, though not totally abandoning a commitment to individual worth while trying to improve the lot of the working class. The danger was such actions would go too far in the direction of authoritarian collectivism.

What does seem to be missing in Rogan’s perceptive discussion of his three major figures is that, particularly in the case of Tawney and Thompson, he does not pay enough attention to their anger at what capitalism has wrought, the price that the working class has paid for the prosperity of Britain. Rogan writes perceptively about the importance that Tawney and Thompson attached to the strength of local communities (based on their experiences teaching in the workers’ education movement), particularly in the north of England, where people paid the price for Britain’s prosperity. He also has an excellent sense of the significance of Christianity for all three writers, explicitly so with Tawney and Polanyi (who was born Jewish). Thompson was the son of Methodist missionaries, although his father abandoned his mission in favor of assisting the Indian independence movement. Thompson was the most politically active of the three, a committed Communist until the suppression of the uprising in Hungary in 1956. But even afterward, unlike many others, he remained an activist on the political left, notably on behalf of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. These writers rejected the idea that the prosperity of some eventually helped all.

Rogan’s analysis of Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1963) is particularly rich, claiming extravagantly but probably accurately that it “was surely the most widely read and most influential work of history published in English in the twentieth century” (158). Rogan’s biographical material about his three authors shows the degree to which the course of their lives influenced their work. He is particularly insightful about the importance of literature for Thompson, tracing the influence of Leavis’ belief in the moral role of literature in community values and social criticism. The contribution of literature and socialist activity to the improvement of society is key in the work of
William Morris and in Thompson’s biography of him that integrated all of Morris’ activities.¹

This book serves as a splendid reminder that capitalism may be morally wrong and that socialism need not be a brutal system. The British welfare state moved in a socialist direction, as did other European countries. But as the present state of capitalism testifies, worldwide, the misery of the many may be worse than it was in the recent past. That said, the book’s conclusion is odd. It should have been a final discussion of its three central figures and their moral critique of capitalism. Rather, it is a brief exposition of the ideas of Kenneth Arrow and Amartya Sen. Those two Nobel laureates may have updated the thinking of the “moral economists,” but Rogan fails to explain why they are appropriate to provide the culminating pages in this study. But as any good history should do, The Moral Economists illuminates the past, in the process providing insights about transforming capitalism to make it a system that is fairer to all, both economically and morally.

Peter Stansky
Stanford University

A Short History of European Law: The Last Two and a Half Millennia. By Tamar Herzog (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2018) 289 pp. $27.95

Every historian runs into law in one or another way: Letters refer to legal disputes; court records describe relations among neighbors; families are bound together and broken apart by law. Nor can law be separated from such large social and economic systems as slavery, feudalism, capitalism, or colonialism. Not every historian must be a legal historian, but some basic literacy in the institutions, sources, and ideas that surround law is likely to be helpful.

Herzog manages to provide such literacy, and more, in a brisk text of 243 pages. In different times and places, people have understood the law in distinctive ways. Herzog selects three topics that recurrently arise: Is law fundamentally of divine or human origin? Whatever its origin, what are the sources people use to determine what the law is? What institutions determine and apply the law? With only a handful of exceptions, she does not describe the content of legal rules—probably an impossible task in a short book.

Herzog also describes relevant scholarly controversies, typically siding with revisionist accounts that blur sharp distinctions that earlier scholars drew. For example, while acknowledging the differences between the

Within the mass of information succinctly presented, Herzog develops one overarching theme. Everywhere law adapted to change, but almost always under the guise of preserving continuity—if not continuity as institutions changed shape, continuity in the concepts thought to justify the use of those institutions. What the law was at any time and place depended heavily on its context, although those who wrote and thought about their law regularly asserted—and may have believed—that they were describing a context-independent law.

An important driver of change was pluralism, the encounter between those committed to one view of the law with communities holding different views of it. In retrospect, we can see dramatic differences between how law was understood in earlier centuries and how it became understood later (and today) after changes had accumulated, even though at nearly every moment, legal thought tended to insist that the law at that moment was little different from what it had been a while before.

A single example drawn from Herzog’s rich account can sketch how she develops this theme. She contrasts the American and French revolutions: “[I]n the Thirteen Colonies, . . . most actors appealed to natural law yet also wished to continue upholding many traditions,” whereas in France, “the declared aim was to create a new order, where norms would no longer be inherited from the past. Instead they would herald a future in which all decisions . . . would be mandated by natural law and reason.” Although this vision “transformed the French Revolution into an earthquake that allowed for the emergence of law as we know it today,” the vision “was sometimes more radical than the actual legal changes” (183–184). The concept of “natural law” was used in the two locations, but it meant something different in each. Nonetheless, some degree of continuity was preserved even as revolutionaries announced that they were breaking sharply with the past.

A work of this sort will inevitably make bold claims that studies of more discrete topics will qualify. It is written not for specialists who focus on one or another domain of substantive law in this or that nation and time but for general historians. Early in her or his training, every historian—no matter the specialty or period of study—would be well advised to step back and read through this superb work.

Mark Tushnet
Harvard University Law School

For the Sake of Learning: Essays in Honor of Anthony Grafton. Edited by Ann Blair and Anja-Silvia Goewing (Boston, Brill, 2016) 2 v. 1082 pp. $331.00

For the Sake of Learning is a splendid two–volume monument to Grafton’s career. Renaissancers are necromancers. Grafton is a master necromancer.
Whereas Odysseus dug a trench, poured libations, and sacrificed sheep to speak with the dead, one trusts that Grafton’s rites are more prosaic. Yet, possibly sometimes in his dreams, he panics like Odysseus and waves a sword at the horde of souls swarming from Erebus. His interlocutors—Joseph Scaliger, Politian, Battista Guarino, Gerolamo Cardano, Johannes Trithemius, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Guillaume Budé, Justus Lipsius, Lorenzo Valla, Johannes Kepler, Leon Battista Alberti, Isaac Casaubon, Edward Gibbon, Jacques Hardouin-Mansart, Giambattista Vico, John Dee, Athanasius Kircher—are a striving, clamorous crowd. Unlike the singing poets in Dante’s “splendid school” (Inferno 4.94) or the smiling lights in his “wheel” of Christian writers (Paradiso 10.145), Grafton’s men (and men they all are) vie for attention and bristle with hatreds and vices. Their astounding errors, fraudulent scholarship, fanciful dreams, beliefs both orthodox and heretical, and their sometimes abusive manners all serve to illuminate the many crooked paths by which modern philology, experimental science, and history as presently practiced came into being. Grafton’s influence on historical scholarship in the decades before and after 2000 has been remarkable, and the volumes of this Festschrift pay it due tribute.

The project, ably edited by Blair and Goeing, begins with a biographical sketch of Grafton written by Blair and Nicholas Popper, followed by a bibliography of Grafton’s writings that fills twenty-seven pages and reads like a Jorge Luis Borges ficción. Each of the fifty-six essays, distributed among seven Parts and an Epilogue, responds to subjects or themes that Grafton has addressed over the course of his career. Part I, about “Scaliger and Casaubon” includes substantial treatment of the two men’s correspondences, a new letter from Sarpi to Casaubon, a fascinating look at a second-rate Hebraist (Arnaldus Pontacus) who wandered onto Scaliger’s turf, an essay about portraits of Scaliger as an orientalist, and a critical edition of Scaliger’s brief treatise about the apocryphal books of the Bible.

“Knowledge Communities” are the subject of the second part, which includes essays about early modern street culture; the networks of a physician (Baudouin Rousse), of a theatrical family (the Andreini), and of Athanasius Kircher; and the politics of Francis Bacon’s reading of others, and of him by them. “Scholarship and Religion” covers a biography of Mohammed by Pomponio Leto that was never intended as a biography, Luther’s marginalia in his copy of Desiderius Erasmus’ Annotations of the New Testament (1516), the preparation post-Trent of a new Vulgate and a new Septuagint, demonology and perception, John Selden’s reception in Germany, animal imagery in connection with the Popish Plot, Lutheran Islamophiles, and a continuing role in modernity for what the Romans called their rex sacrorum (king of the sacred rites).

“Cultures of Collecting” includes studies of the books owned by early Christian writers, the Greek texts named in a dialogue by Angelo
Decembrio, the rich library of Hernando Colón, the recovery of a volume by Conrad Gessner, the sixteenth century’s production of “metadata” for information searches, lettering in the Vatican Library, the Hebrew encyclopedia of Pin as Hurwitz, and ornithology in the Dresden Kunstkammer. “Learned Practices” comprises pieces about graphic visualization, a rhetorical manuscript from Padua, Cardano’s mistaken horoscope of Regiomontanus (of all people!), the Lingua Adanica, Catholic censorship of several of Petrarch’s sonnets, Tommaso Campanella and Niccolò Machiavelli, a role for God and spirits in the work of Robert Boyle and those around him, and nineteenth-century scrapbooking.

“Approaches to Antiquity” offers essays that discuss a poem written circa 1400 that has King Arthur carousing, oddly, in Viterbo; humanists’ use of terms for relics when treating codices; Cyriac of Ancona as a political theorist; the reception of Diodorus Siculus in the sixteenth century; Renaissance views of Marcus Aurelius; Marcus again but this time in seventeenth-century Antwerp; Jesuit natural theology; Henry Savile’s Euclid; nature vs. nurture in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Emile (1762) and contemporary texts; and the reception of Friedrich August Wolf’s reading of Homer in England.

“Uses of Historiography” comprises essays about the changing meanings of the word classic, the histories and legends around French pilgrimage shrines, an intriguing forger in eighteenth-century Bologna, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and antiquarianism, the Egyptologist Georg Ebers, Friedrich Nietzsche and the demise of Quellenforschung (the study of sources), Theodor Mommsen’s deeply cautious approach to inscriptions, and Mark Twain’s “Memory Builder.” The Epilogue is a reconsideration, by the late Lisa Jardine, of a famous essay that she wrote with Grafton in Past & Present; it concludes with a valuable account by Jacob Soll of Grafton’s evolving method.

It is amusing, at this distance in time, to remember what many senior scholars were saying about Grafton in the 1980s and 1990s. Despite their admiration for his erudition, they doubted his work would find interested readers. Many said that the reception of classical antiquity was a dry and narrow subject and others that studying the classics of Greek and Latin literature was an elitist activity serving to perpetuate a stifling class system. Some thought that Grafton’s efforts to entwine philology with the history of science seemed strained and artificial. That the history of scholarship is mere “Bauchnabelbeachtung” (navel gazing) was another dart that was thrown.

For the Sake of Learning is an indispensable guide to Grafton’s sprawling oeuvre. The contributions to the two volumes indicate the extent to which his once lonely efforts came to inspire the generation of early modern scholars studying what now goes by the name of “information history.” As a graduate student with my ear to the ground, I well

remember the first time that I heard Grafton praised unequivocally. In 1985, Peter Brown and I walked around the Princeton campus discussing a paper that I had written in the last seminar that Brown offered at Berkeley before leaving for Princeton. After inquiring about my future interests, Brown suggested that I read Grafton’s article (written with Jardine) on “The School of Guarino.” It was an excellent suggestion, and I’ve been reading Grafton ever since—like so many others.

William J. Connell
Seton Hall University

Pauper Policies: Poor Law Practice in England, 1780–1850. By Samantha A. Shave (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2017) 300 pp. $110.00

In this book, Shave advocates a re-emphasis of the need to invest more effort in understanding the administrative processes of the Old Poor Law’s last fifty years and the New Poor Law’s first twenty years (c. 1780–1850). She views scholars’ recent focus on the experiences of those in receipt of poor relief, particularly that making exclusive use of overseers’ accounts, as inclined to neglect what she terms the “policy process.” She seeks to remedy this neglect through focused consideration, in Chapters 2 and 3, of two sets of enabling Acts of Parliament and their manner of adoption by parishes. The intent behind Thomas Gilbert’s Act of 1782 was to move vulnerable sections of the population (children and the elderly) within those parishes that adopted it to a workhouse for employment while focusing outdoor relief on the able-bodied poor. The Sturges Bourne Act of 1819 permitted parishes to employ an assistant overseer to collect the poor rates and distribute relief and to appoint a select vestry to make policy decisions regarding relief to individual claimants.

Chapter 4 effectively focuses on the multiple ways in which parish officials before 1834 utilized local networks in the search for knowledge about how to administer these Acts, suggesting considerable “bottom up” involvement in the policy process. This chapter also highlights elements of similar procedures after 1834 in the Boards of Guardians and Assistant Commissioners; the more centralized and potentially top-down framework for policy implementation was constrained by local reactions and knowledge networks.

Chapter 5 treats two notorious scandals, both in the New Poor Law era. The one in Bridgewater Union specifically involved medical policy, and that in Andover Union involved workhouse employment practices in crushing animal bones to make fertilizer. In this chapter, Shave is at pains to emphasize how the New Poor Law policies that emerged subsequent to the scandals reflected both the accountability of local authorities to a

\[2 \text{ Eidem, “Humanism and the School of Guarino: A Problem of Evaluation,” ibid., XCVI (1982), 51–80.} \]
centralized welfare authority and the central welfare authority’s accountability to the State.

Shave devoted her research to the agrarian counties in the south of England (Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset, Wiltshire, and West Sussex). Through this regional choice, she concludes that many more parishes, either individually or in unions, adopted Gilbert’s Act than previously supposed. Furthermore, she reports that the manner in which individuals were accommodated in the workhouses that the Act created varied considerably. In many cases, the motivation for adoption of the Act was to reduce costs, particularly in phases with rising relief bills.

Certain of her conclusions about the effect of Gilbert’s Act rest heavily on a detailed analysis of the Easebourne Union workhouse in West Sussex, formed (atypically) by sixteen participating parishes in 1792. Although children and the elderly formed the majority of the inhabitants, the number of males admitted between the ages of fifteen and fifty-nine (able-bodied?) surged in the years following the conclusion of the Napoleonic War, apparently reflecting a use for the workhouse hardly compatible with Gilbert’s original aims. Shave argues that the increasing number of parishes appointing select vestries and hiring assistant overseers after 1819, during years of acute economic strain, suggests that the implementation of this particular legislation was not unlike that of other parish relief strategies under the Old Poor Law. She inclines to the view that these tendencies reveal much about the adopters’ intentions, particularly in the case of the Sturges Bourne Act. The sharpening distinction that she perceives in select vestries after 1819 between the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor further supports her contention that the adopters were looking to reduce expenditure on poor relief.

It is not always clear how well Shave’s evidence represents policy per se as opposed to the mere recording of actions in vestry minutes or the admissions of individuals to workhouses. Readers may want to know more about the outcomes of policies, particularly given Shave’s claim that many measures aimed at cutting costs. Parish data that cast light on levels of rate-based expenditure before and after the adoption of the legislation would have aided her argument. The published returns to Parliament are readily available to provide this information for much of the period from 1802/3 to 1834. The regional specificity of her approach permits Shave to enhance our knowledge of policies during a critical phase in the latter decades of the Old Poor Law, but it needs to be compared with the coarser data relating to the nation at large. Information in the Abstracts of the Poor may well throw light on the scale of relief provided “indoors” in workhouses, but at no point do the persons relieved in such settings amount to more than 1 percent of the total national population, or 10 percent of those permanently relieved.

These concerns apart, this book constitutes a forceful attempt to delineate elements of poor-law policy more clearly, especially as it emerged from two important pieces of legislation that have not received the attention that they deserve. Likewise Shave’s investigations add
substantially to the argument that even after the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, with its more centralized organisational structure of poor law provision, local problems could also generate local solutions.

Richard Smith  
Downing College  
University of Cambridge

Exhibiting the Empire: Cultures of Display and the British Empire. Edited by John McAleer and John M. Mackenzie (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2015) 291 pp. $110.00 cloth $39.95 paper

Mackenzie is the dean of British imperial history, founding the Manchester Studies in Imperialism in 1984 long before the “imperial turn” in British history. Although Mackenzie’s work inclines more toward social history and less toward theory than the New Imperial History that has emerged during the last two decades, the motivating theme of the series—that “imperialism as a cultural phenomenon had as significant an effect on the dominant as on the subordinate societies”—is much at home in the contemporary literature of empire. McAleer brings to the volume considerable expertise about material culture. Together they have compiled an innovative and worthwhile collection that examines “the literal display and exhibition of empire (and the idea of empire) in the imperial metropolis” through the lens of material culture (1–2). The authors come from diverse disciplinary backgrounds—art and art history (Douglas Fordham and Eleanor Hughes), ethnomusicology (Nalini Ghuman), history (Stephanie Barczewski and Ashley Jackson), museum studies/public history (Sarah Longair and David Tomkins), and post-colonial/area studies (Berny Sèbe). The representations of empire that they examine are equally diverse (satirical prints, exhibitions, and architecture).

The question of the pervasiveness of the imperial project to the culture, politics, and society of the British metropole is a contentious one in the historiography. At the high point of European imperialism, Joseph Schumpeter in The Sociology of Imperialism (Tübingen, 1919) argued that imperialism was an atavism of a modern and capitalist society, the refuge of an increasingly irrelevant aristocracy. Richard Price’s An Imperial War and the British Working Class (New York, 1972) examined the “jingo crowd” and anti-war sentiment during the Second Anglo-Boer War (now more appropriately identified as the South African War), concluding that support for the war and thus the project of empire was found in the middle classes rather than the working classes. Bernard Porter’s The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain (New York, 2006) revived this more traditional class-based argument, claiming to find few imperial artifacts in British politics, society, and culture. It managed to unite both the more traditional camp of imperial historians led by Mackenzie and a newer breed of New Imperial historians in criticism of his premises and
findings. As Bell has suggested, these debates often talk past one another; historians of a political or social ilk often focus on imperial consciousness, whereas historians of a cultural and more theory-driven persuasion consider the complicated ways in which British society, politics, and culture were forged in a relationship with empire, often unconsciously. At the same time, scholars disagree about whether the British historically cared or thought about empire in any sort of lasting or meaningful way.

Exhibiting the Empire brings the Mackenzie camp closer to the cultural history of the New Imperial History. But the careful curation of these artifacts of empire shares more in common with the careful social history of Mackenzie’s earlier work, such as Imperialism and Popular Culture (Manchester, 1987), which could easily share shelf space with the current volume. This approach to the history of imperial representations and symbols in Britain is more empirical, seeking pieces of culture on which to shine light. It helps us to understand the diverse ways in which British society represented and imagined empire.

Mackenzie’s own chapter (Chapter 8) about the Delhi Durbar of 1911 examines metropolitan press coverage of King George V and Queen Mary’s travels to India as the new emperor and empress of India for the Mughal-inspired assemblage. Jeffrey Auerbach’s Chapter 5 explores other British fantasies of empire as exhibited at the Crystal Palace in the 1851 Great Exhibition to the 1911 Festival of Empire; for Auerbach, these exhibits reflected the development of an imperial culture in Britain during the nineteenth century, as well as omens of its coming demise. Print culture also receives considerable attention, from Fordham’s attention to satirical prints of the eighteenth century (Chapter 3) to Jackson and Tomkin’s attention to imperial “ephemera” of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Chapter 6). These contributions demonstrate the complex ways in which empire was received and understood and an “imperial culture” in Britain was fractured and uneven, informed by considerations of time, class/status, geographical location, and education. The authors, however, might have considered more carefully how these representations “flowed” through British society, what they tell us about the relationship between this Britain and its empire, and the limits of those representations in assessing the British imperial consciousness.

That said, the volume achieves its goal of engaging the history of empire in Britain from a range of interdisciplinary perspectives, particularly that of material culture. The study reflects the usefulness—and some of the challenges—of relating the world of ideas to the world of things. It is, in the end, its own kind of exhibition, its diverse galleries offering a complex picture of an empire of things throughout 300 years of British imperialism.

Charles V. Reed
Elizabeth City State University

We associate the economic growth of the nineteenth century with cotton, iron, and steam, but the working-class standard of living rose mainly from the cheaper food that came from increased agricultural productivity and imports. Woods’ short book explores the development of the systematic breeding of sheep and cattle that increased British meat production as population growth and urbanization dramatically increased demand in the late eighteenth century. Later, the knowledge of animal breeding and the animals themselves established herds in Australasia and North America that greatly augmented meat supplies.

By the seventeenth century, British farmers raised a large number of noticeably different types of sheep and cattle, each usually associated with ecological regions—of which Britian has an abundance relative to its size. With the spread of enclosure and mixed farming, interest in breeding improved animals took hold. The major challenge for breeders was the reliable transmission of desirable traits from selected animals to their offspring. Woods has drawn exhaustively from contemporary sources, particularly agricultural periodicals, to document both the growing understanding of “breeds” and the effect of the learning involved. She concentrates on two breeds—merino sheep and Hereford cattle, both of which are significant in British practice but neither at the forefront of British improvement. These breeds did, however, play central roles in the development of herds in the temperate areas of Australasia and North America. Wood first documents the effort (and failure) to incorporate the exceptionally fine wool of Merino sheep from Spain into English flocks and then to establish the export-oriented sheep economics of Australia and New Zealand. Hereford cattle, initially almost exclusive to that county, proved exceptionally adaptable to overseas conditions, eventually becoming the basis of overseas beef production for the British market. British provision of breeding stock became a major activity.

Understanding of the source of differentiation hereditability was a learning process. Debate raged about the relative importance of heredity and environment since the two factors tended to coincide in Britain (readers would benefit from a brief update regarding these issues). The general lack of success of merino sheep provided fuel to the debate. Those who emphasized environment pointed out that merino wool raised in Britain lacked some of the fine character of Spanish wool, suffering from the damp English climate. A third element of the breeding equation also entered into the marino story. By the early nineteenth century, mutton mattered at least as much as wool in English sheep raising. Attempts to cross-breed marinos with fat improved English sheep, particularly with new Leicesters, failed in England.

Colonial context made a difference. Marino sheep thrived in Australia’s harsh climate, which was similar to that of Spain. In New Zealand,
environment again came to the fore. Marinos easily adjusted to extreme climates but could not adapt to milder and damper ones. After refrigeration allowed for shipment of meat to Britain, New Zealand breeders successfully produced the Corriedale sheep that maintained much of the fineness of marino wool with the mutton in demand in Britain. Initially, at least, the breed stock for Australasia came from Britain, but as the Corriedale demonstrated, colonial breeders came to stand alone.

The story of the Hereford was similar. This breed lacked the prestige of highly bred shorthorns in Britain, but it found value as a beef cattle. It proved extremely adaptable to the extreme conditions in North America. Hereford bulls from Britain improved “native” cattle in Canada and the United States, supporting the imports that comprised much of the British meat supply after the 1880s. In the twentieth century, North American Herefords developed into larger cattle than their English counterparts and began to challenge British breeding stock even in Britain.

The narrative of this short, interesting book is a masterly construction from contemporary sources, and but the source of its strength also betrays a weakness. That the agricultural press represented elite agriculturalists rather than regular farmers is not necessarily a weakness in studying change, but recent economic histories of British agriculture have challenged the notion that aristocratic farming was mainly responsible for productivity enhancement; actions of more ordinary tenant farmers were crucial. Woods recognizes this problem in various places, but quantitative economic historians (like this reviewer) would have appreciated some information about the effect of breed improvements on agricultural productivity generally. How common were pure-bred herds? In quantitative terms, was the main contribution of pure-bred herds providing studs for mix-breed offspring? Notwithstanding the lack of such information, the book provides a fascinating insight into early biological technological change while also placing issues of animal breeding into broader social contexts of race and colonial expansion.

C. Knick Harley
St. Antony’s College
University of Oxford


In this remarkable work of historical synthesis, Offen provides an indispensable overview of several centuries of debates about the place of women in French society. A “companion volume” to her Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870–1920 (New York, 2018), this book draws from Offen’s previously published research and from the work of other scholars of French women’s history; it is a
consciously synthetic study relying on “decades of collaborative, collegial feminist scholarship” (xii). Offen seeks to present the particularities and under-analyzed continuities of the “woman question” in France for both scholars and general readers by bridging periodizations that have long dominated the field. Thus, in preparation for the volume that follows it, *The Woman Question in France* “is grounded in the realization that no aspect of the debates on the woman question actually began with the Third Republic” [emphasis in original] (x).

Offen’s study is a corrective, first, to restrictive chronologies, and, second, to a tendency to see French “universalit” rather than “cultural exceptionality” in gender debates. As a historian whose work is rooted in nineteenth-century European feminisms, Offen discovered in researching women’s emancipation debates of the Third Republic, that “the explanatory schemes devised in recent women’s history and feminist theory, notably those concerned with chronology, did not hold up for the French case” (11). The first chapter contends that early modern French elite society was characterized by a “peculiar and quite remarkable” association of Woman with culture and civilization, rather than nature, and a heightened notion of women’s cultural influence. Although the chapter does not pursue this comparative suggestion, it does marshal examples primarily from historians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to demonstrate that post-revolutionary efforts to curb women’s influence were a continuation of previous debates rather than a rupture.

Offen renews this argument in the second chapter, in which she asserts that efforts to restrain women’s political authority did not originate with the Declaration of the Rights of Man, but instead must be seen as part of a *longue durée* history in which “concerns about gender became embedded at the very core of French notions about governance and rule” (47). Similarly, Offen’s discussion of early debates about women’s education and intellect concludes that a notion of gendered separate spheres was “hardly a nineteenth-century development.”

Despite the imposing sweep of centuries indicated in the book’s title and in its conception, the study has most to say about the period from the late seventeenth century through the 1860s. For instance, although Chapter 2 begins with the intention to survey “evidence that encompasses five centuries,” it in fact offers only a couple of pages about late sixteenth-century French law; the bulk of the chapter moves within the period from the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth century.

The book is at its most compelling when Offen applies her wide-ranging knowledge to some aspect of nineteenth-century French women’s history before 1870. The volume includes one chapter drawn from Offen’s own original research, an elegantly argued essay about the politics of women’s history in the nineteenth century. Therein, she is especially interested in 1840s scholarship by Edouard Laboulaye and Ernest Legouvé, which addressed the question of the history of women’s power, and post-1848 studies by men like Jules Michelet, which, in the aftermath of women’s revolutionary activism, “produced justificatory historical defenses
of ‘patriarchy’” (178). Offen also produces a masterful survey of debates about women’s labor in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to argue that many women workers made claims for expanded labor rights but also sought to enforce a sexual division of labor, “in defense of their already extant economic positions against male encroachment” (202).

Offen wisely dots her chapters with recurrent characters from the July Monarchy and the Second Empire, engaging primary voices like those of Julie–Victoire Daubié, André Léo, and Jenny d’Héricourt that bring vim to the narrative. Accessibly written and historiographically provocative, this ambitious study holds important and often surprising insights for both expert scholars of French women’s history and for newcomers to the topic.

Patricia Tilburg
Davidson College

*The Cult of the Modern: Trans-Mediterranean France and the Construction of French Modernity.* By Gavin Murray-Miller (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2017) 317 pp. $60.00

*The Cult of the Modern* revolves around an innovative research question: How did the obsession with modernity evolve into a political strategy during the Second Empire in both metropolitan France and French Algeria? The book demonstrates that similar concerns shaped debates on both sides of the Mediterranean, and that the theme of modernity lay at the heart of political debate. Murray-Miller argues that “modernization” and “colonization” were interconnected processes, and that “modernity remained an imaginary construction that carried a variety of meanings and associations” (12). Napoleon III’s regime is known for its modernization efforts, particularly massive urban development projects in Paris. In glorifying the modern, the emperor and his supporters depicted the regime as improving life in France by bringing order, stability, and progress. Murray-Miller’s book reveals that those who opposed the Second Empire similarly used modernity as a political tool, as a strategy to combat authoritarian strains within the regime. Murray-Miller also makes clear that European settlers in Algeria used modernization as a way to attack both the military administration of the colony and the Second Empire’s support of Arab autonomy, a kind of cultural relativism that the settlers rejected in the name of “civilization” and “progress.”

The book promises an innovative approach, with a structure that focuses on metropolitan France and Algeria, in the process showing how the two places related to, and shaped, each other through the rhetoric of the modern. In the end, much of the book reads more like a synthesis of the secondary literature about the Second Empire and of France in Algeria, treating the “modern” as a theme visible in both places. Only the last three chapters build their arguments largely from original research into primary sources. In addition, the Algeria side of the story disappears from
long sections of the book, making that important component of Murray-Miller’s larger point seem less than central at times.

The book begins with a chapter that discusses ideas about the modern, followed by a chapter that discusses the Second Empire’s use of “modernity” as a political tool. Both chapters are based largely on secondary sources and present a fairly standard narrative. Murray-Miller’s main point is that “modernity and ‘modern society’ were themes embedded in and elaborated through the political language of the period . . . . linking discourse with practice, and ideology with reality” (80). Chapter 3 treats ideas about the nation and their relationship to the rhetoric of the modern in both France and Algeria, demonstrating the parallel efforts to modernize the people of both places. The fourth chapter addresses the theme of religion and the modern, exploring both Catholicism and Islam and demonstrating that “modernity and progress” worked to create a unified sense of the Second Empire’s goals and accomplishments on both sides of the Mediterranean.

The following two chapters examine how reformers and critics of the regime, including republicans, used the language of modernity, blending positivist themes of science and progress with democratic values. In that way, they “successfully appropriated a nonrevolutionary, democratic, and ‘modern’ political identity for themselves” (181). These chapters include some reference to civilian administration and policy in Algeria, though they concentrate mostly on metropolitan France.

The last chapter of the book turns to a fuller exploration of the situation in Algeria, particularly how political prisoners sent there served as a conduit between metropolitan political circles and settler communities. As cultivating “civilization” and “modernity” among the Arabs of North Africa emerged as a central goal for the regime, colonists looked to the state to reinforce their positions within Algeria. Republican critics of the regime also denounced the treatment of Algerians and the refusal to grant them citizenship as a way to voice opposition to the Second Empire. These last points draw attention to the most innovative methodological contribution of this book—its insistence that Second Empire French modernity was essentially and integrally trans-Mediterranean. Murray-Miller’s contention is that modernity in the Second Empire cannot be fully or accurately comprehended on the basis of metropolitan France alone. On this point, the book is unquestionably convincing.

Denise Z. Davidson  
Georgia State University

Paradise Destroyed: Catastrophe and Citizenship in the French Caribbean. By Christopher M. Church (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2017) 324 pp. $65.00

In the twenty-five years since Hurricane Andrew devastated South Florida in 1992, historians, when confronted with questions that cannot be
answered satisfactorily by utilizing traditional categories of analysis, have
turned to the effects of natural hazards to explain the outcome of historical
tissues of race, class, nationality, citizenship, and colonialism (he includes a
mine collapse in France for comparison’s sake). In 1890, the major cities on
both islands were destroyed by fires exacerbated by drought, and the
following year, Martinique took a direct hit from a devastating hurricane.
Later in the decade, a worldwide economic crisis led to a decline in the
price of sugar causing unemployment and rising prices, which, in turn,
fueled resentment and political unrest throughout the region as cane
workers took their rage out on private property. An earthquake struck
Guadeloupe in 1897; continued incendiarism resulted in the destruction
of Pointe-à-Pitre, the largest city, in April 1899; a category-four hurricane
struck in August 1899; and the eruption of Mt. Peleé on Martinique in
May 1902 killed 30,600 residents and left the surrounding region uninhab-
itable for decades.

The islands’ sequential calamities become the foils that allow Church
to explore political and social attitudes regarding citizenship and colonial-
ism in an era of Social Darwinism. Early in the book, Church asserts that
the “extension of France in the tropics became the site of an intense strug-
gle over French identity and nationality” (19). A later section establishes the
debate about scientific racism, tropical exoticism, and the emergence of a
“new race of Frenchmen” (38). It highlights the clash between metro-
politan entrepreneurs who valued Martinique and Guadeloupe solely for
their economic importance and assimilationists who viewed the islands as
an opportunity for settlement and an inclusive society. French law dictated
that all residents were citizens, but not all citizens were worthy of an equal
amount of post-disaster assistance. Cosmopolitan and sophisticated
Martinique was the favorite; rural, backward, and phenotypically darker
Guadeloupe always received less consideration. Initially, after the
fires and hurricane early in the 1890s, the metropolis displayed an outpouring
of support, but as time progressed, sequential disasters, combined with the
worldwide economic downturn, a crisis in the sugar harvest, and labor
unrest, contributed to disaster fatigue. The result was a concomitant decline
in enthusiasm to support “concitoyens” who lived in a “tropical environment
that perpetually threatened French civilization” (97, 109).

This well-researched book moves beyond being simply an analysis
of the issues surrounding race, citizenship, and colonialism by incorpo-
rating the theoretical and methodological models of disaster studies.
Starting with a comprehensive knowledge of the secondary literature,
Church consults primary sources from local archives in Martinique
and Guadeloupe, as well as from the French National Library, the over-
seas colonial repository in Aix-en-Provence, and the National Archives
near Paris. He augments official documentation (from France and the
United States, for example) with travelers’ letters, contemporary diaries,
newspapers, advertisements, and literature, weaving these sources into a
detailed and colorful narrative interspersed with biographies of the most
important personalities. One of the most effective pieces of evidence, the
beautiful color image that graces the book’s cover, is an illustration of a
white Marianne (the symbol of France), extending a helping hand to a
mulatta Marianne (a symbol of the islands), fleeing the eruption of
Mt. Peleé in 1902. Church also compiles and analyzes a variety of numerical
data from the quantities of sugar produced and exported to ascertain
which areas of Martinique sustained the greatest financial losses in the
hurricane of 1891 and which regions of France were most generous in
providing financial relief. His time-series analysis of the percentage of
books that employed patriotic language shows spikes after the successive
crises. Church demonstrates that by end of the period under study, metro-
politan policymakers had reduced disaster victims to impersonal, faceless
statistics.

Scholars interested in historical disasters will find this work useful
for its comparative utility, especially if viewed alongside studies about
the effects of disaster and colonialism in other parts of the world. The
effects of sequential disasters on the late-nineteenth-century French
Caribbean can be compared to hurricane strikes in the 1840s that caused
the collapse of the Cuban coffee and tobacco industries and led to the
emergence of sugar as Cuba’s primary crop. More recently, anyone who
suffered through the 2017 hurricane season will recognize the book’s rel-
evance to the current debate about the unequal distribution of resources
in the aftermath of those recent hurricanes. Scholarship that seeks causes
for historical events beyond traditional explanations is useful to areas in
the Caribbean and anywhere else that are vulnerable to natural hazards
and their consequences.

Sherry Johnson
Florida International University

The French Army and Its African Soldiers: The Years of Decolonization. By
Ruth Ginio (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2017) 250 pp. $60.00

Ginio’s The French Army and Its African Soldiers is an indispensable addi-
tion to the literature about decolonization in an area of the world critical
to that process. As she notes, West Africa between the years 1945 and
1960 has attracted comparatively little attention, since, unlike in other
areas of the world, independence there was not associated with war or
even violence. That does not mean, however, that the army and military
matters were unimportant. As this book demonstrates, the French army
played a critical role in shaping the structure of colonialism, the process
doing colonial control, and the nature of postcolonial states in the
region. It did so through policies directed at the thousands of Africans
who served in the French ranks during World War II or in garrisons
throughout the region, as well as through attempts to prop up French colonial rule through wars in Indochina and Algeria.

Military leaders undertook reforms that were truly revolutionary in the colonial context, such as instituting the principle of equal pay for equal work, raising the pensions of African veterans to the same level as their metropolitan French counterparts, and actively interfering in matters properly the purview of civilian officials as independence loomed. Once independence became inevitable, the army took steps to shape the militaries of new African nations in ways that would continue to serve French interests. Moreover, soldiers who had served the French in uniform remained important there too, as officers and even as leaders of a dozen coups d’état in various countries during the first two decades following independence.

Readers of this journal will be especially interested in Ginio’s methodology. Though largely a conventional archival history (relying on extensive work in documentary repositories in Africa and France), it also makes creative and effective use of oral interviews and personal testimony. The deep archival work alone would make the book an essential resource for students of the period and region, but the inclusion of the voices of African soldiers weaves a richer fabric and allows for greater insight. For example, Ginio’s reports of individual soldiers’ personal histories and of testimonies from veterans of wars in Indochina and Algeria elucidate the complex motivations, allegiances, and emotions at play as colonial subjects from one region fought to prevent the emancipation of colonial subjects from another. Thus, she highlights not only the “problematic assumptions” of observers who assume that this situation presented a “moral” quandary for the soldiers but also the ways in which the soldiers’ own views about this issue changed over time—as they moved from soldiers to veterans and from colonial subjects to citizens of independent nations (136).

The book is also interdisciplinary in its treatment of psychological warfare. As Ginio notes, this aspect of modern war developed along with, and out of, the development of the modern discipline of psychology. She provides in this study an informed and detailed examination of how the French army deployed this strategy both during the Algerian War to combat enemy propaganda among African troops and in West Africa as the army worked to position itself and the French Empire, rather than independence, as the best guarantor of equality and modernity for Africans.

In the end, The French Army and Its African Soldiers illuminates the dynamics of colonialism and decolonization in new ways, by paying close attention to the role of the army and to the experiences of the African soldiers who served in it. By taking soldiers’ perspectives seriously, Ginio moves beyond anachronism and stereotype to tell a story that is as complex and varied as were the events themselves.

Richard S. Fogarty
University at Albany, SUNY
More than a decade ago, Spohnholz noticed that a minor episode in Reformed (Calvinist) Church history—a meeting of dozens of Calvinist ministers and leaders in 1568—was surprisingly difficult to document. The lack of evidence for the “Synod,” “Convent,” or assembly at Wesel near the Dutch border finally prompted a full-scale investigation. He begins with a meeting on November 3, 1568, that produced a set of 122 articles proposing to regulate the governing structures, rituals, and doctrines of the Reformed Church. The final version, which ran to twenty-two pages in Latin, had sixty-three signatures—fifty-one autographs and twelve proxy signatures.

Traditionally, this document has been regarded as evidence of the first major move to establish a unified Reformed Church in the Low Countries, the founding of a “presbyterial constitution” within a unified state church. Close study of the shifting context of military and ecclesiastical events reveals that the document of 1568 must have been written in that year. But far from achieving a moment of unity, the Wesel document reflected instead the tensions and disagreements of its day. Spohnholz makes a persuasive case that the author of these articles was Petrus Dathenus (Datheen), and that his efforts to obtain as many signatures as possible led him to send his manuscript from Wesel to Emden and then to London.

From his detailed studies of the sixty-three signators, Spohnholz shows that the meeting that supposedly generated this document cannot have taken place. He proves that some of the Reformed leaders were not even in Wesel in early November and that other major leaders who could have been in Wesel did not sign the articles. Instead, it now appears far more likely that Dathenus and his articles testify more to a “diverse, uncertain, and fractured religious landscape” than to a newly consolidated and unified movement (88). Spohnholz’s case that there was no “convent of Wesel” at all is persuasive, but except for committed historians of the Dutch Reformed Church, this finding seems like small potatoes.

In his next section, however, Spohnholz raises the broader question of how and why generations of historians mistook this document for proof of the early unanimity and collegiality of the Dutch refugee Calvinists in Wesel. For fifty years after its supposed occurrence, no one even claimed the existence of such a meeting, but at the time of the Synod of Dort (1618/9), some of the Dutch Reformed officials began to feel the need to root their newly established orthodoxy in tradition. By the standards of polemical history writing, this new construction of events was not surprising, but Spohnholz also shows that the increasingly rigorous standards of the Enlightenment did not dispel the allure of “the Convent of Wesel” even if the absence of evidence now cried out for explanation. The more critical but increasingly nationalist historians of
the nineteenth century also rallied around explanations that deployed the silence of the sources as proof of the event and its importance. Spohnholz is illuminating on the shifting standards of historiography during the past three centuries and why even sharp critique did not undermine the national, especially German, importance of a non-event.

Along the way, Spohnholz also shows that historians who came to emphasize the crucial importance of archives often fell unwittingly into the organizational imperatives of the archives that they used. Even today, the files that historians consult often prefigure what is likely to be seen in them. Spohnholz shows that the organization of city, state, and church archives almost always serves purposes that differ from those of later researchers. Granted, he is not the first to make these points, but he emphasizes them in a specific context that brings home their practical importance.

In a short but fascinating final section, Spohnholz wonders what might entitle him to think that he now has the story straight in contrast to the distortions wrought by the generations of bright and able historians before him. He concedes that people’s personal backgrounds and experiences unavoidably affect and enable what they see and think. He explains in some detail how and why he might today approach the evidence (and the absence of evidence) in a manner different from that of his predecessors. He describes his self-doubts and prejudices so well that historians and philosophers who have no special interest in the events of the sixteenth century could profitably read what he has to say about this matter (235–242). We may draw different conclusions today, but Spohnholz argues that we may well be justified in doing so. This surprising book moves from the obscure to the more general with ease and elegance.

H. C. Erik Midelfort
University of Virginia

*Reconstruction in a Globalizing World.* Edited by David Prior (New York, Fordham University Press, 2018) 224 pp. $30.00

For too many years, Reconstruction history seemed to stop at the water’s edge—that water being the Ohio River. Only recently have scholars given it a more national scope, spreading its impact to Comanche and Modoc country and the barrios and Chinatowns of the West. Now *Reconstruction in a Globalizing World* carries it overseas, not as diplomatic historians do by focusing on war, expansion, trade but by uncovering what non-Americans learned from Reconstruction and how Americans, home-grown and naturalized, helped to shape its course. Like most collections, the topics range far and wide, onto four continents and into two hemispheres. Along with this varied subject matter, again like any collection, the individual chapters bear an uneven quality—in this case, happily, between good and superb.
Matthew J. Hetrick’s study of Liberia College finds parallels between the search for uplift and preconceptions about color and class in the Reconstruction South and in the first black African republic. Julia Brookins looks into the special contributions made to postwar Texas development by German immigrants. Evan C. Rothera connects the liberal program of Argentine President Domingo F. Sarmiento and American reform movements mid-century, and Caleb Richardson shows how much the context of a free republican society changed the meaning of get-togethers among rank and file Fenians from what they had been in Ireland. The “Great Republic,” as it liked to call itself, was not just a model for much of the rest of the world but also a participant in the movement of transatlantic liberalism. As Mitchell Snay’s chapter about Republican editors’ coverage of Britain’s Second Reform Act makes clear, Americans were well aware of their role.

Readers may protest that Rekonstruction in a Globalizing World tells little about such globalization, much less the world. They may object that, except for two chapters, it fails to show that any groups outside the United States noticed Rekonstruction or drew lessons from it at all. Historians exclusively steeped in the context of the period, as generally depicted, may wonder if in some cases, the authors have overstated the contribution of the foreign-born to the results: Alison Clark Efford’s useful investigation into the Grant administration’s arms sales to France, for example, may not have been the watershed moment that readers may infer it to be. It was just one among many complaints that a growing liberal-republican faction had against governmental dishonesty. Indeed, British standards for a professional civil service and British free-trade precepts may have influenced reformers a lot more and a good deal earlier than the arms scandal. How differently would Rekonstruktion in Texas have turned out if no German-Americans had settled there?

Even if they doubt certain conclusions, readers will not doubt the general subject’s vital importance. So many other groups and countries shared in the interaction that a weighty tome could be made just listing the chapters that await writing. Many of them, presumably, would go farther in mining sources from other countries and in languages other than English, German, and Spanish. They also might do what most of the chapters here do not, take a close look at the mutual interaction between countries. Fenian picnics may have served different functions in the United States than they did in Ireland, but readers may long for that bigger picture, of how American conditions informed Irish modes of resistance and how the interconnection of families across the Atlantic both alleviated and exacerbated the tensions between Britain and Ireland. Stateside editors’ perspective on Britain’s Second Reform bill casts fresh light on how they understood democracy or misunderstood parliamentary politics, but how far were British reformers informed in their remedies by what they saw in America?

If Rekonstruktion in a Globalizing World does not go nearly far enough, it falls short because no volume of any reasonable size could do better.
Instead, it makes a promising start on a venture that will need a five-foot shelf of books to do it even the semblance of justice. But it may also suggest an important truth about Reconstruction itself.

Mark Wahlgren Summers
University of Kentucky

Cityscapes of New Orleans. By Richard Campanella (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2017) 383 pp. $29.95 cloth

Campanella’s scholarship, which largely focuses on the city of New Orleans, is compelling in its range, providing a model for those who wish to work across disciplinary boundaries seamlessly and substantively. In this collection, Campanella compiles seventy-four brief articles, most of them previously published, arranged topically in five sections that include thematic excursions across time and space designed to help readers understand the city and its distinctive twists and turns. The two strongest sections are “Architectural Geographies and the Built Environment” and “Disaster and Recovery,” which puts the city’s recent tribulations into a useful comparative context. According to Campanella, the book “has one primary goal, and this is spatial explanation—elucidating the why behind the where” (xiii). This book is recommended to anyone coming to New Orleans, whether for a weekend or a summer of intensive research, and certainly to any historian, geographer, literary scholar, or academic who is seeking inspiration from a writer who not only knows his stuff but also succeeds in sharing it.

Campanella has an impressive record of academic approbation, and was also named the 2018 king of Krewe du Vieux, a Mardi Gras organization with an annual parade that is both political and bawdy. The theme of this year’s procession traded irreverently on the name of Campanella’s book Bienville’s Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans.1 Although this particular achievement may seem beside the point to some scholars, Cityscapes of New Orleans is testament not only to Campanella’s practice of interdisciplinary methodologies; it also contains material accessible enough to explain how a geographer was able to earn an honor that in recent years had gone to well-known New Orleans musicians like Irma Thomas and Dr. John.

For anyone interested in New Orleans, Campanella’s book is a useful guide full of surprises, even for those who think that they know the city well. For scholars who hope to communicate their work to audiences beyond the university, this collection provides an especially useful template for how to write for and to the public in a fashion that is clear, compelling, but never simplistic. Scholars can use this book both as a

1 Campanella, Bienville’s Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans (Lafayette, 2008).
resource and, in its quietly graceful way, as a well-rounded and clear-eyed tribute to, and primer about, the Crescent City.

Alecia P. Long
Louisiana State University


“Black Chicago” may well be the most-studied (some say over-studied) African-American community in the United States. The fascinating blend of environmental and cultural-history methods in *Landscapes of Hope* shines new and exciting light on the so-called Black Belt, forcing us to look again at what we thought we knew so well. In this work, McCammack’s deft attention to the making and imagining of “natural” and landscaped environments on Chicago’s greater South Side brings exciting new approaches to both urban and environmental studies.

Instead of telling the expected story of black struggle with environmental injustice or simply collecting a series of African-American musings about “nature,” McCammack offers a literal *landscaping* of the modern Black experience. He includes all of the usual sites of examination in his study—southern farms, urban toil in slaughterhouses, racial conflict in Washington Park, and pleasurable release along Chicago’s famed leisure district “The Stroll.” But McCammack examines these well-known venues for their spatial qualities and the meaning of their physical dimensions to demonstrate the ways in which Black Chicagoans thought about and shaped their environments to make themselves over as modern. This is an important project!

Alongside the places to which every student of Chicago turns, *Landscapes of Hope* also visits new corners of the metropolitan experience. McCammack’s deep archival analysis and close readings of resorts and camps on the “margins” of what most of us understand as an urban experience are particularly striking. We learn much from the adventures and adversities that African Americans faced at YMCA, YWCA, and Boy Scouts summer camps; the Cook County Forrest Preserves; and the New Deal’s Civilian Conservation Corps. Building resorts and engaging in leisure practices in semirural spaces like Michigan’s Lake Idlewild were central to how African-Americans understood themselves as black, made sense of their class position, and physically navigated the Midwestern metropolis, especially given migrants’ contested and ambivalent relationship to land in the Jim Crow South. This book nicely complements other works, such as Andrew Kahril’s *The Land was Ours: How Black Beaches Became White Wealth in the Coastal South* (Chapel Hill, 2016) and Colin Fisher’s *Urban Green: Nature, Recreation, and the Working Class in Industrial Chicago* (Chapel Hill, 2015). *Landscapes of Hope* stands, however, as one of the first studies
to place urban parks and nightlife alongside semirural summer and work camps in a study of Black environmental and urban history.

*Landscapes of Hope* offers three key interventions. First, it brings together environmental justice and African-American history in ways that move beyond a focus on environmental racism. Second, its mapping of environmental experience continues the push of urban studies along the path of considering rural and semirural landscapes as central to its field of study. Third, it provides cultural history not only with a new set of materials but also with a new analytical tool kit for recovering meaning from a racialized urban life. It presents the city park, the resort, the youth camp, and the CCC work camp as sites for understanding personal desire, collective community building, social conflict, and race in the interwar urban north. Hopefully, environmental historians will hear its subtle call for race to become central to any treatment of environmental inequality and environmental experience in general. This powerful project is more than just a study of “Black Chicago” or of a particular community. Although it certainly succeeds as a deep local history, it also demonstrates how broad and deep histories of space and the built environment can inform us about the making of place, race, power, and everyday life in different ways.

McCammack’s use of Richard Wright as a reoccurring voice throughout is relatively effective, though not so much his use of Wright as a sort of omniscient voice given what could be seen as Wright’s adversarial position against much of the landscape that animates this text. Other literary and local voices, alongside Wright, could speak more sympathetically to *Landscapes of Hope*’s nuanced mediation on the relationship between nature and black life. Finally, McCammack could have been more explicit about the book’s larger implications. But these are small concerns about a major work of history that brings together African-American history and environmental studies in exciting ways. In the process of collapsing harsh divides between natural landscapes and the built environment, *Landscapes of Hope* forces us to think anew about the city of Chicago.

Davarian L. Baldwin  
Trinity College, Hartford

*Greater Gotham: A History of New York City from 1898 to 1919*. By Mike Wallace (New York, Oxford University Press, 2017) 1,196 pp. $45.00

The takeaway from Wallace’s *Greater Gotham* is that New York City was big, plenty big. His story begins with a detailed and persuasive account of the late nineteenth-century consolidation of the city and ends in 1919, with a metropolis bursting with energy, wealth, and prospects. This book’s predecessor, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York, 2000), written by Wallace and Edwin G. Burrows, covered
289 years, ending with a successful outcome of the referendum that united Manhattan with the East Bronx, Brooklyn, western Queens County, and Staten Island on January 1, 1898. Wallace and Burrows argued that the very fact of consolidation “would be the key to the new century’s first decades” (Gotham, 1, 235). The wealthy and powerful men who supported consolidation re-appear in Greater Gotham to play a dominant role in the new world of opportunities opened by the overwhelming “yes” vote in 1898. Wallace’s approach is that New York’s story is to be understood from “multiple vantage points” (8).

No single thesis could possibly be adequate to such a bustling, complex metropolis. Wallace is preoccupied with the sheer size of New York City, what could be weighed, counted, and measured. He finds many ways to make this point in his account of the city’s commercial and industrial might: The Newtown Creek “bore more freight annually than the 1000 mile long Mississippi River” (216). The city had the “largest integrated transport system on the face of the earth” (236), and “the largest low-income-housing project in the world” (258–259). The Atlantic Terra Cotta Company on Staten island was “the largest producer of its kind in the world” (309), and so on. Understatement is not Wallace’s preferred voice. It is hard to see whom he is arguing against. Had scholars failed to notice the city’s great size?

Despite its’ narrower chronological framework, covering scarcely more than two decades, the limitations of Greater Gotham are those of Gotham, at least to any curious soul who might like to know where, for example, Ezra Pound praised the “magical power” of Manhattan skyscrapers (153). Wallace cites twenty-seven titles in his notes for the chapter about the skyscraper boom; none are by or specifically about Pound. His method of citation does not make it easy to track down his sources. Gotham had 143 pages of references, in an achingly small font size, and its pages had four columns of text. Greater Gotham, covering a briefer time span, has 122 pages of references, in the same miniscule font size. Wallace cites thirty sources, by date, for his discussion of the “New Women,” but without page references. The index, massive as it is, is incomplete. In Wallace’s brief discussion of sources, he mentions the limited space available for such purposes—presumably, the responsibility of the publisher. The effect of this constraint on citations is to make these two imposing monuments to scholarship less useful than they should have been.

Wallace notes the banker George Baker’s “muttonchop whiskers and . . . ample paunch” (67), and he spots Joseph Barondess, the “king of cloakmakers,” leading nine thousand Jewish workers on May Day 1890 singing the “Marseillaise” as they marched toward Union Square from the lower East Side. Wallace shows an eye for local color and a nice flair for the comedy of New York life. But he scarcely seems interested in the city’s high culture, possibly concluding that elite culture, other than the Metropolitan Opera, matters less than we might assume. He mentions the Union Club and Tiffany’s twice. Mrs Caroline Astor briefly figures
in an unseemly family row. The Patriarchs, however, have not made the cut. Wallace devotes a single footnote to the piano manufacturers Steinway & Sons (314, n. 4), but fails to say anything about Alfred Steglitz and the city’s rich photographic culture. He pays substantial and thoughtful attention to immigrant life—Jewish, Italian, Irish—throughout the book, though German life in New York remains something of an afterthought.

Wallace informs us that October 23, 1915, was the day of a grand suffragette parade, in which thousands of women wearing white dresses and yellow sashes demanded the vote in the upcoming November election. It was “a crisp day, [Wallace writes,] splashed with sunshine, perfect for a parade” (791–792). The scene setting, the little turns of local color, is welcome. It offsets the claims that Wallace makes for facts, facts, and more facts to be collected, praised, and asserted, comprising this work’s dominant note. Weighing more than 4 lbs, the book is uncomfortable to read; perhaps it is not actually intended to be read. But it is a remarkable and serious book nonetheless, knowledgeable, diligent, and sometimes entertaining.

Eric Homberger
University of East Anglia


As every woman in America knows, automobile culture is highly gendered. Parkin’s *Women at the Wheel* provides a lively commentary on the numerous experiences that shape that culture. Drawing on advertising, popular journalism, reports from related industries, and automobile marketing information, she charts a century’s worth of examples of how women were pushed to the periphery of automobility. “Most women found their legitimacy as drivers compromised by a cultural expectation that placed men in the driver’s seat and relegated women to the passenger side of the car whenever both were present. The cultural representations of men’s control of cars served to dissuade women from assuming an identity as driver” (x).

Although Parkin provides many instances of this predicament, at times she seems a little too eager to shape the evidence. For example, she cites a 1930 study finding that 81 percent of rural boys drove whereas only 46 percent of rural girls did (3). However, the 46 percent for girls indicates a significant number, even if it is less than that of boys—which comes as no surprise. This observation points to one of the flaws of this useful and interesting book: It feels like a foregone conclusion; that men had more power in car culture is hardly a novel discovery. Another concern is the way that the book moves across the century in apparent
obliviousness to context. Parkin notes, however, that this is a deliberate strategy: “By focusing their analyses on changing trends, historians have underappreciated the permanencies of ideological power in American culture. Automobiles offer an opportunity to analyze the ways this power has been wielded to great effect. Principally looking for change over time in such attitudes obscures their longevity” (xx). This technique certainly illustrates the difficulties of eradicating long-entrenched assumptions, but it can also feel bewildering and frustrating in de-coupling popular culture from history.

*Women at the Wheel* benefits from a voluminous array of sources, which work together to offer a complete picture of the kinds of challenges that women drivers faced, though the book’s lack of a sustained analysis of race and class in shaping women’s access to the automobile, despite brief scattered references, is disappointing. Parkin has gathered material from the auto industry that presents suggested strategies for selling cars to women (or not), information from gasoline companies about the kinds of services and restrooms to provide, data from the AAA (American Automobile Association) about road services and security, and government regulations surrounding access to drivers’ licenses. She also weaves in brief references to popular songs and movies. But her emphasis on popular journalism and advertising fits well into the book’s aim of portraying how cultural forces shaped women’s access to cars. It also allows her to cherry-pick and spin some of her material. The numerous ads that she selects help her argument, but other ads could have challenged it. Parkin characterizes one of the most famous ads—a 1923 advertisement for the Jordan Playboy, titled “Somewhere West of Laramie” (61)—as an exception, which it is, but she misses an important message in it about women and cars. In their quest to sell more cars, automobile companies appealed to women on a wide scale, including ads that acknowledged female control. Although many advertisements appeared to favor a limitation on women’s power, the very fact that women were buying and driving cars undermined that approach.

Furthermore, Parkin’s interpretive conclusions often feel predictable. For this reason, the materials from less subjective sources—government documents and industry publications, for example—seem more persuasive and, ultimately, provide better support for the argument than do the sometimes tenuous claims that she makes about the ads. But the power of the book lies in its ability to bring its interdisciplinary material together to explore women’s challenges buying, driving, and maintaining a car, within a culture of strong opinions about women’s roles, as well as about cars. Even if, at times, nuance may be lacking, the book reflects the value of an interdisciplinary approach to a multifaceted topic.

Deborah Clarke
Arizona State University
These two books, which are diverse in style and length, are the products of writers with vastly different backgrounds. But they have a common theme, and they reach some strikingly similar conclusions. They cite similar figures, from similar sources, to demonstrate that the United States, and indeed many countries in the world, are becoming more unequal, both as a result of an economic dynamic and a movement away from redistributive taxation. In other words, both pre- and post-tax inequality is rising. In this way, both books address what has become, in the wake of the global financial crisis, the most pressing political issue of the age. Both authors recommend higher rates of taxation, more aggressive approaches to tax evasion and tax avoidance, as well as—more surprisingly—a basic minimum income to be paid to all citizens.

Collins, the Director of the Institute for Policy Studies’ Program on Inequality and the Common Good, is an engaged activist from a think tank created in the 1960s to promote systemic change by encouraging social movements. His is the more extensive set of measures—luxury consumption taxes, the repeal of mortgage and housing tax deductions for upper incomes, and universally funded children’s savings accounts. The premise of his book, however, is precisely that of Tanzi—“that inequality is not the result of optimal and efficient market forces, but of a set of rules, shaped by those with power” (26). Collins contrasts his position with that of “most mainstream economists” who have a view of a “pristine free market allocating resources according to market principles” (26).

It is not clear that “most economists” conform to that stereotype any more. Tanzi, the former long-time head of the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) Fiscal Affairs Division and later a senior government official in Italy, has long worried about governments becoming too big and claiming too large a share of resources. Although he might be thought a peculiar ally for Collins, he offers a deeply reasoned account of why and how Collins is right, also concerned to attack what he repeatedly terms “the religion of market fundamentalism” (79). For Tanzi, the story of inequality is only one-half the story about the advance of market fundamentalism propagated by the political right. He describes how “in academia, but less so in international institutions and in government circles, the pro-market thinking acquired many followers” in the late twentieth century (87). The right, and its push for lower taxes based on bad economic analysis (such as the abuse of the famous Laffer curve), is partly responsible for destructive and disruptive outcomes. Tanzi complains that the U.S. push for a universal adoption of performance-based pay on efficiency grounds was also advanced in the Bretton Woods institutions, the IMF, and the World Bank (364). But the left was also
responsible, given the return of statist thinking after the collapse of communism. Tanzi explains how “the termites created by socialist thinking too refuge in the woodwork, waiting for a better time to reemerge” (74).

Tanzi draws deeply from public-finance theory, the work of Richard Musgrave, and the Italian tradition of Scienza delle Finanze to explain how the absence of good rules encourages crony capitalism. Good rules are simple rules; the more complex rules become, the more space they offer to “termites,” who abuse the rules for specific interests. Tanzi uses both Italian and American history to illustrate the evolution of ever-greater complexity, obscurantism, and cronyism. According to Tanzi, the United States has 23,000 different governmental forms. But Tanzi is also aware of how regulations respond in many cases to real needs, as well as how they are gamed and abused. His reflections on the way in which even well-designed constitutions can be undermined and protections eroded echo many recent reflections, such as the work of Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, How Democracies Die (New York, 2018). He points out that in Italy, Benito Mussolini existed with, and because of, the continued application of the Savoyard constitution from the revolutionary year 1848, suggesting that the same kind of abuse of a good constitution could easily occur in the United States. The major policy responses to the financial crisis, monetary-policy activism, and increased regulation have made the complexity of regulation and consequently the possibility and the fact of abuse worse.

Neither Collins nor Tanzi are historians, but they offer largely valid and compelling historical accounts of the origins of the present predicament and of current policy proposals. Some of the incidents to which Tanzi alludes in his astonishingly wide-ranging account, however, may not stand up to the experts. For instance, Tanzi’s explanation of the Irish potato famine of the 1840s as a consequence of the British government’s failure to provide public assistance and its permission to export grain at a time of famine may be too simple. Modern scholars also explain that a well-intentioned attempt to redistribute in the crisis made matters worse, as higher taxes drove merchants and more prosperous farmers who might have supplied food needs into emigration, thereby decreasing the amount of resources and food available to tackle the crisis. During certain genuinely tragic situations, attempts to produce better policy can make suffering worse.

A more striking problem arises from the contrast between the policy environments of the Great Depression and the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. In the earlier crisis, policymakers may have tackled inequality effectively, with measures that included large tax increases in most countries, but only in the framework of nationalist solutions that often augmented cronyism and had destructive side effects, including war.

1 See, for example, Richard Musgrave, Public Finance in Theory and Practice (New York, 1973).
Because it focuses on one large country and its legislative environment, Collins’ study does not center on the problem of policy spillovers and interactions, which applies much more powerfully and threateningly to many of Tanzi’s cases. But both books reflect a clear need to lay out a reform agenda to show how international action and coordination can respond to the challenges raised by complexity.

Harold James
Princeton University


Newitt’s Short History of Mozambique weighs in at less than half the length of his earlier History of Mozambique (Johannesburg, 1993), with which it overlaps in some coverage. It will also become a standard work. Newitt states and sharpens themes from his earlier work for the sixteenth through twentieth centuries, but then plunges into the unfamiliar and fraught territory of Mozambique’s twenty-first century experience. The book has two good colonial-era maps, one of concession companies and the other of provinces, ports, towns, rivers, railways, and airports in the early 1960s. The brief notes, the bibliography of suggested readings (mostly in English), and the index are less than one-quarter the length of the same features in the 1993 book. Advanced scholars will want to consult both of Newitt’s histories of Mozambique, not just this one.

Readers of the Journal of Interdisciplinary History will appreciate Newitt’s use of the rich records of contemporary European observers, travelers, missionaries, and Portuguese archival sources, many of which he translated and edited himself. He generously weaves their perspectives throughout his historical narrative, emphasizing political, military, economic, and Portuguese strategic intentions. As is often the case, without comparable records from Africans, the narrative reveals more about European views, including their misunderstandings about Africans. Although Newitt interrogates perspectives and reads against the grain, his methods are archival and textual. Readers come away with a clearer sense of, say, the German Jesuit Mauriz Thoman than of many Mozambicans (42–47).

Newitt necessarily turns to a variety of economic and political analyses when he moves into Mozambique’s recent economic policies and the political decisions that shaped them. Newitt begins with his long-held and fitting perspective that Mozambique’s physical geography shaped its history. The east to west trajectories inscribed by Mozambique’s rivers promoted regional networks that were and remain more important than an imagined national whole. Mozambique’s extremely long coastline, comprising one-third of East Africa, organically tied its peoples into the Indian Ocean maritime and islands world, and to the seasonal monsoons. Newitt explicitly refutes Frelimo’s (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) nation-building mantra of a single people
from the Ruvuma River in the north to the Maputo River in the south, arguing for the saliency of regional identities, in particular those to the north and south of the Zambezi.

The populous north and central regions and the politically important but more sparsely populated south have experienced long-standing and keenly felt different histories. The fact that the ports of Beira and Maputo were and are better connected to the cities and economies of their hinterlands than to each other supports Newitt’s emphasis on regionalism. No significant north to south road or railway existed until the late colonial period when Portugal rapidly and defensively expanded Mozambique’s transportation infrastructure. As late as the 1960s, the only road connecting the country’s north and south passed through Nyasaland (129). Since the completion of the country’s north/south highway (N1) in 1973, transportation has periodically come to a halt when floods and bombs took out bridges or insurgents shut down or sharply diminished highway circulation. As recently as 2016, assaults along N1 earned it the epitaph “ghost road.”

Related to Newitt’s emphasis on regions and environments is his emphasis on the enduring historical links between periodic droughts, famine, and disease crises that triggered violence, predation by armed men under the direction of emergent regional strongmen, and the sweep of the “cohorts of the destitute” into slave raids, forced labor, military conscription, urban migration, and related social upheaval (4). He carefully charts drought and famine crises during the 1570s, 1690s, 1760s, the turn of the nineteenth century, 1860s, 1920s, and into the independence period. The drought and famine of the early 1980s drove Frelimo to sign the humiliating Nkomati Accord with apartheid South Africa. Similarly, the killer drought of 1990/1 exhausted the opposing sides in Mozambique’s civil war and eventually brought them to the 1992 Rome Peace Accord. Newitt links geography, environment, social change, and continuity—firmly placed in time and space—with attention to a range of disciplines.

The closing chapters employ statistical analysis from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Economist Intelligence Unit to interrogate the impact of Poverty Reduction Action Plans in the twenty-first century. Newitt also draws profitably from political science, anthropology, and activist scholarship to make his points, but Women and the Law in Southern Africa’s (WLSA) interdisciplinary research on gender and family law and Negrão’s work on agriculture would have enhanced these chapters. Newitt’s broad range accounts for culture, discourses of power and the complex and often contradictory entanglements among ordinary people, Mozambican, and international political elites. His scathing assessment of development aid highlights the self-serving practices of well-placed people throughout Mozambique and its global connections.

Newitt’s case for the intransigence of patrimonial power overriding pretentions of democracy and development seems increasingly fitting. With Frelimo secure in some regions and the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo) increasingly secure in others, neither party was willing to cede political space. Daviz Simango, leader of the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM), whose popular base in Beira potentially contends with both parties, recently spoke of the closely shared corruption, patrimonial ambitions, and exclusionary policies of Frelimo—a conflation of Frelimo and Renamo. Tragically, revealing and repeating Newitt’s observations regarding drought and destitution, ordinary Mozambicans will continue to pay the disproportionate costs of global warming while political elites squander and absorb revenues from Mozambique’s recently revealed oil and gas resources.

Jeanne Marie Penvenne
Tufts University


Hunter’s new book offers a fresh and complex perspective on Tanzanian history, revealing multiple and competing visions of political liberation from World War II through the late 1960s. By excavating multiple political visions from the decades preceding and following independence, Hunter decenters national independence as the defining event in Tanzanian politics. In this way, she takes up the challenge posed by Cooper, who has emphasized that citizenship in sovereign African nation-states was only one of many political possibilities imagined by Africans in the 1940s and 1950s, calling on historians to uncover alternative visions.¹

Given the purview of this journal, it is worth stating from the outset that this book is rooted squarely within the discipline of history. Hunter relies on two kinds of historical source—documents from the Tanzanian National Archives and Swahili language newspapers. She mines these written sources exhaustively and effectively to uncover shifting political discourses authored by literate Tanzanians—a fairly conventional way to read archives. Moreover, she addresses the contributions of the book to an audience of Africanist historians, and most often to fellow historians of Tanzania. Interdisciplinary research methods are not where the strength of this book lies, nor, in fairness, are they within the author’s purview.

The strength of the book is its close scrutiny of political discourse in Tanzania’s late colonial public sphere. Using the Swahili language

¹ Frederick Cooper, Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present (New York, 2002).
press as her main source, Hunter shows heated contests about concepts such as freedom, citizenship, socialism, and democracy, teasing out their multiple and shifting meanings. Hunter analyzes how terms that were in global circulation in mid-century did not simply parachute into Tanzanian politics as fully formed or static concepts; rather, they took shape through long-term local struggles over land, chiefship, generational priorities, and debates about inequality. African political thinkers were engaged in debates simultaneously on the global stage and in their home villages, drawing on concepts from multiple political traditions as they crafted visions for how society, the state, and the economy should be organized.

Though national in scope, this book focuses on the Kilimanjaro district of Tanzania, a region made prosperous by its rich agriculture and particularly the cultivation of coffee by Chagga farmers. This regional approach makes Hunter’s book a welcome addition to a literature about Tanzanian political history that rarely looks in any sustained way beyond the capital city of Dar es Salaam. Chapters 1 and 2 set the global stage by examining new ideas about progress, modernity, and democracy in the 1940s after World War II. The remaining six chapters proceed in loose chronological order, each structured as an analysis of contestations about a different political concept. For example, a chapter about notions of “freedom”—uhuru, in Kiswahili—challenges any simplistic reading of freedom as the mere absence of colonial rule. At different moments during the course of the twentieth century, various Tanzanians used the Kiswahili word uhuru in many ways, shaped by abolitionist discourse, the rebellion of women and youth against patriarchal social structures, transnational anti-communist discourse, and the anticolonialism of the Tanganyika African National Union. Moreover, many Tanzanians defined freedom as a positive quality of belonging in a political community, with all of the expectations and obligations that such an identity entailed. Hunter applies a similar analysis in other chapters, tracing the various resonances and connotations of terms like freedom, democracy, citizenship, and socialism within Tanzania’s multiple public spheres.

Emily Callaci
University of Wisconsin, Madison


The “normal standards of due process” did not apply when dealing with less “civilized” peoples, especially the Africans of what was then Southern

Rhodesia and is now Zimbabwe. Such was the ruling white government’s approach to increasing indigenous political dissent and physical protests in the 1950s. Africans, writes this careful scholar of the evolution of the law and its place in Zimbabwean society, were “discursively constructed as simpletons or errant children” being misled by agitators—a common colonialist trope.

This book discusses the use of the law in all of its social extension to repress African aspirations from 1890 to 1980, to take farming lands away from Africans, and to curtail their access to urban life and amenities. Segregation, an apartheid-lite regime, was legally arranged as well as socially observed through World War II and, to some extent, afterward. The law, as the author indicates, was deployed creatively in the interest of ruling whites, a small minority of the total population. Later, it was used unilaterally to declare “independence” from Britain by white postcolonial usurpers.

Following real independence in 1980, and the transfer of power to Africans, President Robert Mugabe’s increasingly authoritarian government used the old legal framework to limit the movement and free expression of opponents, to hamstring their rights of assembly, to remove most press freedom, to rig elections, and to reduce human rights. It also confiscated white-owned land, wholesale and illegally. The author also shows how customary law was made to serve the state instead of traditional society.

This book is one of a handful of African examinations of the nature of legal history in sub-Saharan Africa. It is welcome on that score for its thorough scholarship, as well as for its explicit connection of law with state power in a manner that few other scholars have attempted. The making and employing of the full legal mechanism was coercive, in the usual manner, but also productive and discursive.

This book closely examines the legal battles, and hence the political battles, that roiled independent Zimbabwe. The author portrays the legal pleading by accomplished lawyers, shows how the Movement for Democratic Change and Mugabe’s Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front attempted to overcome each other’s legal arguments, and indicates some of the ways in which civil society tried to use legal means to free citizens from governmental constraints.

The author interviewed a number of judges in the course of his research. He also quotes, tellingly, several courtroom exchanges between baffled and largely clueless state witnesses and experienced advocates to demonstrate how the laws of the land were misused and abused. But the author fails to say enough about the loss of judicial independence after 1999, and about what the shift from a principled to a regime-controlled judiciary meant for indigenous freedom and the contemporary evolution of his homeland.

—R. I. R.

Doumani’s comparative study of the mutually constitutive encounters between property, kin, and gender in the Ottoman cities of Tripoli and Nablus from the early modern to the modern period (1660–1860) is a social history of the family (materially and discursively understood) as constituted by, and reflective of, the legal/spiritual practices and political economies of the two cities. His argument is focused on the family waqf (endowment) that was pervasively used by the propertied urban classes in Ottoman Syria and elsewhere in the period under investigation.

The importance of the family waqf lies in its being the only legal instrument for property devolution in Islam; as crucial, it was flexible, with “a built-in toolbox of options” allowing individuals to “custom-design . . . long-term property relations between kin, and between the self and God” (103). In addition to being both a “social act” and a “family charter,” the waqf was a “capacious institution” that enabled both economic investment and social mobility (96).

Family waqfs were constructed and litigated at the local Ottoman shari’a courts, the registers (sijills) of which for Tripoli and Nablus represent Doumani’s most important sources (he also examines fatwa collections, family papers, and local chronicles). These courts brought together imperial prerogatives and Islamic legal traditions in dynamic interaction with specific political economies; they provided the setting in which propertied men and women engaged in the creation of the familial, cultural, and socioeconomic “building blocks” that bound them into communities, regions, and empire (86). As such, the family waqf stood at the intersection of several material and discursive orders, bringing together family, property, court, and political economies through dynamic processes in different Ottoman spaces and over time.

Doumani’s layered, comparative, and multifaceted analysis of the waqf as a “sensitive barometer” of understandings about kin and property in Tripoli and Nablus weaves together a broad quantitative, or macro-, social study of some 15,000 waqf-related court documents with a microtextual examination of select cases (and bundles of related cases) (99). Using numerous tables and charts, he provides powerful evidence for patterns over time and place regarding endowment acts and lawsuits—who endowed (class and gender composition) what kinds of properties and to whom and why (family members/gender and good deeds)—and establishes connections between waqf patterns, on the one hand, and the local political economies of the two cities, on the other.

On the micro-level, he instantiates the social, legal, cultural, and emotive worlds that made the family waqf. The enormity and rigor of the quantitative methodology are matched by the careful and imaginative approach used in the case studies—a case in point being when he describes a large gathering of legal witnesses to a waqf endowment
as “social mobilization akin to a wedding” (138), or comments that the charitable deeds in many family waqfs in Tripoli “give the impression that the religious establishment in the city operated somewhat like a pension management fund for the soul” (23).

Doumani’s comparative approach provides evidence for startlingly different iterations of the family waqf in Tripoli and Nablus, expressing distinct notions about relations among property, family, and gender. He encapsulates this difference with reference to the modes and structures of production associated with the orchard (bustan) in Tripoli and the residence (dar) in Nablus, such as land ownership, agricultural labor, and investment strategies. In sum, the political economy of Tripoli gave rise to the conjugal family and family waqfs in which women were both beneficiaries and active founders, whereas in Nablus, the extended family founded on family waqfs gradually excluded women both as participants and beneficiaries.

Doumani’s tightly knit argument for the historical dynamism and flexibility of Islamic legal traditions and against monolithic and unchanging notions of family and gender in the Ottoman Mediterranean is a remarkable achievement. It presents a powerful challenge to deep-rooted scholarly assumptions in Ottoman/Islamic studies; it is a model for combining the power of quantitative data with the empathy of the historical imagination; and it brings to bear insights and tools from the disciplines of political economy, historical sociology, legal and cultural anthropology, family history, and literary textual analysis.

Najwa al-Qattan
Loyola Marymount University


It is unusual for a work about Ming Dynasty (1368–1643) history to be anchored deeply in sources and yet able to move nimbly through multiple stories of ordinary people. Even more surprising is a carefully argued research monograph about the early modern era that has little connection to events or people in Europe but manages to make a compelling argument for why historians who do not work on China should be drawn to reading it. Szonyi’s subject is specific—efforts to achieve material success and minimize vulnerability to the military-service obligation assigned to one ancestor within a household that later any of his male descendants could fulfill.

The Art of Being Governed is composed of three parts discussing villages, guards, and military colonies, respectively. Each part has two chapters, the six chapters being followed by a seventh chapter in a final part about the legacy of this Ming system for subsequent everyday politics. Szonyi shows people coping with conscription by attempting to insulate
family members from state impositions by specifying or concentrating them as narrowly as possible, to increase their predictability, and to assure that all descendants of a patriarch shared these inherited obligations. Extended families recognized that desertion and default by any given soldier placed them at risk for fulfilling the required military service. Hence, the strategy of compensating the household that undertook the conscription burden had to be qualified by the perceived risk of that household’s recruit(s) fleeing their obligation.

Part II addresses two topics. The first is the well-known yet murky subject of piracy, which Szonyi presents from the vantage point of a military that was both responsible for controlling piracy and often engaged in the very activities that it was expected to prevent. The second theme is the varied ways in which officers and soldiers could either integrate into the larger local society or, to the contrary, reproduce their separate-ness over generations, to the extent that they even retained their own distinctive “soldier’s dialect.” Part III further explores people’s efforts to maximize their opportunities and limit the burdens of service. Part III has one chapter about post-Ming legacies of the military household-registration system, discussing the ways in which Ming tax regulations influenced subsequent Qing dynasty practices despite the dissolution of the Ming household-registration system.

China specialists will find that this book examines the Ming military system of conscription not in the usual terms of its autocratic tendencies or its lumbering and ineffective bureaucracy but instead as a framework within which individuals made choices to maximize benefits and minimize risks. One challenge is to determine how to generalize from the situations of people who may have been more closely controlled in this respect than was the civilian population at large. For historians more generally, this book highlights strategic behavior among at least some ordinary people living in an institutional environment foreign to other early modern contexts. Although Szonyi does not employ the concept of negotiating explicitly until late in the book, the study largely shows how people were able to take advantage of differences between systems or situations to achieve gain—what economists today call, as Szonyi points out, regulatory arbitrage. Key to this ability is the use of contracts in ways that spill out from the strictly legal frameworks familiar in European history to include more informal means of adjudicating disagreements. Szonyi’s Chinese did not exercise “voice,” from the troika of Hirschman’s possibilities “exit, voice, and loyalty”; they appear to have negotiated their lives under an authority that was met more directly in Western societies by voice. Such an understanding should help historians to place Chinese experiences into early modern history more broadly.

R. Bin Wong
University of California, Los Angeles


The subtitle of this absorbing study promises more than the book delivers for two reasons: (1) because Ford limits his discussion of “America’s secret strategy in Southeast Asia” to American interactions with Southeast Asian Buddhism, focusing on Thailand, and (2) because even though America’s strategy in Southeast Asia to contain the Sino-Soviet bloc and to come out ahead in the Cold War was always in the open, many of its tactics, and the sources for its funding, were not.

This issue is important because the tactics that America used to influence Thai Buddhism in the Cold War were managed by the Asia Foundation (TAF)—a seemingly independent NGO (nongovernmental organization) that had been secretly funded and overseen by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) since its inception in the early 1950s. The CIA/TAF connection broke in 1967 when the Agency’s cover was blown. TAF soon withdrew from its involvement in Asian religious affairs. Although more about the CIA connection would have been welcome in Cold War Monks, Ford sensibly sidesteps the issue because he does not see the TAF/CIA connection as intrinsically sinister. More to the point, Ford has other stories to tell that have greater historical value.

The Thai Buddhist monastic community or sangha is the collective protagonist of Cold War Monks. Ford’s often enthralling narrative draws from interviews with major actors, monks or former monks, Thai language material, secondary literature, and U.S. government documents. As the Cold War gathered momentum in the 1950s, American policymakers decided that the international Buddhism among America’s allies should at least become more attuned to U.S. national interests. TAF was the instrument designated for the mission. The secrecy surrounding its funding and its unstated political agenda was essential because the United States could not be seen as supporting religious activities anywhere in the world. Through skilled and dedicated TAF officials such as William Klausner (interviewed in depth for this book) and Leonard Overton, TAF linked up with outward-looking members of the Thai, Lao, and Cambodian monastic communities. The abbots and monks within these communities perceived Buddhism as a multinational movement, Asian Communism as a threat, and the sangha as a positive social force that needed modernization.

TAF specifically targeted a senior, forward-looking monk named Phra Phimolatham, the abbot of Wat Mahathat in Bangkok. Phimolatham, who was active in international Buddhist circles, had his origins in Thailand’s impoverished, Lao-speaking northeast. He also enjoyed a substantial urban following. Eventually, his energy, internationalism, populist programs, and widespread popularity attracted the envy and anger of the hide-bound Thai Buddhist hierarchy whose senior members accused Phimolatham of Communist sympathies and homosexuality. In 1960, they forced him to relinquish his title and imprisoned him for four years. Subsequently, TAF’s work in Thailand lost much of its momentum.
Notwithstanding these indignities, Phimolatham emerges as the hero of Ford’s book.

Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the international response to the anti-Ngo Dinh Diem Buddhist movement in South Vietnam in 1963. These thoroughgoing pages are less compelling than the Thai-oriented chapters, partly because the Mahayana clergy in Vietnam were vastly different organizationally and ideologically from their Theravada counterparts in Thailand and largely because the volatile situation in Vietnam, described by many other authors, overwhelmed any efforts to resolve internal Buddhist crises.

The final chapters of Cold War Monks provide a sure-footed narrative history of the sangha’s intersection with Thai politics between the late 1960s and the end of the Cold War twenty years later. Newcomers to the subject may well view these chapters as well documented and persuasive, but much of the political history has been ably handled by other scholars. The main strengths of Cold War Monks lie in its early chapters and in its examination of U.S./TAF involvement with the Thai sangha. The opening chapters deftly set the stage, and the clear-headed final ones ably close the story.

Cold War Monks will appeal to readers interested in the history of twentieth-century Thai Buddhism and, more generally, those interested in its case study of a singular, even commendable, American effort to persuade an ancient foreign religious institution to align itself with America’s occasionally benign, incurious, and quasi-imperial national interests.

David Chandler
Monash University


This scholarly volume presents the history of India’s south-central Deccan region in a dynamic period—the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries—that witnessed great political and cultural transitions. Medieval Hindu kingdoms gave way to Muslim courts and new forms of sovereignty in the Indian subcontinent. The authors, however, eschew a simple religious binary for a broader civilizational view of the players and their cultural values, further advancing their already established research and analytical methods. Whereas previous studies generally focused on courtly capitals and primary urban centers, such as Golconda and Bijapur, this book sets out to foreground the Deccan’s lesser-known frontiers of action and contested areas, particularly Kalyana, Raichur, and Warangal.

One of the most interesting approaches of the book is to view the conquest of the Deccan by the Delhi Sultanate in the early fourteenth century as an encounter between a Sanskrit “cosmopolis” (a broad social network united by language and political culture) and a Persian cosmopolis. The
Chalukya and Kakatiya dynasties that successively ruled the Deccan from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries were forebears of a “placeless” Sanskritic ideal; their royal values and architectural styles were shaped in part by the literary image of the warrior king Rama, hero of the Ramayana epic. The incoming Persian cosmopolis was unified by Islam and the New Persian literary traditions, and also infused with the history and culture of the Middle East, central Asia, and northern India. Both civilizational systems shared an ideal of domination, in which religion came second to pure power and a sense of continuity with the past. By the sixteenth century—the major focus of the volume—the Persianate and Sanskritic ideals had been deeply blended, and their literary and political models were inherited by the Sultanate successors of the Bahmanid and Vijayanagara dynasties that came into power.

The book addresses the currently sensitive topic of the attitudes of the conquerors to the sacred and secular spaces of the conquered. Muslim responses to Hindu temples varied; they included destruction (when the temple had political importance), re-use, and active support. The authors examine the built landscape—even the often-overlooked subject of gateways—interpreting its symbolism and its relationship to the local past. The deliberate resurrection of earlier Hindu styles by later rulers, both Hindu and Muslim, is thus placed in meaningful context. Tracing the “stormy and tragic” career of Shitab Khan through the careful study of text, architecture, and inscriptions provides an avenue for these themes.

One of the most iconic buildings of the Deccan, the Charminar in Hyderabad, emerges as the fruit of its cultural encounters. Built in 1591, the millennial year of Islam, and marking the intersection of four cardinal roadways, this ornately decorated gateway tower complex with an upper-story mosque acts as a cosmic centerpiece for the city’s urban space, drawing together multiple architectural traditions from the past, while heralding the sumptuous future of the Golconda sultans.

This book is particularly valuable in light of today’s cultural debates in India—and around the world—given the widespread phenomenon of writing about the past with the tools and aims of politicians rather than those of historians. The authors’ detailed examination of texts, architecture, military technology, and biography offers reliable cross-references to explicate the complex history of the Deccan in this important transitional period. The book is accessible to both scholars and general readers, as well as to visitors and viewers of Deccan art and architecture.

Navina Najat Haidar
Metropolitan Museum of Art

_The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India_. By David Engerman (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2018) 512 pp. $35.00

In _The Price of Aid_, Engerman brings recently declassified Russian, British, American, Indian, and other archival documents together with an
astounding array of secondary published material to reconstruct India’s “foreign economic relations” in the early years of the Cold War (170). Engerman studies the Cold War as an organizing principle of the world, one that remains crucial to the way that the international economic order took shape in the twentieth century, reconstructing how superpowers turned to foreign aid as a tool of the Cold War to influence geopolitics through economic means.

Because Soviet and American aid policies and practices in India had wide-ranging consequences for both the donor countries, too, this book is essentially based on three parallel national narratives, grounded in an international context. Thus, its main conclusion is that none of the national economic policies of the time were purely domestic. Engerman stresses the inherently political nature of these seemingly purely economic decisions. The Price of Aid brings forward the idea that political actors on all sides were “building a national economy into an international enterprise” (3).

While this strategy might have been a large-writ feature of that time, Engerman illustrates through an astonishing accumulation of detail the specificity of the Indian case. Thus, the book engages not just with the concept of India as a recipient of foreign aid but equally with the question of how India shaped superpower practices and theories—indeed, how far donor policies were driven by, and began in, India. The central voice in the book turns out to be that of Indian officialdom; many of its episodes demonstrate the surprisingly robust agency with which personalities like Homi J. Bhabha, father of the Indian nuclear program, and Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, a member of India’s erstwhile planning commission, sought their own ends. Engerman achieves his worm’s eye view in the book through microhistories of “personalities, politics and institutions” (167), conveying a sense of “not just the scale but also the shape of aid” (188). The narrative provokes the idea that foreign donors were often building networks with particular ministries and not the entire government of India, thus weakening the Indian state by encouraging competition between its constituent parts (348).

Engerman approaches questions of economics through historical analysis, but he also makes a significant contribution to the historiography of the Cold War. The framing of the book and the insights that it offers beg the question, how far is economic history from being a history of ideas? After all, as Engerman says, “both sides . . . portrayed history as an irreversible march to improvement, which (they believed) would lead inevitably to the victory of their ideas” (7). This book’s motif may be the politics of economics, but as such, it foregrounds the vital question of what constitutes the study of the Cold War. Economic history has long been plagued with arguments regarding its contributions to both economics and history. Engerman has treated his object of study not just as a subfield of both disciplines; he has also situated the site of inquiry differently, by introducing the concept of “development politics” (6). By privileging the international over the national, this book has rid itself of the curse of letting “economic history” occupy itself with developed nation-states
while leaving “economic development” to deal with lesser-developed countries.

In addition to introducing this method, the book offers one of the best features of economic history—the creation of a large data bank, a new set of material for both historians and economists. The most celebrated examples of Cold War studies have followed a similar wave of regeneration, combining the materiality of data (in this case, economic) with the more allegorical aspects of superpower politics. More radical interventions seem not too far in the future, as evidenced in Engerman’s invocation of Morgenthau, a leading figure in yet another discipline concerned deeply with the Cold War (348).¹

Swapna Kona Nayudu
Harvard University Asia Center

¹ See, for example, Hans Morgenthau, Power among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace (New York, 1948).