

## Book Reviews

### Britain and Ireland

WILLIAM P. L. THOMSON, *The new history of Orkney* (Mercat Press, sec. edn, 2001). xii + 529 pp. 108 maps and illus. £14.99.

William Thomson's revised *History of Orkney* (first published in 1987) spans the history of the islands from the Iron Age to the twentieth century and is a model of what a local history should be. Lucid, comprehensive and interesting, it exemplifies the value of local studies, particularly when the locality is an independent cultural unit like a group of islands. As all historians and anthropologists know, islands are very interesting sociological entities, especially when they are distinctive and populous enough to have their own cultural identity. In Orkney's case this identity is mirrored in a very long-lived aristocratic title, originating as a Viking *jarldom*, in a self-sufficient agricultural community and in a well-organized urban mercantile oligarchy in Kirkwall.

These islands lie at the northern end of the British Isles, and along with Shetland came under the influence and control of Norway in the early middle ages. The earls of Orkney are the epitome of the islands' Norse character, established as Viking warlords, and using the islands as a base for harrying and raiding the Christian kingdoms to the south of them. Their own saga still survives and provides a remarkable early account of their deeds and dynastic struggles. They imprinted Norse speech and culture on their island empire and created a Scandinavian colony which retained its ethnic identity into the early modern period. The problem is, however, that the brilliance of this aristocratic fiefdom (which acquired its own saintly dynastic martyr and built a cathedral for his resting-place which has survived better than any other Scottish cathedral) overshadows the rest of Orkney's history. Previous Orkney historians have had difficulty breaking free of this mould, tending to see the Norse period as the apogee of Orkney's cultural past and the following centuries as one long slow decline. The social and economic peculiarities which give these islands their own particular character, different from the rest of Scotland, were explained as traces of earlier Norse administrative methods, and older historians attempted

to stress the Norseness of all Orkney's agrarian phenomena. The particular value of Thomson's writings, as a geographer with wide knowledge of economic and agricultural change, is that he understands the post-Norse period to be of interest in its own right, with its own hybrid blend of Norwegian/Scottish culture. In fact his *History* takes the reader right up to the post-war period more comprehensively than any previous study of Orkney history.

Orkney is therefore fortunate to have a local historian (the author has taught geography in the secondary schools of both Orkney and Shetland) with the particular expertise to understand and explain the sometimes complex economic and fiscal organizations which different social systems have introduced in the islands. This is one of the most interesting historical aspects of the fertile Orkneys which consist of mostly low-lying beds of Old Red Sandstone capable of producing arable crops far beyond the normal output of grain-growing cultivation in the north of Scotland. This feature has made them exceedingly attractive possessions to Iron-Age Picts, Norse Vikings, medieval churchmen, Scots colonists, and improving landowners. Each layer of landlord power has left traces of its land assessment units or agricultural methodology in document, place-name or landscape feature. The author commands all the evidence, whether it is the complex excavated remains of the Pictish period; the complexities of the Norse fiscal assessment system and the taxing and renting of land in medieval Orkney; the introduction of a new form of feudal tenure after the Reformation; the actualities of runrig arrangements; the different phases of agricultural improvement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the changes wrought by it on the face of the islands; the merchant-lairds and the kelp-boom (about which he has written a whole book); or the effects of war in the twentieth century when the Orkney islands became a front-line military zone.

There can be few areas of Scotland which reveal so much about the past in the present landscape. Ranging from the magnificent prehistoric monuments – the main sites of which now form a World Heritage Site – to the medieval cathedral of St. Magnus, to the wrecks

of the scuttled German fleet in Scapa Flow, these are the product of the fertile land and of the nodal position which these islands occupy at the northern tip of Britain. Such features in the landscape can only be fully appreciated by the visitor with an understanding of the historical circumstances. Thomson's *New history of Orkney* explains these and places them in context. It also puts the historical issues into context, by explaining the arguments and controversies, whether they are to do with the violence or otherwise of the Viking settlement, the value or otherwise of the saga of the earls, the existence or otherwise of the *udal* system of land tenure, and from more recent history, the effects of the various phases of agricultural improvement. Moreover, this revised version is a *new* history of Orkney, much of it reworked since its 1987 predecessor, with new chapters added, particularly on the early period, incorporating excellent discussions of work which has appeared since then. Additionally, the illustrations are transformed from 42 to 108 maps and photos. There can be few localities and very few indeed in Scotland, which have such a valuable overview of their history.

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PHILLIPP R. SCHOFIELD, *Peasant and community in medieval England, 1200–1500* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). vii + 279 pp. £55 (hbk); £19.99 (pbk).

The study of medieval peasants has been so active a field of medieval social history in recent decades that it is hardly surprising the topic repays an extensive and careful review. Phillipp Schofield's book, designed to be read as an introductory text to the subject, will also be valuable for readers wanting an up-to-date survey of current research. He discusses succinctly, in three chapters, the large body of evidence relating to rural tenures, whose distinguished historiography goes back to the later nineteenth century, before going on to consider more recent areas of interest. Another three chapters are devoted to what is known about peasant families, in which age at marriage, household size, and the wider responsibilities associated with kinship are all explored. Three further chapters examine the relationship between peasant societies and commercial, political and religious institutions. These last three topics Schofield classifies as relationships between peasants and 'worlds beyond', so emphasizing the extent to which the medieval rural communities were open to both stimuli and pressures from outside.

Inevitably, given the large proportion of the English population under discussion, the book has to deal with a diversity of experience that defies easy generalizations. However, progress in this area of research has often

involved undermining generalized fallacies about medieval peasants and their ways: to demonstrate the diversity to be found through the documents has in itself myth-breaking potential so that even negative conclusions can be informative. However, Schofield's prevailing emphasis is a positive one, contrasting strongly with some pessimistic traditions of the past; he demonstrates the extent to which peasants understood their environment, adapted to change, and responded actively to the challenges and opportunities they encountered. The contribution of peasant farmers to the growth of output and trade in agricultural produce is a major case in point, supported by interesting and well-chosen examples. There are predictably helpful comments on rural credit, the peasant land market and litigation, topics with which Schofield's name is particularly associated. The book has interesting comments on practical understanding of legal procedure within rural society, and on the extent to which ordinary countrymen were aware of political events. Even in matters of religion, where there were severe institutional constraints on what lay people could and could not do, Schofield shows how the establishment of parishes encouraged peasant involvement, and he discusses the range of different ways through which peasant piety could be expressed both privately and collectively. In all these discussions he is well aware of the scope for rivalry and oppression internal to peasant society, given the considerable inequalities of wealth and status to be found there.

The condition of the peasantry did not remain unchanged through the three centuries under consideration, even if economic development was slow by modern standards. Underlying the analyses of peasant society, the book subsumes the familiar dynamic outlines of demographic, commercial, legal and political changes that affected the environment in which rural livelihoods could be gained. The need to incorporate change over time makes for complexity in Chapters 2 to 4 concerning the land, in which regional differences, legal distinctions and social categories also struggle for space. A student approaching peasant society for the first time will have to study these pages particularly closely to gain a firm grasp of the issues. Later chapters pose fewer complications, and can consequently be read more easily. Throughout the book, the analysis is invariably up-to-date. Where the offered interpretation is controversial, the facts in question are sufficiently unclear to justify whole research programmes. It is not as obvious as Schofield implies, for example, that the proportion of the population dependent upon wage labour increased through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The evidence of population, wages and tenures might rather be

interpreted to imply that proletarianization in the countryside declined through this period. But arguments either way have yet to be posed effectively and properly tested.

Besides the interest of its text, a further advantage of the book is the assistance the author gives to those wanting to develop their knowledge of the subject. Each chapter is well annotated, with references to an extensive range of sources. In addition, there is an excellent eight-page annotated bibliography, clearly demarcated by subject area. The book is usefully indexed both by names and the subjects discussed.

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SAMANTHA LETTERS, MARIO FERNANDES, DEREK KEENE and OLWEN MYHILL, *Gazetteer of markets and fairs in England and Wales to 1516* (List and Index Society, Special Series 32 and 33, 2003). 529 pp. £36 to non-members. Available from the Society, c/o The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU.

In this work, Samantha Letters and her team of co-researchers at the Centre for Metropolitan History have created an extremely valuable reference tool. During the past two decades, medieval social and economic historians have developed a keen interest in issues related to commercialization. Documenting the location, chronology, and uses of markets and fairs has been a major concern in this endeavour, and a number of excellent county and regional studies have appeared over the years. These have served well as building blocks for broader syntheses, but the field as a whole has long been hampered by the absence of a standard, authoritative source with coverage of all parts of the country and all medieval centuries. Letters and her team have at last solved this problem with resounding success.

The *Gazetteer* is structured on a simple and straightforward basis, providing entries organized by individual commercial location, arranged alphabetically within each county. A separate section is devoted to Wales, treated as a single unit. Within each entry, information is given about the earliest datable reference to the conduct of commercial activity at that particular place, the days on which the market or fair met, and the person or institution vested with authority to hold the gathering. To assist analysis of the material, most entries also provide information about the amount of tax paid in the 1334 lay subsidy, and about the survival of the venue into the sixteenth century, as determined by comparison with Alan Everitt's list of early modern markets and William Harrison's 1587 list of fairs. Ancillary material related to the commercial fortunes of the site is also provided in many cases, including among other things

evidence from law suits over franchisal rights, manorial descents, and miscellaneous references to trade taking place at the site.

To this reviewer's eyes, the information provided is comprehensive and reliable. Undoubtedly evidence for other markets and fairs will surface from time to time, but it is unlikely that much more will be found. In addition to its thoroughness, three features of the *gazetteer* deserve special comment. The first is the care taken in translating place-names from their medieval forms into their current modern forms. Anyone who has attempted this feat even on a limited scale understands how daunting such an undertaking can be. The inclusion of Ordnance Survey grid references for each entry enhances this accomplishment. The second notable feature is the provision of multiple indexes to the work, allowing it to be searched efficiently for information about the individuals and institutions holding rights over markets and fairs, as well as about where the markets and fairs were held. The third notable feature is the level of detail provided for markets operating before the standard documentary sources are available (essentially before 1200). These early markets are notoriously difficult to date, and the compilers of the work are to be commended for their effort in dealing with this problem.

Letters and her team limited their searches to source material already in print. A work on this scale assembled with such great care would have been difficult to complete in any other way. It is, nonetheless, unfortunate that the team working on this project did not make use of the manuscript sources emanating from the royal office of the Clerk of the Market, a relatively comprehensive source of information about medieval markets and one that is reasonably accessible for research in the Public Record Office. Inclusion of such material would have greatly enriched the ancillary references furnished for many listings, and would have been particularly useful in narrowing the chronological parameters within which individual markets operated. The compilers of the work state that one of the key aims of their research was to define the active working life of each venue listed, but their decision to use the sixteenth century as their reference point fails to do justice to this important topic.

Perhaps the biggest problem confronting this volume is the limited accessibility of the series in which it appears. The List and Index Society has a venerable pedigree as a publisher of research tools for scholars, but its volumes can be difficult to obtain, particularly outside the United Kingdom. According to WorldCat, only about three dozen libraries in North America subscribe to the Society's Special Series, and a random check of individual library catalogues reveals that even some of the biggest libraries do not subscribe to it. This

probably reflects recent austerities in library budgets, and one can only hope for improvement in this situation, so that work of such high quality as Samantha Letters and her team have produced will find the wide audience it deserves.

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IAN D. WHYTE, *Landscape and history since 1500* (Reaktion Books, 2002). 256 pp. £25.

This is an intelligent and ambitious book which, among other things, seeks to unite two different kinds of approach to the study of the landscape: those which explore the physical landscape as a many-layered product of past economic and social activity; and those which emphasize landscape's 'symbolic qualities', and in which landscape is 'the external world mediated through subjective human experiences ... not merely the world we see [but] a construction of that world'. Whyte thus seeks to bring together the tradition of landscape history/archaeology developed by Hoskins, and elaborated by Taylor, Rackham, and others, and the approaches of cultural geographers such as Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, and art historians and scholars of English literature such as John Barrell and Ann Bermingham. This in itself is a tall order, but the book is in fact more ambitious than this, for it embraces not only the whole of Britain but also, to varying extents, Europe and America. Successive chapters deal with the emergence and development of these different approaches: the early modern landscape; 'Enlightenment, picturesque and romantic landscapes'; 'Industrial and imperial landscapes'; and 'Modern and post-modern landscapes'.

Whyte writes well and the book contains much that is interesting and informative, especially to those landscape historians (especially at the undergraduate level) who may be unfamiliar with much of the cultural geography/art historical literature. But it is not without its problems. The scope is somewhat uneven in that there is no consistency of geographical coverage: southern Europe appears, for example, in some detail when art-historical matters are discussed but change in its 'real' landscape is hardly ever mentioned. At sudden, unpredictable moments the focus suddenly narrows back to Britain or England. This is in part a consequence of the book's ambitious scope yet relatively limited length, and many arguments are, inevitably, simplified and abbreviated to a considerable extent. Another effect of this is that Whyte often reiterates or reinterprets traditional arguments which he himself clearly feels would merit reinvestigation. Thus the familiar suggestion that people only began to find upland scenery attractive in

the later eighteenth century as a result of William Gilpin's writing is developed in interesting ways, but only in passing is qualified with the comment 'some views and descriptions of English scenery from the 1750s are very much in the picturesque tradition'. A more rigorous investigation of whether the traditional argument is actually correct – before giving it a modish twist – might have been interesting.

There are other minor problems. The reason why particular themes or individuals are emphasized in the narrative are not always evident, and at times the book seems more concerned with people's general attitudes to the world than with their understanding of or reaction to landscape per se. Thus the intellectual influence of the geologist James Hutton is discussed in some detail but there is no mention of people like William Smith whose work on stratigraphy laid the foundations for the modern understanding of the physical landscape. Occasionally, Whyte makes excellent points but could have chosen his material better. Thus his discussion of how Constable and Gainsborough painted areas of East Anglia 'that had not been dramatically altered by eighteenth-century enclosure', part of an idealization of the rural landscape intended to suppress the extent of contemporary social and economic change, ought perhaps have mentioned Constable's *Mill on a common*, which shows East Bergholt common being ploughed up, probably for the first time ever, in the immediate aftermath of the enclosure of 1816.

Yet such criticisms are minor, carping and a little unfair. This is a book which covers a great deal of ground, and not surprisingly some is covered unevenly. Whyte displays an enviable knowledge of a vast range of writing, from a very diverse range of academic disciplines. The final chapter is a particularly succinct and lively summary of current views from the likes of David Matless and Stephen Daniels. Those whose main interest is in agricultural history, or in the structuring of the physical landscape, might be advised to look elsewhere: the book's strength lies in its analysis of the imagined, perceived landscape. But overall, highly recommended.

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W. R. MEAD, *Pehr Kalm. A Finnish visitor to the Chilterns in 1748* (The author, 2003). ix + 159 pp. 18 illus. £10 incl. p&xp from the author, 6 Lower Icknield Way, Aston Clinton, Aylesbury HP22 5JS.

In 1748, Pehr Kalm was on his way to North America to study its botany but spent five months in England, including three weeks in Little Gaddesden in Hertfordshire visiting William Ellis the noted

agricultural writer who lived there and from whom he learnt the detail of local farming methods. This is a new translation of Kalm's diary of that stay with an introduction by Emeritus Professor William ('Bill') Mead, who first drew Kalm to the attention of my generation of agricultural historians. Kalm was of Finnish blood but born in Sweden where his parents had fled as the Russian empire expanded. He became a disciple of Carl Linnaeus, the brilliant Swedish naturalist and taxonomist. William Ellis, the object of his visit to Hertfordshire, was an important observer of mid eighteenth-century agrarian society, and Kalm was in little doubt even before he arrived that this district was the most advanced agricultural area of England. Its fame for the practicalities of field husbandry, animal management, and the use of implements indicated a place of invention and innovation, and Ellis's *Chiltern and Vale Farming* (1733) was widely circulated amongst Swedish estate owners. The commercialization of English life, let alone its agriculture, is a striking feature of Kalm's travels, observations and record. In describing the journey from Woodford in Essex to Little Gaddesden there is surely a hidden comparison with home: 'the entire countryside we passed through ... resembled a garden, so that nature as well as art and industry have spared nothing that is required to adorn it' (p. 36). He soon made contact with Ellis who instructed him in local agricultural ways. In consequence there is much to delight agricultural historians in this account, but let me use turnips as illustration. He describes using their leaves as a salad accompaniment to roast beef, a new experience but to be compared with the equivalent use of spinach. There is also a description of turnips as sheep fodder, a cornerstone of the agrarian revolution. In contrast he observes the relative absence of turnips from the open fields of the Vale of Aylesbury. He forms an opinion of Ellis that is instructive. While an important writer, observer, and sometime inventor, Ellis was also too dedicated to the study of agriculture ever to be an able practitioner. Indeed Mead at one stage refers to the 'charlatan' nature of Ellis's local reputation, which in Kalm's words translated as 'I have always hated a rural husbandry rooted in words and not deeds' (p. 148). This may be a short book but it is packed with detail of mid-eighteenth-century Chiltern and Vale agriculture by an acute contemporary observer, and Mead is to be thanked for bringing him back to our attention.

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IAN WHYTE, *Transforming fell and valley. Landscape and parliamentary enclosure in north-west England* (University of Lancaster, Centre for North West Regional Studies, 2003). xi + 102 pp. 9 tables; 47 figs; 10 maps. £11.50.

This is the latest volume to appear in a long line of publications by the Centre of North West Regional Studies at the University of Lancaster. In lowland England it would be fair to say that its subject matter – parliamentary enclosure – has been done to death. What singles out this volume is that it relates to upland England: and the intimate history of parliamentary enclosure above the 100 to 200 metre datum is far from understood. Moreover, the study area, the Cumbrian region, had the largest proportion of such formerly unenclosed land of any English region. So for the transformation of the open fields substitute the transformation of the moors and fells, and other upland commons. They were mainly held as pasture before enclosure, a land use that was mainly retained after enclosure, though not always. While there is a certain ruggedness to the untrained modern eye, they are in fact every bit as planned a landscape as their counterparts in the midland counties and elsewhere. They just look different, in particular in their use of stone walls, as well as fences, for the demarcation of boundaries.

The misapprehension that has abounded historically is that in their unenclosed state they were wastelands. In truth, they were servants of a specific economy that was merely different, but an economy that at times was as productive as the exigencies of altitude and the weather permitted, against a background of changing market conditions. It is not simply pedantic to highlight this difference between less and more productive, between waste and improvable. The economy of these wild places may have been enhanced through their transformation from open moors and commons to more regulated pasture, but the timing of that enhancement is also instructive. For example, if the open fields of the English Midlands came under pressure over time, so also did the upland commons. Not least was this the case when stinting norms were subject to overgrazing often through the external pressure placed on them by the demand for grazing by the passing Scottish cattle trade, a pressure that local commoners accommodated by offering agistment or leasing rights to that trade. This pressure on grazing built up as the eighteenth century advanced and in time it threatened the sustainability of these commons. It was but a short step from regulated but communal ownership that was increasingly difficult to police, to an ownership pattern in severalty. This was only one reason for the emergence of enclosure and we should not dismiss the fact that sometimes there was a

land use change from pasture to arable production. Moreover, not all land involved was high up the valleys or on the fells. The topography sometimes relented. Therefore the resulting enclosure history in this part of England is more complicated than perhaps is always allowed.

Although we are talking about an economy dominated by animal production rather than arable it was undoubtedly the case that high prices during the French wars encouraged a plough-up of some land and a conversion to arable production. In addition, although parliamentary enclosure occurred in this region from the 1750s through to the 1890s, over half was concentrated from 1800 to 1830 when arable prices were at their greatest. There was also quite a considerable enclosure after 1850, especially in Westmorland, for which a link with the extension of the railways has been made. In short, monocausal explanations for the enclosure history of this otherwise distinctive region, as with any other, are doomed to failure.

However, what is apparent is the ease with which the chapters unfold as if telling that self-same story about the Midland counties. Thus chronology and location, economic motivation for change, opposition to that change, the social consequences ensuing, and the administration of the process, all have chapters and passages devoted to them in a way that replicates the unfolding of the story elsewhere. Similarity of presentation is one thing, but we must beware of suggesting too easily that it was such a uniform story. It was not, and we must thank the author for presenting it in a familiar way but uncovering some unfamiliar outcomes. One of the most striking relates to the social outcome, in which the emphasis is on the underlying continuity in rural society. Moreover, in Westmorland at least, as much common still remains open as was enclosed, and therefore to that extent the story remains yet incomplete.

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REX RUSSELL, *From cock-fighting to chapel building. Changes in popular culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Lincolnshire* (Sleaford: Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Reports Series, 6, 2002). vi + 119 pp. Illus. £16.95.

Rex Russell's latest contribution to the social history of Lincolnshire analyzes the changes which took place in rural popular culture over the course of the nineteenth century. A transformation in popular culture was achieved by two main elements: attacks 'from above' and adoption of new beliefs and standards 'from below'. How various parts of older culture traditions –

including bull-running, cock-fighting, plough plays, village festivals and statute fairs – were undermined is amply demonstrated through the reproduction of extracts from local newspaper reports. The fear and misunderstanding underpinning these attacks from the upper and middle classes is apparent. Plough Monday celebrations were described as 'heathenish customs', 'rustic fooleries' and 'a mere subsidiary means of getting money' by reports in the 1840s and '50s. The conversion of the harvest home into a well-ordered, church-led festival is used as an illustration of the imposition of rational recreation in village life. However, Russell's contention is that changing attitudes among the labouring poor themselves were perhaps more influential in transforming popular culture. Primitive Methodism, with its emphasis on self-help and humility, spearheaded this change. Through its religious, and later political radicalism, the chapel contributed much to the contents of a newer popular culture. The influence of friendly societies, with their orderly membership and processions, and the temperance movement, which offered workers meeting spaces and social provision away from the village pub, are also shown to have been significant. Finally the spread of literacy and educational institutions also aided the acceptance of a new rural culture in the nineteenth century. The changes in popular village culture were not always easily achieved. There were tensions and clashes, not only between the working classes and those who wanted to enforce change, but also between elements of the labourers' new culture: although the chapel and the temperance movement were closely linked, the teetotal zeal of the latter often divided chapel-goers. Russell is also careful to show that older practices and beliefs did not simply disappear from rural life and some traditions, such as rough music, persisted well into the twentieth century. Overall then, this is a pleasingly presented and well-packaged account. Some sections lack context or commentary, and historians will find little that is new or contentious. But the primary source material is used to good effect and will be of use to those who are introducing students to the debates over rural popular culture for the first time.

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JEREMY BURCHARDT, *The allotment movement in England, 1793–1873* (Royal Historical Society/Boydell, 2002). xii + 287 pp. 25 tables. £45.

'A pamphlet on the Poor Laws', observed Sidney Smith in an 1820 *Edinburgh Review* article, 'generally contains some little piece of favourite nonsense, by which we are gravely told this enormous evil may be perfectly cured. The first gentleman recommends little gardens; the

second cows; the third a village shop; the fourth a spade'. Historians in their turn have not, on the whole, taken either allotment gardens or the spade husbandry that nurtured them seriously. For Burchardt, however, allotments are not nonsense. In the course of nine closely argued chapters, backed by eight appendices and a fifteen-page bibliography, he sets out a compelling case for locating allotments at the heart of the narrative of mid-nineteenth century social progress and stability. This is the first ever full-length study of allotments and agricultural and rural historians will be indebted to Burchardt for decades to come.

The author necessarily takes some time setting the scene, choosing 1793 as a starting point as the conjectural date of the first documented allotments, in Wiltshire. Before the 1830s almost fifty per cent of documented allotment sites (still only 54 in total) were still all in Wiltshire or close to its borders. Burchardt prudently concludes that by 1830 the actual number of schemes was around double this. On the face of it, this seems low and Burchardt himself only fully accounts for it by arguing that 1830 was the hinge upon which allotment history turned. The year 1830 saw the critical coincidence of the Swing riots and the formation of the Labourers' Friend Society, the first and only national body dedicated exclusively to allotment promotion. To support his claim that Swing decisively shifted landowner and farmer opinion in favour of allotments, the author finds evidence to support the contemporary view that Swing left untouched those parishes which had allotments; but with site numbers so small the avoidance of riot may just have been chance, as he concedes.

A better test of the relationship between allotment provision and social unrest might be found by correlating such schemes with the incidence of Chartism, and especially support for the Chartist land plan. Burchardt considers this possibility; but he does so in a not especially systematic way (making no use of the subscribers' registers that survive in Board of Trade papers or the known distribution of land plan branches). He concludes that allotment promotion 'may have contributed to the genesis of the Chartist land plan'. However, a rough check of the sources Burchardt has not used, against the east midlands case study he offers, suggests that allotments may indeed have suppressed interest in the Chartist plan. Only four out of the twenty-two locations he identifies as visited by the indefatigable local propagandist for the Labourers' Friend Society apparently supported the land plan.

*The allotment movement* presents a long-overdue evaluation of the Labourers' Friend Society (of the records of which, implausibly surviving in the Greater London Record Office's Peabody Housing Trust

archives, it makes shrewd use). He necessarily draws heavily on its journal, published continuously from 1834 until 1884, bolstered by a full range of parliamentary papers and contemporary literature. His conclusions are suggestive and underline just how much remains to be found out concerning rural Victorian society. Allotments, Burchardt concludes, were a substantial compensation for common right and customary commons access. They raised family incomes significantly, perhaps by as much as a fifth. Furthermore, their prevalence across southern England meant, he argues, that agricultural labour there was never as proletarianized as is usually thought. They were a profoundly modernizing force: the land was restored to the labourers but in a marketized context that pointed towards individual enterprise, respectability and urban-style working-class mutuality. Burchardt is also persuaded, on the basis of qualitative evidence, that allotments reduced crime (some contemporaries thought the opposite). The combined effect of increasing allotment provision after 1830 'was to make villages less "rough" and more "respectable" and to control and channel social conflict into more regularized, peaceable and legal channels'. Concerning the latter, Burchardt places particular emphasis upon the allotment as a base 'to fly to', as labourers themselves put it, 'when times are hard and labour troubles have to be fought out'. These are large claims and Burchardt readily concedes that Methodism, elementary education, and more regular employment were as important in shaping rural social relations. In southern England, however, he suggests allotments may have contributed as much as any other factor.

In view of the claims made for their importance, it is unfortunate that the book nowhere states with complete clarity what the total extent of allotments by 1873 actually was. Burchardt chooses 1873 as his terminating date because of the fairly reliable Agricultural Returns for Great Britain of that year: they are no more than fairly reliable since they excluded both urban parishes and, probably, individual allotments over one acre in extent. Within these limitations the returns suggest the total number of plots was 242,542, with a density of more than one plot to every male agricultural labourer aged 10 or over in Leicestershire, falling to a ratio of one plot to thirty labourers in Westmorland. Nationally, the overall ratio was one allotment to 3.1 male labourers. Of course, and Burchardt shows this, not all allotment holders were agricultural labourers. However the basis for his generalizations about the social impact of allotment provision appears secure, until one stumbles across an aside (p. 223) that by the mid-1870s the proportion of parishes with allotments was 'probably' only 'about a third'. It is unclear if this includes urban as well as rural parishes;

nor is it completely clear how distribution varied regionally. For although Burchardt is very firm in claiming for allotments a significant social impact in rural southern England, density ratios were 9.5 in Kent and well over 11 in both Surrey and Sussex – only Shropshire, Cheshire, Lancashire and Westmorland had poorer levels of provision by his criteria. By 1873 the clear strongholds for allotments were the east Midlands and Warwickshire. (This perhaps suggests that miners may have been as significant a tenant base as farm workers, a point not explored by the author, except obliquely in Somerset in 1839.) Ultimately, for all its extensive calculations of profits, yields, rents and sizes, backed by a two-thousand strong computerized dataset, *The allotment movement* still leaves some key questions tantalisingly unanswered.

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### Elsewhere and general

ADRIAAN VERHULST, *The Carolingian economy* (CUP, 2002). 160 pp. £37.50 (hbk); £13.95 (pbk).

Adriaan Verhulst has written an useful and accessible Cambridge Medieval textbook on the Carolingian economy, drawing upon a lifetime's research. The book focuses upon economic issues as opposed to the more familiar political ones made famous by the book's dedicatee, François Ganshof. The short introduction provides a clear overview of the historiography of this subject, briefly describing in turn the contribution of major medieval historians including Henri Pirenne, Alfons Dopsch, Maurice Lombard, Sture Bolin, Philip Grierson and, more recently Georges Duby. Verhulst himself belongs in this galaxy of distinguished historians. The book then comprises ten clearly written chapters, amply footnoted, on landscape and settlement, demography, agricultural production, agricultural technique, craft and production, commercial organization, directions of trade, money and prices, the state economy and, finally, a short but cogent summary offering a 'long perspective'. In many ways, the book is a model of synthesis – a historian's summary serving as an attractive first step towards reading Michael McCormick's monumental *The origins of the medieval economy* (CUP, 2001) which appeared as Verhulst's book was in press.

Verhulst summarizes an impressive amount of information into each of these chapters. Not only does he provide a compelling overview of the historical debates, but he manages a considerable survey of the pertinent and contemporary archaeological literature from both sides of the Alps. Much of this is taken from the recent European Science Foundation's 'Transformation of the Roman World' project. The chapter on agricultural

production is a typical example. He reduces the recent debates stimulated by Pierre Toubert on Italian estate management in this period to one cogent page. Many might quibble, but it is an invaluable index to Toubert's vast studies of Latium's estate histories. The chapters on crafts as well as commerce are no less impressive for the wealth of archaeological and documentary data woven together.

The underlying thrust of the book is developed from a quotation by Chris Wickham that the Carolingian economy was 'a network of subsistence-based exchange' (p. 2). Verhulst uses this to distinguish between minimalists and maximalists: those who interpret the sources to show a closed agrarian-based economy without towns, merchants or trade, or those who, largely using data from Carolingian estate surveys, polyptychs, believe this age marked the 'take off' of the western economy. Verhulst's position is clear: taking a 'long perspective', he concludes that it is the cyclical movements within the period that should now command our interest. Towns and trade, he argues, are the best indicators of these movements (as McCormick tellingly shows in his huge book cited above). Interestingly, he uses the archaeological typology of trading towns, emporia, as a framework for relocating the familiar historical events of the age. Hence, while clearly uncertain about the motives for the early eighth-century rise of the emporia, it is, he maintains, the great zenith of these places in the years from 775–90 to c. 830 which sets the stage for the ninth century. On the one hand, their decline, he argues, is responsible for the Viking attacks. On the other hand, thanks to the successful establishment of well-organized 'big estates', producing surpluses, during a pause in the Viking attacks in the 860s new towns were created which became the cornerstone of the middle ages.

Verhulst is possibly the first historian to acknowledge these nuances in the economic cycles using archaeological data. Notwithstanding ever increasing refinements of these data (see for example, Simon Coupland, 'Trading places: Quentovic and Dorestad reconsidered', *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002), pp. 209–32 and Tim Pestell and Katharina Ulmschneider (eds), *Markets in early medieval Europe* (2003)), this is a historian using contemporary sources, evaluating them and setting a new historical agenda that is all the more impressive for being concise and compelling. As a textbook it is presently without rival and well worthy of the best work of its dedicatee.

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PETER JONES, *Liberty and locality in revolutionary France.*

*Six villages compared, 1760–1820* (CUP, 2003). xiv + 306 pp. 6 plates; 6 figs; 10 maps. £45.

In the years from 1793 to 1800, travellers returning to the French countryside were met with a deafening silence: the everyday tolling of village bells, which had marked times of day, moments of prayer, weddings, births, deaths, and much else, was not to be heard. A revolutionary measure to efface the clerical underpinnings of the Old Regime, the silencing of church bells made way for a new routine sound, the martial beat of the drum that signalled the call to assemble or sounded the alarm.

This is but one of the memorable discoveries that await readers of this fine, engaging book. Path-breaking and painstaking, it is a comparative study of six villages chosen to ensure wide geographical distribution and contrasting ecological situations. The book's approach and arguments bespeak a clear allegiance to Tocqueville over Marx and Georges Lefebvre, so accordingly the main theme is the political evolution that arose from the interaction of state policy and local practice. Like Tocqueville, Jones concludes that equality before the law was more enduring than liberty (political participation) at the village level, an irony for a book so entitled. Nonetheless, he shows persuasively that state centralization of the kind Tocqueville attributed to the Old Regime was in fact a product of the Directory and Empire.

Tocqueville's failings in rural history are not overlooked either but persuasively corrected. His argument that state centralization sapped the life out of rural communities during the Old Regime is put to rest, thanks to compelling comparative evidence for the six diverse villages. Four of the six had a tradition of regular assemblies, and village officials were not the unlettered creatures of Tocqueville's imagination but a literate elite whose control of economic resources and positions within the seigneurial enterprise assured a steady – if oligarchic – hand at the wheel. The power of seigneurs and their agents, underestimated by Tocqueville and numerous revisionist historians today, exerted a shaping and often unwelcome influence over daily life. That peasant resistance in the cases under study was typically short-lived and episodic suggests, ventures Jones, that a shared sense of reciprocity continued to guide the relations between lords and peasants.

Between 1787 and 1790, the argument continues, the Old Regime died in the minds of villagers as one reform after another flowed down from Versailles and Paris, providing the welcome writs for peasants to break free of seigneurialism. Differing greatly from George Lefebvre's description of the peasant revolution as largely an autonomous movement, Jones' account

emphasizes the connections between Parisian authorities and village officials – an approach reflecting the author's reliance on the minute books of the new communal governments. Village elites, these sources reveal, kept in close contact with the National Assembly, looking there to confirm their new rights and usually succeeding in manoeuvring revolutionary mandates for change to their own advantage. Courting approval from above and endorsement from below, dynasties of power brokers usually remained in charge over the whole period – a conclusion that stands shoulder to shoulder with Jean-Pierre Jessenne's account of rural Artois (*Pouvoir au village et révolution: Artois, 1760–1848* (Lille, 1987)).

Novel and interesting is the fresh evidence in Chapters Three and Four on peasant politicization and the new civic landscape of village life. From 1787, villagers were schooled in national politics, and few could ignore how the influence of the state in their lives expanded and how the meaning of liberty was further and further narrowed under the Directory, Consulate, and Empire. Although we learn little about the resentments such narrowing caused or about grievances that arose from huge war-time requisitions of men, food, and horses, Jones gives imaginative attention to the lessons villagers received in civics and national identity. That effort sheds new light on evolving notions of citizenship that were reinforced by oath taking and service in the National Guard, just as it indicates how the practice of regular elections from 1789 to 1804 built a firm foundation of democratic political culture at the village level. In his treatment of rituals and their changing political functions, the revolutionary experience comes alive. As to what endured, Jones emphasizes that a new belief took hold in the minds of villagers: in sharp contrast to the old order, the new bureaucracy was the guarantor of legal equality; moreover, it both enforced and obeyed the law. Chapter Six studies another enduring change and an underlying continuity: the state's subordination of the church and the persistence of religious belief despite the suppression of public worship from 1793 to 1800.

Did three generations of reform establish liberty on the land? Here, some will regret, Jones steers clear of debates about rural capitalism. Vigilant against anachronism and the encroachments of theory, he treats agrarian reform efforts as they materialized in his six villages from the land clearance edicts of 1764 to the 1804 law that regularized the procedures for dividing common lands. The ways in which top-down reforms aggravated local misunderstandings are treated with skill. His discerning analysis of national land sales during the Revolution and Empire confirms the prevailing view that the rural and urban bourgeois were the chief

beneficiaries of the sales. Moreover, it enriches our understanding both of the Jacobin efforts to turn the landless into micro-proprietors and how these efforts, together with the division of common lands, met to some degree the peasant hunger for land. In treating the continuing conflicts that pitted enclosure against collective rights, he wisely reminds us that self-interest has a logic all its own. At bottom, rich and poor alike wanted to have their cake and eat it too: exclusive access to land they possessed and customary rights over the lands of others.

Such vintage insights that appear time and again in the book occasionally need elaboration or clarification. In the chapter just discussed, for example, readers convinced by the claim in the pre-Revolutionary discussion that 'no consensual language of "rights" and "freedoms" existed in the agrarian world in the Old Regime' are left to wonder whether the situation was much different when Louis XVIII returned to the throne, for conflicts over individual and collective rights continued, and Napoleon's hope of creating a uniform code of agrarian law never materialized. Another question concerns seigneurialism. Given its demise and the consequent elimination of shared rights on land previously held by seigneurial tenure, more about the implications of this critical change for new and evolving definitions of private property would have been helpful. Finally, that land became 'an unmistakable signifier of citizenship' with particular import for the previously landless is another insight mentioned only in passing. It cries out for additional development, the better to grasp the fuller meaning of revolutionary change at the village level.

Such a missed opportunity results partly from the decision to end the story in 1820. From the Consulate through the Restoration, the slim evidence on village politics falls all but silent until 1830 when elections of communal officials were restored and the voices of micro-proprietors could again be heard, sometimes loudly. It was then, when political possibilities were reopened by the July Revolution in Paris, that the suppressed language of *liberté* and citizenship was often recalled with vigour and memories of the Revolution were invoked in popular efforts to restore participatory citizenship and the accountability of their heretofore appointed mayors. Long curtailed, liberty returned to the village in the 1830s and to varying degrees depending on the locality.

One other missed opportunity is worth mentioning: the absence of any discussion of seigneurial justice and its successor as court of first instance, the Justice of the Peace. As recent research by Zoe Schneider, Jeremy Hayhoe, Anthony Crubaugh, and the reviewer has shown, the functioning of seigneurial justice reveals

much about village governance and power relations not only between the lord and peasants but also between village elites and ordinary residents. In open-field communities at least, the courts regulated agrarian practices and settled to general satisfaction disputes involving crop damage by trespassing livestock. More broadly, seigneurial justice shaped villagers' perceptions of law and legal rectification. How villagers assessed and responded to new civic arrangements and new rules of law depended in no small way on those Old Regime perceptions.

One quibble: in a book brimming with meticulous archival research, it is regrettable that the author chose to keep footnotes to a minimum.

This book confirms Jones' place among the premier historians of rural France during the Old Regime and Revolution. A fine achievement, the study builds on the strong foundation of his earlier work and includes important new departures. That seigneurialism in a diverse selection of villages was more significant than anticipated is one good example, a finding that will be influential. That villagers, and especially the elites among them, came to understand the relevance of national politics for their own lives and interests is a revision of greater importance. It persuasively restores the origins of peasant politicization to the Revolution, undermining further the claim by Eugen Weber – and by Jones in his first book – that this process began only when the schools and teachers of the Third Republic were well-established. For these and other reasons, this avowed experiment in comparative micro-history is a noteworthy success. Elegantly written and wisely argued, the study will hopefully convince others to add comparative perspective to their research into rural history. Those who do might consider whether a Tocquevillian approach gives undue attention to top-down commands and local responses; they might also consider seigneurial justice and weigh the advantages of pushing beyond 1820 and into the 1830s. Although much talent, time, and energy will be needed to match the author's accomplishment, his book calls out inspiringly, '*Aux archives!*'

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WILLIAM GERVASE CLARENCE-SMITH, *Cocoa and chocolate, 1765–1914* (Routledge, 2000). xiv + 319 pp. 13 tables; 11 figs; 8 maps. £55.

It is often hard to grasp the history of simple, everyday things: difficult to imagine that the readily-available consumables of modern life the world over have their own important and revealing history. How many stop to ponder the history of sweetness when they add sugar to their range of drinks and foodstuffs? Scholars of material

consumption of course have taken a different approach, concentrating not merely on the explosion of material acquisitiveness from the seventeenth century onwards, but teasing historical meaning from the most commonplace of daily artefacts. In the process, what has emerged is the story of a rapid and massive global expansion of production and consumption, drawing distant colonial settlements into an ever firmer economic and social dependency, first on the European, later the North American economic and political heartlands. Today, the process is clear and unavoidable. A generation ago, it was much less obvious. In the interim a host of scholars from a range of disciplines have provided the data and arguments from which we can take a measured view. Few had the intellectual sweep and imaginative grasp of Sidney Mintz in his wonderful book *Sweetness and power*, a book which has – properly – come to exercise great influence over the field. Clarence-Smith's latest contribution, on cocoa and chocolate, will be seen as another sophisticated study in the field, but arguing outwards from a specific example.

It is a major study of an important commodity and product, and a book which derives from the author's distinctive intellectual grasp across a range of disciplines. It is not an easy read, arguing its case through a thicket of secondary and primary materials, but what emerges is one of the most important volumes in the field. Indeed the book's importance greatly transcends the focus of its study. In effect Clarence-Smith has produced both a definitive statement on the subject, and a major argument for all students of commodity production and material consumption.

The author begins with an incisive argument about the commodity chain, before moving backwards to the historical origins of cocoa and chocolate in meso America. A study of the fiscal and taxation relationship to the historical development of the global chocolate industry leads the author to a detailed account of the technical development of chocolate production itself. Here, as elsewhere, Clarence-Smith moves with intellectual ease between the specifics of his study and the broader issues which lie in the background, seeking at every turn to draw the reader's attention to the overarching theoretical issues and questions. The book is shaped by the author's own grappling with major questions, and the reader moves with him, from the specifics of each chapter, back to the broader intellectual canvas. When he steps into the historical geography of land and production, the author seems to get into his literary stride, providing a sweep and grasp of global patterns. At times, what he writes seems straightforward and obvious – but that is merely testimony to Clarence-Smith's ability to make sense, for others, of a complex

and bewildering global literature. Much the same applies to his analysis of the labour systems, free and unfree, used to cultivate cocoa/chocolate. As with sugar and tea, behind the pleasures (and necessities) of a global market there lay a rapaciousness towards land and labour which caused ecological damage and human distress on a massive scale. The author's conclusions are pithy – but (to this reviewer at least) bleak. The world-wide pleasurable addiction to chocolate products, along with other tropical products, pose serious harm to the earth's natural habitats and resources. But who so much thinks of that, mid-morning, when millions take their break by eating or drinking chocolate?

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ROGER G. KENNEDY, *Mr Jefferson's lost cause. Land, farmers, slavery, and the Louisiana Purchase* (OUP, 2003).  
xv + 350 pp. 15 halftones and maps. £18.99.

Roger Kennedy's account of Thomas Jefferson does not paint him in an admirable light. Kennedy certainly makes a well-documented argument that Jefferson helped to extend the plantation economy and slavery in the South and in doing so passed up the opportunity to promote his agrarian vision. We are told that Jefferson did not avail himself of the opportunity to manumit his slaves, he did not push for an antislavery clause in the land ordinance of 1784, and he discouraged the development of a mixed agricultural and manufacturing economy in the lower Mississippi valley after the Louisiana Purchase. The result was the extension of the plantation system, the concomitant expansion of slavery, the continued degradation of southern land and a dependency on the vagaries of international cotton markets instead of a society of small independent farmers with some mixed manufacturing. Kennedy claims that Jefferson abandoned his vision out of economic self-interest, a psychological need for the approval from southern plantation society and for political expediency. Moreover, we are told that had Jefferson used 'his talent for persuasion', southern land may actually have become the 'seed-bed for family farmers'.

Kennedy offers a good analysis of the ecological and human costs of the way things went and a compelling argument that Jefferson did not use his power to promote a different course of economic development which would have been more humane and ecologically sound. Nonetheless, Kennedy's analysis should be tempered with a more complete picture of Jefferson's economic thinking and a less romanticized and naïve vision of his agrarian ideal. Jefferson came of political age at a time of great economic change. The remnants of feudal society were being discarded and new institutional

arrangements were emerging in the wake of a wholly different economic order which itself was rapidly transmogrifying. Economic thinkers of the time were attempting to articulate systematically the parameters of this new order and so was Jefferson. This was not a simple matter leaving room for much ambiguity and confusion.

When Jefferson spoke of the independent farmer he did not intend that farmers would be independent of markets, he simply meant that they would be able to dictate the rhythms of their work day and would not be forced (as those working in manufacturing were) to spend their days tied to the rhythms of work dictated by the expediciencies of machines. Jefferson, following Adam Smith, was taken with the market economy as the natural order of society built around the principles of specialization and free trade. Indeed the South had carved out a particular economic niche based on climate, the labour of slaves and an abundance of accessible land. Jefferson's promotion of the plantation economy and his disapproval of manufacturing are given greater context against this backdrop. Why engage in manufacturing with all of its concomitant ills when it made more economic sense to specialize in agriculture and then trade? The South had been integrated more fully into 'world' markets than the North by the time Jefferson came of political age. Thus, at first glance the South may have seemed to him exemplary of this new economic order, at least in theory. (Obviously there was substantial dissonance between Jefferson's first-hand economic experience and the orderly framework of economic liberalism which he found so appealing.)

Mr Kennedy's notion that the alternative to the plantation system was Jefferson's agrarian ideal ignores the connection between the two. Jefferson certainly might have been able to reconcile his agrarian vision with the plantation system since both were variations around the same economic theme. They were linked through specialization and free trade and the view of the market economy as the natural order. In this sense these two options may not have been as divergent to Jefferson as Kennedy seems to imply. From this purely economic perspective, Jefferson's adherence to the plantation system need not be interpreted as a complete abandonment of his agrarian vision but rather part of a world view rooted in early nineteenth-century economic liberalism and embodying all of the confusions therein.

My purpose here is not to exonerate Jefferson in his complacency on the issue of slavery nor on his self-serving motivations for pushing for the expansion of the plantation system. Roger Kennedy's picture of him is accurate and carefully documented. Nevertheless, the story of Jefferson should to be punctuated with a more

robust understanding of the economic vision which was foundational to his thinking. At the very least this vision gave him a bit of room to 'reconcile' the plantation economy with his agrarian ideal and in doing so to neglect the cause of emancipation.

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MARGARET E. DERRY, *Bred for perfection. Shorthorn cattle, Collies, and Arabian horses since 1800* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2003). xvi + 198 pp. Illus. £27.50.

Several years ago (and against my better judgement) I attended a meeting at which an internationally celebrated breeder of performance horses discussed his approach towards pedigree breeding. Questioned on the issue of chromosome segregation at meiosis by a somewhat querulous geneticist who had spent much of his career studying mice, the breeder (himself of impeccable bloodline) loftily retorted that what may well apply to the mouse couldn't possibly apply to the 'noble animal'. And therein rests enshrined much of the purblind ignorance characterizing the pedigree breeding world until recent years. Happy enough with Galtonian eugenic notions, pedigree breeders ignored the revelations of Mendelian genetics in their obsession with male pedigrees, distrusted the arguments of scientists, and even with the development of population genetics in the mid-twentieth century, saw little reason to alter their approach which they divined as an 'art' rather than a 'science'. Even today, the last fifty years' advances in genetics have done little to change the fundamentals of pure breeding which remain in principle much the same as the techniques applied by Bakewell, Bates and the Collings brothers to Shorthorn cattle, William E. Mason and Samuel Untermayer to Collie dogs and Lady Judith Wentworth to Arab horses.

It is to these animals that Margaret E. Derry (herself a breeder) turns her attention in this engaging and carefully researched book. Central to Derry's six chapters in which she discusses the breeding of Shorthorns, Collies and Arabians since the early nineteenth century is the basic theme that breeding ideology and the growth of internal and transatlantic markets were closely intertwined in the creation of purebred animals. Whatever may have been the absurdities of the obsession with 'show' points, the craving for 'prettiness' or the mistaken belief that 'quality' was invariably linked to pure blood or a specific coat colour, the market was a profoundly important driver in breed evolution. This applied as much to J. P. Morgan and Albert Payson Terhune who wrote extensively of Collie genealogy and the connection between human and canine values, as to Judy Blunt Lytton, Lady Wentworth (d. 1957) who did so much to

establish the international trade in Arab horses, or those late nineteenth-century Shorthorn breeders who capitalized successfully on the transatlantic trade. Economics aside, the trade in pedigree animals was closely regulated and Derry writes at length on methods of registration and recording by way of Coates Herd Book, the Arabian Horse Registry of America, which strongly influenced the dynamics of a global Arabian industry, and the Kennel Clubs of Great Britain and the USA whose membership strove manfully to eliminate the corruption and fraudulence associated with the dog-breeding world of the earlier nineteenth century. The pedigree world was (and even to some extent remains) a socially exclusive milieu, dominated by fashion, faddism and fancy and driven by passionate idealism and not a little greed. People who argue over whether the red, white or roan colouring of a cow is linked to utility or whether the set of the ears or shape of the nose of a dog relates to its temperament tend to fall upon bad times, and Derry's exposition of the economics of the Arab world is not short on examples of penal taxation, bankruptcy and divorce. In a sense the book is a detailed study of obsession, of the conflict between pedigree and commercial concerns and of the unspoken belief among breeders that line breeding of animals and line breeding of people amounted, as Harriet Ritvo noted, to much the same thing!

While Derry's volume admirably exposes the foibles and eccentricities of pedigree breeders and discusses the many factors motivating their activities, it is largely devoid of background genetic theory or statistical data. We learn little of the problems of inbreeding depression or of inbreeding theory central to the business of pedigree breeding itself; the term 'variety' is sometimes applied incorrectly, and other terms such as 'beefing quality' are used without any indication of implications for physical conformation. In the discussion of Shorthorn cattle, of which the early-maturing beef type came to dominate the world cattle trade, there is virtually no mention of the Dairy Shorthorn which became so vitally important to the British farming economy, while it would have been useful to have read of the extent to which the transatlantic trade in Arabian horses was paralleled in other equine breeds. Equally, the narrative would have benefited from some discussion of the nature/nurture argument which rumbled through the nineteenth century, provoked, in the horse world at least, by the writings of Osmer, Wall and others the century previously. But these are minor criticisms of omission. The historian of livestock, ideally equipped with a decent undergraduate textbook of genetics, will find much to learn and much to enjoy in Dr Derry's book and its very valuable tailpiece essay on her sources.

Her multi-faceted story is generously illustrated throughout with bovine, canine and equine *dramatis personae*, including 'Lad' (1902–1918) who brought tears to many an eye and, along with Eric Knight's 'Lassie', established the popularity of the Collie breed in the middle of the last century. The book is largely free of the usual typos although I have a sneaking suspicion that Dr Derry will feel less than charitably disposed towards the Johns Hopkins proof-reader who failed to spot the reference to 'pubic pedigrees' on page 66. On the other hand, I have probably missed the point!

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RITA ALDENHOFF-HÜBINGER, *Agrarpolitik und protektionismus. Deutschland und Frankreich im Vergleich, 1879–1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002). 257 pp. 14 tables. €28.

Over the past two decades a dramatic shift has occurred in the interpretation of modern German history. Previously, there was axiomatic acceptance of the thesis presented by non-agricultural historians that the decision of 1879 to adopt a grain tariff made a fundamental contribution to the rise of Nazism. It was presumed that duties on imported grain, which were increased in 1885 and 1902 (and supplemented with protection for the livestock sector), maintained the economic existence and political power of the *Junkers* – a class of large (in German rather than British terms) landowner-farmers of the nobility that became a particular *bête noire* of British First World War propaganda – as inefficient agriculturalists. Historians have since at least mitigated the link between the *Junkers* and National Socialism. Agricultural historians have established that *Junker* farming under the tariff was decidedly progressive.

A basic problem is determining 'efficiency'. In the absence of other satisfactory data, the author of the work under review simply adopts estimated output/yields per hectare over time, as indicating that German arable farming had clearly overtaken that of Britain by the eve of the First World War. This occurred despite the retreat from marginal arable land in Britain from the 1870s, as compared with an increase in the area in Germany. The measure, however, ignores labour and capital productivity. Even allowing for the substantially higher real wages of British agricultural workers, low as they were, it is questionable whether German labour productivity exceeded that of Britain before 1914. The increase of German arable output came increasingly to depend upon hundreds of thousands of seasonal immigrants, mainly from Russian Poland, who were poorly paid and, partly on that account, not highly

efficient. Paradoxically, the influx of cheap Polish labour into Germany's *Junker*-dominated eastern territories, insofar as it stimulated the migration of German workers to western urban centres, posed a political threat to the German state that the tariff was supposed to prevent. The continuous increase in application rates of artificial fertilizer per hectare of arable land in Germany (especially in comparison to France), which accounted for an increasing proportion of capital outlays, was presumably reaching the point of diminishing returns.

In this light the exploration of the Franco-German comparison, as in the volume under review, has considerable merit. France also resorted to tariff protection at a comparable level in response to the rapid expansion of grain exports from North America and Russia. For agricultural as well as political reasons, both experienced an intensification of arable farming which, temporarily at least, was seen as requiring protection. For the large area of poor, mostly sandy soils in the eastern territories of Germany, the only alternative was the reversion of the land to extensively-farmed permanent pasture. The latter would have considerably increased the already substantial indebtedness among farmers. In both countries steps were taken to reduce the debt burden. The structure of holdings in the two countries was comparable. A significantly greater proportion of the agricultural area of France was occupied by leaseholders. If anything, however, as the author argues, leaseholders were more motivated than owners to adopt improved methods. And leasehold land in France was particularly concentrated in the north where the farming was relatively progressive. Nevertheless, in overall terms such progress in the case of France was retarded as compared with Germany.

The comparatively poor performance of French agriculture behind the tariff barrier is essentially ascribed to

two factors. First, whereas the state in Germany was prepared to impose arrangements, such as chambers of agriculture, to promote modernization, in France (at least before the 1920s) this was left to self-help organizations. Second, as compared with Germany, France's demographic and industrial retardation limited the growth of the protected market for agricultural produce. This conclusion has interesting implications for the intense 'agricultural versus industrial state' debate in Germany before 1914, where many contributors assumed it was a choice between alternatives.

While the volume is a useful contribution, there are several deficiencies. It is essentially based on secondary sources, and selective ones at that. The focus is more on the political debates over the issues than on the outcomes in terms of the impact of agricultural policy on production. The work veers away from examining the political process in relation to policy formulation to explore the Franco-German protectionist response as the forerunner of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Hence an entire chapter is devoted to the international agricultural congresses, essentially Franco-German, which were little more than forums for discussion. If the protectionist agricultural policy adopted by Germany marks the origins of the CAP, then perhaps the statement made by the historian Hans Rosenberg in the 1960s can be extended:

When one considers ... the fateful long-term irrational ideological domestic and foreign policy consequences of agricultural policy up to National Socialism, with the benefit of hindsight it can be proven that the turning-point of 1879 was the greatest mistaken decision of German and thereby European history in the nineteenth century.

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