

# Book Reviews

## UK and Ireland

ANNE ROWE, *Tudor and early Stuart parks of Hertfordshire* (University of Hertfordshire Press, 2019). xv + 290 pp. 47 figs. 6 tables. £18.99.

This book provides a comprehensive guide to the deer parks of Hertfordshire between 1485 and 1642. Released nearly a decade after the author's *Medieval deer parks of Hertfordshire*, it is as thorough and beautiful as its predecessor. Rowe has produced another well-researched regional landscape history, interrogating a range of archive and secondary texts to present new insights and raise new questions. The objective of the book is to provide an evidence base rather than answer the resulting questions, and the reader should expect to follow up on those insights that pique their interest themselves.

Part I begins by describing the source material, highlighting that the period in question provides a great many more than were available for the medieval volume. Particular attention is paid to county maps, the earliest of which is Saxton's 1577 county survey. These county maps are thoughtfully evaluated, although there is no corresponding discussion of other cartographic sources such as at the estate or park level. We then move on to the legacy of the over 70 medieval deer parks in Hertfordshire, most of which had come and gone, with over a third surviving into the seventeenth century. These tended to be large, with almost all parks of over 300 acres surviving to the sixteenth century and sometimes beyond. The real focus of this book is on those parks existing from the late fifteenth century, with at least 60 existing at some point between then and 1642. There is only evidence for 46 of the parks containing deer, and it is these that form the core for analysis as 'Probable' parks. It is possible that surviving documents are too sparse to record deer at the 14 other parks, but Rowe also suggests that in some cases these 'Possible' parks refer to areas of ground used as rabbit warrens. An accompanying comparative table of all the deer parks in the study would have been a useful tool for the reader.

The 'Probable' parks have been assigned to five main

ownership categories: royal, aristocratic, ecclesiastical, royal officials, and gentry. It is no surprise that the data show a large drop in ecclesiastical ownership in the 1530s and 1540s, corresponding to a peak in royal ownership at the same time. Although gentry and aristocrats seemed to benefit most from the resulting redistribution of land during this time, the correlation is not quite so simple, as elevations to the peerage moved parks from one category to another. Overall though, the gentry consistently held the highest number of parks if never the largest acreage. The total number of parks rose in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, despite the peak in acreage having been in the 1570s. Most new parks were created during the reign of Elizabeth I and clustered in the south of the county, interpreted as evidence of the increased importance of the capital during the period.

Sub-sections dealing with the inhabitants and materiality of the park follow. A segment concerning animal history covers deer, rabbits, hares, fish, horses, livestock and birds. Poachers and park personnel follow. Wage rates for employees were apparently kept low but accompanied a prestige that was difficult to match in other occupations. Finally, the less animate parts of the park receive attention. The archaeological nature of the boundary and its complementary oak pale are discussed and contrasted to medieval evidence suggesting that most pales during that period were more likely to have been constructed or at least reinforced with dead wood.

Part I ends with the buildings of the park: lodges, banqueting houses, standings and deer houses. Lodges are afforded the most discussion, being either substantial houses for gentleman keepers or simple timber-framed constructions that were occasionally moved. There is tantalizing evidence here for the afterlives of parks in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A few lodges were replaced by or became country houses, but most were converted to farmhouses. In either case, what became of the surrounding parkland? Such threads are numerous in the book, hinting at the future use of this vast body of evidence. The chapter ends after a short paragraph on hay barns, and some concluding remarks would have perhaps been appropriate.

Following on from such a good overview of the whole work, Part II seems slightly out of place. It deals exclusively with the evidence for the relationship between the parks of Hertfordshire and the Tudor and Stuart monarchies. The crown estate is examined before each monarch is given their own section. Henry VIII greatly expanded the acreage of parks owned by the crown in Hertfordshire, while we have already seen that Elizabeth I's reign saw the highest number of new parks created. James I spent 'almost half his reign' at Theobalds, a park that had measured just over 300 acres in 1600 but was over 2500 acres by 1650. It is an interesting section and the strength of royal connection cannot be denied, but there is little discussion of how this compared to other counties and their parks. At fifteen pages this section could have been absorbed into Part I.

The gazetteer in Part III is organized alphabetically by parish, with over 50 entries. Some of these entries pertain to more than one park, and a central table listing all the featured parks would have been convenient. Each park has a name, National Grid Reference, dates and acreage. All have a corresponding map based on the first edition Ordnance Survey maps. A biography of each park follows, built from the historical evidence. Where a boundary has been difficult to reconstruct from the archives alone, entries are supplemented with LiDAR and aerial photography to physically identify earthwork traces. Relevant earlier park and estate maps have been reproduced as a set of plates in the centre of the book, including a map of c.1610 depicting nine parks between Hatfield and London. As elsewhere in the book, there is a wealth of detail in these park biographies, which is drawn together in such a way as to encourage further research.

The book is well laid out and beautifully illustrated. An individual list of citations follows each park entry, consisting largely of primary archive sources. The bibliography attests to the amount of research in the book, listing over seven pages' worth of primary sources drawn from private, local, and national archives. The gazetteer and main text have been indexed, simplifying the task of navigating to specific sites or topics of interest.

This volume forms a well-researched and robust evidence base for further work, although the lack of space for exploring some of the questions it raises is occasionally frustrating. For instance, why is it that larger parks were more robust than their smaller counterparts, and therefore more likely to survive beyond the fifteenth century? The correlation between size and survival is identified and the question is posed, but no answer attempted. Rowe's use of county maps

to illustrate Hertfordshire being particularly 'parky' is one of the few examples of comparative evidence in the book, and more of this contextualization would have been helpful. When discussing the under-studied topic of deer coursing and standings, for example, consideration could have been given to the evidence for such courses and structures at Ravensdale and Clarendon, among others. This does feel like nitpicking, because overall the book is an excellent addition to the literature on post-medieval parks. The objective of the volume is to present the evidence for deer parks that existed in Hertfordshire over the course of two centuries, and it meets that objective in an informative and engaging way. If only such a book existed for all counties.

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ERIC H. ASH, *The draining of the Fens: Projectors, popular politics, and state building in early modern England* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017). 416 pp. 17 illus. 8 maps. \$54.95

A recent review of this book, by Piet van Cruyningen in the *Dutch Journal of Water History* (*Tijdschrift voor Waterstaatsgeschiedenis*), vol. 27, no. 2, concluded that Ash had written a brilliant book that would set the standard for decades to come. High praise indeed, and totally deserved, if you ask me. In eight chapters, chronologically ordered between an Introduction and Epilogue, Ash provides us with a detailed, entertaining and convincing account of how drainage activities in the Fens area, specifically the Hatfield Level and the Great Level Drainage, relate to – and need to be understood as – state building activities. His balanced attention and (sometimes implicit) judgement on actions and opinions of Fenlanders and outsiders – ranging from kings to prospectors – allows the reader to understand the drainage projects in the Fens as a continuously negotiated process.

The different Commissions of Sewers in the Fens were important actors in the negotiations, assuming we can define them as single actors, given their internal struggles. The role of the Commissions remains somewhat unclear to me, though. In the first part of the book (the first four chapters), Ash stresses that it was the local knowledge embodied in the Commissions that made more centralized control so difficult to achieve. We learn how important the role of the Commissions was in controlling the land and who could access it, both materially and on maps. For a long time, this control was preventing the Fens from being drained. However, we also read that drainage of the Hatfield Fens had no need to work through Commissions of Sewers, as there was only one

landowner, the crown itself (p. 148). Despite not having the need to work through Commissions, Hatfield's drainage started rather late too, in the 1620s. Would it be correct to argue that whether Fen areas had influential Commissions or not, there was no drainage under King James I? If so, what does that tell us about state formation and its success?

In the process of Fen drainage, we encounter what I would like to call the ontology of failure and success: success and failure are constructed. We encounter several suggestions in the book that support this idea. Ash writes that 'the fate of the land itself was shaped by the power to define it' (p. 194). This was not only the case for the Fens in their pre-drainage state. At a certain moment, 'the Great level was both drained and not drained' (p. 203), as there were different statements on the effects and status of the works. It is a little strange then to find statements suggesting that, to take one example, the 'project of Ayloffe and Thomas thus represents a failed attempt at state building in Jacobean England' (p. 138). Fate of failure was also shaped by the power to define it, I would think. Can we define with certainty what the Jacobean state would have to look like anyway? Perhaps the results of the project were not as hoped for by some, but the interactions between representatives of the central state-in-the-making and Fens-in-transition must have changed something in the relations between them – and thus state building itself as well.

Another key issue is the idea of the state itself. Obviously state policies change over time, and the book does indeed show this. We read about the 'crown's new, more aggressive policy' (p. 64) towards draining the Fens. In that light, I find the observation that the Great Level 'company ... continued to be supported by the full legal and administrative apparatus of the early modern English state, both before and after the collapse of the protectorate and the Restoration of King Charles II' (pp. 296–7) – rather interesting, and a little problematic. I would suggest it is unlikely that there is something like a defined, stable early modern state over the period of these dramatic events. The 'state' is an entity that needs to recreate its own support continuously. I find this idea of a continuous early modern state – which is presented at the end of the final chapter before the Epilogue, so rather late in the book – at odds with the careful and detailed analysis of Fen drainage as an example of the ambivalence of state formation in the book as a whole.

State formation is clearly a process that is always local, both in the Fens and in London – and elsewhere – which makes the concept of the state itself ambivalent. Ash may reserve the word 'local' to those from the

Fens, but he makes it perfectly clear that even if they are only local, their actions make or break what wanted to become the centralized state. Indeed, like state building, '[a]ll politics is local, ultimately' (p. 238). Ash manages to bring all these locals into his narrative in a clear and convincing manner. A suggestion from my side would be to consider the crown as local too. Crown policy in London is as locally constructed as Fen drainage by state and non-state agents that negotiate its realization in the Fens and London. Ash shows beautifully how (Dutch and English) prospectors acted as representatives of themselves, other agents in society, a glorious future – defined by themselves – and the crown that wanted to build a more centralized state – all at once.

In the Epilogue, Ash concludes that '[d]rainage projects were [...] a manifestation of the early modern centralization of governance under a unitary English monarchy – an exercise in state building.' (p. 309). Where chapter 8 had suggested a final success in Fen drainage and state building, it becomes clear rather quickly in the Epilogue that the exercise never ends – or so it could have been. The land itself continued in its refusal to cooperate, with the result that the 'Bedford Level Corporation was clearly losing control of the Great Level as time went on' (p. 307). One page later we even read that the 'creation of a single, coordinated drainage network in the Great Level had largely failed' (p. 308). However, Ash does not relate these continuous efforts to keep the Fens controlled to the process of state formation itself. If draining land was so closely related to state building, one would expect that keeping land dry was as well.

Obviously, I do not ask Ash to write an even longer book that encompasses the even longer history of the draining of the Fens. I would just have liked to see a simple statement like 'state building never ends'. Instead, Ash goes even further on the route of state centralization by claiming that 'Fen drainage [...] went beyond state building to become a quasi-imperial project' (p. 310). Why is this step needed? I would argue that the processes that Ash describes are indeed also happening in settings that are (now) defined as colonial or imperial – including the rather utopian way of thinking of many representatives of the state. I simply think that we should not allow a difference in terminology between state building and empire building as a process. Empires are not necessarily more or less top-down or centralized than national states – but they are as local as centralized states.

In the last pages of his great book, Ash refers to recent ideas to allow the Fens a little more wetness, by enlarging remaining wetlands and changing water

management arrangements. I cannot wait for someone – and why not Eric Ash himself? – to write about this process in the same excellent way that Ash has done for sixteenth and seventeenth-century drainage projects in the Fens. After all, twenty-first-century rewilding initiatives must be regarded as efforts of state building too.

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ADRIAN GREEN and BARBARA CROSBIE (eds),  
*Economy and culture in north-east England, 1500–1800*  
(The Boydell Press, 2018). 319 pp. 18 illus. £65.

In considering the economy and culture of north-east England in the period 1500 to 1800, Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie have co-edited a book which explores one of the earliest periods of industrialization, before the traditional time frame of the Industrial Revolution. The industries which developed along the banks of, and between, the rivers Tyne and Wear, as well as the thriving town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, attracted considerable numbers of people, all of whom needed feeding by local agricultural systems.

The editors suggest that modern historians view the four northern counties of England as under-developed, reflecting an ignorance of this early evolution in industry, agriculture and commerce. Because historians have only considered ‘coal and class’, they have ignored the cultural interactions which underpinned the development of an economy and society in the area. Further, the introduction suggests that economic integration across the England-Scotland border was an underlying factor in the consolidation of the Union between the two countries.

The first two chapters of the book are of primary interest to agricultural historians. In chapter 1, A. T. Brown examines those who occupied land on Durham Cathedral’s estate, with the progression of the Dean and Chapter’s bond tenants of the fifteenth century into the church leaseholders of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thereby bridging traditional periodization. The township of Horton is used as a case study to understand the land they farmed, their possessions through probate inventories and their wealth, both relative to each other and to those from other regions. A comparison between the tenants of the Dean and Chapter and those of the bishops of Durham demonstrates the limited economic and social outlook for the former.

Adrian Green commences the next chapter by examining the contribution made by agriculture in support of the early industrialization, and the changes in agriculture necessary to feed a growing

population: with the majority employed in non-agricultural activities, this represented an early agricultural revolution. Enclosure by agreement was undertaken by the leading freeholders and leaseholders, resulting in few open fields by the eighteenth century: enclosure peaked between 1630 and 1680, with only six townships in the county requiring Parliamentary enclosure after 1800. This enabled selective stock breeding which produced livestock specialized for the region’s climate (Border Leicester sheep and Durham Shorthorn cattle). In addition, milking took place at the farmsteads, thereby replacing the ancient habit of transhumance. Farmhouses and farm buildings were rebuilt, often in the centre of the newly enclosed fields. Animal and human waste, along with nitrogen-fixing crops, coal ash and lime were all used to improve the land. However, it was often those who held land by freehold or extended leasehold who had the confidence to do so. A second agrarian revolution occurred during the eighteenth century with large landowners promoting commercial tenancies on improved farms to maximize rental income. This was achievable due to the expanding market for food in the region. Adrian Green concludes that there is more work to do on the relationship between farming and industry in north-east England and considers a set of research questions: however, the scene has been set.

John Brown examines lead mining through the role of the Bowes family as gentry entrepreneurs in Weardale and Teesdale, with tenants who regarded lead production as a ‘casual cash crop’. In terms of by-employment, these tenants were definitely farmer-miners, rather than miner-farmers. Moving away from matters rural, in chapter 4, Leona Skelton looks at the efforts of the civic officers of Berwick-upon-Tweed in presenting the town as an urban space rather than part of its rural hinterland by improving sanitation and other infrastructure in the town. Despite this, civic employees were paid in units of ‘ewe’s grass’ rather than money, dunghills persisted in the streets and the mowing of grass for hay around the outskirts of Berwick was an important ceremonial event, reflecting the entrenched agricultural nature of the town’s economy.

In chapter 5, Andy Burn considers the development of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in terms of population, migration and occupational structures over the period 1600–1710, whilst Lindsay Houpt-Varner examines the role of the Quakers in the region in chapter 6. Using the example of the glass-making industry in Newcastle, she illustrates how the fine balance was achieved between undertaking economic and social business and yet maintaining the Quaker way of life.

Peter Wright takes the reader away from coal to the development of the more general trades, focusing on shipping on the Tyne. Using Newcastle port books for 1702–03 and 1756, he concludes that whilst coal was the major export, there was an extensive range and volume of other commodities and products leaving and arriving at the port, along with some re-exporting activity. In chapter 8, Matthew Greenhall investigates the nature and extent of Scottish trade with north-east England, both cross-border and coastal, over the period of regal, and later, political union between the two countries. He identifies step changes in trade after each of the years 1603, 1654 and 1707, in terms of both commodities traded and transportation logistics.

In the final two chapters, Barbara Crosbie looks at the role of the print trade in Newcastle, whilst Morgan and Rushton move the focus to Sunderland and the River Wear – ‘the other coal exporting river’. Whilst Sunderland had no formal civic identity until Victorian times, it was able to operate and develop prior to this with the focal point being the river and its trade.

The book concludes with a combined bibliography for all the book chapters. This reader found only one typographical error (Stokesely cf. Stokesley, p. 218). A table of weights and measures would assist the understanding of the extent of a chaldron of coal, a wey of salt and a fother of lead, which can also have regional variations. The overriding conclusions from the diverse aspects considered in this book are that the economic and cultural development in the north-east cannot be seen in geographic isolation and that there is much work to do using untapped source material.

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ROBERT TITTLER (ed.), *Two weather diaries from northern England, 1779–1807: The journals of John Chipchase and Elihu Robinson* (Boydell: Surtees Society, 2019). 343 pp. 4 illus. £50.

This volume brings together the diaries of two Quakers living in northern England in the late eighteenth century. The first is that of John Chipchase (1747–1816) who ran a school with an international reputation for teaching navigation in Stockton-on-Tees. The journal itself, housed in the library of Concordia University in Montreal, has until now been little known and difficult to access by scholars working in Britain. The second is the better-known diary of Elihu Robinson (1734–1809), an enterprising yeoman farmer from Cumberland, now in the possession of the Religious Society of Friends Library in London. Robert Tittler’s useful introduction summarizes the available biographical information about the two men, and in common with

much scholarship on life-writing, explores how their faith shaped their outlook and their practice of diary keeping and how the practices of reading and letter writing contributed to cultures of knowledge in this period.

The weather, as the title of the volume suggests, was a major preoccupation of both diarists, though their approach to recording it and making sense of its significance is notably different. Chipchase had a social historian’s eye for the impact that meteorological phenomena had on the lives of individuals and communities and the meanings his neighbours ascribed to weather events. He is often concerned, for example, with the struggles of the labouring poor during heavy snowstorms, or the impact of flooding on local businesses. His entries consist not of daily notices but rather an episodic narrative of unusual or extreme events. In contrast, Robinson’s accounts are more systematic and data driven, listing weather conditions, readings of the thermometer and barometer, and the prices of farm produce in each entry, but he was less interested in interpreting or contextualizing this information in his record. As a farmer, however, the weather had a direct daily effect on his livelihood, and his diary is a meticulous record of how one farm was managed in relation to unpredictable environmental conditions.

Chipchase was a keen editor of his own writing, adding notes and addenda to earlier entries, and elements of his diary resemble a commonplace book or local history more than an ego document. The recto pages of both the original and this transcribed edition contain his diary in chronological order, while on the verso pages facing these Chipchase included corroborating or contrasting accounts from newspapers or notes about earlier occurrences of similar phenomena. For example, opposite an entry about damage done to a neighbour’s house by lightning in 1783, Chipchase added notes about the death of a woman struck by lightning in 1724 and a barn fire caused by lightning in 1751. Chipchase also incorporated poems and literary quotes in his writing, copied accounts of local and national food prices, and transcribed the contents of another diary in his possession, that of Stockton parish clerk Robert Stock (c.1650–1719), onto some of the verso pages of his own journal, adding to the layers of local knowledge contained in this volume. The result is a fascinating intertextual web, but it can be difficult for the reader to come to grips with in the first instance. A parallel structure has been retained so that recto and verso can be compared side by side, but the result sometimes includes awkwardly placed jumps to successive pages and cumbersome gaps in the text.

Tittler's footnotes and note on editorial method offer some guidance, so these are critical to comprehension rather than a bibliographical addition.

Chipchase was also a keen amateur participant in the science of astronomy, an interest that may have grown out of his professional expertise in navigation, and his diary has much to offer scholars interested in engagement with Enlightenment ideas and the Scientific Revolution among groups beyond the elite. He frequently noted his own observations of the night sky and collated these with reports of notable occurrences both around his locality and further afield. Among other subjects, Chipchase recorded the appearance of the Aurora Borealis over his home in 1783 and 1814 and included extracts from newspaper reports charting the extent of its visibility. Imaginative speculation about the phenomenon's similarity to the view 'which the Ring of Saturn must exhibit to the Inhabitants of that planet' is interspersed with precise scientific measurements from the Macfarlane Observatory in Glasgow. Observations of meteors are a recurring feature, with numerous accounts in particular of the Leonid meteor show which caused an international sensation in 1799, as are atmospheric optical phenomena like lunar coronae and a parhelion (sundogs, in modern parlance).

Robinson's is a denser text with a tendency toward listing events and activities rather than reflecting on them, though he becomes more animated about social and political upheaval in the latter two of his three diary volumes. The dearth and hardship of the late 1790s, when several poor harvests and ongoing war with France compounded the strain on domestic food supply, shapes both diaries in this period. Chipchase recorded an account of food riots in Stockton in 1795 which included unrest by local women on market day and an attack on the local miller. His response to the need to alleviate food shortage was political and practical, suggesting alternative recipes for feeding the poor and recording the deliberations of the bishop of Durham and local elites about the best way to provide additional relief. Robinson, by contrast, tended to reiterate his faith in God to provide deliverance.

Overall, one major contribution of this volume is the detailed local perspective on the volatile decades at the close of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, in addition to adding to the corpus of published personal narratives of the northern middling sort in general, historians of agriculture, scientific inquiry and the environment, in particular, will find much of interest in both diaries.

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JOHN SHAW, *The Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation, 1765–1826: 'A Prison with a Milder Name'* (Boydell Press, 2019). 556 pp. 13 b&w illus. £40.

This large volume reproduces seven quarterly minute books of the Loes and Wilford Poor Law Incorporation from July 1765 until its disincorporation in 1826, interspersed with many other documents. Shaw provides around fifty pages of introduction to and analysis of the documents. The Incorporation comprised 17 of the 19 parishes in Loes Hundred and the 16 parishes of Wilford. Incorporations were a particularly favoured model by which relief of the poor was administered in East Anglia (61 per cent of parishes in Suffolk and 26 per cent in Norfolk), due to, it is suggested, the pressure of the poor rate upon only moderately wealthy ratepayers and the active involvement of the resident gentry and clergy. The Incorporation was run by a body of directors and acting guardians.

Poor relief was similar in many respects to those parishes operating under the Elizabethan statutes. The Incorporation's newly built House of Industry in Melton opened in July 1768 with children (68 per cent) and the elderly (13 per cent) dominating admissions, as in most workhouses. Quarterly parish assessments, plus the inmates' earnings from spinning wool, were expected to meet the house's day-to-day operating costs, repay the investments, and cover outdoor relief. Like workhouses, the provision of work in this house of industry underperformed. Although inmates in the house of industry were required to wear a uniform and daily life was punctuated by a bell, their diet was superior to that of the labouring poor. Outdoor relief was still given in a largely similar fashion to parochial poor relief, with elderly widows, younger widows with children, and the disabled faring well, as did women in childbirth and those suffering from short-term injury or illness. Medical provision was provided by contracted surgeons. But the operation of the Incorporation was also different in other respects. Relief in kind was rarely given and families were either taken into the house of industry or outdoor relief was dependent upon at least one child being admitted to the house. Relief might be refused on pain of admittance.

By 1791 it was found that the Incorporation had been mismanaged and expenditure generally exceeded income. An amending act was passed and governance overhauled. Despite increased poor rates, wartime price inflation left the Incorporations' finances in a critical state, with a further amendment in 1810. The issue of rating and assessments caused dissent from twelve parishes. By 1824 a committee found an upward trend in costs such that 'the existence of the said House

does ... materially and unnecessarily increase the expense of maintaining the poor'. The Incorporation concluded that the 'experience [of incorporating] has proved it to be in every respect radically bad' and it would be 'expedient to return to the old English system of parochial economy with regard to the poor as enacted by the 43 of Eliz'. The Incorporation petitioned for disincorporation. Inmates of the Melton House of Industry were returned to their parishes of settlement and the house was converted into the Suffolk County Lunatic Asylum.

The introduction provides some useful maps, tables summarizing the documents and amendments of 1791 and 1810, and graphs of expenditure. The latter only commences in 1796 and so spending between 1765 and the start of wartime inflation in 1795 is not given for comparison. Much of the discussion concerns finance and rating, rather than the provision of poor relief. A useful glossary is provided. The real value of this volume is, of course, the transcription of the quarterly minute books, running to 425 pages and these reproduced documents provide the opportunity for amateur and academic historians to explore the process of incorporation – and disincorporation – and how this compared with parochial poor relief and unions under the New Poor Law. The provision of poor relief was highly variable at the local and regional level and the Loes and Wilford Incorporation provide an example of this disparity by place and system of governance. There are two indexes: one of people and places and one of subjects. The former will be helpful to local historians and genealogists, while the latter reveals that the minutes contain information on a wide range of topics, including children and apprenticeship, allowances, contracts to supply the house and conditions inside it, Incorporation finance, the variety of outdoor relief, disease and medical care, and pauper work. The transcription and presentation of these books and accompanying documents is an achievement for Shaw and provides a valuable resource for other historians of welfare to share.

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M. L. BISCOTTI, *British sporting periodicals: An annotated bibliography* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019). 196 pp. £65.

In the 1920s the American sportsman and wealthy collector, Harry Worcester Smith visited Howell's bookstore, Liverpool, before boarding his transatlantic liner to America. The best market for antique British sporting books, prints, periodicals, and the like was in the US, where Howell's had over 800 customers eager to

snap up their latest stock of rare publications. Keen to fill his new, fashionable Sportsman's Library, Worcester Smith gleefully noted he 'was not long in bargaining for all of these rarities, and whereas English collectors are the losers, the library at Lordvale is the gainer' (Harry Worcester Smith Papers, National Sporting Library and Museum, Virginia, p. 324).

Notably, it was Americans who first recognized the value of Britain's sporting heritage, and the American interest in British sporting ephemera remains dominant today. It is to an American, then, that we still turn for a new bibliography of British Sporting Journals. M. L. Biscotti, himself formerly an antiquarian bookseller, has previously done sterling service for historians of Field sports and American sports, by collating works such as *Six centuries of foxhunting* (2017), and *American sporting periodicals: An annotated bibliography* (2018). While previously there have been good bibliographic efforts by Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald (1946) and Anne Grimshaw (1982), it says something that many collectors still found they needed to refer to the sporting bibliographies of the private library of Charles Schwerdt (1862–1939) privately published in four volumes between 1928 and 1937 to obtain detailed periodical information.

Biscotti's work then, is arguably one of the most important new listings of British Sporting Periodicals to date. His research into their publishing history and precise listing of where they may be found (both online and elsewhere) offers a truly valuable resource for locating this often obscure material. Useful sections on journal name changes and mergers also save much confusion for the researcher. Wide-ranging and detailed, his research captures previously little-known sporting journals for the first time. This is no easy task. Many early journals have largely been forgotten or ignored because their surviving run of issues are incomplete. As Paul Morgan argues in the foreword to Biscotti's book, 'periodicals – magazines, journals, newspapers – are ephemeral', with the result that many were read, then discarded. Furthermore, because of their collective bulk, few complete series have been preserved by libraries or public repositories.

Arguably, Biscotti has had a distinct advantage over earlier bibliographers. The advent of the internet and digitization of primary books and periodicals on platforms such as Hathi Trust has made huge differences to our knowledge of what survives worldwide. Biscotti fully utilizes these new resources using everything from the impressive British sporting collections of the National Sporting Museum and Library in Middleburg, USA, to booksellers' catalogues, and even eBay. Some periodicals such as *Bailey's Hunting Directory* or

the *Badminton Magazine* – two of the most popular sporting magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – will be familiar to the reader, but other such as *Field and Kennel* (1902) survive in only one or two editions.

Biscotti has aimed his bibliography at the researcher or collector of vintage sporting periodicals. However, historians of more modern sports looking for journals of rugby, football and athletics etc., may be disappointed. As a consequence of Biscotti only including magazines that began publication before 1950, the works catalogued within are heavily weighted towards field sports, and publications originally largely printed for more wealthy sporting participants and their pastimes. Once common rural community sports such as Stoolball, Tipcat, and street football were rarely, if at all, featured in periodicals.

Considering the current British debates around field sports and cruelty, for some, the definition of ‘sport’ and the bibliographies’ bias towards field sports or ‘blood sports’ may be questioned, reflecting as it does the older forms of play. Yet, historians of the countryside, rural history, conservation, animal studies, and land management and legislation should welcome Biscotti’s diligence in capturing these ephemera into one readily accessible reference guide. These old periodicals and the articles, illustrations and even advertisements within offer much that is useful to understand the physical and material world and opinions of the sportsmen, larger sporting economy – the traders and shopkeepers who supplied the sportsmen and sporting resorts, and the often rural geographies of British sports and their participants. The wide spread of rural sporting periodicals covered and their frequent inclusion in periodicals linked with farming and land management should also satisfy the agricultural historian.

Indeed, while modern sport is increasingly urban-centric, with the benefits of this bibliography it is striking to see that the current idea of separation between the rural and urban is a relatively new development, with little distinction being made between the two in the earlier periodicals. Many of the periodicals were published in cities for elites who moved between town and countryside, and the rural exploits such as foxhunting, coursing and angling were given the greater weight and often combined with urban news about the theatre, latest fashions and pugilism. Not all periodicals have been included. Biscotti omitted the hundreds of lesser-known racing papers such as the *Sporting Globe* and *Sporting Oracle*, which have not survived apart from partial print runs in the British Library.

As he notes, Biscotti is unlikely to have exhausted the periodicals available, as some of these ephemeral publications are bound to exist in private hands or remain forgotten. While the compilation of these works must have involved a large amount of detective work, the rise of digitization may well uncover other period works that will require inclusion. Nonetheless, Biscotti has created an invaluable benchmark from which future findings may now be mapped and added.

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JOANNA FOAT, *Lumberjills: Britain's forgotten army* (The History Press, 2019). 272 pp. illus. £14.99.

This study of the Lumberjills, the Women’s Timber Corps, is clearly a labour of love. Its author Joanna Foat first heard about the Corps while working for the Forestry Commission as a public relations consultant. As she describes, ‘I [...] stumbled across their story and it fired up a storm in my belly’ (p. 21). Unable to find very much material to sate her initial curiosity, Foat came to suspect wilful neglect: ‘the government wanted the Women’s Timber Corps to be forgotten, or worse, the women’s contribution was regarded as insignificant’ (p. 15). Foat initially planned to write a fictional account but decided that fictionalizing these women’s war work ‘downplayed the challenges they faced, the stigma they experienced and the incredible advances they made in eroding a view of women as substandard’ (p. 20). This volume seeks to redress the status of the organization as ‘the forgotten army’, and ensure its place in the history of women’s service in the Second World War.

The narrative stems from research conducted at the National Archives and the Imperial War Museum, but the main bulk of the source material of the book stems from veterans of the Force, 22 of whom are thanked personally in the acknowledgments for providing interviews, letters, and personal photographs (including one ‘Lumber Jack’). There are 28 pages of photographs giving many of the names faces, and offering engaging images of the experience of service in the Corps as presented to the camera.

The Women’s Timber Corps was officially formed in England in April 1942, and in Scotland a month later, by which time women had already been working in forestry through the Women’s Land Army with which the corps had an intertwined and somewhat complicated relationship which continued into the twenty first century. In December 2007, reflecting the trickiness of the relationship, the Land Army and the Timber Corps were granted a special badge of honour showing a wheat sheaf, rather than the fir tree or pair of crossed axes worn by the Corps.



*Lumberjills* is organized in 20 chapters, ending with the First World War precedent for the organization, and including a timeline and bibliography. These chapters offer detailed descriptions of life in service, including joining up, uniforms, living conditions, the range of roles undertaken by the women in the Corps, leisure activities, health implications, and the end and legacy of the force – ‘And I never had lady’s hands, never since’ (Edna Barton, p. 240). The women’s voices are quoted extensively, with a framing narrative providing context and some further primary source evidence outlining the history of the organization. As the author explains, ‘to give these women a voice, I have written the book using their words as much as possible to let their voices shine’ (p. 21). Such an approach allows diversities of experience to accumulate: for example, motivations for joining up included escape from the mundane, from domestic or ‘interior’ jobs, and parental preferences for this occupation, not least as a form of evacuation. What emerges across the chapters is an impressionistic picture of hard physical labour and wide spectrums of experience encompassing camaraderie and loneliness, prejudice and tolerance, commitment and disaffection. Amongst the testimonies are some quirky nuggets: an assumption that the WTC were the Women’s Tank Corps, for example, or the description of the educated measurers as the ‘Airborne Land Army’ ‘because we were above the rest’ (Eileen Mark, p. 99). One anecdote involved a group of fellers arrested wearing cami-knickers, woollen socks and big leather boots, for having ostensibly brought down the telephone lines to Churchill’s war office and suspected of sabotage (p. 63). These narratives are often anecdotal, many reflective, and fragmented between the numerous chapters.

The claims made by the author can be bold: ‘In the 1940s they smashed down what society thought women were physically and mentally capable of, they forced men to rethink what women could achieve, and they proved women could do things differently to men and still succeed’ (p. 20). Most historians of social change would be wary of claiming that preconceptions and gender boundaries had been ‘smashed’ in the Second World War, and oral historians uncomfortable about the concept of ‘giving a voice’. But Foat is transparent about her approach and passion, and is seeking to contribute to the historical record of women’s experiences rather than to the historical theories on gender identities in the Second World War. I write this review listening to Woody Herman’s ‘Woodchopper’s Ball’, his biggest hit first recorded in 1939, because I discovered here that it was the tune often struck up to welcome the girls when members of the WTC entered a dance. *Lumberjills* would be of greatest interest to those interested in the

diverse contributions of women to the war effort, in the history of forestry, and those who relish details of the peculiar and the mundane for the insights they offer on lives over experienced over seventy years ago.

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GLEN O’HARA, *The politics of water in post-war Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). 326 pp. 2 illus. £63.99.

This important study explores the concept of water as a whole, at scales ranging from local to global, and across disciplinary boundaries, ultimately using it as a vehicle through which to understand the relationships between human societies, their governance, and the environments they inhabit. O’Hara argues that water is both a critical site of contestation in late twentieth-century British society, and a means by which to understand that society. In order to demonstrate this, he uses an impressive range of research papers, government reports, minutes, proceedings, and correspondence alongside newspapers and periodicals, and other media sources to unpack both the content and context of government legislation around water, and the impact of this, first on wider British society, and then on international relations. While the focus is on water politics in post-war Britain, it promotes a deeper and wider approach to understanding environmental history on a global scale, and the changes in the modern British state in the longer term. The book also addresses politics at several levels, from the complex negotiations between nations to the politics arising in local and domestic milieux, and thereby representing the stakes held in water by a variety of different publics, with a variety of competing priorities. Tracing the way in which these priorities have been negotiated forms a picture of the changing politics of water in Britain and the wider world throughout the twentieth century. As O’Hara convincingly argues, these politics are often far removed from simple questions of social class or neatly delineated ideas of Left and Right, instead representing a messy, shifting, and ‘fluid’ approach to governance around the theme of water. In this, the book fits well into the historiographies of both environmentalism and British politics, with much to contribute to both.

O’Hara places his work at the confluence between environmental, social and political histories, influenced by Terje Tvedt and Richard Coopey’s conceptualization of the ‘third layer’ of water systems: the management practices and ‘habits of thought’ around water. He agrees with the viewpoint recently espoused by environmental historians that history should be the starting

point of all new policy proposals and formulations. *The politics of water in post-war Britain* traces the place of water in the historiography of environmental history, convincingly making the case that a thorough appreciation of economic, social, political, personal and emotional histories is essential to carrying out a 'new type of environmental historiography', which follows the evolving relationship between human beings and the natural world. He identifies several lacunae in previous scholarship, including the dearth of twentieth-century water histories in comparison to those covering the Victorian water industry, and, linked to this, the tendency for 'material and technocratic cadences' to dominate these histories at the expense of socio-political and domestic narratives. O'Hara seeks to redress this balance, placing the politics of power around domestic water availability, water safety, and water usage alongside developments in water and environmental politics on national and international scales.

The book is divided into chapters covering water in its different aspects, explored through its different interrelationships with human beings. The earlier chapters examine the way that the rise of environmental politics and international co-operation in relation to environmental matters helped to re-conceptualize water in Britain and farther afield; a case study of the floods on Britain's east coast in 1953 and the public, political and press reactions, using them to contextualize twenty-first-century disaster preparedness and reactions in the aftermath of flooding. The book then moves on to the theme of pollution, covering riverine and oceanic pollution over the next two chapters. It draws out the roots of modern legislation from the nineteenth-century crisis of contamination as pollution control legislation initially failed to keep pace with industrial development, and follows the growing scale of public and political concern to the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. The final three chapters of the book are devoted to the politics of water as they applied to everyday domestic life: water involved in leisure activities; water provision in the home; and the fluoridation of water. These chapters represent the convincing filling of an intriguing lacuna around the use of public water for leisure and domestic purposes, and the flows of power and meaning associated therewith. This is necessarily an issue of women's and children's history, expanding the fascinating interdisciplinary aspect of the study, and making clear the gendered way in which clean water has historically been discussed, and the impact this has had on long term and wide ranging policies on water both inside and outside the home.

This produces a largely holistic-feeling history of Britain's water politics, which embraces the importance of water to all sections of society, in both urban and rural contexts. However, despite good coverage of the role played by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in the development of water politics in Britain, the issue of the availability of water in rural areas, and the admirable depth to which previously somewhat neglected themes such as the domestic and leisure usage of water are investigated, it was surprising to find that the use of water by the agricultural community itself is not explored in more detail. The use of water in increasingly intensifying agriculture, as mentioned by O'Hara, is a significant factor of its own in global water politics, and the farming community has its own unique set of needs, problems and drivers when it comes to water usage and the politics surrounding it, which are separate from those relating to the wider rural community and its domestic needs. Under these circumstances, it seems a shame that the views of the industry at local and regional level are underrepresented in this work.

*The politics of water in post-war Britain* has much to offer the fields of environmental history and political history. It represents the drawing together of a number of interdisciplinary threads to address the topic of water, and the politics it engenders, as a whole, which I am certain will prove useful and informative for the future study of water politics and environmental history as a whole.

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## Europe and Elsewhere

CHRISTOPHER DYER, ERIK THOEN and TOM WILLIAMSON (eds), *Peasants and their fields: The rationale of open-field agriculture, c. 700–1800* (Brepols, 2018). 275 pp. 71 illus. €84.

This is a stimulating and ambitious edited collection on forms of open-field systems in Europe and beyond. It sets out to examine the chronology of the development of open fields, situate them within their socio-economic context, explain their rationale, consider how they changed and adapted in their long history, and address the reasons for their demise. Ten substantive chapters tackle these questions for England (two chapters), Scandinavia, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium (two chapters), Bolivia, and Japan. The main findings of these chapters are brought together by the editors in a concluding eleventh chapter. The chronological scope of the volume is as broad as its geography: the sub-title indicates coverage from 700 to 1800, but

the book extends well into the twentieth century by virtue of the chapters on Bolivia and Japan.

The volume begins with a broad definition of open fields as 'areas of cultivated land in which the intermingled plots of different cultivators, without upstanding physical boundaries, were subject to some degree of communal management in terms of cropping and grazing' (p.1). Such a broad definition is merited by the findings of the subsequent chapters, which amply demonstrate that, while open-field systems functioned in many areas, there were substantial local, regional, and national differences in their operation. These variations and their causes are not always elucidated because chapters mix explanations of technical differences between types of open-field systems with explanations for why open-field farming developed in some areas and not others. In either case, the editors conclude that a range of factors were at play (environmental, agrarian, societal, economic) but that the timing and nature of the development of open-field systems depended on the precise confluence of these factors in certain localities or regions. Individual chapters place varying degrees of emphasis on one or more factors: in chapter 1, Tom Williamson argues for the centrality of environmental factors for explaining regional field systems in England; whereas Erik Thoen, in chapter 7, argues for the crucial part played by power, property, and labour relations in shaping five different types of field systems in Flanders. In chapter 5, Petri Talvitie demonstrates that agrarian differences played a key role in the development of open fields in Finland. Areas dominated by burn-beating and animal husbandry in eastern and northern Finland did not see the emergence of open-field systems, which developed in districts more reliant on arable agriculture. Of course, these agrarian differences are also fundamentally related to the environment.

The volume contains a wide range of approaches drawing on an extensive source base to reconstruct the history of open-field agriculture. The editors acknowledge key obstacles to recovering the history of open-field systems, not least because practices were often rooted in oral custom. The 'retrogressive' approach is applied in many chapters, with authors working backwards from early modern or nineteenth-century sources to recover landscape use and field management practices in earlier times. Alternative approaches are identified by the editors, such as pollen analysis, archaeological field surveys, and geo-archaeology. The inclusion of chapters employing these methods may have led to new and decisive pronouncements on the chronology of open-field development in Europe that cannot otherwise be made from archival evidence.

In general, the individual chapters make convincing and important contributions to our understanding of the development and operation of open-field agriculture. The volume is, however, less successful in organizing these into a cohesive whole. Rather than an overview of the well-known English case, the volume would have benefited from an introduction that clearly set out a) the known forms of various open-field systems and b) where and at what times these have been observed across Europe. Not until chapter 6 is there a direct comparison of criteria for different types of farming system in table 6.1 (this is largely predicated on Joan Thirsk, 'The common fields', *Past and Present* 29 [1964]) and maps of field systems across Europe in figures 6.3 and 6.14 (taken from studies by Rosemary Hopcroft, René Lebeau, and H. D. Clout). Placed in an introduction alongside extended discussion of the history of European open-field systems, these would have gone some way to provide the necessary context to situate the detailed discussions of case studies in individual chapters.

Furthermore, the inclusion of two non-European twentieth-century case-study chapters provide exciting and meaningful comparisons to the volume but render it somewhat unwieldy and unbalanced given the remaining eight chapters are European case studies. Greater consistency between chapters could also have been achieved. For example, chapter conclusions varied between four sentences and two pages. The editors and publishers should be commended for supplying large numbers of illustrations and maps to complement discussion and analysis but there was scope to deploy these even more effectively. In many cases, these were reprints of previously published figures, which are consequently of lower fidelity. Lastly, more care might have been taken with the selection of contributors, as the book contains only one chapter by a female author. These limitations notwithstanding, this volume contains many important contributions that will repay close reading and should prompt further research into this vital topic.

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SANDRO CAROCCI, *Lordships of Southern Italy: rural societies, aristocratic powers and monarchy in the 12th and 13th centuries*, trans. LUCINDA BYATT (Viella, 2018). xv + 622 pp. €95.

The role of aristocratic power and its interrelationship with the State, on the one hand, and rural society, on the other, has often been situated at the centre of the long-standing debates around southern Italy's perceived 'otherness', particularly in the Middle Ages and in

relation to the development of central and northern Italy. A conventional picture which emphasizes the negative dominance of aristocratic authority and the concomitant lack of agency of medieval southern Italy's rural communities undoubtedly requires rethinking as new evidence and interpretative models emerge. It is the sort of subject that needs a comprehensive and holistic assessment, and which Sandro Carocci's book (which was first published by Viella in Italian in 2014 as *Signorie di Mezzogiorno: Società rurali, poteri aristocratici e monarchia (XII–XIII secolo)*); the English edition includes an additional foreword by the author) attempts, very successfully indeed, to do so.

This is a quite monumental study (the main text runs to over 550 pages) which covers an array of interconnected subjects, although it must be noted that, for sound methodological reasons relating mostly to evidence types, the focus rests primarily on the South Italian mainland (but Carocci still offers intermittent and important analysis of developments on the island of Sicily). Carocci's introduction lucidly frames the study and its historiography, carefully questioning and rejecting the traditional master narratives which have both mythologized the South Italian monarchy and which have focused on notions of 'backwardness'. The titles of the book's chapters (which are then divided by numerous sub-headings) offer the clearest insight into the range and ambition of Carocci's study: 'Before the Normans', 'The Normans: Change and Continuity', 'Monarchy and Feudalism', 'Kings and Lords', 'Nobility and Pre-eminence', 'Clientele and Submission', 'Villeins and Serfs', 'Seigneurial Justices', 'Worlds of Exaction', 'Economy, Lordship, the Rural World', 'Rural Societies and Aristocratic Lordship'. There is much thematic overlap and cross-referencing between these chapters, inevitable and necessary given the entangled and complex subject matter and evidence. It does mean though that this study requires careful, painstaking attention. One must regularly move back and forth across chapters to consolidate and clarify the argument as it develops and the sheer quantity of small, but important interpretations can sometimes be challenging. But Carocci is aware of this and expertly signposts and summarizes where possible to guide the reader and to situate a given chapter within the book's most fundamental arguments.

But what are these key arguments? There are many and they are undoubtedly extremely important. Carocci includes a quite wonderful deconstruction of the *Catalogus Baronum* which demonstrates that in the South Italian monarchy's formative years it was far from establishing a fixed set of feudal norms. Instead there was much experimentation and contingency and even

royal opposition to 'formalized serfdom'. Moreover, the monarchy's presence created a 'supralocal' arena from which the State could mediate in disputes between lords and 'subordinated communities', often curbing aristocratic abuses. This situation simultaneously contributed to a trend which often made lords extraneous to peasant society. The lords were thus unable and/or unwilling to exert a significant level of what Carocci calls 'pervasive controls' (p. 53) and generally they extracted less resources from the rural world than many of their counterparts elsewhere in Italy and beyond. A picture of a much more dynamic rural world emerges, one in which we encounter a multitude of invariably fluid forms of dependence and clientele relationships, defined by a varied set of terms (*affidati, angararii, franci, liberi, servi, villani* and so on). Conversely, this also nurtured forms of pluralized and localized power which enabled local 'notables' to exert quite significant agency within village communities and, when necessary, to demonstrate effective forms of resistance to aristocratic power.

This foregoing summary cannot do full justice to the range and depth of Carocci's interpretations, and a close reading of the author's extended conclusion sets out clearly what he believes to be the study's main contributions. For Carocci, 'the South fluctuates between otherness and representativeness' (p. 540); indeed his study shows numerous parallels and differences with other regions of medieval Europe and it consolidates the view established in other recent studies of medieval southern Italy that the region should not be interpreted through the prism of 'backwardness'. Likewise, the Normans could paradoxically bring 'continuity through change' (pp. 89–94) and a dynamic rural world is presented with fluid and contingent connections with aristocratic and royal power. Carocci discerns the emergence of a new reality for the rural and aristocratic worlds in the post-1220 Staufen era, when Frederick II initiated administrative and legislative reforms (such as a general state tax, along with new definitions of clientele relations and of knighthood) which would change and eventually diminish the types of agency and autonomy available to rural communities. This trend would be consolidated and accentuated under the Angevins in the second half of the thirteenth century, such that, for Carocci, 'the lordships of the Mezzogiorno were becoming more normal', in other words increasingly less distinct from those elsewhere in Europe.

In short, Carocci's study is a *tour de force*, though it is not without some minor problems: in places, the entanglement and complexity of evidence and interpretation can be hard to follow. But, setting this

reservation aside, Carocci's book should now stand as the seminal work on medieval South Italian aristocratic power and the rural world. It is a must-read and a quite astonishing achievement which re-shapes our understanding of the field.

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LUIGI LORENZETTI, YANN DECORZANT, and ANNE-LISE HEAD-KÖNIG (eds), *Relire l'altitude: la terre et ses usages, Suisse et espace avoisinants, XIIe-XXIe siècles* (Éditions Alphil – Presses universitaires suisses, 2019). 338 pp. €29.90 / free open access.

The basic idea of this collection is impressive: it aims to trace the effects of a geographical factor – altitude – on human activity through time. For, according to the implicit hypothesis, even something as immutable as altitude is subject to change in the course of history, to changes of function and meaning.

Admittedly, Luigi Lorenzetti, Yann Decorzant and Anne-Lise Head-König are not the first to tackle this subject. Inspired by the European voyages of discovery and conquest, natural scientists have been studying the effects of altitude since the eighteenth century, and several historical studies using comparative approaches have already been published. Nevertheless, the question of how altitude has shaped (agricultural) economic production methods and social formations in various historical and geographical contexts has not been conclusively answered. Jon Mathieu writes in the foreword to his 2011 survey *The third dimension: A comparative history of mountains in the modern era*, that a global comparative view can only be the beginning, and that many more studies 'in different tones' are needed to understand the complexity and multifaceted development of mountain regions and their societies. And so the editors of the present volume evidently see their contribution to this complex of questions as a renewed focus on altitude, a 'relire'. They focus on Switzerland and mountain regions in neighbouring Italy, France and Austria, from the middle ages to the present.

The book features 11 case studies and one systematic comparison between mountain regions and lowlands. The contributions in French and German examine the effects of altitude on land use systems, on market relations and on political institutions. It is striking that each of the chapters is assigned to one of the three focal points, but that each also uses all three dimensions to explain the developments they describe.

The chosen geographical framework makes it possible to cover the development of the individual regions

over a long period and in a variety of thematic areas. Thus, Lombardy, the French Alps and Switzerland are covered by several articles and are examined from multiple perspectives, showing particularly clearly the changing function and meaning of altitude over time. The transnational perspective also clearly demonstrates the far-reaching market relations between highlands and lowlands. These cross-border connections are described and impressively visualized with maps in the chapter by Mark Bertogliati and Patrik Krebs on charcoal production and trade between the Insubric Alpine valleys and the northern Italian cities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the same region and the same period, Luca Mocarelli explores the interconnections and mutual dependences between town and country, plain and mountain. He focuses on grain, but also depicts the diversified economic strategies of mountain households, which are described in other articles too.

The institutions of mountain societies and the widespread practices of collective organization are mentioned several times. They are an explicit theme of Fabrice Mouthon's chapter, which traces the geographical shift of a collective ownership category, the 'mas', in medieval Savoie-Dauphiné. While it disappeared in the valley areas, the *mas* became dominant in the mountain areas. Mouthon also examines how tax regimes and legal practices strengthened collective organization. At the other end of the temporal scale, in the twentieth century, Yann Decorzant, Jean-Charles Fellay and Jean Rochat take a closer look at a 'consortage d'alpage' in Swiss Valais and show how this form of organization combined – and to this day continues to combine – both political and economic action and therefore must be analysed as a hybrid private-public organization.

The great variety of organizational forms that appears in the volume is accompanied by a wide range of land uses and forms of production. The articles by Hannes Obermair and Volker Stamm on Tyrol from the middle ages to the early modern period, by Luigi Lorenzetti on the area around Locarno between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, by Claudio Besana and Andrea Maria Locatelli on Valtellina in the nineteenth century, and by Anne-Lise Head-König about Switzerland between 1750 and 1914 all describe the spatial patterns of cereal growing, cattle breeding, dairy farming and specialized agriculture, like viticulture. Firstly, it appears that altitude was by no means the only factor that influenced a particular form of production at a particular location. Other natural factors such as exposure and slope inclination also played a role. Secondly, in many places there were small-scale patterns and close interdependencies

between the various forms of production (like the diversified economic strategies discussed in the volume). And thirdly, over time, striking shifts in these patterns become apparent, which are always related to economic developments in the surrounding areas. There can be no talk of natural determinism, and even the concept of path dependency falters in these descriptions.

G erard B aur's survey article finally focuses on the systematic comparison between mountain and valley areas. The author questions the peculiarities ascribed to mountain regions because of their exclusivity. The result is a highly differentiated picture of factors that have different degrees of importance. A clear list of what constitutes a mountain region – even in a long-term historical perspective – is characteristically not available.

Introducing a fourth dimension, the history of knowledge, would have been a possibility, alongside land use, market relations and institutional arrangements. After all, the conception of mountain regions is a prominent topic in two contributions, namely in those of Anne-Marie Granet-Abisset, and Michela Barbot and Matteo Di Tullio. Both chapters deal with political attempts to modernize mountain regions, focusing on the French Hautes Alpes *d partement* after the Second World War, and the mountainous regions of Lombardy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The article by Romed Aschwanden on supply policy conflicts between the Swiss federal authorities and cantonal representatives from Central Switzerland during the First World War raises a further area of interest for historians of knowledge: mountain populations' understanding of the space they inhabit and manage. It is just such a juxtaposition of the external and internal perspectives on altitude and the negotiation processes between the two positions that could generate further insights when exploring the question at issue here.

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MARKUS LAMPE and PAUL SHARP, *A land of milk and butter: how elites created the modern Danish dairy industry* (University of Chicago Press, 2018). 320 pp. 39 illus. \$65.00.

Danish history writing traditionally considers the late nineteenth-century cooperatives key to the success of the Danish road to economic development. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, middle-sized peasant-farmers united in cooperatives enabling them to produce butter competitively to the British market. The success story of the so-called Danish model was largely ascribed to these middle-sized farmers, who gained importance not only in economic matters but

also socially and politically. The Danish historian Thorkild Kj ergaard has described this predominant narrative as the 'peasant-farmer line' in Danish history writing. In their new book, Markus Lampe and Paul Sharp challenge this narrative.

The authors have both contributed significantly to the economic history of Danish agricultural development in previous articles, and their new book brings their research into a more complete account. This makes for a very original interpretation of the Danish success story. Their main argument throughout the book is that the cooperatives – their focus is on the important cooperative dairies – did not represent a turning point but rather a continuation of earlier Danish agricultural success. Throughout the book, they trace the roots of this development from the eighteenth century to the establishment of the first cooperative dairy in 1882 and their subsequent rapid spread.

In sixteenth-century Schleswig and Holstein – the German part of the Danish monarchy and personal union – estate owners developed a characteristic kind of field system called *kobbelwirtschaft*. This field system replaced the three-field rotation with an eleven-field rotation, which entailed more intensive cultivation and larger amounts of livestock. Estate owners often combined this rotation system with a centralized dairy on the estate; a combination termed the Holstein system. The system spread to estates in Denmark proper from the mid-eighteenth century when German elites started to buy estates in Denmark and imported German agricultural expertise. By 1800, most demesnes were using *kobbelwirtschaft*, some of which combined it with dairy production. Sharp and Lampe show that the first dairy cooperatives between 1882 and 1890 were more likely to be established closer to estates with a centralized dairy, and in a series of further arguments, they convincingly demonstrate that the introduction of the more centralized and rationalized Holstein system on Danish estates paved the way for Danish agricultural modernization.

Throughout chapters 4–7, Sharp and Lampe dive into different aspects of this process of agricultural modernization. They show how the landowning elite developed new rationalized accounting practices and techniques and disseminated their knowledge through agricultural journals and societies. These developments were important for the spread of high-quality butter production, firstly on estates and community dairies, later through the cooperatives. Estate owners, shipping entrepreneurs, and merchants worked together to establish trade links between Denmark and the British market long before 1864, which is conventionally recognized as the turning point for Danish

reorientation towards the British market. Through a trickle-down effect from estate production to farmers, these early, elite efforts of technological innovation, market integration, and human capital formation were crucial to the later success of the cooperatives.

In chapter 8, they add another important corrective to the traditional story of Danish agricultural modernization. Denmark is usually understood to have been a liberal paragon amidst an increasingly protectionist Europe by the later nineteenth century. In contrast to this view, and based on previous research, the authors demonstrate that Danish trade policy in fact offered considerable (implicit) subsidies to dairy production, thereby directly intervening in favour of a specialized sector.

Sharp and Lampe effectively complicate the traditional narrative of Danish agricultural modernization. Importantly, however, they continue to emphasize that the cooperatives were indeed crucial for the economic development by the later nineteenth century. While early elite innovations acted as the long-run preconditions for their success, the cooperatives were still important. The organizational form of cooperatives contributed to raising the productivity of dairy production more than both estate and community dairies (although the contribution of new technology was comparatively higher). Sharp and Lampe also turn against another common assumption by arguing that the cooperatives were capable of eclipsing both dairy production on the estates and private community dairies not due to a unique national homogenous culture among peasant-farmers, but rather due to the lack of internal competition and by being better to ensure product quality. While the authors briefly speculate on what would have happened had the cooperatives not been established, their focus remains on the question of their contribution to economic growth. However, the cooperative movement was influential in many other social and political aspects as well as important for explaining, for example, why Denmark not only successfully economically developed but also why and how it became one of the most egalitarian societies in the world.

Can the 'Danish model' effectively be implemented to ensure economic development today? In the final chapter, the authors argue that the discrepancy between the traditional ideal image of the Danish model and its actual historical preconditions goes a long way in explaining failed attempts to emulate the model in the twentieth century. In this sense, the book is a much-welcomed warning about looking to ideal 'models' of development without taking care to understand how these models were products of specific historical conditions. Nevertheless, the authors argue

that with this in mind, the Danish model still has important lessons for development policy today.

Sharp and Lampe's book is an important corrective to the traditional story of Danish agricultural modernization with a special interest for economic and agricultural historians. Any new writings of Danish economic and agricultural history will have to consider their findings. The reconsideration of the role of the cooperatives also have implications beyond the economic history of Denmark, and it will be interesting to see how Sharp and Lampe's findings and arguments will affect social, cultural, and political histories of the period as well.

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LLUÍS SERRANO JIMÉNEZ, *Tancar la terra: Pràctiques de propietat i dinàmiques socials (Catalunya, 1850–1910)* (Documenta Universitaria, 2018). 324 pp. €20.

The subject of this book, written in Catalan, is 'the making of enclosures (*procés de tancament de finques*) and the social construction of rural property in Catalunya during the second part of the nineteenth century' (back cover). It covers a rural southern European society in the period up to 1910, the year after the protests known as the 'tragic week' (25 July to 2 August 1909) took place in Barcelona, the capital of Catalunya and industrial stronghold of the rural Kingdom of Spain. Across the entire 'long nineteenth century', Spain was a predominantly rural kingdom, like much of southern Europe. One of the merits of this book is how it contextualizes practices of rural property in Catalunya in the '*longue durée*' (p. 25) preceding the First World War. Elsewhere in Europe, enclosures existed long before the unprecedented industrialization of the post-1850 period, which emerged in industrial outposts surrounded by persistently rural societies. As such, the author makes explicit reference to Marc Bloch (p. 11), the founder of *Annales*, who studied the 'agrarian individualism' and enclosures of pre-Revolutionary France which undermined feudalism and its privileges by favouring democratizing reforms involving land redistribution and republican citizenship.

*Tancar la terra* stems from a doctoral dissertation defended at the University of Girona in 2015, and investigates 'the discourses of the enclosure decrees in the Official Journals (*butlletins oficials*) of the four provinces of Catalunya' (p. 9), Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Tarragona. The book is divided into seven chapters and includes several statistical charts and maps. Serrano Jiménez begins by introducing his

main source and approach (the Official Journals and their discourses), and then surveys the 'socio-professional categories' (p. 79) linked to landed property, highlighting the importance of the aristocracy (p. 86). Then he uses the Official Journals to analyze how poor peasants were prevented from accessing increasingly privatized rural spaces. The focus then moves on to the legal enforcement of these prohibitions, and how they served dominant private interests. These interests also shaped the juridical dimensions of enclosure, itself deeply linked to 'the idea of exclusive and excluding property' (pp. 142, 165). In chapter 5, Serrano Jiménez examines how these dominant interests also took control of paths, which were progressively swallowed up by this 'more exclusive right of property' (p. 195). The penultimate chapter, on Catalunya's pioneering promotion of armed groups for 'the vigilant protection of private property' (p. 197), is particularly interesting and will be the subject of the remainder of this review. Finally, the author demonstrates that in rural Catalunya hunting rights largely remained a privilege of elites enjoying a period of unprecedented industrialization.

One of the finest historians of Catalunya, Pierre Vilar (who is repeatedly quoted in this book – on pp. 10, 16, and so on), highlighted the industrialization of this rural part of Spain. He collected empirical evidence which showed that, 'for the Catalan economic elites', the more rural rest of Spain never ceased to appear as 'a sort of colonial market to be artificially reserved for Barcelona' ('La vie industrielle dans la région de Barcelone', *Annales de géographie*, 1929). Integrating this industrial dimension would bring new insights for agricultural history, especially since it emerged during the period under examination in this book, involving complex phenomena of external and internal colonization. Moreover, our knowledge of differently industrialized European societies could be empirically deepened, enlarged and nuanced by considering the great property concentration that characterized the rural worlds of Southern Europe in this period. José Álvarez Junco recently highlighted how Edward Malefakis' *Agrarian reform and peasant revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War*, a 'masterpiece' written half a century ago, remains perennially fashionable because its empirical analysis of the rural worlds in Spain during the Second Republic (1931–36) deals 'in fact with all the great economic and political problems' (*El País*, 23 August 2016).

The anti-republican *Coup d'État* of 1936 used nationalist violence to bypass the complex problems related to the concentration of rural property in Spain and any democratizing reforms to rural property. Their *longue durée* roots have to do with what the

author calls 'the so-called Liberal Revolution' (p. 17), especially in the Spanish context so persistently marked by *caciquismo* (clientelism) within and beyond the rural worlds. Indeed, while the universal rights of political liberalism (freedom of conscience, etc.) were bloodily repressed by Francoism, avoiding democratizing reforms, the *laissez faire laissez passer* system of economic liberalism based on property was reinforced as never before. Thus, Catalunya fortified its dominant industrial position in the Spanish Kingdom, whose regime was established anew through the brutality of dictatorship. The relationship between violence and the 'silent revolution' (p. 26) of 'the great work of property' (p. 21) studied here, has then to be approached through a flexible chronology straddling both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. It would also be useful to compare Catalunya with other regions of the Kingdom.

In the sixth chapter, 'Vigilance, Repression and Rural Guards', Serrano Jiménez interestingly points out that, as early as in 1846, the Barcelona Association of Large Landowners (*Asociación de Propietarios de Barcelona*) 'asked the Queen to confer on their rural guards a public character' (p. 198). Comparisons with the rural Kingdom of Italy and especially with its Northern regions, where industrial nuclei emerged in another mostly rural space marked by clientelism and aristocratic big landowners, could shed new light on how self-serving dominant groups co-opted institutions and official roles in the name of the public good. A good way to avoid 'the great narrative of the development of the North' (p. 8), could be to demonstrate how and why the appropriation of power in this manner in Mediterranean Europe so often appears as a process operating in small fiefdoms, which mechanically reproduced local privileges in its rural and dominant worlds and beyond. As such, the question of 'property' in Catalunya, which is interestingly analysed by Serrano Jiménez, could be deepened and enlarged by adding to it the concepts of 'capital' and 'field', as the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu invites us to do.

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CONNIE Y. CHIANG, *Nature behind barbed wire: An environmental history of the Japanese American incarceration* (Oxford University Press, 2018). 328 pp. 34 illus. £22.99.

Since the nineteenth century, the abundance and open space of the American West represented freedom to immigrants and their descendants even as ecological constraints held them hostage to natural forces. In this narrative, new arrivals chose to resettle places that demanded an accommodation with the non-human



world. During the Second World War, the United States government forcibly removed Japanese Americans from the Pacific Coast and incarcerated them at internment camps located in the arid Western interior. As Connie Y. Chiang demonstrates in *Nature behind barbed wire*, the environmental realities of their relocation to, confinement at, and hardships living in the camps mediated their unjust treatment during the war. But Chiang also makes clear that in many ways Japanese Americans leveraged those material realities of the non-human world to enhance their living conditions and negotiate the terms of their incarceration. In this way, Chiang uses the environment as a lens through which to investigate the social relations of freedom, injustice, and agency that characterized the history of Japanese American internment camps during the war.

Barbed wire fences defined the physical space of the camps, and therefore the practical edges of Japanese American freedom during the war. By emphasizing the relationship between detainees and their environment, however, Chiang also illustrates how the fences serve as a wonderfully evocative metaphor for both the denial and reclamation of freedom. Chiang makes clear that fences created a framework for both for detainees and historians to understand how farm fields and gardens, a windswept and arid climate, and the enormity of the surrounding landscape shaped the wartime experience of Japanese Americans. Despite the importance of the fences as a literal and imaginative framing device, Chiang demonstrates that detainees consistently engaged with the environment outside camp settings through farm work, hiking, swimming, and fishing in ways that transgressed the fences. By exploring how Japanese Americans interacted with their environment during the war, Chiang demonstrates that they negotiated their incarceration every time they moved back and forth across the edges of the fenced camps. Yet, of course, as Chiang is careful to point out, 'True freedom remained elusive' for Japanese Americans living behind barbed wire (p. 173).

Indeed, one of the sad ironies of the Japanese American incarceration was that detainees made several meaningful and symbolic contributions to support a war being fought in the name of freedom at the same time as their own personal freedoms were denied. This contradiction was manifest nearly every time detainees interacted with the environment in and around the camps. When they cleared scrubland, dug irrigation ditches, and planted and harvested crops, detainees contributed to the war effort materially by engaging in what Chiang calls 'environmental patriotism' (chapter 5). But they often withheld their labour and went on strike to protest inadequate living

conditions and demeaning outdoor work that unfairly exposed them to the environment of the arid West. In negotiating their encounters with the environment inside and outside camp fences, Japanese Americans performed their freedom both through loyalty to the United States and by satisfying individual and community desires and needs.

Chiang's greatest contribution comes from connecting notions of Japanese American agency (or lack thereof), which have defined the study of their incarceration for many years, with a central tenet of environmental history that insists the non-human world also has agency capable of helping historians explain power relations between people and how they have changed over time. Incarceration is a denial of agency. But Chiang shows that despite detainees' 'state of relative dependence and their overall vulnerability ... they found many ways to harness nature and assert some control over the terms and conditions of their confinement. In doing so, they often proclaimed their Americanness' (p. 5). By highlighting their agency, not only in relation to the camp administrators and guards, but also in terms of a reciprocal relationship with the arid West, Chiang builds on work exploring environmental inequality by revealing that injustice was inextricably tied to much longer histories and understandings of place. 'If they [detainees] could turn desolate land into productive fields, like the white pioneers before them', Chiang argues, 'their confinement might appear all the more undemocratic. The foreboding landscapes of the camps, in short, could become a source of power in their wartime struggles for inclusion' (p. 98).

Yet, this quotation also contains one of several problematic word choices that Chiang uses throughout the book to describe the arid West where the camps were located. At various points, Chiang characterizes the environments where camps were located in pejorative terms (e.g. 'desolate,' 'unforgiving,' 'foreboding,' 'unmediated,' 'harsh,' 'adverse,' 'oppressive'). Certainly, ample evidence makes clear that these qualitative descriptions reflect how administrators and detainees perceived the camp environments. But Chiang's own use of this kind of language in her analysis is surprising considering that environmental historians have done a thorough job explaining how this privileges an outsider's view (most often characterized as Euro-centric) of places that were none of those things to Indigenous peoples, especially given that two of the camps Chiang examines were located on Native American reservations.

*Nature behind barbed wire* offers an interesting perspective on the intersection of environment and

injustice by exploring how Japanese Americans used their relationship with the non-human world to carve out greater control for themselves amidst wartime incarceration. At times, it is not clear how or why environmental history adds to our understanding of this history. Chiang does not always clearly explain why we need to understand the environment to understand the refusal of detainees to engage in arduous labour outdoors, or why they occasionally went on strike. Chiang insists that nature influenced their decisions, and she makes a convincing case for this. But as Chiang and others have so clearly articulated, Japanese Americans objected to dirty and disagreeable work, because they felt unjustly treated. The non-human world has agency in this story, but at times Chiang seems to confuse this with human agency. In the end, human oppression still explains this story better than nature behind barbed wire.

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VENUS BIVAR, *Organic resistance: the struggle over industrial farming in postwar France* (University of North Carolina Press, 2018). 240 pp. 16 b&w illus. \$29.95.

‘The story of postwar French agriculture,’ argues Venus Bivar in this readable and well-researched book, ‘is really two stories that must be told in parallel: the story of a brutal state-mandated industrialization and the story of those who resisted it with alternative methods and markets’ (p. 181). That, in a nutshell, is the shape and content of the story told here. Five substantive chapters cover the years between 1944 and 1980, oscillating between the extraordinary growth of export-focused industrial farming, and the early development of an organic movement that would eventually inform the turn to quality, and the environmental concerns, of more recent years.

If not a frontal assault on the idea that France is a ‘bastion of gastronomic quality’ (p. 49), the book nonetheless sets out to correct the too rose-tinted, too myopic vision of the country’s recent rural past, inasmuch as the latter is transmitted to us through pervasive stories of tradition, *appellations d’origine* and terroir. Following the Second World War, Bivar argues that the land and the agricultural practices of France changed profoundly, as the national government sought to rationalize a patchwork landscape, modernize farming methods, promote the service economy, and improve the country’s balance of payments by exporting basic foodstuffs to the European common market. These changes are illustrated both with analysis of policy, media coverage, and economic figures, and with

telling individual stories. Some of the economic figures are – if not surprising to some rural historians – at least remarkable: French exports to Europe increased by a factor of eight in the 1960s; total agricultural exports grew by 390 per cent between 1963 and 1974; and by that time, France stood as the second largest exporter of agricultural goods in the world.

One of the key arguments of the book is to be found in chapter 3, where Bivar explains that the idea of prosperity for all, so often used to justify post-war modernization efforts, was in reality limited to big players on the agricultural stage. As the size of viable farms increased, as farmers became increasingly indebted, as the number of farmers fell away, and as the state used its planning apparatus to help large farms consolidate their position, so disenchantment amongst small farmers spread. In the search for alternatives, Bivar charts the gradual rise of the organic movement, and hooks her analysis on key figures such as Raoul Lemaire and André Louis. We are shown a variety of motivations among the farmers and interested onlookers who join their ranks, and the community is built ‘one letter at a time’ (pp. 64–5), including collaboration across the border with farmers and scientists in Germany, and overseas. The organic products they helped to create in the 1950s and 1960s resonated first with popular ideas of health, vitality and purity, and later with growing anxieties about pesticides and environmental degradation. Though in the decades that followed, the organic movement split into different factions, its influence continued to grow, and in chapter 5 the author considers how its nationwide adoption by (generally small) farmers fed into an emerging policy agenda around environmental services, rural tourism, and the promotion of quality food and drink. In keeping with the book’s overall perspective, however, the author reminds us that whilst organic agriculture gained credibility in the 1970s, conventional agriculture was still going ‘at breakneck speed’ (p. 143).

Analysing the rural share of the *trente glorieuses* period of French history, Bivar convincingly argues that ‘the industrialization of French farming was one of the more stunningly thorough and brutally aggressive cases of agricultural transformation of the modern era’ (p. 176), and gives a nod to those scholars who have described the activity of the period as a revolution. She synthesizes a good deal of literature, much of it in French, and the book will provide substantial insight for those interested in that part of history but who can’t easily access it for language or other practical reasons. Bivar uses many of the farmers’ own words, harvested from personal correspondence and

the media, and diligent archival work allows her, for instance, to adduce evidence for a concerted campaign by identifying the same content on two different union letterheads (p. 109).

Anyone coming at this book's large subject in 200 pages is liable to receive criticism regarding omissions, particular foci, interpretation, and so on, notwithstanding the work's merits. One very minor issue which might chafe rural historian readers is the use of the term 'county' in the French context in chapter 1. Because they had no official status in the period under study, talking of counties as opposed to *départements*, cantons or regions is more distracting than helpful, and given the departmental map provided at the front of the book, unnecessary. Slightly more than semantically, the coverage of 'terroir', including the brief assertion that it had been a term 'largely dormant since the 1940s' (p. 5), could be improved. Where the author points to the significance of the public being educated on France's diverse *produits de terroir* in press coverage and government-sponsored guides in the 1980s, I would argue this formed part of a longer cultural tradition

of associating place with product, one rehearsed through gastronomic and viticultural maps from the late eighteenth century to the present day. Indeed, it would have been instructive to mention the annual *Salon Internationale de l'Agriculture*, held in Paris every year since 1964, amidst the great transformations of modernization so well documented in Bivar's book. That event offers a prospectus of agricultural goods from around the country and puts into motion what I have elsewhere called France's geographical culture ('Staging a nation's culinary geography at the Salon de l'Agriculture', *Cultural Geographies*, 2018, (25), pp. 643–9). Whilst we might disagree on the impact of that cultural sense, the author and I would probably agree on the propensity of many French products to rehearse a fantasy of rural France and its food production which diverts attention from its largely industrial character. Any scholar interested in that interface would be well advised to read this book.

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