

*Book reviews**

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Bruce M. S. Campbell and Ken Bartley, *England on the Eve of the Black Death: an atlas of lay lordship, land and wealth, 1300–49* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006. Pp. xxvii + 382. 122 figs. 299 maps. 26 tabs. ISBN 0719037689 Hbk. £120/\$210)

This important book is a pioneering application of a Geographical Information System (GIS) to medieval data, bringing together two national sources: the Inquisitions Post Mortem (IPM) for the period 1300–49 and the 1327, 1332, and 1334 lay subsidies. The results are in the form of numerous tables, graphs, and maps. Built around these is a series of invaluable commentaries.

After a concise account of the methods employed in the mapping and an invaluable discussion of the merits of the IPMs as a source (reaffirming H. L. Gray's positive view over E. A. Kosminsky's), the book turns to the mapping of regional traits. Naturally, many of the results are confirmatory rather than revelatory—on the distribution of common rights, for example—but they are no less significant for that. Similarly, the IPMs tend to confirm Kosminsky's findings on the variety and composition of manors from the surviving returns of the Hundred Rolls of 1279–80; that is to say, that demesnes were generally of greater relative significance on small manors, rents and services on middle-sized manors, and customary rents and services on the largest of all. The positive correlation between size of manor and size of estate is also confirmed. Of particular interest is the evidence for the distribution of small lay manors, indicating the area in which they predominated and those in which they did not. In terms of topographical features, one of the most interesting finds is that river flooding appears to have been a greater hazard than inundations from the sea.

Chapters on demesne land use, both major and minor, and on demesne buildings provide extremely useful distribution maps and statistics. There is an especially valuable discussion of the recording and non-recording of fallow land which all future users of IPMs will need to consult. There is a fine discussion of land values which shows, *inter alia*, that these values moved up or down according to general price trends. The construction of moving averages across the period 1270–1349 reveals not only short-term variations but also a long-term decline. A variety of factors underlay the determination of these values in addition to the quality and productivity of land, and there was in-built distortion due to the persistence of customary as opposed to statute acres. Nonetheless, the authors are able to provide both a detailed spatial analysis and an overall classification of land values. From there they move to a classification of husbandry or 'farm enterprise' types and, by combining this with land use, to 'a comprehensive picture of agriculture' in the form of 'agricultural types'. There follows a thorough discussion of rents and services, on average the largest single component of manorial revenues. The authors calculate

*Prices given are those supplied by publishers with review copies.

that at least 50 per cent of rent income was free, that the quantity of land held by customary tenants was only half of that held in free tenure, and that the great bulk of the demesne force was hired. Particularly interesting is the conclusion that by the early 1340s 'customary rents and customary services were both significantly lower in relative value to demesnes than they had been at the opening of the century' and that 'the demesne sector was becoming progressively less dependent upon the customary sector, both for cash and for labour' (p. 268). There are chapters on seigniorial courts and mills. What is especially striking about the former, as recorded in the IPMs, is their low average value, a mere 2 per cent of net revenues. The manor court was very much a southern institution. Mills, on the other hand, were widespread, yielding 4.6 per cent of the revenue of lay lords. Although in many cases windmills were built to deal with the lack of water power, in the eastern counties they were often built to complement water mills. The profitability of mills, deriving directly from seigniorial power, seems to have led lords to overinvest so that in the eastern counties some were finding it harder to maintain their income from them in the decades before the Black Death. The chapter on commerce and trade brings the number of known pre-plague boroughs to nearly 600. What is especially significant in this chapter is the evidence suggesting that market and borough foundations should be seen as alternatives within a general seigniorial drive that created a formal trading network in southern England.

The final chapter combines the three lay subsidies to map both the geographical distribution of wealth and the density of taxpayers, presenting for the first time the results of Robin Glasscock's massive study of the rolls. The use of a smaller kernel of 20 square miles alongside a large kernel of 250 square miles reveals local variations within a broader pattern. Finally, the mapping of *per capita* wealth shows not only the richness of Kent but also the average or better-than-average position of those living in parts of midland England where common rights and customary tenures were pronounced. A composite view using the technique of map overlay that is much in evidence throughout the book brings together these three measures with complementary results. It was 'in the countryside of England's mixed-farming and manorialized heartland that the highest densities of relatively wealthy taxpayers were to be found' and 'many of these well-to-do taxpayers were substantial customary tenants' (p. 349). The book is full of nuances and explanations for the myriad variations. What is abundantly clear is that this study puts our knowledge of the economy and society of pre-plague England on a much sounder basis.

Cardiff University

PETER COSS

Richard Jones and Mark Page, *Medieval villages in an English landscape: beginnings and ends* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2006. Pp. xviii + 270. 78 figs. ISBN 1905119097 Pbk. £19.99/\$39.95)

As Christopher Dyer explains in the preface, this is an important staging-post in a project planned long and carefully. It was soon after 1987 that he first mooted, in the Medieval Settlement Research Group, a project to carry forward the achievements of the 40 years' work at Wharham Percy in the Yorkshire Wolds. A logical sequel to the intensive analysis of this single deserted village, open to invasive archaeology, would be the investigation of a group of parishes through all possible means: documentary sources, surface archaeology, and, where possible, excavation. Where

Wharram Percy had revealed so much of the buildings of the medieval village, their construction, and their reconstruction, the new project would look at the broader pattern of settlement, how it developed, how it changed, and why.

The East Midlands were chosen as the region for the work, as their securely-dated Anglo-Saxon pottery would provide a firm chronology of settlement, and a pilot study published in 1997 (Carenza Lewis, Patrick Mitchell-Fox, and Christopher Dyer, *Village, hamlet and field: changing medieval settlements in central England*) identified the best areas for detailed research. The area finally selected comprised 12 parishes, 37 square miles, straddling the Northamptonshire-Buckinghamshire border. It lay entirely within Whittlewood Forest (it was deforested partly in the late-thirteenth century, partly in 1853), so the project became known as the Whittlewood Project, and the present book gives the result of the five years' research conducted by its authors. One is an archaeologist, the other an historian, echoing the Beresford-Hurst collaboration at Wharram Percy and echoing too its success: the work is seamless, and only inside knowledge can tell the reader which parts must be by Jones, which by Page.

Certainly the area is well chosen: a mix of dispersed and nucleated settlements, of woodland and fields. It is wholly rural, although Towcester, Stony Stratford, Buckingham, and Brackley are not far away. In the middle ages, it was divided between small-scale secular estates, so the distorting effect of a large-scale lay honour or ecclesiastical landlord was avoided. To choose a forest area was reasonable, given the huge areas that at one time or another were designated forest; the authors found one settlement that was probably removed in the twelfth century for the sake of hunting, but they suggest that the Normans' creation of the Forest merely formalized existing arrangements and they point out that the woodland long produced a wider spread of occupations than one would find in a purely champion area.

Some of the project's discoveries confirm—valuably—what has been found elsewhere: the reversion of arable land to woodland in the fifth and sixth centuries, with population much reduced until the late Anglo-Saxon period; the importance of extremely local sales, not necessarily in markets, for disposing of surplus produce in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the engrossment of peasant holdings in the fifteenth century, clear from documentary sources but hard to detect on the ground without excavation; and more. However, many discoveries are new and important, especially in the changing settlement pattern that was the project's main focus. The authors found no reason to correlate the desertion of scattered farmsteads with the formation of nucleated villages; some settlements, which they call pre-village nuclei, grew into villages in the period 850–1000, but, while others were abandoned, this happened piecemeal and from no obvious causes. Changing sherd distribution, revealing changing patterns of manuring, dates the origin of the area's open fields to the same period, but nothing suggests the organized planning that would create at once the nucleated village and the common fields around it. Nor was there just one growth-settlement per parish; some nuclei became hamlets of between three and a dozen homesteads. Indeed, while the whole book unavoidably uses the parishes as its point of reference, this can mislead, giving undue weight to just one administrative structure that here, as elsewhere, need not mirror the pattern of settlement.

One key message of the book is that the settlement pattern, indeed the whole economic history, of neighbouring places, seemingly wholly alike, can differ sharply for no apparent reason. It becomes ever clearer that we seek in vain the universal explanation, the single model, for the experience of different rural communities in the middle ages. Dyer emphasizes properly at the start that 'this book does not mean

the end of the Whittlewood Project, but marks a stage in its progress . . . as we seek to answer the still unresolved questions thrown up by the research' (p. xviii). All the same, the reader will find many more questions answered than are left unresolved.

University of Durham

P. D. A. HARVEY

Christopher P. Lewis and Alan T. Thacker, eds., *Victoria county history: a history of the county of Chester*, vol. V, 2, *The city of Chester: culture, buildings and institutions* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2005. Pp. xxiv + 398. 184 illus. ISBN 1904356036 Hbk. £90/\$170)

Gillian Cookson, ed., *Victoria county history: a history of the county of Durham*, vol. IV, *Darlington* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2005. Pp. xi + 267. 57 illus. 8 maps. ISBN 1904356265 Hbk. £95/\$180)

S. Townley, ed., *Victoria county history: a history of the County of Oxford*, vol. XV, *Carterton, Minster Lovell, and environs (Bampton Hundred part three)* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2006. Pp. xiii + 280. 64 illus. 20 maps. ISBN 1904356060 Hbk. £95/\$175)

The first of these three Victoria county history (VCH) volumes constitutes the second part of a two-volume history of the city of Chester from Roman times to the year 2000. The first part, published in 2003, covered the administrative, political, economic, social, and religious history of the city, and was organized chronologically, while the present volume provides a detailed account of particular topics, institutions, and buildings and is organized thematically under five headings: local government and public services; economic infrastructure and institutions; the churches and other religious bodies; major buildings; and leisure and culture. Each volume includes a (very brief) general introduction to the city's history, the two volumes are cross-referenced, and part 2 provides a comprehensive index to the whole, for which those who purchased part 1 four years ago are no doubt very grateful. Part 2 is also exceptionally well-endowed with illustrations.

The decision to divide the history of the Chester into two volumes was no doubt taken for pragmatic reasons, but it does create some difficulties. Hence the introduction to the section on 'economic infrastructure and institutions' in the present volume includes two pages on population to set the scene, but the subject is treated in a cursory fashion, clearly repeating some of the material contained in part 1, and with numerous cross-references. Similarly, it is not clear why transport and marketing feature in this volume, rather than being included with the economic and social history of the city in part 1, and the same might be said of the section on municipal and parochial charities. Nevertheless, one can also see why two volumes were necessary, for this survey contains an enormous weight of information in its 40 deeply researched, substantive chapters, providing an indispensable work of reference for the historian of the city. The great majority of the chapters were written by one or other of the two editors, though there are cameos by Julia Barrow (on policing and fire services, public utilities, railways, and libraries), David Mills (on play, sports, and customs before 1700, and on the twentieth-century revival of the mystery plays), Aidan Lawes (charities), and Malcolm Seaborne (education). Unlike many of the earlier VCH volumes, this one does justice to church architecture

without being dominated by it, although the two final chapters—which list mayors and sheriffs, and manors and estates in and near the city—do hark back a little to the more antiquarian concerns that the VCH has for so long struggled to leave behind.

The second volume focuses upon Darlington, and constitutes volume 4 of the VCH series for Durham, appearing almost 80 years after the publication of volume 3—a result of the revival of the Durham VCH in 1999, the first fruits of which was the publication (in paperback) of *The townscape of Darlington* (2003), now incorporated into the present volume. Its four sections cover the growth and development of the town, town government and politics, trade and industry, and religious and cultural life. The editor is responsible for much of the volume, though substantial contributions are credited to the assistant editor Christine Newman, with additional contributions from Graham Potts and Elizabeth Williamson. First recorded in 1003, Darlington remained a small town throughout the medieval and early-modern periods, with a population in the region of 1,200–1,300 in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, before its rapid eighteenth-century growth to a size of 4,670 in 1801. As such it depended heavily upon its marketing role, with a weekly market and annual fair, which survived the depredations of the Black Death and the later medieval recession. Its medieval cloth trade had given way in importance by the seventeenth century to leather production, while the town continued to benefit from its strategic position on the national north–south thoroughfare. Its headlong rise in the nineteenth century was the product of its development of engineering and iron industries, producing mass immigration and a population of over 42,000 by the start of the twentieth century. While the heyday of iron was over by the 1880s, engineering continued to prosper, only to decline in turn after the 1950s. Population reached nearly 85,000 by 1951, growing only marginally thereafter to 97,000 by 1991. Much of the discussion of the engineering and iron industries is taken up by discussion of individual firms, which tends to fragment the narrative. Unfortunately the volume has little to say about the town's recent economic history, although, like so many other towns, it no doubt held its own through its possession of a diverse economic base and the further development of commercial, retail, and service industries.

The Oxford VCH is fortunate in having the continuing support of the Oxfordshire County Council, supplemented by funds raised from the VCH Oxfordshire Trust, established in 1998. Volume 15 covers eight largely rural parishes in west Oxfordshire: Alvescot, Asthall, Black Bourton, Carterton, Clanfield, Kencot, Minster Lovell and Brize Norton. New guidelines for the structure of VCH parish histories were adopted in 2003, the chief features of which are the inclusion of discrete sections on social history and on buildings, and the combination of church history and non-conformist history into a single section. The account of Kencot presented here conforms to this new structure; those of the other parishes represent a hybrid. Each, however, includes a section on economic history—though at least as much space is devoted to 'manors and estates'—as well as (rather brief) information on aspects of social history like poor relief and education, subsumed under the heading 'social life'. The editor, Simon Townley, is responsible for the bulk of the writing, with substantial contributions from Veronica Ortenberg and Robert Peberdy.

I have very ambivalent feelings about the Victoria County History, even as an erstwhile contributor to VCH *Essex*. Many of the earlier volumes were overly concerned with manorial descents, church architecture and even with 'flora and fauna', but as a starting point for the history of, for example, philanthropy, they are often indispensable. Some contain valuable material on population and economic history, as do the four volumes of the VCH *Hertfordshire*, published as early as

1904–14. In general, however, they have become increasingly useful to the economic historian during the last 50 years or so, and there are some particularly notable urban studies. However, despite these longer-term changes, reinforced by policies adopted by recent Directors of the VCH, the impression remains that they are locked in a struggle, straining to throw off the shackles of their antiquarian heritage yet retaining the weight of empirical research that is their defining characteristic, eschewing broad interpretations of historical development yet giving shape to the past, remaining essentially source-driven yet striving for a readable historical narrative.

The three volumes reviewed here are exemplary in their mastery of the available source material, and they provide a wealth of information about innumerable aspects of the communities to which they relate. They retain, however, echoes of the ‘old way of doing things’, with their lists of mayors, insubstantial treatment of topics such as poverty and social structure, concentration on manors and estates, and focus upon firms rather than broader economic history. One still feels a tension between the general and the particular in these volumes: insofar as it clings to the particular, perhaps the VCH is more in tune than this reviewer with post-modernism, and (like my clothes) is threatening a return to fashion. But, fashionable or not, my ambivalence remains. I do want the VCH to be there, not only because of the welter of information its volumes contain, but also because of the employment opportunities it offers to so many first-rate historians. But I also want it to break more completely with its past, to situate itself more firmly in the camp of professional local history, to remove the taint of antiquarianism that is still all too often associated by the ill-informed with the local historian. Should we cherish the VCH? Is it, in the words of a recent reviewer in this journal, ‘too important to lose?’ (LIX, p. 230). One way to answer this question would be to compare the progress made in local and regional history in counties that have managed to retain, and those that have not managed to retain, a VCH presence. Another would be to ask whether or not it should be fully funded, diverting resources for the purpose from the AHRC and ESRC that would otherwise fund research centres, individual projects, and research leave. I am not sure about the answer to the first of these questions but, given the enormous annual cost of the central and local VCH operations, and with profuse apologies to friends and colleagues who work in the VCH, I am about the second. If it is able to continue with its mix of funding from the University of London, other universities, county councils, VCH Trusts, sponsorships, charitable endowments, and heritage lottery fund grants—with all of the uncertainties, frustration, and sheer effort that this involves—then I am a keen supporter of the VCH. I sincerely hope that it is able to do so.

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NIGEL GOOSE

John Styles and Amanda Vickery, eds., *Gender, taste and material culture in Britain and North America, 1700–1830* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006. Pp. viii + 358. 84 plates. ISBN 0300116594 Hbk. £40/\$65)

Here is another collection on consumption and culture in the long eighteenth century, distinguished in the first instance by its copious use of high quality colour illustrations, ranging from photographs of buildings, wallpaper, and costume and prints, as befits its appearance in the Yale series ‘Studies in British art’, and more generally by an exceptionally broad range of approaches applied by scholars from

diverse fields. The book has grown out of the AHRC-funded project which established the Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior, based on collaboration between the Royal College of Art, the Bedford Centre for the History of Women at Royal Holloway, University of London, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. This volume provides new insights into linked topics including female knowledge in household management and shopping, the gendered nature of taste, and masculine modes of consumption. The keynote theme seems to be that of not taking everyday objects for granted and of subjecting the tricky terrain of subjective preference and taste to historical scrutiny. Such an approach promises to link important economic themes of the eighteenth century to the spheres of culture and politics.

The book is spread over four themes. The first, 'Spaces', opens with Bernard Herman on material culture and everyday life, this based on a comparative study of Deptford (England) and Philadelphia. John Styles examines lodgings and their furnishings in eighteenth-century London, building on a study of records of stolen property gleaned from the online version of Old Bailey proceedings. His main contention is that 'plebeian men and women performed a more active role as consumers . . . than the pessimists admit' (p. 62). In the next contribution, Robert Blair St George analyses the domestic interior with a study of book-reading spaces through the lens of what he terms, following Charles Taylor, 'the social imaginary'. Karen Lipsedge considers women, closet culture, and the eighteenth-century English novel, starting out with the observation, well known to literary scholars, that the novels of Samuel Richardson convey 'a clear impression of inhabited living spaces' (p. 107).

The second part, 'Shopping', includes a study of 'collaborative consumption' in early American port cities, finding that agents from enslaved servants to children all played a role in determining the outcomes of consumer choice, and an essay by Claire Walsh on shops, shopping, and the art of decision-making in eighteenth-century England. Ann Smart Martin interprets gendered consumption at the point of purchase inside the matrix of relationships 'between merchants and customers; between women and their husbands, fathers, or lovers; and, as important, between customers and objects' (p. 180). Amanda Vickery looks at wallpaper in an innovative chapter that makes use of trade letter books to reconstruct the concepts and language that informed domestic aesthetic judgements.

'Politics', the third thematic division, looks at clothing and the politics of male identity in a chapter by Lizzy Brekke, followed by Jonathan White's confidently materialist synoptic study on social thought and 'the labouring-class domestic sphere'. This finds a class-conscious British bourgeoisie out to shape new ideologies of work and patterns of consumption in a vibrant home market. 'People', the final section, comprises Amy Henderson's study of the construction and decoration of a Philadelphia townhouse between 1785 and 1790; Hannah Greig's study of fashion and London's *beau monde* (an incisive study of elites and the social semiotics of dress); and Kate Retford's study of English country house portraiture.

Overall, this is a collection of thoughtful, sophisticated, and innovative studies that will find an eager audience in the seemingly ever-expanding readership for historical material culture. The centrality of the eighteenth century's new worlds of goods is emphasized; myths about spendthrift women and abstemious Spartan men are critically scrutinized. The role of Asia is perhaps neglected by the book's focus on a north Atlantic crucible of consumption. Most of the essays are richly detailed descriptions rather than analytical studies, with relatively little attempt at explicit theory, comparison, or generalization, although it should be stressed that influences

are drawn from an exceptionally wide range of perspectives including material culture, archaeology, fine arts, and literature. Readers of this journal may find little in this book that links to mainstream economics and economic history; nevertheless, it will certainly interest those who teach or research the field.

University of Bristol

RICHARD SHELDON

Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt, and Samantha Williams, eds., *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700–1920* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Pp. xv + 249. 7 figs. 32 tabs. ISBN 1403990654 Hbk. £50/\$80)

In 2004, a group of enthusiastic Cambridge postgraduates organized a conference on the British experience of bastardy. It was a good conference and has led to a good book; a unified effort, not a collection of disparate chapters, with a good introduction by the editors. It is difficult, and perhaps not desirable, to escape the influence of the Cambridge group when discussing illegitimacy. Of the 12 contributors, six are either working there or did so in the past. Of the others, one is working on Scotland and three on Ireland. The group have set the scene for the manner in which illegitimacy is discussed. It is why the book has much quantitative material, and only one chapter—by Tanya Evans—that overlaps with cultural history and another—by Nutt—with administrative history. Perhaps most readers of this journal would argue that this is for the good. Count first. If there is not enough to count, look for policy biases.

Counting thus features strongly in trying to trace what must now inelegantly be called ‘the bastardy prone sub-society’, or if not a sub-society, at least bastardy-prone individuals. Steve King, with his usual scepticism of averages and his attempts to link disparate sources, devotes his chapter to finding such societies, tracking them down in Lancashire, Wiltshire, and Somerset during the early-nineteenth century. Tracing bastardy-prone men and women is a laborious exercise, particularly when different parishes are involved and there is always the question of how many people are needed for a sub-society. King admits that the term ‘raises all sorts of problems’ (p. 213), which he takes some steps towards solving in a closely argued chapter, but this is a laborious process. Looking at the fathers of illegitimate children in wide areas of London, John Black finds few such fathers. These were not, he firmly announces, ‘drawn from a separate and specific sub-stratum of men prone to fathering bastards’ (p. 51); instead they reproduced the occupational structures of their communities, in this case three separate London parishes, an argument that Black has set out in detail in his doctoral thesis. King might reply fairly that counties and regions had their own peculiarities: the rural or proto-urban Lancashire parishes had few workhouses, London parishes had them, as well as the option of sending persistent offenders to Bridewell, but Black has done his work thoroughly. Andrew Blackie, Eilidh Garrett, and Ros Davies tackle this problem squarely when comparing illegitimacy in Skye and Rothiemay in Scotland, 1871–81. They compare systematically the two communities (including the considerable variations within Skye), both of which had high rates of illegitimacy compared with England. There are problems of comparison, ones so well described that this paper could usefully be given to Masters students as a model. Although a progress report, and a condensed one at that, it is clear that explanations for differences in illegitimacy rates are found firmly within the local societies.

Samantha Williams's chapter examining policies for permitting entry to the Foundling Hospital demonstrates why historians should examine the policies of institutions before jumping to conclusions. The Foundling's entry petitions have been used by historians of sexuality, such as Randolph Trumbach, Patty Seleski, and Francoise Barrett-Ducroq, to draw different conclusions, and in the process they have tended to ignore—or at least to play down—that in 1801 the Foundling changed its rules to prioritize 'respectable' mothers: those who consented—preferably only once—to sexual relations upon promise of marriage, were abandoned, felt deeply ashamed, and were therefore deemed proper objects of charity. Petitions changed accordingly. Tanya Evans has explored the petitions to the Foundling before this shift in her *Unfortunate objects* (2005); women used a different, more independent language. Evans's chapter in this book does not cover that ground but takes other areas of her previous book to look at courtship and illegitimacy in eighteenth-century popular literature. There is the usual problem of typicality, but one is sympathetic to her view that marriage might well be difficult to achieve and maintain, and that popular attitudes reflected this. One wonders how far the greater instability of the seventeenth century, or the greater stability of the nineteenth century, led to changed popular attitudes.

Nutt uses the records of Chelmsford court of petty sessions to take issue with the view of the New Poor Law Commission report that under the old poor law magistrates were not permitted to question closely women's assertion of paternity. The Chelmsford magistrates did so, and their efforts between 1814 and 1834 have left a paper trail. One has the impression of a conscientious bench navigating the shoals of the legal system, and some faith in the mothers' declarations of paternity. Firmly back with numbers, Alys Levene and Alice Reid tackle the problem of the mortality penalty for illegitimate children: Levene for London parishes and the Foundling Hospital around the mid-eighteenth century, Reid for Derbyshire during the First World War. It is not so difficult to establish such a penalty; it is much more difficult to provide an explanation. In Derbyshire the mortality penalty was particularly striking when the mother was poor and the father a soldier, a combination that was not so striking for the mortality of legitimate children. In the parishes examined by Levene, where the infant mortality rate could be as high as 900 per thousand, the crucial variable seems to have been breastfeeding by the mother.

The authors conclude their introduction by quoting Peter Laslett on certain groups of illegitimate children: 'About them we shall never know anything more' (p. 17) and conclude that this book challenges this statement. It does indeed do so.

University of Birmingham

LEONARD SCHWARZ

James Taylor, *Creating capitalism: joint-stock enterprise in British politics and culture, 1800–1870* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006. Pp. x + 256. 18 illus. 11 tabs. ISBN 0861932846 Hbk. £45/\$80)

Can a company go to heaven? Most certainly not, thought the banker and corporate moralist J. W. Gilbart writing in 1846. The idea of the business corporation without a soul will resonate with modern readers in the post-Enron era. This pioneering study shows that it also was central to popular perceptions of the joint-stock company in the nineteenth century, as Victorians struggled to come to terms with

the expanding numbers of such companies in their midst, and the mushrooming conflicts that they spawned among owners, managers, and consumers.

Taylor sets out to challenge what he calls 'whiggish' accounts of the development of the corporate economy in nineteenth-century Britain, and to question the assumption that the rise of the limited-liability company represented the triumph of 'common sense' and 'free trade' over self-interest and inefficiency. In the first part of the book, popular attitudes to the joint-stock company are explored using an impressive array of sources: newspaper and periodical articles, pamphlets and lectures, parliamentary speeches, evidence before select committees, law reports, fictional accounts by novelists and playwrights, and satirical cartoons. The analysis is witty, nuanced, and a fascinating read. The argument is that, for much of this period, perceptions of joint-stock companies were dominated by the belief that individuals and small partnerships were better at business, and that companies, whether incorporated or not, were associated with privilege, monopoly, inefficiency, and 'Old Corruption'. Commerce by partnership, contemporaries argued, was predicated on notions of character, trust, credit, and individual responsibility. Companies, as associations of capital, not individuals, undermined the importance of character and morality in business. There was great concern about the moral hazards posed by company directors, employees, and customers. Limited liability was a potential 'fortress of immorality' because it diminished the prospect of failure for investors and reduced the burden of individual responsibility for directors.

Part 2 of the book examines the cyclical booms in company promotions, 1806–9, 1824–5, 1834–7, 1845–7, and the political and legislative responses. Taylor juxtaposes carefully the arguments for and against joint-stocks and succeeds in giving the reader a good idea of the extent of uncertainty in the minds of those involved in the debates. During the first four decades of the century, notwithstanding the repeal of the Bubble Act and the legal reform of English banking, those calling for less restrictive regulation and greater legal protection for joint-stock companies made little headway. The judiciary continued to view joint-stock investments as a zero-sum game. Company supporters had to overcome the deeply engrained fears of excessive speculation and 'stock-jobbing', which was difficult given the bubbles of 1825 and the frauds in insurance, banking, and railways during the 1830s and 1840s. The introduction of company registration in 1844, Taylor argues, did not represent any sea-change in official attitudes. Rather, it aimed to reduce the disruptive influence of companies on the economy and to enable shareholders to perform their regulatory duties more effectively.

The 1844 legislation failed in its primary aim. Scandals re-emerged during the railway mania. In a detailed account of the debates within and outside Parliament, Taylor demonstrates how divided opinion was on the question of company reform. He rejects several recent explanations of the coming of limited liability in 1856, for instance that it was an attempt to 'domesticate' speculation, or that it represented a new prioritization of growth over stability, or that it was a social measure designed to give larger numbers a stake in the world of joint-stock capitalism. Instead, Taylor argues, limited liability was a 'modest adjustment of policy' that aimed, as previous legislation had done, to promote stability rather than growth. The superiority of individual enterprise remained a staple belief, as did the belief in the importance of shareholder responsibility for monitoring company behaviour.

Changes did happen, however. One factor behind the legislation of the 1840s and 1850s was the decline in the view that the state was best able to manage the distribution of corporate privileges. There was a gradual reconceptualization of

joint-stock companies, at least those outside the railway, gas, and water industries, as 'private' rather than as public entities, and of limited liability as a natural right. Many of these ideas were pushed by a new financial press benefiting from the advertising revenue that large numbers of company promotions provided. Distinctions were beginning to be made between speculative shareholders who deserved little pity, and those steady shareholders whose losses were to be regretted. Official responses to the Overend Gurney scandal of 1866 demonstrated that the joint-stock system had cemented its position, and that, despite the public outcry, there would be no rolling back of limited liability or of the powers of directors vis-à-vis shareholders.

This book, based on a Kent PhD thesis, is a splendid addition to the Royal Historical Society's series 'Studies in History', which is providing a valuable outlet for some of the best new post-doctoral research in Britain. This reviewer must admit to an interest in the author, whom he has employed as a researcher and with whom he has co-authored articles recently. The book, however, was written largely during Taylor's time as a Tawney Research Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research, and anyone reading it cannot fail to be struck by its quality. It should enhance considerably his reputation as one of the finest young historians in the country.

University of Hull

ROBIN PEARSON

Anthony Howe and Simon Morgan, eds., *Rethinking nineteenth-century liberalism: Richard Cobden bicentenary essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006. Pp. xii + 302. 3 illus. ISBN 0754655725 Hbk. £55/\$99.95)

The 15 essays in this collection, together with the substantial introduction by the editors who give a careful summary of each contribution, maintain a high standard in terms of scholarship throughout and they cover a wide range of topics. David Stack makes a vigorous case for seeing the phrenologist George Combe as Cobden's chief intellectual inspiration alongside Adam Smith, and Simon Morgan provides some interesting insights into Cobden's celebrity status after the repeal of the corn laws.

There are three essays on Cobden's contribution to liberal politics in Britain. Michael Thompson writes on the campaign for free trade in land (which, via several quirks of fate, eventually gave birth to the Abbey National building society, now Abbey plc), and David Brown on Cobden's attitudes to press freedom and the outcomes of his ownership of the *Star* newspaper. The best of this bunch is Ronald Quinault's careful reappraisal of Cobden's attitude to the franchise where he demonstrates that the latter 'never opposed universal suffrage in principle and did much to advance it in practice' (p. 67).

There follows a group of four essays—Alex Tyrrell on France, Roberto Romani on Italy, Detlev Mares on Germany, and Pandeimon Hionidis on Greece—that make it amply clear how widespread and varied was Cobden's influence on the development of liberal movements in Europe. These pieces are complemented by Keith Robbins's study, which argues that Cobden 'stood at a central point where the old world of inter-state relations met the new world of inter-national relations' (p. 188); and by Martin Ceadel on Cobden's complex and sometimes tortuous relations with the peace movement in Britain which arose from the fact that Cobden, despite his interest in disarmament and international arbitration in international disputes, was

not a pacifist, while so many of the activists on whom he had to rely supported the Quaker cause. Stephen Meardon then investigates another strand of Cobden's internationalism in reappraising carefully the latter's attitudes to the American Civil War and comparing and contrasting them with those of Bright, and those of the American politician Charles Sumner with whom Cobden had an extensive correspondence during the war.

The collection ends with some considerations of Cobden's legacy. Sarah Richardson charts the varied ways in which that legacy was developed and interpreted by his daughters after their father's death; in an essay of particular interest to readers of this journal, Donald Winch then shows how Cobden's ideas became Cobdenism as reflected in the austere writings of Louis Mallet, who tried vainly to protect his hero's ideas from dilution and pollution; and Frank Trentmann rounds off the collection neatly when he examines the way the image of Cobden and what he stood for has evolved in the 140 years since his death.

Some of the judgements made in these essays may have to be qualified in the near future because the editors of this volume are also the principals involved in the new edition of Cobden's letters which will begin publication soon, and which has been held up by the discovery of an amount of new material much greater than that originally expected. However, as matters stand, these essays announce no major shifts in historical perceptions of the significance of its subject, and no real suggestion that the major biographies of the 1980s by Nicholas Edsall and Wendy Hinde are in need of fundamental reappraisal or revision. The density of the detail also tends to obscure the fact that Cobden was a rarity amongst British politicians in having a coherent vision of the world and its future, a vision to which he tried, despite the inevitable messiness of everyday politics, to adhere throughout his life. The only in-depth analysis of the tension between Cobden's deepest convictions and the limitations imposed by political realities is Meardon's essay which shows how, when push came to shove in the Civil War crisis, although Bright was willing to put aside his commitment to free trade, peace, and non-intervention in the interests of actively supporting the North and its anti-slavery campaign, Cobden could not. He never thought the cause of abolition a sufficient reason for going to war and had finally to rest his support for the North on the shaky ground that they had a right to defend themselves against aggression by the South. Finally, although the emphasis on liberalism in the main title is certainly justified in the clutch of essays on Cobden's European influence, his internationalism, and his peace activities, these needed to be complemented by more studies of the evolution of the British variant. In that context it would have been good, for example, to return to John Vincent's judgement that Cobden added little to the mix from which the Gladstonian Liberal party emerged and to test it in the light of what has been written by Eugenio Biagini, Jonathan Parry, and others in recent years.

Sheffield Hallam University

PETER CAIN

Steven King, *'We might be trusted': women, welfare and local politics, 1880–1920* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2006. Pp. ix + 364. 12 figs. 3 maps. 5 tabs. ISBN 1845190874 Hbk. £55/\$75)

Steven King sets out clearly three main goals for this book: to assess assumptions about the late Victorian and Edwardian poor law; to evaluate women's work as poor

law guardians; and to explore the relationships between women's local government experiences and the emerging women's movement. He emphasizes that while empirical local studies concerning these three themes are lacking, they are the only means to test broad generalizations based on the national picture. Rather than confirming what he sees as the historiographical consensus that the poor law in this period was suffering stagnation and decline, that women received hostility as poor law guardians and lacked the experience to truly effect change, and that women's local government work had little direct connection to the suffrage movement, King turns these premises on their heads. '*We might be trusted*' is the result of King's own case study of the Bolton poor law union in Lancashire and offers conclusions that are persuasive, if possibly overstated. The chapters are arranged thematically to address each of King's three key issues, as well as to reveal the progressive development of Bolton women's involvement in philanthropy, local government, and a feminist movement. King's attention to the detail of the Bolton records is impressive and produces a rich portrait of women's activism.

This is a celebratory text, which King acknowledges comes out of the need to correct a pessimistic historiography. While applauding the welfare work of Bolton women generally, King focuses on the remarkable life of Mary Haslam. Haslam, the daughter of a prominent Liberal, philanthropic family, was clearly a force in Bolton, and she provides the material through which King identifies the vitality of Bolton poor law work, women's roles in creating and maintaining that vitality, and the significance of welfare work to the emergence of a local feminist movement. The centrality of Haslam to King's interconnected stories is clear throughout his text, and his inclusion of Haslam's diary of her guardian work, autobiographical notes, and travel diaries is testament both to his reliance on Haslam's voice for his narrative and the fullness of the material itself.

King demonstrates forcefully that women's experiences, first as philanthropists and second as poor law guardians, provided the essential base on which to build a feminist politics. Bolton women's initial forays into local government grew out of active philanthropy (as opposed to passive giving). Philanthropic commitment led to an investment in more professional welfare work and campaigns to elect women poor law guardians. King offers a strong case for the support Bolton women received both in their election campaigns and once they took their places on boards of guardians. While studies exist which stress the links between women's charitable activities and local government work, or between women's philanthropy and developing feminism, none links so systematically all three areas with such specificity.

Perhaps King's most insightful challenge to previous scholarship concerns the conventional picture of the late Victorian and Edwardian poor law (which, he notes rightly, is sadly under-studied) and the implication that women's work as poor law guardians coincided with the poor law apparatus falling into decay. Rather, King illustrates that not only did women's poor law work contribute to their own personal development as feminists, but it also revitalized poor law practices, particularly those concerning children, women, and the elderly. King argues that female poor law guardians' attention to these populations was not relegation to 'women's work' which pushed female guardians to the periphery, but indeed was central to the operation of the poor law, as evidenced by analysis of increasing expenditures and programmes. Additionally, King contends that these women had a very significant impact on the lives of the poor themselves through the improvement of services. 'Rather than being marginalized', King asserts, 'the Bolton female guardians were at the very heart of union business' (p. 161).

The strength these women derived from the poor law experiences was fundamental to their development as feminists. According to King, the Bolton women's movement rested on the bedrock of female poor law guardianship which expressed women's competence—to themselves and those in the community—and informed a desire for greater public roles. King traces the emergence of a feminist consciousness and women's movement in Bolton from 1890 to the period after women achieved the vote, noting the development of women's increasingly focused activism, a growing utilization of a language of rights and citizenship, and an expansion of the socio-economic backgrounds of the women involved.

This is a valuable study. King's multi-dimensional analysis of Bolton women's activism, reassessment of the state of the late Victorian and Edwardian poor law, and reproduction of and commentary on important primary source material all contribute significantly to our knowledge of the welfare practices and the women's movement of the period. My enthusiasm for the book is tempered, however, by the heavy-handed nature of the argument. There are only so many times a reader needs to be reminded of the inadequacies of the existing literature or that something will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. These are primarily issues of style, however; the substance is all there.

University of Colorado at Denver

MARJORIE LEVINE-CLARK

Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt, and Lynne Thompson, eds., *The English countryside between the wars: regeneration or decline?* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006. Pp. ix + 324. 16 plates. 10 tabs. ISBN 184383264X Hbk. £55/\$90)

This book of essays is a shop window for the Interwar Rural History Study Group, formed in 2002 out of scholarly concern at the neglect of the countryside in general histories of the period. Its aim is to challenge the orthodox view of the interwar countryside as chronically depressed, and to reshape an historiography that is over-simplified and too narrowly concerned with the problems of agriculture. It addresses the question 'decline or regeneration?'; it sets new parameters for research; and identifies sources of new growth, in farming itself, but also in the social, cultural, and policy spheres. The 15 chapters, by researchers drawn from an impressive range of disciplines, are organized, not in every case harmoniously, into four sections: society, culture, politics, and economics.

Central to the new historiography is the renewed growth after nearly half a century of decline of the rural population, especially in the eastern and southern regions, as businesses and their workers began to move out of the conurbations. In his overview, Alun Howkins identifies inward migrants, particularly from the educated middle class, and falling numbers of 'rural workers', as key drivers of social and occupational change, to the point where, by 1930, 'rural history' in the conventional sense had come to an end. The period abounds with new initiatives at all levels. In the chapter on rural education, Caitlin Adams finds as yet little fundamental change in goals and governance, although the Village College movement indicates what could be achieved by enterprising individuals. The establishment of village halls, the subject of a chapter by Jeremy Burchardt, helped to regenerate and democratize village communities, and to expand the range of leisure activities and voluntary groups. Another cultural vehicle, Village Theatre, is examined by Mick Wallis in a study of its development and impact in Gloucestershire, and the Village Drama Society, founded in 1919, and with

over 600 members in 1939. Marion Shaw's study of female rural novelists concludes that while they may have challenged women's traditional roles, very few were wanting drastically to reform rural society.

In a succinct account of economic and policy changes, Brassley shows the agricultural achievement to have been much more impressive than is generally supposed, and in mechanization and growth areas, such as poultry and horticulture, notably so. Whereas in the 'great depression' of the later-nineteenth century agricultural output had stagnated, between the mid-1920s and the later 1930s it rose by an estimated 14 per cent, while industrial efficiency, measured as total factor productivity, increased by an average 2.1 per cent per annum, more than in any major sector of the economy. Yet the period is remembered by the farming community as one of depression and hardship, largely it seems on account of poor profitability linked to adverse terms of trade and high ratios of costs to prices. Roy Brigden's case study of the Leckford Estate, owned by the department store magnate Speydon Lewis is evidence that even the most technically progressive farms, managed on proven commercial principles, made little or no profit in the period. Lynne Thompson examines developments in agricultural training in rural schools, and on a less formal basis by Women's Institutes, Farmers' Clubs, and Rural Community Councils. 'Regeneration via agricultural education' became a popular rallying cry by the 1930s.

The embedded issues are addressed intelligently in the chapters by Christopher Bailey and Brassley on traditional rural crafts. Of little economic but great symbolic importance, they served as 'a kind of index' of general decline. In 1942, the Scott Commission put the question as to whether the crafts should be preserved as a tradition, or regenerated on commercial lines. Bailey discusses some of the philosophical issues in the context of the work of the Rural Industries Bureau and Rural Community Councils. Brassley contrasts the anti-industrial, pro-preservationist tone of rural writers such as Sturt and Hartley with the more positive approach of FitzRandolph and Hay's 1926 rural industries survey. Statistical analysis shows the decline in Devon to have been of modest proportions, with signs of adaptation, diversification, and, among blacksmiths, a shift from vernacular to decorative iron-work.

Rural regeneration is in no sense an exclusively interwar concern. Nor was there a shortage of novel prescriptions. John Sheail looks at agriculture within the broader framework of the 'planned economy', and the growing importance of town and country planning and the 'scientific method' in strategic thinking about the rural sector and its place in a predominantly urban and industrial society. Clare Griffiths examines efforts by the Labour Party to identify new ways, other than protection, of integrating agricultural policy within a broader national programme. These include proposals to link producers and consumers and restructure farm output in support of a national nutrition policy. On the extreme fringe stood Henry Williamson, fascist sympathizer, nature writer, and farmer, who saw the way ahead in terms of a physiocratic state and programme of national renewal in which agriculture was the unifying force. Mark Rawlinson discusses the philosophy of this idiosyncratic figure, and his influence, in the later 1930s. David Jeremiah's chapter on the Dartington Hall Estate brings an art historian's perspective to a famous experiment in rural reconstruction, and large (mainly American) investment in farms, workers' housing, a nursery school, artist studios, and craft workshops.

Future generations will find this volume of seminal importance in the writing, rewriting, and reshaping of interwar rural history. This first sally gives tantalizing

glimpses of creative destruction at work in the countryside: in farming, where the seeds of the post-Second World War technical revolution were being sown, and in village society at a critical transitional stage of development, on the threshold of the mass consumption age. The editors are to be congratulated on a most commendable and well-executed initiative. Alas, the high price of the volume will deter buyers: a pity, as the book deserves a wide readership.

University of Reading

E. J. T. COLLINS

Steven Thomson, *Unemployment, poverty and health in interwar south Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006. Pp. xvii + 296. 26 figs. 30 tabs. ISBN 0708320422 Hbk. £45/\$90)

During the 1980s, there was a vigorous debate about the impact of the interwar recession on the health of unemployed people and their families. Thompson's new book revisits this debate by examining the relationships among poverty, unemployment, and health in interwar south Wales. It is also designed to make a substantial contribution to the study of Welsh history more generally.

Thompson's approach is both rigorous and systematic, and he draws on a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative sources. He begins by looking at the nature and extent of unemployment in south Wales, before going on to examine the resources which unemployed people could obtain from the unemployment benefit system and the poor law (or public assistance). He then looks at the ways in which unemployed people and their families spent the limited amount of money available to them. He emphasizes the importance of the 'informal economy' and demonstrates the significance of unusually high levels of home ownership in the south Wales coalfield. He suggests that even though the advent of unemployment might have had an immediate impact on the incomes of unemployed people and their families, it had a more gradual effect on patterns of expenditure.

The next four chapters are concerned with those aspects of the standard of living which were likely to have the most direct effect on standards of health. In chapter 3, Thompson shows that unemployment reduced the range of foods consumed by unemployed families and that mothers and older girls tended to bear the main cost of this. In chapter 4, he examines the question of housing provision. It has often been suggested that south Wales experienced comparatively low levels of overcrowding during this period, partly as a result of high levels of outward migration. Thompson argues that this picture ignores the very low rates of new housing construction between the wars, and the high number of families in multiple occupancy.

The following two chapters are concerned with, firstly, the extent of improvements in the environment and sanitation and, secondly, the provision of medical services. As Thompson observes rightly, historians of British public health have tended to lavish attention on the nineteenth century whilst neglecting the extent of changes after 1914, and he provides a very full account of changes in both sanitary provision and water supply during the interwar period. Chapter 6 is, perhaps, less successful. Although this chapter devotes considerable attention to the provision of folk remedies and other forms of 'alternative' medicine, it pays much less attention to the development of conventional medical services. There is surprisingly little reference to the provision of medical services under the national health insurance

scheme or to municipal medicine, although the provision of maternity and child welfare services is discussed in chapter 8.

Although Thompson discusses the history of children's heights in chapter 3, he leaves the main part of his analysis of health to chapters 7 and 8, and these chapters are concerned primarily with questions of mortality. Chapter 7 examines the main trends in aggregate mortality, including an analysis of trends in sex-specific mortality rates. He shows that the ratio of female mortality to male mortality was higher in some parts of the region than in others, and that the ratio of female mortality to male mortality in the whole of the region was greater than in the rest of England and Wales. He argues that this reflected the additional burdens which wives and mothers imposed on themselves but it would have been interesting to pursue this further in the light of differences in the cause-structure of mortality and levels of maternal mortality. He then goes on to take a more detailed look at trends in infant mortality. He distinguishes between trends in neonatal and post-neonatal mortality and suggests that the high level of the former provides further evidence of maternal deprivation (in a pre-Bowlby sense).

Thompson's overall conclusion is that poverty and unemployment acted as a significant brake on the improvements which might otherwise have occurred, and that this tended to exacerbate the differences which already existed between standards of health in south Wales and those found in other parts of Britain. Although this conclusion is not particularly surprising, it is buttressed with a great deal of useful evidence and presented with considerable clarity. However, there are a number of ways in which this analysis might have been taken further. One of the main lacunae is the absence of any sustained discussion of the impact of unemployment on the psychological health of unemployed people and their families. This was a major preoccupation for contemporary observers and one of the main influences on the distribution of voluntary effort in south Wales during the interwar period.

University of Southampton

BERNARD HARRIS

Brian Short, Charles Watkins, and John Martin, eds., *The front line of freedom: British farming in the Second World War* (Exeter: British Agricultural History Society, 2007). Pp. xvi + 238. 28 figs. 41 tabs. ISBN 090326904X Hbk. £17.50

Public understanding of the realities of British domestic experience during the Second World War remains limited. Simple and generally rosy images of wartime Britain continue to dominate—the stoicism of the British people faced with the terror of bombing; the fun of 'making do' without stockings, car headlamps on dark country roads, and staple foods. Likewise, the British public's knowledge of agriculture during the Second World War often relies on sepia-tinted images of jolly Land Girls and/or hard-working farmers pleased to be driving shiny new tractors. The 'oh what fun it all was' line of argument has diminished slightly with time, and has been challenged by historians, but nevertheless remains powerful, even when discussing agriculture's contribution to the British war effort.

Wholesale dismantling of this rose-tinted image is not the intention of the editors and authors of *The front line of freedom*. Patriotic myths about wartime farming represent certain truths, and this is acknowledged. However, this book does aim—and generally succeeds—to expose the complexity of what took place on

British farms between 1939 and 1945. By looking at what happened, rather than what officials and farmers told themselves had happened, certain myths are put in their place.

Paul Brassley's assessment of agricultural productivity challenges the notion that British farmers achieved real increases in efficiency during the war. Output went up, but so did inputs. Brassley's conclusion that total factor productivity decreased across the agricultural sector during the war, and that real gains in productivity only came later, is an important one. This assessment is neatly complemented by John Martin's argument that *the* significant change that took place during the war was the decision by policymakers to implement ideas promoted by agricultural economists. These set the framework for a postwar agricultural sector based on industrial scale production, state subsidy, and a new closeness between farmers and 'official' scientific advisors.

In addition to broad, revisionist chapters such as those by Martin and Brassley, *The front line of freedom* also offers a wealth of fascinating detail, often focusing on topics postwar Britain deemed unimportant or too controversial. John Sheail's examination of how the sometimes startling achievements of wartime pragmatism, in this case rodent control, were downplayed by officials is interesting. Philip Conford argues that the emerging organic movement made concerted efforts during the war to promote an 'alternative vision' of the future of farming. No one in power was interested.

Several of the issues raised in *The front line of freedom* seem obvious contenders for further research. The use and experience of prisoners of war on British farms merits more work. Richard Moore-Colyer points out how little we know about the subject and how rich it might prove to be. A comprehensive history of the Women's Land Army is in progress, as Gill Clarke's chapter demonstrates. I hope this history will consider uncomfortable topics, such as the sexual vulnerability that some WLA workers may have felt when billeted on farms. It is interesting to note that three of the 16 chapters that make up *The front line of freedom* are devoted to the impact of state-sanctioned surveillance of and intervention in agriculture during the war, including the 'grading' of farms and the use of dispossession powers. Surely book-length examination of this aspect of wartime farming is now feasible?

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, farmers were praised for the sacrifices they had made to keep Britain fed. Six decades on, there is naturally a great deal more interest in how the war set in train long-term changes in British agriculture rather than simply how many more tonnes of wheat were harvested in 1944 than in 1937. It is a key strength of *The front line of freedom* that wartime farming is assessed in light of how British agriculture developed after the war. In their introductory chapter, the editors ask whether British farming underwent a revolution during the Second World War. Their answer is, basically, yes, even though radical measures such as nationalization of farmland were not implemented. The decisions of policymakers during the war helped get British farming to where it is today: a demoralized industry, dependent on subsidy, and responsible for contributing less than 0.5 per cent of GDP. That would be my summary of the situation (it is not that of the editors of this book); the evidence they present offers a good deal to support such a bleak assessment.

University of Wales Aberystwyth

ERIN GILL

Gordon A. Fletcher, *Dennis Robertson: essays on his life and work* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Pp. vii + 192. ISBN 0230019056 Hbk. £55/\$85)

Since Fletcher has already published a substantial book on Dennis Robertson, *Understanding Dennis Robertson: the man and his work* (2000; hereafter *Understanding*), the first question for a reviewer is the relation of his latest book to that earlier volume. The answer is that the latest is a mixed bag. As he explains in the preface (pp. vi–vii), he has incorporated passages from his earlier book on Robinson and another previous book, *The Keynesian revolution and its critics: issues of theory and policy for the monetary production economy* (1987), together with three appendices from the unpublished doctoral dissertation on which his 1987 book was based; his entry on Robertson for Donald Rutherford's *Biographical dictionary of British economists* (2004); three lectures he gave as visiting professor at Nihon University in Tokyo in 2004; two seminar papers; and one working paper.

The most interesting paper is the first chapter, one of the Tokyo lectures, in which he summarizes the thesis of his *Understanding*. Rather than the 'received opinion' which he has summarized as 'Precocious youth of the most socially acceptable kind ripens into fulfilled and happy maturity [in the years of collaboration with Keynes] only to be blighted by a disagreement [with Keynes] over economic theory' (*Understanding*, pp. 16–17, cited here p. 10), he has proposed: 'the Keynesian revolution *did* provide the watershed between happiness and unhappiness in Robertson's life . . . only in the partial sense that it marked the division between the happy *public* Robertson and the unhappy *public* Robertson. There was . . . a far more significant, longitudinal divide . . . that ran between the (initially happy and successful) *public* Robertson and the perennially unhappy and emotionally desolate *private* Robertson. The Keynesian Revolution was the point at which the two selves converged and Robertson abandoned any hope of escaping into a happier life' (*Understanding*, p. 20, cited here p. 11). However, whilst in his Tokyo lecture Fletcher recounts that he came up with this hypothesis as a result of biographical and literary investigation, his *Understanding* concentrated on Robertson's life and work only up to 1936; the rest of his life (Robertson lived to 1963) was described in two pages (pp. 404–5)—a defect that is not remedied here. The first of his Tokyo lectures, 'The Keynesian revolution and the role of money: Keynes's lasting contribution', which appears here as chapter 8, is a similarly personal account of his own views on the nature of the Keynesian revolution. (The third of the trio, 'Regulating the role of money in Robertsonian economics', appears as chapter 6.)

The collection has been divided into three sections: the man and his economics; Robertson on the trade cycle; and Robertson and the Keynesian revolution. The first includes his *Biographical dictionary* entry, a shortened version of chapter 8, 'The Robertson style', of *Understanding*, in which he identified and tabulated the literary quotations and allusions in Robertson's books, and the Tokyo paper discussed above. In the second section, besides the third Tokyo lecture, are to be found two of the previously unpublished appendices to Fletcher's dissertation, 'Opinion on the *Study*' and 'Opinion on *Banking policy and the price level*', which survey others' writings on Robertson's two early books, *A study of industrial fluctuation* (1915) and *Banking policy and the price level* (1926). (Fletcher's own view of the latter is in chapter 6.) However, he discusses only relatively recent contributions: apart from the *Times* and *Economist* reviews in 1916, the earliest comments on the *Study* considered are those by John Hicks (1942), Thomas Ashton (1948), and Thomas Wilson (1953) before obituary comments after Robertson's death in 1963. With

respect to *Banking policy and the price level*, reviews by contemporaries Arthur Pigou, Ralph Hawtrey, and Roy Harrod appear only in Robert Bigg's comments on them in his *Cambridge and the monetary theory of production* (1990). Fletcher is particularly concerned with the interpretations of modern writers, such as John Presley, Michael Danes, and Charles Goodhart, whom he criticizes again in the last two chapters in the third section.

The compilation makes a coherent collection but not without repetition and it is a slim volume. Two of the 'chapters' (5 and 10) are no more than five pages long. Any reader interested in Fletcher's views on Robertson should read his earlier book.

University of Toronto

SUSAN HOWSON

Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: population decline and independent Ireland, 1922–73* (Madison, Wis. and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006. Pp. xiv + 438. 1 tab. ISBN 0299212904 Hbk. £36.95/\$60)

Since the 1960s, Irish population history has received sustained attention from a wide range of international scholars, many prompted by the seminal account of K. H. Connell, *The population of Ireland, 1750–1845* (1950), one of the most important works of European demographic history to be published in the last century. Much of this work, however, has focused on the period before Irish independence in 1922. Daly's new study is, therefore, to be welcomed as the author provides a comprehensive and richly-detailed account of the population history of independent Ireland.

Those seeking nostalgic versions of the Irish past drawing on rhetoric concerning the ill-effects of British government before the end of the union in 1921 will find little comfort here. This is a story of how poor political leadership, especially on matters of economic policy, combined with rising aspirations, led to a massive exodus from independent Ireland between the Second World War and the 1960s. Moreover, as Daly shows in an exemplary way, for much of this period Irish politicians presided over the continuing decline of the population until eventually a reformulation in economic policy in the late 1950s created much-needed manufacturing and industrial employment. Only then did the numbers leaving the country begin to decrease. Naturally, given the scale of emigration and the consequent population decline, this long-standing feature of the Irish demographic experience occupies roughly half of the coverage in the book. Her discussion of public policy—or more accurately the lack of it—complements the wide range of published accounts of twentieth-century Irish emigration that have appeared in the past decade.

This book is to be commended for the sheer range of archival material that is deployed to add empirical detail and often fascinating vignettes. Daly has uncovered some real nuggets along the way, including the story of the English sociologist who incurred the wrath of the formidable Catholic archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, for daring to suggest in 1960 that Irish Catholics in Britain did not seem to be intellectually prepared for life in a predominantly secular society. McQuaid regarded this observation as a calumny against the whole of Catholic Ireland, even though it was clear to all and sundry that Irish Catholics who settled in Britain were quick to throw off the shackles of the authoritarian moral code that infused Catholic Ireland. Daly is especially good at exposing the inadequacies of public debate about population issues in general, but emigration more specifically. Throughout this

book, her analysis is integrated within the broader contours of the economic and social history of the independent Irish state, and this represents an original dimension that is often lacking in other published work. Another thread that is particularly innovative is the emphasis on gender, a key concern for politicians and clerics alike as the exodus from Ireland, unusually in a postwar European context, was composed of roughly similar numbers of males and females. Even though the introductory chapter establishes the historical background, a concluding section that assessed the Irish experience against a wider chronological backdrop would have added an extra dimension to this impressive study, which should be read by all those interested in Ireland's fascinating demographic history.

University of Edinburgh

ENDA DELANEY

Nicholas Crafts, Ian Gazeley, and Andrew Newell, eds., *Work and pay in twentieth-century Britain* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. vi + 369. 39 figs. 118 tabs. ISBN 0199280584 Hbk. £55/\$99; ISBN 019921266X Pbk. £18.99/\$35)

In the introduction, two of the editors state that 'this volume is about the evolution of pay and employment in Britain through the twentieth century. It is a collection of essays that establish what happened and why it happened' (p. 1). In fact, the focus is rather broader than implied. In addition to the introduction, there are 13 chapters. Four of these deal with living standards, broadly interpreted, and pay issues. There are also chapters on labour supply decisions and female employment conditions, the welfare state, industrial relations, unemployment, education, productivity performance, and immigration. Few of the chapters are based on original material. Rather, they provide surveys, drawing on and synthesizing existing work.

Judging from the content and tone of the chapters, the book has been targeted at the undergraduate twentieth-century labour historian. Nevertheless, it will also be useful for general economic history modules, and some of the material will be suitable also for demographic and social historians. In contrast to traditional labour histories which are often institutional, the emphasis is quantitative. Thus, the volume is flavoured liberally, although not smothered, with graphs and tables. Some of the authors also use economic concepts to aid their analysis, although these are applied in a sympathetic and constructive manner.

Our undergraduates will be pleased with the result. Not only are the contributions clearly written, concise, and of optimal length, but many of the issues to which they will be exposed are discussed. For example, there is some examination of the general improvement in living standards, changing inequality patterns, the decline in fertility and the baby bust of the 1960s and 1970s, the rise of female and the decline of male participation rates, the nature of structural change, the fluctuating fortunes of the trade union movement and the emergence of occasional episodes of labour unrest, the fluctuating unemployment performance, the expansion of university education, and the increase in immigration.

One of the advantages of the edited volume is that, in contrast to the monograph, it can achieve considerable breadth, hopefully attracting experts conversant with the relevant literature and appropriate techniques and debates. Its success, however, depends crucially on the degree of editorial commitment, firstly, in planning the volume and, secondly, in ensuring that the contributors do what is asked of them.

Inevitably, there will be some editorial failure. This volume illustrates these points admirably. It is wide-ranging, covering a range of topics with considerable authority. Some of the contributions are of an exceptionally high standard. The reviewer was particularly impressed with the chapters on living standards, structural change, household structure, the welfare state, industrial relations, and, in particular, unemployment. However, it is quite likely that other readers, with different teaching and research interests, would single out other contributions. Indeed, unlike many edited volumes, the quality of the contributions is quite even.

Nevertheless, there is also evidence of editorial failure. For one thing, the volume could have been planned more carefully. Specifically, given its aims, some of the material could have been sacrificed in order to fill some obvious lacunae. It was unclear, for example, why a chapter on productivity performance was included and why it took the form that it did. It also seemed difficult to justify the inclusion of two-and-a-half chapters on pay issues while the welfare state was squeezed into a single contribution. Similarly, it was curious to see a chapter on immigration, while emigration flows, equally relevant to the labour historian, were virtually ignored. Another weakness was the occasional failure of some authors to analyse the events under discussion. In other words, the contributors established invariably 'what happened'. However, sometimes they failed to explain 'why it happened'. For example, it was established in the first chapter that an improvement in life expectancy and a decline in infant mortality contributed to an improvement in living standards, yet we were provided with virtually no explanation for these developments. Similarly, students might note the fluctuations in trade unions density and the occasional upsurge in strike activity, but they would have difficulty extracting an explanation for these developments from the text.

Nevertheless, these reservations should not detract from the verdict that this is an excellent book, one that compares favourably with other labour histories. It is likely to be adopted as a core text by a number of teachers, and some of the contributions will figure prominently on undergraduate reading lists.

University of Swansea

NICHOLAS WOODWARD

Monica Prasad, *The politics of free markets: the rise of neoliberal economic policies in Britain, France, Germany and the United States* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Pp. ix + 328. 24 figs. 10 tabs. ISBN 0226679012 Hbk. £37.99/\$57; ISBN 0226679020 Pbk. £14.50/\$23)

Writing comparative historical sociology or historical political economy is extremely difficult to do well. Those that succeed, like Peter Hall, have built a deservedly formidable academic reputation and their ideas have informed work across a range of social sciences including economic history. Crucial to their success is the ability to draw out meaningful comparisons while at the same time convincing national experts that the arguments presented are plausible and convincing. In this confidently written and ambitious book, Monica Prasad stakes her claim to be one of the next generation in this genre. Based on her University of Chicago Ph.D. thesis, the book examines the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970s and 1980s in four advanced industrial economies: the US, the UK, Germany, and France. Her argument is constructed on the basis of evidence relating to a case study of a particular policy

episode in each country within each of the fields of taxation, industrial policy, and the welfare state; that is, twelve case studies in all.

Prasad's central argument is that society-centred accounts ignore the independent role of political structures and political institutions in influencing policy outcomes. In the US and UK, adversarial politics were crucial in explaining the rise of neoliberalism, whereas in Germany and France such ideas had less influence on policy outcomes, she argues, because of consensual decision-making. The cases are used to criticize, to varying degrees, currently popular explanatory approaches—American exceptionalism, the influence of ideas in the rise of neoliberalism, cultural explanations, veto points, the varieties of capitalism literature, and path-dependence—by highlighting the historical anomalies in her case studies.

Such a set of targets, the number of cases, and the coverage of four countries illustrate the ambition behind the book. After all, Peter Hall began with only France and Britain in *Governing the economy* (1986). Is this too much for Prasad to take on? Unfortunately, the answer to this has to be broadly in the affirmative from the perspective of an economic historian. There is much to praise in the book: it does make some telling criticisms and meaningful qualifications to a range of leading interpretative approaches, and this is no mean feat. It also forces one to rethink assumptions and issues which are often taken for granted, again a very worthwhile exercise. The nature of its source material is also rather variable, but for the case of Britain it is worth noting that Prasad has made intensive use of the Conservative Party archives of the period.

However, ultimately, while sympathetic to the general argument, this reader remained to be convinced by the evidence presented. To give some examples to illustrate, firstly she adopts a rather one-dimensional view of the firm-centred nature of the varieties of capitalism literature. She rejects the argument on the basis that German business interests did not oppose neoliberal reforms proposed by the Kohl government and were not, therefore, the barrier to their introduction. What peak-level business organizations argued is not the proxy for a firm-centred approach that Prasad seems to assume. Secondly, Prasad emphasizes the regressive nature of the American tax system on the basis of the proportionate breakdown of tax revenue. This is an often neglected point but needs to be kept in perspective in a comparative framework, given the much lower share of GNP taken by taxation in the US compared to France, Germany, and the UK. A final example, and that of most relevance to a British economic historian, is the depiction of Britain that Prasad offers. Her emphasis on adversarial politics seems simplistic and overstated even to a sceptic of the notion of a postwar consensus. The statement that 'Only Labour was involved in nationalizations in Britain meant the Conservatives kept the privatisation flame burning throughout the postwar period' (p. 281) is just misleading, given Conservative acquiescence to virtual nationalizations of some industries during the Second World War and some actual nationalizations after 1945. It may be valid for a few individuals in the Conservative Party but no more.

Ultimately, economic historians may be the hardest audience for a book of this sort to satisfy. Its argument may be a useful corrective to society-centred accounts but it also hints at political determinism. The economic crisis of the 1970s is merely a backdrop in this account and there seems little recognition that it might have impacted differently on these societies. Similarly, there are historical generalizations that are too sweeping and asserted too forcibly. To some extent, such tendencies are inevitable in a book of this sort, but, in trying to do so much, the analysis is sometimes based on fragile evidence which is then glossed over in the certainty of

her argument. Nevertheless, even if one is not convinced by the evidence on which Prasad builds her argument, her ambition is commendable.

University of Glasgow

NEIL ROLLINGS

Louise Hill Curth, ed., *From physick to pharmacology: five hundred years of British drug retailing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. Pp. xiii + 174. 7 figs. ISBN 075463597X Hbk. £50/\$99.95)

Since its introduction in 1980s, the 'medical marketplace' has become a familiar concept to historians. In recent years, considerable attention has been placed upon the services offered by medical practitioners and their relationship to the 'medical economy' (whether this economy be monetary or one of exchange). However, within this body of literature, the spotlight is firmly on the sale and purchase of medical advice rather than medical goods. *From physick to pharmacology*, which provides a narrative of drug retailing in Britain from 1500 to 2000, offers a much-needed account of the sale of medicaments.

The retailing of drugs in the early-modern period is covered in chapters by Patrick Wallis and Louise Curth. Wallis concentrates on the supply and consumption of medicines in seventeenth-century London and discusses the issues faced by apothecaries in sourcing, producing, storing, and selling medicaments. Curth focuses upon the strategies employed by medical practitioners to sell their wares, such as placing advertisements in almanacs. Steven King's study, focusing on eighteenth-century Lancashire and Northamptonshire, claims that, despite the existence of a 'rich network of drug suppliers', access to medicines varied by regions and social classes. Hilary Marland's essay describes the steep increase of chemists and pharmacists in the nineteenth century and argues that they dispensed both advice and medicine. Stuart Anderson contends that 'at no time has the retailing of medicines undergone a greater transformation than the first half of the twentieth century' (p. 139). These transformations include shifts in public expectations of drug efficacy, the development of 'lifestyle drugs', and the modifications to 'what medicines are available, and who makes and supplies them'. In the final essay, Judy Slinns takes the reader to end of the twentieth century by charting the marketing strategies of postwar drug companies.

The wide-ranging themes in the six essays are drawn together by Curth in her introductory survey, where she imposes keenly a structure of five 'phases' in drug retailing. Her account charts the change from 'kitchen physick' where most remedies were made from 'natural' ingredients to the 'era of the giant multinational pharmaceutical companies' which are prevalent today. Within this journey, drug retailing sees the rise of 'commercialized remedies and advertising', the increased number of 'fixed shops specializing in the distribution of drugs', and the 'rise of pathology and microbiology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries'. While Curth is careful to stress that her schema 'deliberately simplifies the pattern of distribution', her overarching structure draws attention to changes rather than continuities. The individual essays, on the other hand, suggest that a number of continuities stretched from the early-modern period to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The essays of Wallis, Curth, King, Marland, and Anderson all emphasize the role played by home-based medical care within the healthcare systems of their chosen period of study. Up until the mid-twentieth century, self-medication continued to be a strong

trend and the majority of patients tended to utilize a combination of commercial and domestic medicine to ease their suffering.

Throughout the period, the needs of British sufferers as knowledgeable and informed consumers also shaped the parameters of drug retailing. This is particularly evident in two areas: customization of medicaments and differentiation of products according to the customer. The essays in the volume suggest that customization of medicines was common in pre-modern drug retailing. Until the Second World War, the sick continued to bring in their family nostrums to apothecaries (and later chemists and pharmacies) to be 'made up' and, as Anderson contends, pharmacists continued to blend medicines according to traditional, personalized recipes. The second retail strategy which is evident throughout the 500-year time span is the need to differentiate products according to the social class and economic wealth of the customer. In the earlier period, remedies designed for patients of varied social and economic standings were often composed of different sets of ingredients. By the beginning of the twentieth century, this practice was extended into the packaging of the medicaments. Like the customization of medicines, this strategy of differentiation was only phased out with the introduction of free medicines with the National Health Service. When taken together, the essays in the volume suggest that the organization of medical care was as influential as shifts in medical theory in affecting changes to the practices and strategies of drug retailing.

From physick to pharmacology is a useful volume of essays by major scholars addressing gaps in the literature in both medical history and the history of retailing. The individual essays within the volume provide insightful overviews of drug retailing within particular time periods. The volume will serve as an excellent entry point to the topic for researchers and students alike.

University of Warwick

ELAINE LEONG

GENERAL

Pierrick Pourchasse, *Le commerce du Nord: les échanges commerciaux entre la France et l'Europe septentrionale au XVIIIe siècle* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006. Pp. 390. 14 figs. 1 illus. 5 maps. 36 tabs. ISBN 2753500975 Pbk. €22)

The rise of Atlantic trade in the early-modern period was sustained by intense European trade. During the eighteenth century, the number of ships passing through the Baltic Sound doubled. British and Dutch trade to the Baltic attracts great scholarly attention, but the relationships between France and northern Europe in the eighteenth century have hardly been explored. French scholars concentrate on colonial trade, and neglect inter-European shipping. This book fills the gap and is a major contribution to our understanding of this trade. It has an impressive bibliography of European studies (one-third in Scandinavian languages) and a multiplicity of French and Scandinavian sources: consular and official reports, merchants' correspondence, the papers of the French East India Company, and data from the Sound duty registers.

Pourchasse underlines the specificities of eighteenth-century French trade to northern Europe, compared to British and Dutch trade. France exported wine, salt, and colonial goods to northern Europe and was, therefore, the only west European country to have a positive balance of trade with the Baltic. Despite the increasing

importance of French commercial relations to the north, trading among France, the North Sea, and the Baltic was almost entirely on foreign ships, and controlled by foreign merchants. This book tries to explain why French merchants and shipowners were not able to compete with their northern European colleagues. Pourchasse pays particular attention to the organization and evolution of merchant networks and the implications for French agriculture, fishing, and textiles. Pourchasse adopts both a macro-regard, providing plenty of statistical data, and a micro-insight. Although the author identifies and discusses the effects of warfare upon French trade with northern Europe, one wonders how far many of the difficulties highlighted might apply to peacetime.

The book has four sections. Section I presents the apparent paradox of an important branch of trade that Frenchmen abandoned to foreign ships and merchants. The data leave no doubt about the paucity of French ships in the Baltic: at the end of the 1760s, four to five French ships entered into the Baltic each year, compared to 1,200 Dutch and 800–900 British ships. Pourchasse reviews the different products exported from northern Europe and states the relative importance of France as a market for, or as a supplier to, different northern European ports. Section II questions the role of the state regarding the weakness of French shipping and trade to the north. Pourchasse underlines the financial difficulties of the navy throughout the century, which did not allow a regular supply policy. All governmental attempts to establish steady trade to the Baltic failed. The French navy depended, therefore, on foreign suppliers, but as it was a notoriously bad payer, the terms of payment were unappealing. Moreover, British naval control over Baltic shipping created major supply problems in wartime, precisely when naval stores were wanted. Pourchasse points to the negative effects and incoherence of French commercial politics: France failed to adopt an equivalent to the British or Swedish Navigation Acts, thus allowing foreign ships to carry goods from northern Europe to France. The duty on foreign ships travelling between two French ports encouraged French shipowners to charge high freights for the same service, and made French transport even less competitive. Finally, most European states relied on a developed network of consular services. On the eve of the French Revolution, Denmark had eight consuls and 30 vice-consuls in France, while France had seven consuls and less than ten vice-consuls in the whole north European area.

Section III describes the inability of French merchants to penetrate trade networks in northern Europe. Pourchasse presents cases of foreign merchants preventing French newcomers competing in northern markets. He discusses the relative costs of French and foreign shipping, comparing crew, construction, and freight costs. He argues that the Atlantic and West Indian worlds offered better and less risky opportunities of profit for French investors. However, the book fails to define what the author considers to be a French or foreign merchant. The Huguenots participated actively in international trade, but Pourchasse does not consider them 'true French merchants' but rather 'members of a supranational merchant community' (p. 209). One wonders if the same is not true of most eighteenth-century merchants living in foreign ports. Like many French scholars, Pourchasse adopts a national point of view, when his deep understanding of international trade networks could have led him to question such a traditional approach.

Section IV describes the efficiency of foreign merchant networks in northern European trade. Denmark, Sweden, and Britain used their navies to protect trade with the Baltic in wartime. Their merchants could settle easily in French ports where they acted as commission merchants for the firms of their home country. After the

Seven Years War, for instance, German firms in Bordeaux forwarded most French colonial goods to Hamburg, where sugar was refined, leaving little room for the development of a French refining industry. The Dutch controlled the grain trade to France, and Amsterdam (rather than Danzig) fixed the prices. Dutch merchants were particularly active in French salt exports, which provided them with a bulky cargo to the Baltic, until a drastic drop in French production allowed British salt to dominate the markets in the 1770s. The absence of Frenchmen in this branch of trade, together with an increase in French export duties, provoked a decline in the demand for French salt in the Baltic area. Breton peasants were dependent on Lubeck ships to obtain Livonian and Courland linseed, and the high number of commercial intermediaries contrived to make the Breton linen industry uncompetitive in the second half of the eighteenth century. The British markets absorbed increasing amounts of wood, iron, and other naval stores, and merchants bought them directly in the countries of production. The French bought what was left over, often of inferior quality.

The conclusion is clear: France depended heavily on foreign merchants and ships for its trade with northern Europe. This had a negative effect on the price, quality, and quantity of goods in French ports. It also deprived French merchants of the profits involved in such trade, as foreign merchants controlled most of it. With a few exceptions, French attempts to penetrate Baltic trade failed, because both state and merchants lacked good economic information. Pourchasse points to the lack of ambition of French merchants, and agrees with David Landes on the poor entrepreneurial skills of French businessmen. Political inadequacy was also responsible. This book complements the successes of French transatlantic and colonial trade. Readers will learn a great deal about each area and port, appreciate their evolution, and become familiar with the main actors who controlled the markets. They will also be able to track people and places through the index. The argument is clear and convincing; however, the reader must form his own conclusions about most of the sub-themes, as the author fails to assess his findings systematically.

University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis

SILVIA MARZAGALLI

Jörg Ulbert and Gérard Le Bouëdec, eds., *La fonction consulaire à l'époque moderne: l'affirmation d'une institution économique et politique, 1500–1700* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006. Pp. 427. 17 figs. 8 tabs. ISBN 2753502625 Pbk. €22)

These symposium proceedings on the history of consular networks present current research and identify numerous questions which remain uninvestigated. The first part, 'The French consular services and the French nations abroad', comprises chapters concerned mainly with consular institutions in the Mediterranean region, although two authors do explore other places (Hamburg and the US). The second part, 'The consular function in the world', deals with France and Scandinavia, the Hanseatic cities, Cadiz, the US, Austria, and Prussia.

Part 1 opens with Géraud Poumarède's chapter, detailing how consular services emerged from the sixteenth century onwards to become gradually an integral part of the institutionalization of inter-state dialogue, like the permanent embassies. Their role reached a new visibility with the Colbert Ordinance of 1681. Anne Mézin then provides an excellent synthesis of her thesis, still the best source on the

subject of the French consular service (*Les Consuls de France au Siècle des Lumières*, 1997). Based on her research in the archives she reminds us that the institution was rooted in the heart of twelfth-century Italy and, as Pierre Ariste wrote in 1667, that it arose from the necessity of protecting traders working abroad—they needed to solve disputes ‘without having recourse to the justice of places where their manners and customs, as well as their real interests, were ignored’ (p. 37). As far as France is concerned, the institution organized itself from the sixteenth century onwards, under the control of the monarchy, which was anxious to put an end to the mistakes of an institution then criticized strongly. The numerous reforms put in place under Louis XIV made it into a tool controlled strictly by the monarchy, with this chapter covering the history of the institution through to the end of the Old Regime. Next, Jérôme Cras highlights one of the central aspects of the consular function (that of consular jurisdiction), and how this has left researchers with abundant ‘acts of chancery’. This mass of documentation is presented in the context of its production: both the consul as a judge and notary, and the chancellor, at once clerk, process server, and notary. Antoine Gautier examines the *drogmans* (translators) who played an essential role in the development of trading and diplomatic relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Pascal Even tackles the creation of Hamburg in 1786, tracing the life of this ephemeral nation, endorsed at the time of its creation by the Navy Minister, Castries, who confirmed the king’s intention to see the French consulate established in Hamburg organized like those of the Mediterranean harbours. Patrick Boulanger presents the salaries of the Consuls of France in Algiers, highlighting the central role of the Marseilles Chamber of Commerce in the functioning of the institution, in Algiers as well as in the rest of the Mediterranean harbours. Marc Belissa traces the early stages of Franco-American relations, notably the last consular network put in place by the monarchy. In contrast to other consular networks, it was characterized more by its political than by its economic aspects. Finally, Amaury Faivre d’Arcier analyses the consular service in the Levant at the end of the eighteenth century and its evolution under the French Revolution.

In part 2, Pierrick Pourchasse’s opening chapter proposes a comparative approach for the French and Scandinavian services. On the French side, there appears to have been a striking lack of ambition, tied to the supposed lack of utility from installing a consul where France had little or no trade, whereas on the Scandinavian side the creation of consular posts precedes or accompanies the growth of trade. Next, Burghardt Schmidt discusses the history of consular relations between the Hanseatic cities and France, starting in 1579 with the installation of the first consul in Hamburg. Manuel Bustos Rodriguez then discusses the consuls in eighteenth-century Cadiz, examining the French presence in the city—previously little known because of a lack of sources—and the consular institution and its functions. Using the example of Bordeaux, Silvia Marzagalli analyses the beginnings of the American consular services, slow to be established because of coordination difficulties between the new States and because of their inexperience in diplomatic and trading matters. Rudolf Agstner tackles the development of the consular service in Austria, which had only two seaports at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Trieste and Fiume. Those two ports are at the origin of the Austrian consular service. Jörg Ulbert’s final chapter relates the history of Prussian consular services in the eighteenth century, for which some important documentary sources still remain unexploited. The author draws up a list of consular posts and examines the origin of the consuls, their status, and their prerogatives.

In addition to these country studies, there is a most useful thematic bibliography of about 1,100 references (though only one of these is a prosopography, that by Anne Mézin). A contribution to research in its own right, the bibliography makes clear that the most numerous publications deal with the Mediterranean, as indeed do most of the chapters in this volume. There is also an index, but no map, which is a pity. The absence of articles about British consuls is also regrettable, as is the lack of a comparative study between France and England, or of a presentation of the English consular function comparable to the first two chapters, which are general and very instructive about the history of the French consuls.

Paris IV, Sorbonne

XAVIER LABAT SAINT VINCENT

Paola Lanaro, ed., *At the centre of the old world: trade and manufacturing in Venice and the Venetian mainland, 1400–1800* (Toronto: Victoria University Press, 2006). Pp. 412. 10 figs. 9 maps. 18 tabs. ISBN 0772720312 Pbk. \$32)

The traditional image of Venice as a ‘maritime republic’ has been as resilient as the ‘myth of Venice’ in the Anglo-American world, both in academic scholarship and in the more popular output. However, during the last 40 years, two generations of Italian scholars—Paola Lanaro foremost among them—have contributed a wealth of scholarship to the history of the *Terraferma*, the Italian mainland controlled by Venice, and particularly on its important contribution to the economy of the Republic at large. This volume introduces the Anglophone readership to some of the results of these endeavours, and this is a most welcome development that will allow a larger audience to have a more complete understanding not only of the Venetian economy, but also of Venetian history. Most of the literature on the history of the Republic of Venice has hitherto proceeded from an internal perspective, and this is probably a paradoxical consequence of the long-term success of Venetian history as an independent field of enquiry. A consequence of this has been a lack of substantial engagement with the big debates that are at the centre of current studies on the history of the pre-modern European economy, such as the role of guilds, and the modalities behind the development of proto-industry. This volume represents an attempt at looking at Venetian economic history through the interpretative lens of these debates.

The analysis of manufacturing activities in Venice and in the mainland forms the backbone of the volume. Particular attention is dedicated to silk and wool textiles and to this sector’s remarkable endurance and adaptability during the difficult economic circumstances of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this period, the need to face the rise of foreign competition stimulated Venetian manufactures to employ a highly flexible approach in their operations to confront new challenges, as discussed by Paola Lanaro in her introduction on re-interpreting Venetian economic history. Walter Panciera’s chapter on Venetian industries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provides a lucid overview of recent scholarship on this subject, while the contributions by Andrea Mozzato (‘The production of woollens in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Venice’), Marcello Della Valentina (‘The silk industry in Venice: guilds and labour relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’), Edoardo Demo (‘Wool and silk: the textile urban industry of the Venetian mainland, 15th–7th centuries’), Carlo Marco Belfanti (‘Hosiery manufacturing in the Venetian Republic, 16th–18th centuries’), and Giovanni Favero (‘Old and new

ceramics: manufacturers, products and markets in the Venetian Republic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries') all concentrate on more detailed case studies that present new research and, in some cases, new interpretations of the history of Venetian manufacturing.

A critical engagement with current historiographical debates is present in the essays of Francesca Trivellato ('Murano glass, continuity and transformation, 1400–1800'), Luca Mocarelli ('Manufacturing activity in Venetian Lombardy: specialized products and the formation of a regional market, 17th–18th centuries') and Francesco Vianello ('Rural manufactures and patterns of economic specialization: cases from the Venetian mainland'). Trivellato contextualizes Venetian glass manufacturing within the debate on the role and development of early-modern European guilds; Mocarelli contributes to the debate on the connection between proto-industrialization and regional markets in his analysis of the economic activities of Venetian Lombardy; and Vianello provides a fresh look at the debate on the relationship between rural manufacture and proto-industry through a nuanced description of the variety of production processes in place in the region.

Taken together, the contributions in this volume fill what was a very large gap in the Anglophone historiography. This book can also be seen as the companion to the recent edited volume on the history of early-modern Venice (John Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Venice reconsidered: the history and civilization of an Italian city-state, 1297–1797*, 2000), which concentrated on culture and politics rather than economics. Together, these two books provide a panoramic view of the state of the art in Venetian history, and offer most useful reference points to anyone interested in approaching the ever-fascinating history of the *Serenissima*.

University of Exeter

MARIA FUSARO

Erik van der Vleuten and Arne Kaijser, eds., *Networking Europe: transnational infrastructures and the shaping of Europe, 1850–2000* (Sagamore Beach, Mass.: Science History Publications, 2006. Pp. vii + 335. 30 figs. 2 tabs. ISBN 0881353949 Hbk. \$47.50)

Networking Europe recasts European integration in the twentieth century while suggesting new approaches to economic and technological history. The volume argues that understanding European integration, usually conceptualized as a political process, requires understanding the technical infrastructures that often structured and shaped it. Additionally, the authors show that new views on Europe's political and economic history can result from a careful reading of these evolving technical infrastructures—even those that persisted as compelling visions, sometimes for many decades, such as the Channel Tunnel (first proposed nearly 250 years before it finally opened in 1994). The volume deals even-handedly with grandiose continent-wide plans and visions, such as the Atlantropa scheme to dam up the Mediterranean at Gibraltar, as well as railway models in a local museum high in the Swiss Alps where visions of nations and borders were also performed and recorded.

One key insight of the book is that 'Europe' has long been a contested entity. The chapters resist tidy geographic definitions of Europe, say, Portugal to the Urals. They also problematize 'cultural' definitions of Europe that presume shared values,

currently fashionable inside the European Commission. Instead, the chapters investigate Europe's shifting internal structure and external boundaries. Geographically, the chapters range from Portugal's role in Britain's globe-spanning telegraph network, through Greece's late-developing railway links to the European heartland, to the Baltic countries being reconnected between East and West during and after the Cold War. Material on Sweden, Germany, France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands rounds out the book.

Overarching visions of Europe abounded. Alexander Gall recounts the breathtakingly utopian Atlantropa project, supported by technocratic engineers as well as idealistic elites within the Paneuropa Union. Publicity for the project in 1938 contrasted explicitly an 'old' Europe, divided into walled-off nation-states ('a big cage with solitary cells') with a futuristic view of a united Europe linked together by high-voltage power lines (p. 114). On paper, the project promised enough hydroelectricity to supply all of Europe. The National Socialists coming to power in the 1930s had their own visions. Helmut Meier shows rather unflinchingly that Europe's postwar integration rested in part on infrastructure schemes developed by the Nazis. Their vision of a *Grossraumtechnik*, or large-territory technology, sought to incorporate far-flung power stations and even entire countries into a single continent-wide network. The giant hydroelectric power plant Tauernwerk/Kaprun, constructed in the Austrian Alps using slave labour from Auschwitz, at once was 'one of the most outstanding symbols' of Nazi engineering as well as 'a cornerstone of the European power grid of today' (p. 142).

'Europe' took form also through the daily practices of citizens, planners, and engineers. Pär Blomkvist considers Europe's transnational network of motorways, the E-roads. Here the International Road Federation, set up in 1948 by American automobile, rubber, and oil companies, was 'heavily involved in the shaping of the European Road Plan' (p. 162). European engineers went to the US and learned how to design roads for maximum size and speed. Remarkably the plan in the 1950s had roads extending straight across the centre of Europe, linking London, Budapest, and Ankara; Rome and Warsaw; as well as Paris, Prague, and Moscow. 'Avoiding all publicity' was Gunnar Myrdal's favoured means for pushing through such a plan during the extreme political tensions of the early Cold War.

A second key insight of this volume is to problematize the chronology of European integration. Clearly, there were impressive transport and energy infrastructures in place by the 1930s, and they paved the way partly to the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Nonetheless, technology was not always an integrating force. As Léonard Laborie notes, repeated efforts to strengthen the European Conference of Post and Telecommunication Administrations, founded in 1959, had little success and remained largely a handmaiden for the national PTTs that emphasized sovereignty and monopoly rather than continental integration. Similarly, Geert Verbong suggests that national economics accounted for the changing postwar electricity flows between the Netherlands and its neighbours, while for the Baltic region, Per Högselius provides a vivid mapping of the contradictory linkages and re-orientations between East and West. During the Cold War, Soviet-built electric lines tied power stations in Estonia and Lithuania to the energy demands of Leningrad and other Soviet cities. As late as 2006, the sole electricity link between former East and West was one line between Sweden and Poland. Lithuania, still tied to Russia, remained disconnected from the grid in neighbouring Poland, while Estonia was (until January 2007) connected to Finland only via the historic tie to Russia.

This volume resulted from a six-year research effort led by the editors. In his conclusion, van der Vleuten summarizes the essays and helpfully relates their findings to the large-technological system research programme. On balance, the volume points the way for new collaborations between economic, political, cultural, and technological historians.

University of Minnesota

THOMAS J. MISA

Markku Kangaspuro and Jeremy Smith, eds., *Modernization in Russia since 1900* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2006. Pp. 331. 11 figs. 9 tabs. ISBN 9517468547 Pbk. £24.99/€31)

This edited volume provides a notable contribution to understanding Russian economic history and contemporary Russian society based on much relevant scholarship; it is also fundamentally flawed on one important plane of conception. The book contains 16 chapters by different authors which focus on particular periods and themes of Russian social, political, and economic development, together with an introduction by the editors. Modernization is frequently presented as rapid transformation in order to catch up with the west in predominantly (although not exclusively) economic terms, with various nuances of interpretation (such as copying western systems against adapting indigenous institutions) being highlighted along the way. Underlying much of the volume is the idea of modernization as an empirical endeavour—more steel, more guns, and more schools—with far less concern for the intangible aspects of human life.

Firstly, starting with the positive aspects of the book, the chapters in which the framework of ‘modernization’ is entirely appropriate, namely those on the Tsarist and post-Soviet periods, are uniformly excellent. For example, Peter Gatrell summarizes expertly the debates that occurred on modernizing the Tsarist economy, with due regard for class and spatial concerns, highlighting the growing integration of Russia in the world economy that occurred up until 1914. Philip Hanson probes deftly the rules of the economic game in post-Soviet Russia, focusing especially on requirements for the modernization of institutions, and suggests that some positive developments have occurred recently in this area. Richard Sakwa examines Russian political leadership from Yeltsin onwards, usefully presenting a number of binary oppositions (dysfunction against modernization) that can be seen to apply within new forms of constitutional rule. In addition, Julian Cooper provides a timely overview of the internet as an agent of very recent modernization, highlighting the link between a strong civil society and a healthy internet culture. He points wisely to various obstacles that face Russia in the future in overcoming its internet development gap with western democracies.

Examining the problematic areas of the volume (some of the chapters on the Soviet period), the central flaw is apparent from the opening section of R. W. Davies’s chapter on the modernization of the Soviet economy in the interwar period. Davies relates that, for Marx, economic progress was about advances in the forces of production, and hence (according to Davies) the Bolsheviks had followed Marx and attempted to advance the Russian productive forces through central planning (p. 71). In fact, for Marx, socialism was actually about changes to the relations of production; that is, overcoming exploitative social structures. Mistakenly, Davies presents the Bolshevik attempt to use planning to develop the Russian productive

forces as if it were a straightforward application of Marx's method, when in fact it was a complete inversion of what Marx had predicted. The fact that Davies (and some of the other writers on the Soviet period) then analyse Soviet development within a modernization framework serves to perpetuate this prevalent misunderstanding.

For example, Jeremy Smith begins his chapter on Khrushchev and education with a competitive modernization claim for much of Russian history, which apparently was in operation continuously from Peter the Great to Joseph Stalin (p. 221). The notion of modernization being applied here seems perilously close to 'improving the nation': what government ever claimed to be against modernization (that is, against bettering the country)? Smith then situates Khrushchev's education reform programme as part of Soviet modernization, but with insufficient regard for how this was connected to building a new set of social relations, Marx's underlying goal. Smith also highlights the contrast between the apathy seen in the late Soviet period and Khrushchev's vision of an educated citizenry devoted *to* labour (p. 236), without also noting a contradiction between Khrushchev's ideas and Marx's vision of communism as entailing the liberation *from* labour.

A few specific conceptual oddities can also be detected. Katri Pynnoniemi writes that, for Marx, the market was not rationally understandable (p. 244)—what was *Capital* all about then? Melanie Ilic writes of the modernization of women as well as of gender relations (p. 145)—is this meant in an evolutionary biological sense? And the editors refer to the Russian nation as 'she' (p. 15)—so is the US a 'he'? But despite these minor quibbles, and also the major conceptual flaw outlined previously, this collection is certainly worth consulting as a guide to the current state of the modernization debate as presented by one long-standing research team in Russian studies, if a sufficiently critical attitude is brought to bear on the erroneous analytical presentations being made in some of the historical chapters.

Bedfordshire University

VINCENT BARNETT

Tirthankar Roy, *The economic history of India, 1857–1947* (2nd edn, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xvi + 386. 23 figs. 8 maps. 66 tabs. ISBN 0195684303 Pbk. £11.99/\$24.95)

Roy's textbook provides us with a fresh look at India under British rule. The analysis diverges from the nationalist approach to colonial rule that emphasizes the subordination of Indian interests to those of the imperial economy and the consequent stagnation of the Indian economy. It also questions the Marxist interpretation of Indian economic history that echoes the broad thesis of the dependency school: that trade and commercialization destroyed a self-sufficient economy and caused the *development of underdevelopment*. Roy has put the market at the centre of his analysis and tries to assess the economic effects of trade, both internal and international, as the Indian economy became a part of the global economy. The main theme that runs throughout is how economic agents reacted to access to new markets. Roy considers the impact of India's integration into the world economy on different sectors of the economy and on different markets: goods, credit, and labour.

The book starts with a picture of pre-colonial India and the changes in institutions and markets that accompanied the transition to colonial rule. The new types of property rights on land led to differentiation of the peasantry and evolution of a

market in land. The decline of the traditional textile industry is seen in the context of its effect on consumers, as cheaper imports became available, and on the producers, some of whom gained from the use of machine-made thread, while many lost their livelihood.

Roy analyses the effect of the change in India's international economic relations in terms of the response of economic agents. In agriculture, the cultivators responded to new opportunities by switching to cash crops and then developed regional specialization. The book discusses the slow growth and decline in agricultural productivity, the development of a market for credit, and the fortunes of the agricultural labourer. The analysis uses concepts from institutional economics to understand the differences between regions in terms of differences in land tenure.

On industry, the book brings together insights from new research on the development of large industry and the development and changes in small-scale and handloom industry. Roy uses the idea of a labour-intensive industrial development that led to *an industrious revolution* to explain the decline of traditional industry and the survival and persistence of small production in various segments of the market. The development of a large-scale industry is discussed in terms of its impact on growth and employment, although it remained limited in scope in the colonial period. In a separate chapter on infrastructure, Roy discusses the development of the railways and the irrigation systems and their impact on the economy.

One area which had received a lot of attention is the labour market. Using evidence from recent research, the book discusses changes in employment opportunities in different sectors of the economy, and for men and women; productivity differences across sectors and over time; and wages for different categories of work. Whatever the developments in the sectors of the economy, the key issue must be what happened to living standards. Here the book provides an excellent discourse on growth in per capita income until the turn of the century and the subsequent stagnation. Roy argues that the integration of India into the international economy did increase economic growth until the early years of the twentieth century, but agricultural stagnation dominated growth dynamics until the end of colonial rule. The rise in poverty is attributed to population growth when agricultural productivity stagnated. Roy does not see lack of investment in agriculture as a policy failure. This is an aspect where there remains scope for further debate.

There is some discussion on policies towards industry, but this is not the emphasis Roy wants to use in his analysis of colonial India. The last chapter on population and social dynamics is a useful end to understanding the evolution of India's economy before independence. The second edition has a better structure and organization. There is some new material as well. It gives us an insight into contemporary research on colonial India. This book is a must-read for students of Indian economic history and brings to teachers of the subject a valuable textbook.

University of Warwick

BISHNUPRIYA GUPTA

David R. Meyer, *Networked machinists: high-technology industries in Antebellum America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. Pp. xi + 311. 24 figs. 6 maps. 36 tabs. ISBN 0801884713 Hbk. £33.50/\$49.95)

Networked machinists continues Meyer's research programme on antebellum American industrialization. This time he analyses the emergence of the machine industry

between 1780 and 1860 on the east coast, particularly in New England and the mid-Atlantic states, and discusses the dissemination of knowledge within this industry. The machine industry was the high-tech sector of early industrialization. Although there was only limited demand for machines prior to the Civil War, and although the markets usually did not exceed the regional limits within which the producers were located, transfer of technological knowledge between the hubs of the machine industry along the east coast occurred early. According to Meyer, this was one of the preconditions for accelerating industrialization since the mid-nineteenth century. His central thesis is that the main actors of this technology transfer were machinists who, when in their twenties, often passed through a number of workshops to acquire tacit knowledge. Motivated by the search for higher income and better positions, machinists changed frequently from one job to another, often not only between different regions but also between metalworking sectors. By doing so they carried and exchanged knowledge up and down the east coast and made personal contacts with other machinists, leading to the formation of networks. These machinist networks have been the key instrument for technology transfer within and between regions and across different machine industry sectors.

The book is divided in two main parts. The first part deals with the formation of networks between 1790 and 1820. Meyer demonstrates how iron foundries represented early hubs of machinist networks, because they integrated different shops under one umbrella and attracted mechanics with diverse talents. The little-specialized machine industry at this time allowed different experts to work together in one shop and facilitated the changes across several metalworking sectors. Meyer elucidates that, besides the iron foundries, it was also the cotton textile industry, with its textile machinery shops as well as the federal and private armories, that represented early hubs of machinist networks. The second part of the book describes the enlargements of the networks between 1820 and 1860. In addition to the industries already analysed in the first part, the steam engine and the evolving locomotive industries are investigated. Meyer further demonstrates how an increasingly specialized machine tool expertise and skills developed within the technical departments of firms within the machine industry. These firms built machine tools for their own use and sometimes for sale. Even though the limited demand for machine tools had, until 1860, not led to a unique machine tool industry, machine tool builders participated already in machinist networks extending into several industries. Besides the personal interdependences among the machinists, Meyer discusses other types and channels of technology transfer only peripherally. Though the importance of the British ideal for the American machinist is touched on sporadically, it is not evaluated systematically. Equally, the significance of technical institutes, professional journals, or patents in the diffusion of technological knowledge is not placed in relation to the achievements of technology transfer resulting from personal contacts among the machinists.

Meyer exemplifies his statements throughout the book in the same detailed manner with examples of different machinists and enterprises in several industries and regions, which is somewhat exhausting for the reader. He arrives again and again at the same conclusion: machinists have operated in networks structured around hubs of technologically leading machinists and firms. This enabled an intensive knowledge and technology transfer. The book does not discuss how these networks operated, why some were successful, and why others failed. This shortcoming is caused by a fundamental methodological problem. Meyer's network approach is limited to the concept of social networks, which is used in an

idiosyncratic manner. Social networks are not merely the result of a simple contact between two or more actors, as Meyer makes one believe, but are the result of reiterated reciprocal trust-based interactions. In other words, a confirmed contact between two machinists does not necessarily allow one to conclude that the mechanics operated together in a network. This reduced approach reflects a lack of awareness of recent research regarding the types and functions of networks such as regional and inter-regional business networks. It further surprises that relationships between the machinists are analysed on an entirely rational basis, thus ignoring the impact of conflicts and irrationality between machinists in antebellum America. Because of limited use of primary sources, Meyer may have not been able to take a closer look at the strategies of actors and the functions of networks. Thus, a lot of statements in this book are unsupported and speculative.

All in all, Meyer makes an interesting point regarding technology transfer in early American industrialization. However, the book title is misleading because the book is a synthesis of the key actors of antebellum American machine industry and their linkages, rather than an analysis of machinist networks.

Bielefeld University

RALF RICHTER

Adam Green, *Selling the race: culture, community and black Chicago, 1940–1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Pp. vi + 217. 29 illus. ISBN 0226306410 Hbk. £22.50/\$35)

‘There in that self-conscious city, we caught whispers of the meaning life could have’ (p. 1). Richard Wright’s poetic phrasing introduces Adam Green’s insightful study of the cultural renaissance that defined this moment in Chicago’s history. Green makes the whispers to which Wright refers audible by detailing the endeavours, both successful and ill-fated, that black Chicagoans undertook to construct and rewrite the meaning of their lives and destinies in the modern metropolis. Green’s work psychologizes and anthropomorphizes the city, and imbues the space with a persona—and, more specifically, a personality that regards itself in relation to other personas and spaces. The most likely candidate for such comparisons is that other black urban enclave, Harlem, but Green’s study makes clear the deficiencies and oversights of such a comparison. In emphasizing the local, the vernacular, and the quotidian, Green illuminates the specific sites and manifestations of black culture and its relation to modernity that emerged as a result of the convergence of black migrants and the urban environment.

Green’s snapshot of black life and culture in Chicago during the postwar period provides an important link in recent scholarly efforts to rewrite American history and culture to incorporate the voices, lives, and experiences of traditionally marginalized populations. Like historians such as Ronald Takaki, Robert G. Lee, and Lisa Lowe, Green identifies the cultural sphere as an important political battleground—as a site of contestation, community building, and acquiescence. Green’s contribution to this project lies primarily in his revelation of the tenuous and fraught relations between African Americans and mainstream American culture and the power structures that permeate it, and consequently influence cultural forms and their dissemination. His discussion of Claude Barnett and the ambitious effort to present the ‘first real Negro World’s Fair’ details the fragile negotiations

between federal and state agencies and the forms of support they offered and the ambitions and intent of those who mounted and collaborated in the exhibit's final result. Likewise, Green does not shy away from quantifying the tensions that emerge within the African American community, particularly with relation to their identification with American culture and national identity, an issue that emerged at the foreground of political and social discourse after the Second World War. Indeed, one of Green's central points is to identify the ways in which African Americans' political affiliations shifted as different constituencies capitulated to or defied constricting philosophies or strategies of liberation and/or race progress.

Modernity is a term that Green highlights as a means to convey the stakes of his project. At the centre of his conception of modernity, he locates an intertwining of freedom and control that structures the experiences of all historical subjects, and, in relation to his analysis, the lives of African Americans. The most salient example of this animating tension is borne out in Green's chapter on 'Making the music'. At the time, the geographical concentration of African Americans was increasing (rather than diminishing as many had hoped), but his discussion of black music highlights the fertile ground such circumstances could engender. He does so without celebrating or minimizing the isolation and deprivation of African American neighbourhoods. At the same time, Green challenges characterizations such as that of James Baldwin, who referred to the urban black population as 'the millions in captivity'. Green's work unravels the complex convergence of liberating impulses and structural constraints that resulted in both important successes and frustrated hopes. The responsibility of the black population of Chicago for the generative content of the music had to contend with white control of the record industry and the remuneration for the musicians' labour as well as the dissemination of their creative output. Green's analysis also illuminates the interdependence of working-class culture and vernacular forms such as the blues in modern articulations of black culture. In addition, he reveals how the centrality of the act of migration to the black population altered conceptions and practices of community and race. As with his exploration of the image of Emmett Till's brutalized body in the final chapter, his discussion of black music gestures toward the importance of alternate forms of community and representation that, in bypassing literacy for example, could circulate more widely throughout the African American community, and, as Green reveals, perform a crucial role in the constitution of a *national* black identity and agenda.

The era of which Green writes was one of transformation: beginning with the Second World War and terminating in a moment of relative quiet and selective prosperity; the beginnings of deindustrialization, suburbanization, urban renewal, and the public housing boom; the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision; the modernization of nationalist sentiment; the advent of image-dominated popular culture; and so forth. Green does an excellent job of incorporating all of these historical currents into a compelling and inclusive narrative that is unified by his placement of African Americans at the fulcrum of these movements. By focusing on specific characters within this broader narrative, Green communicates forcefully the problems and possibilities posed by an era of tremendous social and political change *and* potent forces of resistance to those changes. This technique reflects Green's broader effort to situate African Americans at the centre rather than at the margins of modernity, and, likewise, as agents in its manifestation rather than victims. In doing so, Green articulates the ways in which the complexities, trials, and tribulations of modern notions of identity, both self and

communal, have been alternately preserved and rewritten through the creative acts of Chicago's black population.

Yale University

RACHEL ROSEMAN

Richard M. Abrams, *America transformed: sixty years of revolutionary change, 1941–2001* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xix + 345. ISBN 0521862469 Hbk. £25/\$35)

This is quite an unusual book to be asked to review for this journal. It is not a work of economic history, and it is a work of synthesis, not original research—the product of an eminent senior scholar from the University of California at Berkeley, looking back across his lifetime. It is a meditative, moralizing, provocative, and deeply personal reflection on the United States since Pearl Harbor. Its intended readership is supposed to be ‘the high-school or college student, or simply any history buff’ (p. xviii), but this seems over-optimistic: there are no pictures, no tables, no illustrative documents; in fact, nothing to distract the eye or interrupt the hundreds of pages of closely argued, fact-packed text, which require attention, persistence, a thoughtful response, and, ideally, quite a lot of prior information, in order to make the most of them. So the Press's hopes of a large sale—the price is cheap for a CUP product; the print run must be correspondingly large; it is available as an eBook; and it is being promoted quite vigorously—may not quite be realized. However, readers of this journal with an interest in recent US history and not as much knowledge about it as they might wish, seeking to understand its distinctive modern political culture and economy, perhaps needing to freshen up or extend some tired lectures, can be recommended to it with confidence. There are features of the book which raise it far above the usual politics-centred textbook narrative, in terms of freshness and interest, and should make it particularly attractive for readers grounded in old-fashioned economic and social history.

Abrams—as befits an author who was director of Berkeley's Political Economy of Industrial Societies programme for part of the time during which this book was being written—takes seriously economics and other structural, not simply material, changes in the social order. His working title for the decade-long project from which this book seems to have emerged was *The decline of a sense of commonwealth in America*. Notably, part 3 of the present book, ‘Counterrevolution’, does offer the usual liberal lamentation on almost everything that has happened within the spheres of politics and political culture since the coming to power of Nixon and Reagan; it is refreshing to read an angry narrative of modern American ‘conservatism’ that calls it by its proper name, reaction. However, part 2, ‘Eight revolutions’, is much more interesting. The book has, implicitly, a sort of base-superstructure logic, where part 2 does not simply offer a series of thematic essays on aspects of the transformation of American society and public policy between the 1940s and the 1990s, but presents an argument explaining the origins of the collapse of the post-New Deal liberal order, which part 3 goes on to dissect and criticize.

Two of Abrams's eight ‘revolutions’ are heavily economic. ‘Affluence’ stands at the head of his list, but in many respects his fourth ‘revolution’, ‘The reorganization of American business’, offers the most valuable material for readers of this journal. The other ‘revolutions’ range from the predictable—‘From isolation to international hegemonic power’, ‘The rise of the military in American society’,

'The revolution in racial relations', and 'The revolution in gender-based roles'—to the quirkier and more moralizing 'Revolution in sexual behavior' and 'The demise of privacy', which conjured up for me an image of the author as probably the sort of distinguished American historian of a certain age who has never really been comfortable with the mores of the country beyond the liberal enclaves of elite academe, possibly did not even enjoy the 1960s at Berkeley very much, wears a bow tie, holidays in Europe, and dines at Chez Panisse when he can afford to. The 'Affluence' chapter is a good example of a way of using economic 'facts' that allows quantitative measurement of change to sit comfortably alongside and in support of argument. Abrams has chosen his illustrative data well, and uses them skilfully, never battering his reader with too many figures at one time, and deploying ratios rather than just big, decontextualized numbers. The chapter on business is perhaps less useful as lecture-crib material, but much more interesting. Abrams's only research-based monograph in his entire career was his ex-dissertation, *Conservatism in a progressive era: Massachusetts politics, 1900–1912* (1964), and he is still excellent on the politics of regulation (or, since the 1970s, deregulation), and the structural features of the changing American corporate system which underpin its strategic choices within the related spheres of business and politics. What he provides here is a very good introduction to the rise of oligarchy and massive inequality in post-post-New Deal America.

University of Durham

HOWELL JOHN HARRIS

Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal, and Zephyr Frank, eds., *From silver to cocaine: Latin American commodity chains and the building of the world economy, 1500–2000* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006. Pp. 384. 24 figs. 7 tabs. ISBN 0822337533 Hbk. £62.99/\$84.95; ISBN 0822337665 Pbk. £14.99/\$23.95)

This sweeping and ambitious collection of essays offers new angles on an old subject: the Latin American export economies. Focusing on 12 different commodities and crossing five centuries—from the silver mines of sixteenth-century Spanish America to the cocaine trafficking of the late-twentieth century—the contributors to this stimulating set of essays force the reader to take a fresh look at the economic development of Latin America. These essays, in effect, trace the rise of globalization in Latin America since the sixteenth century. Rather than focusing on the countries of production and national economies, these essays reconstruct the international commodity chains for silver, indigo, cochineal, tobacco, coffee, sugar, cacao, guano, nitrates, rubber, henequen, and coca. The emphasis is on 'the interlocking processes of production, transport, commercialization, and consumption of export commodities' (p. 8). As the editors' introduction points out, the analysis of these commodity chains provides a means to integrate the study of Latin American economies into a larger, global setting. The focus on consumption as well as production, along with the processing, transportation, and marketing of commodities, alters our long-standing views of Latin American economic history. One of the most important goals of the editors is 'to provide students of Latin American and world economic and social history with an integrated series of essays that show a panorama of the region in global trade and raise a broad range of methodological and empirical issues that require further exploration' (pp. 15–16).

The essays are arranged in roughly chronological sequence. In chapter one, Carlos Marichal provides a concise and fascinating history of the Spanish-American silver peso, followed by David McCreery's essay on indigo in both the Spanish and British empires from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. Marichal's second essay, on cochineal, provides a nice parallel to McCreery's, and covers the same period. Laura Nater's essay on tobacco from Spanish America—'the first agricultural product from the Americas to conquer the Europeans' (p. 95)—closes a cycle of essays on the colonial period. The middle section of the book concentrates on commodities that emerged along with mass markets for foodstuffs and industrialized goods in the US and Europe in the nineteenth century. Steven Topik and Mario Samper's excellent essay on Brazilian and Costa Rican coffee opens this section, followed by Horacio Crespo's chapter on trade regimes and the sugar market from the mid-nineteenth to the late-twentieth centuries. The next two essays, Mary Ann Mahoney on Brazilian cacao and Marcelo Bucheli and Ian Read on bananas, complete this section.

The final four chapters turn to commodities that were important inputs for agriculture, industry, and pharmaceuticals: nitrates, rubber, henequen, and coca. Rory Miller and Robert Greenhill's essay on guano and nitrates is a fine example of the power of the commodity chain approach, showing the subtleties and insights produced by the method. The same can also be said for the subsequent chapter on Brazil and the rubber trade by Zephyr Frank and Aldo Musacchio. As with so many of the essays in this fine volume, they show how important it is to look closely at the 'position and relative power of each participant in the chain' (p. 293). Allen Wells does a fine job synthesizing many years of research on henequen in his essay, and this section of the book closes with Paul Gootenberg's nice essay on the rise and fall of cocaine as a global commodity in the century before 1950.

The editors close the volume with an overview of the power of commodity chain analysis as a research method. As they point out, the method is not just about economic transmission lines, but also a means to study the 'social history of production and consumption of export products' (p. 353). This method compels historians to pay as much attention to demand as we have to supply. They close with an appeal for others to take up the study of commodity chains as a means to shed new light on 'the roles of labor and key entrepreneurial actors, the importance of state regulations . . . and the ecology of production' (p. 360). This excellent volume of essays is an important contribution to the field of Latin American economic history, and should remind us of the continuing necessity of seeking out new methods and approaches that will force us to rethink our current understanding of the region.

Vanderbilt University

MARSHALL C. EAKIN

Sheldon Garon and Patricia L. Maclachlan, eds., *The ambivalent consumer: questioning consumption in East Asia and the West* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006. Pp. x + 314. 7 figs. 7 illus. 13 tabs. ISBN 080144487X Hbk. £31.95/\$59.95; ISBN 0801473020 Pbk. £15.95/\$29.95)

This is an important and interesting collection of essays, focused primarily on Japanese alternatives and reactions to American-style consumerism, but with important essays also on the history of consumerism in the west itself, on South Korea,

briefly on China, with excursions on Sweden, Britain, and other places. Lizabeth Cohen also contributes an essay on the explosion of consumerism in the United States after the Second World War, on conscious American promotion of consumerism abroad, and on general reactions to consumer-defined Americanization.

The essays are of consistently high quality, well-researched and reliant for the most part on a strong grasp of recent scholarship. The result is without question an important contribution on the diversity of consumer styles as well as specific reactions to the American model. Several essays, including the one on western history, make clear the various uses of the idea of consumerism and the consumer, so that one need not be trapped by a single, and certainly not simply a contemporary, American model.

The book has three main sections. The initial essays deal with basic cultures of consumerism, including historical treatments. The subject is inherently diffuse, but the essays are for the most part quite successful. The evolution of Japanese attitudes toward American consumerism, and some specific features of a 'nostalgic' consumerism in Japan in the 1980s and 1990s, are particularly interesting. A second section, by far the most focused, deals with different savings strategies and in general the concerns of people in many societies about the relationship between consumerism and savings patterns (and of course credit systems as well), and the importance of economic foresight as a vantage point on the presumed profligacy of the American consumer model. This section also contains a good essay on Japanese influence with regard to larger east Asian patterns, and savings-based South Korean concerns about consumerism. The third section, with good individual essays but a less defined overall theme, involves political issues. These include consumption taxes and the welfare state in Japan and Sweden; various national reactions to genetically-modified foods; consumer education efforts in Japan; and the rise of urban Chinese consumers and their pressure to assure appropriate standards of consumer quality.

The essays fit well together on the whole, and collectively the book makes it clear that several concerns have widely surfaced about what is viewed as American-style consumerism—including savings levels, obviously, but also suitable standards of quality and safety and also the issue of sometimes expanding consumer inequalities. The points are driven home effectively by the various specific studies, without undue abstraction or preachiness. Overall, the findings, and their importance, are incontrovertible. I would, however, raise three slight caveats, as shadings on the main themes the book presents. First, American objections to consumerism are largely ignored; but after all this topic has a rich national history that deserves to be compared to the other cases, even if the conclusion is that American scepticism pales besides foreign examples. Second, and here I refer particularly to the historical efforts, the reasons consumerism spread are not treated with sufficient amplitude. Consumerism was pushed by advertisers and shopping malls and has many tawdry undergarments, but it could and can also seem personally liberating and (in certain contexts) egalitarian. I do not think that comes through adequately for any of the societies involved. This applies also to a tendency to exaggerate American influence as opposed to other factors in the appeal of consumerism in Asia. Finally, while I agree that Americanization and consumerism constitute a valid analytical pairing, the United States is not the only export source of consumerism or the only society to which certain others react when they worry about what consumerism involves. Moreover, this subject would, if pursued, return attention—somewhat ironically—to Japan, but here as a major consumer, exporter, and style-setter, and particularly in certain areas such as

children's toys; yet this facet comes through almost not at all. What the collection does, in other words, it does well, and the findings are important. The association of objectionable consumerism with Americanization may be unduly rigid, however, and opportunities for further analysis should not be ignored.

George Mason University

PETER N. STEARNS

J.W. Drukker, *The revolution that bit its own tail: how economic history changed our ideas on economic growth* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2006. Pp. 308. 39 figs. 6 tabs. ISBN 9052601984 Pbk. €35/\$44.95)

This is an ambitious and interesting book that focuses on the evolution of modern economic history, mostly post-1950, and emphasizes the success and limitations of the cliometric revolution. Its main argument is that the revolution built on the neo-classical economics paradigm and has evolved over time to reach the—somewhat unexpected—conclusion that institutions and culture matter and, consequently, that the ahistorical neo-classical approach to economic history should be rejected. For Drukker, neo-classical theory is only able to explain the successful experiences of economic development, those in which initial institutional conditions are conducive to economic growth; it fails to explain those historical cases—in practice, the majority—in which institutions have prevented economic development from occurring.

The book surveys the methodological changes that economic history has undergone over more than a century. Initially, in the classical era, the discipline had a close association with political economy, but there was something of a divorce—offset somewhat by the growing links with social history—with neo-classicism in the first half of the twentieth century, before there occurred a 'reunification' with economics, albeit at the expense of alienating the non-economically trained historians. For Drukker, as the neoclassical paradigm then exhibited diminishing returns in its explanatory power of the past, economic historians have recognized gradually the central role of institutions and culture. Such a circular evolution corresponds to a revolution that bit its own tail.

Part 1 comprises four chapters. After an overview of the achievements of cliometrics, it deals successively with the birth of economic history as an independent discipline after the *Methodenstreit*, the Annals School as a revolution within the field of history, and the diffusion of the new economic history in the US. Part 2 is a deconstruction of the neo-classical approach to economic history, the most powerful weapon in the hands of cliometricians for re-interpreting the past. The destructive capacity of cliometrics is confronted with its lack of ability to provide a new consensus. A systematic survey from a neo-classical perspective of the main shortcomings of cliometrics—'black holes' in Drukker's terminology—is then carried out, in which the low explanatory power of factor accumulation as a source of growth in opposition to the 'residual', the delayed impact of innovations (the 'productivity paradox'), and the persistence of inefficiency as 'path-dependent' provide powerful examples of the limitations of neo-classical economic history to provide a persuasive explanation of the economic past. The evolution of three major cliometricians (Douglass North, Paul David, and Joel Mokyr) from a pure neo-classical to an institutional approach epitomizes the circular evolution of economic history: from using a general theory to explain economic history under any circum-

stances regardless of the institutional background, to vindicating the role of institutions as the providers of the incentives that condition human economic behaviour.

One of the main achievements of cliometrics has been becoming global. However, Drukker barely references economic history outside the Anglo-Saxon world: Asia, Africa, and Latin America are hardly mentioned. A particular omission is the 'new comparative economic history', a 'presentist' approach to economic history (with policy implications for developing countries) associated with Jeffrey Williamson and his collaborators. Some major names are also absent from the bibliography, and often they are only cited for their earlier works. Thus Patrick O'Brien's seminal contribution to understanding European industrialization is not even mentioned; Nicholas Crafts's recent work explaining the 'productivity paradox' in the historical examples of steam and electricity is also a noteworthy omission, as is Dale Jorgenson's groundbreaking attempt to reduce the 'residual' from a neo-classical perspective. Recent innovative developments in institutional history such as Avner Greif's work do not appear at all. All this is in contrast to the overemphasis on Dutch economic historians (a by-product of the origin of the volume as a Dutch textbook).

The book reads well and its detailed explanations of the methodological debates will be useful for postgraduate students. The health of a discipline, Deidre McCloskey wrote a long time ago, is inversely correlated to the ongoing methodological debate. Without disagreeing, I consider that this volume contains useful reflections for the future of our discipline. A final paradox is not addressed, however, by the author: why, when economic history is more present than ever in social sciences journals, is its size as an independent field shrinking? Is it part of 'the snake that bit its own tail', thereby returning us to our original position in the broad field of political economy?

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LEANDRO PRADOS DE LA ESCOSURA

Paul A. Samuelson and William A. Barnett, eds., *Inside the economist's mind: conversations with eminent economists* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. Pp. xxxvi + 419. 3 figs. 72 illus. ISBN 1405157151 Hbk. £60/\$74.95; ISBN 1405159170 Pbk. £19.99/\$29.95)

When Arjo Klamer published his *Conversations with economists: new classical economists and opponents speak out on the current controversy in macroeconomics* (1984), the subtitle of which provides the volume's economic intent, few could have predicted how interviews with economists would develop into a mature genre which now provides, together with other autobiographical materials, a key resource for the history of economic thought and the sociology of economics. This latest contribution to the genre, which incidentally includes six of the economists featured in the Klamer collection, has very different origins and a more generic purpose. All of the interviews first appeared in the journal *Macroeconomic Dynamics*, of which Barnett is the editor, and, uniquely for a leading peer-reviewed academic economics journal, all were given significant space and free licence to say what they wanted about economists and economics to their peers. The end result is a most welcome addition to the genre in which leading economists outline their life philosophies and reflect candidly on the evolution of modern economics. Moreover, whilst not all of the interviewees took advantage of the licence to offend, those that did will not

disappoint, and the reader is directed to pp. 44–5 on how to respond when your head of department tells you that you are a luxury good.

The volume is structured as follows. First, there is a foreword by Samuelson, who is also the first interviewee as befits his status as the first American to receive the Nobel prize in economics. This has all the hallmarks of expected Samuelsonian erudition and sets the scene for why scientists matter in understanding science. Next comes a much longer preface by the second editor. This outlines briefly the nature of the interviews and then progresses to flag some of the highlights to come in the 16 interviews that follow. Disappointingly, it does not tell us anything about the selection criteria or the place of this volume in relation to the now quite substantial literature on economists' lives. Nor does it provide any sort of collective analysis or prosopography of the economists here included. E. Roy Weintraub, an historian of economics who has done much to persuade a somewhat sceptical profession that biography matters, then provides what is billed as a history of thought introduction. This goes a long way towards making up for the second of the lacunae just identified.

The 16 economists interviewed comprise seven Nobel laureates born between 1906 (Wassily Leontief) and 1937 (Robert Lucas); six further academic economists who were born between 1928 (János Kornai) and 1946 (Robert Shiller); two central bankers (Paul Volcker, b. 1927 and Stanley Fischer, b. 1943); and a former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers (Martin Feldstein, b. 1939). The interviewees are hardly less distinguished, ranging from one Nobel laureate (Robert Solow, b. 1924) through senior figures (David Cass, b. 1937; John Taylor, b. 1946; Olivier Blanchard, b. 1948) to the generation born in the 1950s that are now the cohort that comprise the editors of the major journals. Cohorts matter, and of the interviewees what we have here are those who came to professional life between what Americans call the great depression and the early postwar years. Unsurprisingly, there is much in the interviews reflecting on the advent of Keynesianism and the challenges to which it would later be subjected. Institutions also matter very much, and the interviews contain much of interest on the dominance of the major Ph.D. producers and the various networks through which American economics developed since the 1930s. The stress here is on American economics, for whilst six of the 16 were not born in the US, all but two spent the majority of their career in the US. Moreover, these are American men, for there are no women in this sample, though the continuing programme of interviews does include at least one woman (Anna Schwarz), whose interview will appear in the planned second volume; nor are there any economic historians, though as tool-makers many of these economists have made important contributions that have been employed with great profit by economic historians (for example, the input-output matrix of Leontief). The inclusion of Milton Friedman (1912–2006) amongst the 16 also provides a strong showing for the role of monetary history in this collection, whilst many of the others when interviewed go out of their way to stress the importance of history, some even to lament the neglect of economic history and the history of thought in the training of contemporary economists. All in all, a familiar story. The inclusion of Volcker, Fischer, and Feldstein, together with others who have acted formally or informally as policy advisers like Friedman and Tobin, ensures that there is as much here that is of interest to policy historians as to historians of economic thought. Finally, the absence of an index is lamentable if all too common these days; it would aid greatly the task of tracing the key institutional and personal networks that sustain

American and, to a lesser extent, international economics. It is to be hoped, if the projected second volume comes to fruition, that it will include a joint index.

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ROGER MIDDLETON

Youssef Cassis, *Capitals of capital: a history of international financial centres, 1780–2005* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xiv + 385. 10 tabs. ISBN 0521845351 Hbk. £25/\$40)

This book originated from a desire by a firm of private bankers in Geneva, Pictet et Cie, to commemorate their anniversary. They chose to do so by asking Youssef Cassis, a leading financial historian and professor of economic history in the University of Geneva, to write on a subject of his own choosing. He has chosen to provide an account of the development and role of international financial centres from the late-eighteenth century until the present day. It is only to be hoped that this enlightened decision may be copied by others as this volume makes an important contribution to our understanding of the subject. Cassis fills a gap in the literature not by attempting to measure and then rank international financial centres over time, but by describing how they evolved, the environments within which they operated, and the underlying forces at work. In all cases an attempt is made to identify the human dimension as well as the impersonal forces of finance, and this is one of the great strengths of the book. There is a stress throughout on the importance of individual enterprise and the effects of events such as wars.

The book is divided into six chapters covering the period since 1780. The first chapter opens with Amsterdam as the most important international financial centre and closes with London having assumed that role. Crucial to this changeover were the wars and revolutions that plagued continental Europe and the resulting migration of individual bankers like the Rothschilds. In addition, the lack of German unity deprived that country of the opportunity to develop a single financial centre. Instead, a number of different centres existed across continental Europe, each serving a national role and competing for international business with varying degrees of success. The next chapter takes the account to 1875 when London was still dominant, but only after the challenge from Paris had faded through defeat by Prussia in 1871 and the subsequent war indemnity. Again, the challenge from Germany was blunted by disunity, although Berlin was emerging increasingly as the dominant centre. At this stage, the story of international financial centres is solely a western European one, with no discussion of developments elsewhere. In the next chapter, covering the years to 1914, New York is added to the list of centres meriting serious discussion, though only occupying an inferior position to London, which remained at the top of the hierarchy. Paris was next in importance, despite German unification, and the greatly increased status of Berlin, as much German financial business continued to be transacted outside its own borders, to the benefit of those financial centres located in adjacent countries. Overall, this period is seen as the one of peak importance for financial centres. International flows of money and capital took place between individuals and businesses firmly rooted in these national financial centres.

It was the shattering of this world that is the subject of the next chapter. This covers not only the two World Wars but also the Wall Street crash, the financial crises of the early 1930s, and the subsequent era of economic nationalism. In those years,

the positions of London, Paris, and Berlin were undermined through a mixture of military necessity, economic instability, financial decline, monetary turmoil, and government restrictions. Alternative centres such as Amsterdam and Zurich were too small to act as full substitutes, though they gained substantially from the problems experienced in Germany. This left New York as an international financial centre of increasing importance, albeit one which experienced fluctuating fortunes from 1914 onwards before emerging in a dominant position in 1945. However, that dominance was not consolidated in the postwar years, and that theme is taken up in the last two chapters, with the account divided at 1980. Through a mixture of domestic regulation in the United States and national controls that restricted international financial transactions, New York gradually lost the commanding position it had occupied at the end of the Second World War. With Paris emasculated by controls, Frankfurt only slowly emerging as the German financial centre, and other European centres like Zurich located in small countries with governments wary of new markets, it was left to London to offer a home to Eurodollars and Eurobonds from the late 1950s onwards. It is also in these final chapters that Tokyo makes its first appearance as an international financial centre, followed by the likes of Hong Kong and Singapore, although they remain peripheral to a story that is a transatlantic one.

Overall, this book is a major work of scholarship based on the author's deep knowledge of financial history. Its real strength is in the period before 1945, as these years give free reign to Cassis's command of the literature and focus on individuals and events rather than the more complex world of government regulation, multinational business, instantaneous communication, and sophisticated trading strategies that was to follow. In contrast, its weakness is the heavily Eurocentric focus, leavened only with a discussion of New York, as that leaves the present day position rather detached from the past. Despite those minor caveats, this book is a major achievement which few others would be capable of delivering.

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RANALD MICHIE

Paolo Mauro, Nathan Sussman, and Yishay Yafeh, *Emerging markets and financial globalization: sovereign bond spreads in 1870–1913 and today* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. x + 193. 12 figs. 25 tabs. ISBN 0199272697 Hbk. £40/\$74; ISBN 019922613X Pbk. £20)

In a recent Ph.D. dissertation on the 1890 Baring crisis (Juan Flores, *Lorsque le leader suit la foule: la crise Baring dans une perspective microéconomique*, Paris, 2004), it has been observed that 'when one looks up "economic history financial" in the EconLit database, more than 60 per cent of the 231 results published between 1995 and 2004 relate directly or indirectly to the period between 1870 and 1913'. He remarks further that all modern studies that make historical comparisons use the period 1870 to 1913 as a benchmark, from which derives a particular 'then vs. now' perspective. *Emerging markets and financial globalization* belongs to this asset class.

Based on a series of papers published previously, this book seeks to draw lessons from a comparison of the behaviour of secondary markets sovereign bond prices in two historical periods. The first one, or 'then', is the period 1870 to 1913; the second, the 'today', is the much shorter period of 1994 to 2004. The authors argue that the two periods are 'similar . . . eras of globalization and sovereign bond

finance' (p. 1), although they do not really explain in what respects they are similar. Investment in sovereign debt existed in the late-nineteenth century, but then it also existed in the previous century. That the authors are all economists is illustrated by their repeated reference to unexplored 'archival evidence', by which they mean such things as the printed annual *Reports of the Corporation of Foreign Bondholders*, a standard source in financial history. This is also reflected in their effort to relate their research to the work of theoreticians, such as Daron Acemoglu, who discuss institutions from a normative perspective. These approaches are popular among economists and international financial institutions, but historians generally agree that they are poorly informed.

The many drawings from the satirical magazine *Punch*, the numerous charts the authors provide, and the shortness of the book make it an attractive introduction to the subject. Three themes are emphasized. The first is the relevance of political news, where they argue that wars and revolutions were and are an important driver of bond prices and short-term volatility. This point has already been ascertained in earlier studies, and it is undoubtedly an important one. Its validity, however, is not limited to emerging markets. Second, there is the irrelevance of certain institutions, or rather their inability to impress investors. Their regression analysis underpins this verdict for the gold standard, although they do admit that the Japanese case shows that adoption of the gold standard could be more important than domestic institutional reform. The prudent inference the authors make is that 'everything depends', although the evidence they report on p. 43 is not consistent with this. Once the spurious influence of debt redemption is purged from the data, the authors show a dramatic decline in Japanese bond spreads during the period before the adoption of the gold standard and not much change in 1897 (this point is discussed in joint work with Frédéric Zumer, *The making of global finance, 1880–1913*, 2004). By trying to keep to a middle ground between earlier results, the authors end up with an overall assessment that is confused and contradictory to the empirical evidence they report.

The third theme is that nineteenth-century investors seem to have been able to tell bonds apart and avoid contagious fire sales in times of crisis, while their modern counterparts displayed herding behavior. However, the authors do not provide an explanation for this. They suggest that there were more individual investors then, while today large funds play a more important role. At the same time, they quote my earlier work (in Flandreau et al., *International financial history in the twentieth century: system and anarchy*, 2003) that certain banks developed rating techniques to guide huge groups of uninformed investors towards such investments as Russian bonds or Scandinavian securities. It is not clear, therefore, that atomicity of the investing population is a plausible explanation.

Another curious feature of the book is its omission of what is perhaps the most striking parallel between then and now; namely, the dramatic convergence that spreads on emerging market debt have experienced between 1895 and 1913 and then again since 2000. They remark briefly that there was a trend then (p. 33) but ignore its parallel with now. This may be due to the fact that their database stops in 2004. However, the trend was already perceptible 'then' (well, we mean 'now', or in the early 2000s). Moreover, the book was published in 2006, when convergence of sovereign debt spreads was already old news. In the joint work with Zumer cited above, we argued that the decomposition of the sources of interest rate convergence in the late-nineteenth century points to the crucial role of emerging market growth, which boosted public finances. This in turn buoyed bond prices, causing the pre-1914 convergence. It is quite remarkable that modern portfolio managers point to

the very same factors in driving today's boom. 'Emerging markets have had a great run in recent years, outperforming most others, often by a significant margin . . . Growth prospects are bright. For the BRIC economies [Brazil, Russia, India and China], the expectation is for growth of 8.5 per cent in 2007 and 2008—three times the rate of the developed world' (*Financial Times*, Weekly Review of the Fund Management Industry, 21 May 2007).

The same uncomfortable feeling, that the authors have missed the bus, prevails again when they argue: 'Based on these considerations, the future extent of spread co-movement is uncertain . . . On the one hand, greater similarities and co-movement of economic fundamentals across emerging markets may again foster greater co-movement in the future. On the other hand . . . investor behavior may have changed following the recent crisis in Argentina' (p. 127). The prudence is worthy of an IMF report, but the real problem is the 'now' for comparison, which needs to be post-Argentine crisis rather than 1994–2004. The evidence may suggest that investors have finally learnt to tell borrowers apart, just as they did in the late-nineteenth century. If so, then the implication must be that late-nineteenth-century markets were mature institutions so that the comparison between 1870–1913 and 1994–2004 is inadequate. Even the present is bound to become history. The 'then vs. now' industry requires some technological progress. This is a lesson economists should ponder.

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MARC FLANDREAU

Filippo Cesarano, *Monetary theory and Bretton Woods: the construction of an international monetary order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xiii + 248. ISBN 0521867592 Hbk. £48/\$80)

Cesarano has written a splendid book. As a long-run economic explanation for the origins, life, and collapse of Bretton Woods, it is difficult to see how it could be bettered. It is written avowedly from the standpoint of monetary theory and not from that of political or diplomatic perspectives. He notes political aspects and creditor/debtor differences and so on, but keeps guiding the story back to economics. An admirably clear introduction shows how the gold standard emerged and notes its defects. He stresses that the gold standard was a market-led evolution, in contrast with Bretton Woods, which was a formal agreement based on painstaking design. Cesarano wants to emphasize that monetary orders evolve naturally as a product of history, institutions, and theory. When a monetary order is designed by experts, theory is decisive—and the impact of theory can be momentous, as could be seen, for example, in John Law's schemes. Before the First World War, the gold standard was regarded as the optimal arrangement, not least because it was immune from political interference. The deflation of the late-nineteenth century carried hints that a commodity standard could be too rigid (Wicksell in 1898 had set out a paper money proposal). Even after the war, there was still widespread consensus on the standard's optimality and that was decisive in Britain's 'return' to gold in 1925. This view, however, was overturned by 1931. Thereafter, whatever other factors were at work, economic theory played the central role in the Bretton Woods agreement.

There are three (implicit) parts to the book. The first discusses the main features of the gold standard by way of introduction to developments in the international

monetary system in the interwar years. The gold exchange standard after the First World War suffered from damaged credibility and led to crises. The second part provides an economic analysis of the international monetary system as it had evolved. After the First World War, economists criticized the lack of control of the money stock; and in the 1930s, the explanation for falling prices was a monetary one. The Keynes and White plans that were written during the Second World War reflected the problems of the interwar years. Contrary to received wisdom, Cesarano insists the Bretton Woods agreements did not reflect primarily the US view; that would be to disregard the momentous impact of Keynes's theory. Finally, he maintains, the collapse of Bretton Woods can be attributed to the monetary system drifting away from a commodity standard, and thus traced ultimately to the influence of Keynes's theory.

The common story told of the international monetary system after the Second World War is that it was inherently defective. It required the core country to anchor prices and conduct the monetary and fiscal policy needed for this. Up to the mid-1960s, the US behaved correctly—it had the lowest inflation rate in the G7. The others caused disequilibrium by increasing their gold reserves, though after the mid-1960s, monetary and fiscal expansion in the US led to growing imbalances and ultimately collapse. Cesarano's story, however, travels a longer path. First, there was the observed deflationary tendency of the gold standard, followed by the actual deflation of the 1930s. That paved the way for a more active role for central banks and it signalled the beginning of the end for commodity money. Furthermore, price stability with a fixed parity required support from central bank cooperation. (Hawtrey had been an optimist on cooperation, while Keynes had been deeply sceptical.) The great depression promoted full employment to principal priority and that, together with Keynesian economics, was decisive in producing Bretton Woods. The conflict between fixed exchange rates and independent economic policy, particularly the pursuit of full employment, was a key factor leading to strains and collapse. However, it was the innate conservatism of central bankers and their cultural background that attached them to commodity money that led them to accumulate gold. This accumulation undermined the system. 'Policymakers, focusing on the wrong problem and the wrong model, set off cumulative imbalances that led to the undoing of the system' (p. 199).

The book is a blend of the history of monetary thought of much of the twentieth century, including extensive quotation from some of the classics, and some monetary history to boot. Its focus is the intellectual effort to construct a new system; but there are hints throughout that, when it comes to monetary institutions, design *in principle* is far from optimal. At one point that is made explicit: a new monetary order cannot be designed at a drawing board. Monetary orders evolve. (Cesarano does not say so, but there might be an implicit suggestion that this extends to monetary unions.) The fact that there is now universal fiat money for the first time in 2,500 years and the prospect of non-tangible exchange media developing throws up new challenges.

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FORREST CAPIE

Brenda J. Buchanan, ed., *Gunpowder, explosives and the state: a technological history* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. Pp. xxiii + 425. 80 illus. 8 tabs. ISBN 0754652599 Hbk. £55/\$99.95)

Gunpowder and explosives have played a major role in world history, yet strangely their development, behaviour, use, and production have been neglected by historians. Based on 20 papers presented at biannual symposia of the International Commission of the History of Technology from 1996 until 2002, this volume aims to make good the deficiency. The emphasis is on black powder, the mechanical mixture of saltpetre, charcoal, and sulphur that was the sole propellant for firearms and explosives for blasting, from its appearance in eleventh-century China until late in the nineteenth century. This emphasis—16 of the 20 chapters address developments in the black powder era—is entirely appropriate, for black powder influenced war profoundly, and to a lesser extent mining and construction, for over half a millennium as opposed to less than a century and a half for the chemical propellants and explosives that replaced it. Moreover, the origins, thermo-chemical behaviour, manufacture, and historical impact of black powder are far less well understood than those of its successors.

Following Buchanan's introduction, a useful discussion of the intersection between gunpowder manufacture and the economic and military needs of state, the chapters are presented in five sections. The first, 'Modern perceptions and ancient knowledge', contains an overview of the evolution of black powder manufacturing methods by Robert A. Howard; Buchanan's penetrating analysis of the importance of supplies of saltpetre—black powder's critical ingredient—to the British empire; and two essays on the early development and use of black powder on the Indian subcontinent. Iqtidar Alam Khan's 'The Indian response to firearms, 1300–1700' is particularly valuable for addressing parallel Ottoman and western European developments. The second section, 'The production of saltpetre and gunpowder in Europe', contains four chapters addressing developments in Venice, Portugal, and Sweden (two chapters). Walter Panciera's chapter on the production, storage, and use of gunpowder in Venice during the second half of the sixteenth century illuminates the intersection between military necessity and technological adaptation in the face of economic constraints. The third section, 'The overseas transfer of technology from Europe', contains four chapters dealing, respectively, with black powder production in Portugal's overseas possessions; gunpowder production in Egypt, first under Napoleon and then under Muhammad Ali; the transfer of French black powder manufacturing methods to the United States by Eleuthère Irénée du Pont in the early 1800s; and powder production in the Confederacy during the American Civil War.

The fourth section, 'Military technicalities', contains three gems. Kelly DeVries and Robert Smith's essay on the early breech-loading cannon with removable powder chambers, though largely descriptive, is encyclopaedic and should remain the final word on the subject for many years. Brett D. Steele's discussion of mathematician Leonard Euler's work during the Enlightenment makes important original contributions to our understanding of the early interactions among mathematical theory and engineering and military practice. Seymour Mauskopf's beautifully—and usefully—illustrated discussion of the development in Britain of propellants for large ordnance during the final days of black powder tells us why and how increasingly sophisticated propellants were made—the determination of optimum grain size and geometry were particularly vexing issues—but falls tantalizingly short of telling us how the stuff actually worked inside the gun.

The final section, 'Modern developments' has four chapters. René Amiable's 'Scientific reasoning and the empirical approach at the time of the European invention of smokeless powder' provides a critical comparison of two fundamentally different—and equally successful—development strategies, nicely complementing Richard E. Rice's 'Smokeless powder: scientific and institutional contexts at the end of the nineteenth century'. These two essays are exceptionally well-informed scientifically and in combination provide the best intellectual, technical, and institutional history of the early development of smokeless propellants of which I am aware. Ian Rae and James H. Whitehead address the development late in the nineteenth century of blasting agents that were safer and easier to use than black powder, but which shared its 'heaving' action, better suited for moving large quantities of earth and rock than dynamite's shattering effect, and show that the evolution from black powder to dynamite to the ammonium nitrate-fuel oil agents used today was more complex than generally supposed. Finally, in tracing the Royal Dutch/Shell Oil Company's foray into the production of explosives during the First World War, Ernst Homburg presents a fascinating case study of early multinational corporate flexibility.

As is generally the case with collections of essays, the contributions vary in interest and relevance. Those at the top end make significant contributions to the history of technology, economic history, the history of ideas, and business history; at the bottom, there are brushes with antiquarianism. The writing varies from clear to excellent and the copy-editing is uniformly good. The editor is to be commended for enforcing concision and the publisher for the quality of production.

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