

Book reviews

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Ben Dodds, *Peasants and production in the medieval north-east: the evidence from tithes, 1270–1536* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2007. Pp. xii + 205. 20 figs. 3 maps. 25 tabs. ISBN 9781843832874 Hbk. £50/\$85)

The holy grail for many historians of the medieval English economy is the reconstruction—albeit speculatively—of the practices, strategies, and success of peasant agriculture. In contrast to the surfeit of information about great landlords, documentary evidence provides only glimpses of the peasant economy. *Peasants and production* is therefore eye-catchingly bold as a title and the nature of the evidence used appears eye-catching, too. The book reports the findings of Dodds's research on the series of tithe receipts for Durham Cathedral Priory for the period 1270–1536. Tithes, an ecclesiastical tax of approximately one-tenth on all types of produce, have long been used by European historians to reconstruct fluctuations in agricultural output, but this important source of information has been largely overlooked by English historians. Dodds is thus among the first systematically to wrest data on grain output from medieval English tithes; such data, in this case relating to the Tyne-Tees region, can in his view 'shed a narrow shaft of light' (p. 13) on how medieval peasants 'saw the world around them'.

Two initial chapters set the scene, providing an overview of the use of tithes by historians, an introduction to the region (including reference to a mid-fifteenth century document that shows the Durham monks themselves analysing historic tithe income), and discussion of the method for estimating arable output from tithes. This method is unexpectedly complex since the bulk of the Durham evidence consists of the cash income that the monks received from the sale of corn tithes, while the combination of parishes under scrutiny changes from year to year. Indeed, Dodds acknowledges in an appendix that his method has developed even since his 2004 article in this journal. The heart of the book analyses long-term fluctuations in tithe receipts, and is divided into three chapters. The first deals with the period before the Black Death, when population and production in the north-east was driven seemingly down by problems with Scottish raids and bad weather. The second, by some margin the strongest of the three, provides a useful regional example of economic responses in the century after the Black Death (including increased coal-mining and sea-fishing). The third details the difficulties faced by arable farming in the north-east in the century before Durham Priory was dissolved. The book then ends with two innovative chapters, one examining the people who bought the tithes from the priory, the other attempting to explore the production strategies of those paying the tithes (peasants, broadly conceived). Peasants are generally seen as being constrained in their response to the market either by cultural imperatives or subsistence priorities, but Dodds suggests that the market was integral to their decision-making; in fact, he indicates that they responded adroitly to movements in prices. No longer, he argues, should peasants be seen as simple, isolated country-folk.

This could well be true, but the data presented here do not amount to a wholly persuasive case. While based on careful work, Dodds's conclusions are restricted severely by the nature of his evidence, in particular his need to rely chiefly on income from tithes that were sold. These are no substitute for records such as rectory accounts, which survive in number for other areas of medieval England and which give a fuller picture of the actual produce taken in tithe, not least the different types of grain received; indeed, the few

examples that Dodds is able to give of tithes collected in grain provide some of the most illuminating material in the book. In generating data on grain output, he has had to allow consequently for awkward unknowns such as the changing mix of tithe corn over time (which, given the apparent responsiveness of peasant farmers to prices, would have been considerable). Such variables might not unduly affect Dodds's data up to c.1450, given the scale of the changes wrought by the problems of the early fourteenth century and the Black Death, but there is more of a case to answer in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the year-to-year changes that Dodds observes are rather smaller. Furthermore, so-called 'small tithes', including pastoral produce, were not sold by the priory and so were not recorded in the office-holders' accounts. For a book that covers the later middle ages (when the balance between arable and pastoral husbandry shifted significantly in favour of the latter) and the north-east of England (where pastoral resources were abundant), this is problematic. Dodds has done his best to plug the gaps from other, often secondary, sources, but one cannot help feeling that an important part of the empirical story is missing. Thus, this book, while certainly useful and the fruit of solid research, neither realizes the full potential of medieval English tithes as a source nor, as a result, quite illuminates peasant agriculture in the way that the title suggests.

Claygate, Surrey

DAVID STONE

Henry R. French and Richard W. Hoyle, *The character of English rural society: Earls Colne, 1550–1750* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007. Pp. xxv + 309. 30 tabs. ISBN 9780719051081 Hbk. £60/\$85)

This book is primarily a detailed investigation of land transfers in the manors of Earls Colne and Colne Priory in the English parish of Earls Colne, making use of the excellent source publications of Alan Macfarlane. *The character of English rural society* addresses in particular the economic aspects of landholdership, demesne management, and the development of entry fines. It is not, however, a study of the character of Earls Colne society, because many inhabitants had no copyhold in the first place and the study ignores research that would have complemented its own emphasis on copyhold.

The study leads us back into the historiography of the 1960s and 1970s, when the Brenner debate raged and the wisdom of the application of the term 'peasant' from central and eastern European populations onto England began to be questioned, not least by Macfarlane. As the authors contend (p. 16), that debate has been superseded by understanding family–land relations as effects of demography and certain forms of tenure, rather than as a fixed societal model. As has been noted elsewhere, the presence of a local lord of the manor since the 1590s, the Harlakendens, proved to be a decisive factor for intra-village relations, not least because they tried to introduce their own clients into copyholds and to make their manors more profitable. As has also been stated earlier, enmity among some of the tenant families was one consequence of this, coupled with a lengthy feud between the earlier owners (the de Veres) and the Harlakendens, leading to considerable upheaval in the village.

The core of the study consists of the calculation of land turnover. As part of the debate on land turnover preceding this study, the authors have, both separately and jointly, in this journal and elsewhere, argued that it is difficult to measure turnover and to determine whether the results are 'impressive' or otherwise. This problem persists. Leaving aside for the moment such important methodological questions as the basic definition of the family, and thus the subsequent measurement of keeping land within a family, Hoyle made the important point (in *Past & Present*, 1995) that the distinction between inter-familial inheritance and sale to non-family members for cash is fraught with problems, for most

inheritances involved payment; for instance, to non-inheriting siblings. The advantages with inheritance point toward advantages of payment, not necessarily to differences in mentality. Evidence of decreasing or increasing turnover should, therefore, not incline us to speculate about changes in mentality, but to research the specific economic framework to make such changes comprehensible. These are only some of the important and sober considerations that form the background to the sophisticated statistical study in the book. It works with the distinction of different kinds of landholders and different patterns of landholding, of acquiring and selling land, over the life cycle. Across the period researched roughly 60 per cent of all copyholders inherited some land, while 54 per cent managed to bequeath some to their own heirs or heir, and 32 per cent bought all of their holdings. On the whole, 'Earls Colne was a parish in which the purchase and sale of land was as normal and familiar as the inheritance of land' (p. 198). This result vindicates, on the whole, most of the statements of Macfarlane, and clearly sets at least this English local society apart from central or eastern European peasant societies.

On balance, this is not a study of the character of Earls Colne rural society. Thus, it does not deal sufficiently with the many non-copyholders, either sub-tenants or landless people in the village, and fails to take into account the research on them (but see p. 71, where their existence is confirmed indirectly by a comparison between the hearth taxes and the rental of 1678). It does not take account of the research on the social status, age and gender of Earls Colne offenders at the ecclesiastical courts nor, for instance, on the proportion of hearth tax payers in the registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials in the local parish registers; the changes in the timing of marriages in the parish registers during the seventeenth century; the rate of appearance of new names in the parish registers; or the reappearance of taxpayers in the hearth taxes from 1662 to 1675 according to assessed hearths. Hoyle and French thus missed the opportunity to pull together a more complete image of Earls Colne. Having said that, their study of turnover rates of copyhold, of sub-tenancy, of the nature of demesne management, of entry fines, and of relations between the lord of the manor and copyholders, provides us with admirable detail, and for all its limitations no one wishing to study early modern English rural society can afford to miss this study.

Erasmus University Rotterdam

ROBERT VON FRIEDEBURG

Nancy Cox and Karin Dannehl, *Perceptions of retailing in early modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. xv + 214. 18 plates. ISBN 9780754637714 £55/\$99.95)

Retailing history is an area that has received growing attention in recent years—a trend which is part of the more general burgeoning of interest in consumption. This book seeks a niche in what is an increasingly crowded market by focusing on how contemporaries perceived retailing—as participants and commentators—and how they communicated these perceptions through a variety of media, from paintings and novels to newspaper advertisements and petitions to Parliament. As an organizing principle, perception has considerable merit: it highlights an aspect of retailing often neglected by historians intent on quantifying retail change or telling the story of particular stores, and adds intellectual rigour to the enquiry.

Following an introduction which touches, albeit lightly, on topics as varied as art history and social theory, the authors use the lens of perception to explore a variety of themes. Attention centres first on visual and literary representations of retailing, the authors highlighting the way in which shops were seldom given centre stage and were not infrequently 'air-brushed' from images of town and particularly country. This argument seems to hold good for the eighteenth century, but some reference to the plethora

of seventeenth-century plays set in the London exchanges or on Cheapside would form a useful counterpoint to the argument. Consideration turns next to contemporary attitudes to those selling outside the fixed shop. Itinerants, of course, receive most attention since they were subjected to the most vilification by contemporary commentators and especially shopkeepers, not, as the authors point out, that this stopped many early-modern consumers (even the gentry) from drawing on their services. The world of advertising is explored in two chapters. The first of these, on 'virtual supply', comprises an analysis of the purpose, structure and language of advertisements. The second, on 'place names and fashions', focuses on the way in which certain centres of manufacture and fashion were deployed in the advertisements of retailers. Here, attention centres initially on English towns, but later extends into Europe—a welcome broadening of horizons. London also forms the focus of the next chapter, where its image and attraction as a centre of supply is assessed. Particularly interesting here is the discussion of ways in which provincial retailers sought to counteract the lure of London as well as playing on their links to the metropolis. This is followed by an examination of how shopping came to be constructed as a pleasurable activity. Drawing heavily on Cox's previous work in its early sections, this chapter finishes with a more conceptual discussion of how shopping might be defined. This sets the tone for the final chapter, which is an essentially conceptual piece exploring notions of access, space, and distance.

There is much to admire in this somewhat eclectic mix of topics: not least the way in which conceptual arguments are grounded in detailed empirical material. Particularly useful in this respect is the treatment of advertising, which moves beyond the typical utilization of advertisements to illustrate broader arguments and seeks to explore the way in which they formed representations of retailers and the goods they sold. The initial proposition in this argument—that goods were virtually supplied through these advertisements—would benefit from more sustained discussion and a greater engagement with the literature. However, the authors are persuasive in their treatment of the central idea: that advertisements were socially constructed by retailers and socially deconstructed by the consumers who read them. One question that arises, though, is whether they were, in this sense, *conceptions* as much as *perceptions*. Naturally, they sought to mould the latter, but in themselves they were surely conscious attempts to shape the virtual spaces of consumption. Space, in a more general sense, forms an important sub-theme of the book. The authors choose to explore the complexities of the social-spatial dialectic in terms of location (that is, place) and distance. Their discussion of these ideas allows them to make some useful contributions to the debate on the spatial structuring of supply and demand, especially in terms of the customer-retailer relationship. It also leads to some interesting speculations on the dematerialization of retailing. More generally, however, sustained treatment of these ideas is inhibited by the limited reference made to spatial theory—something that has colonized so many aspects of social and even economic history recently.

Despite these limitations, this book has much to offer. There is a wealth of empirical material that supplements rather than duplicates Cox's excellent *The complete tradesman* (2000). Unfortunately, this is referenced to the digital archive of the University of Wolverhampton's 'Dictionary of Traded Goods' project, rather than the original archives. Nonetheless, the reader can garner many useful insights into the activities and image of provincial and metropolitan retailers. More importantly, perhaps, there is a genuine attempt to conceptualize some key aspects of retailing. This opens up some fascinating new perspectives on early-modern retailing, most particularly the ways in which their image was commodified through the advertisements, novels, paintings, and much else discussed in this book.

Northampton University

JON STOBART

Natasha Glaisyer, *The culture of commerce in England, 1660–1720* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006. Pp. x + 220. 2 figs. ISBN 9780861932818 Hbk. £40/\$75)

Natasha Glaisyer's book forms a welcome addition to a distinct body of writing about the social and cultural history of British commerce, typified in recent work by Perry Gauci on the politics of trade, Deborah Valenze on money, and John Smail and Craig Muldrew on credit and obligation. It does not pretend to be a comprehensive survey of the diverse ways in which commerce was reorganized, promoted and depicted during a critical period, and instead focuses on four areas or case studies: the Royal Exchange, sermons preached before the Levant Company, merchants' manuals, and newspapers. Aside from the second essay which stands somewhat apart from the rest, the central theme is the circulation of commercial intelligence: informative, advisory, and didactic. Its purpose was primarily practical and technical, but beyond this, the emergence of a new specialized language of trading terms is interpreted as demarcating commerce as an area of knowledge worthy of study by gentlemen. Roger North, for example, writing in 1714, claimed that merchants' accounts were 'worthy to be put among Sciences, and to be understood by all Virtuosi' (cited p. 118), and argued the case for exactness and transparency. As the author suggests, the language of commercial publications can be interpreted as a means of promoting the trustworthiness and professionalism of merchants or, with a different emphasis, as a generalized 'rhetorical defence of trade'.

It is arguable that commerce, in its expansive late-seventeenth-century phase, required little in the way of legitimization. Institutional changes, war, and commercial and currency crises each generated specific problems addressed by lobbyists and special interest groups, which by the early eighteenth century had generated an enormous pamphlet literature. However, the identification of mercantile interests with national prosperity, established in the 1650s and sealed by the navigation code of 1660 and 1663, provided merchants with a secure position in society throughout the post-Restoration decades. Indeed, as Glaisyer shows in a revealing chapter on the dual identity of the Royal Exchange as a fashionable shopping centre and a hub of commercial information, growing public interest in the world of the merchant demanded a vicarious sense of involvement. Guidebooks and commercial literature facilitated the taking of 'imaginary journeys' into the otherwise mysterious world of commerce.

During the war-torn 1690s, the celebratory tone of some of the earlier literature was displaced by the growth of London newspapers providing a range of specialized business information, including exchange rates, and commodity and stock prices. The author concludes that it was the speculative fever of the 1690s that most influenced the printed culture of commerce, and introduced specialized business information to the general reader. John Houghton's periodic *Collection for improvement of husbandry and trade* (1692–1703) occupies an important place in this stage of the argument, despite the fact that the author struggled to sell the series, even with the financial support of 28 Fellows of the Royal Society. Generally, contemporary writers made exaggerated claims about the size and character of their readership, and reliable information is especially difficult to come by for serial publications in this period. Glaisyer acknowledges the problem (pp. 104–5), but to an old-fashioned quantitatively-inclined economic historian, this remains a minor stumbling block.

As a self-consciously cultural history of the cult of commerce, it must be said that this book makes very modest claims about the impact of commercial information on political discourse and economic life. Recent explanations for the rise of the Amsterdam market, especially from Clé Lesger and Oscar Gelderblom, have replaced the traditional picture of a central staple market organized around the mere stockpiling of commodities with a socio-cultural emphasis. Information exchange and its dissemination, the integration of merchant networks and the accumulation of entrepreneurial skills are singled out as the

key transformative influences operating on this 'great Staple of News'. Factors such as these undoubtedly played a key role in the rise of London as a world entrepôt, but the navigation code and the 'warehousing system' which followed ensured that stockpiling would retain its importance for eighteenth-century British commerce.

University of Kent

DAVID ORMROD

Perry Gauci, *Emporium of the world: the merchants of London, 1660–1800* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006. Pp. x + 254. 15 figs. ISBN 9781847250292 Hbk. £60/\$126)

During the long eighteenth century, London emerged as the dominant commercial and financial centre in Europe, if not the world. Given the significance of this transformation, and the important role that the metropolis played in Britain's economic growth, Gauci's study sets out to study the agents of this change: London's overseas merchants. The book's findings are based on a comprehensive study of published sources, both contemporary and modern, and are further informed by two large samples of merchants collected by the author, one from 1690 and a second from 1763.

Gauci's account begins with the Great Fire of 1666, dramatic in its own right, but also symbolically important because the responses to it—by merchants, the government, and the nation—can be read as a signal of the changing perceptions of the importance of trade that set the stage for London's ascendancy. The remainder of the book, however, is developed in a synchronic rather than narrative fashion, for in general Gauci emphasizes the continuities across the long eighteenth century rather than the developments within it. Thus chapter two, which examines the built environment, shows that the locus of mercantile activity remained concentrated in the eastern end of the City proper, despite massive growth in the volume of trade, the size the city, and the lure of the more fashionable West End.

The next four chapters explore aspects of the life of overseas merchants. There are two chapters examining their day-to-day existence, looking first at the Exchange (a required part of any merchant's daily round) and then at topics such as the complex choreography—involving customs officials, ship captains, four kinds of porters, car-men, and wharfingers—needed to land a cargo. These are followed by two chapters that take a more synoptic approach, looking first at the characteristics of the profession and then at the merchant's life cycle. If there is one question that hovers over this survey, and Gauci intends his work to raise questions, it is his portrayal of overseas merchants as a relatively distinct group. We are told to imagine them at the Exchange, in 'intense negotiations' and 'gesticulating in the heat of a deal' (p. 45) but, with due acknowledgement to the substantial re-export trade, most of these deals must have been with correspondents who were not engaged in overseas trade. Were those deals always made at the Exchange? How did merchants dispose of their imported cargos or assemble goods for export? In short, how did merchants interact with the supporting cast that made their trade possible?

The final chapters of the book address the place of the overseas merchant in English society. Chapter 7 explores the merchants' role in London's developing financial markets, a potentially lucrative arena for some but one tarnished by the pejorative connotation of stock-jobbing. Chapter 8 then examines the complex and subtle ways in which merchants were involved in politics. Here again, the question of the distinctiveness of the overseas merchant emerges. For example, Gauci reads the patriotic display of the Lord Mayor's Show in 1761 as an illustration of the muted and expedient political voice of the overseas trader—but how can the point be limited to that group given that the new Lord Mayor it was celebrating, Sir Samuel Fludyer, was also a colossus in the inland trade?

Different audiences are likely to have different assessments of the significance of *The emporium of the world*. Specialists in the field will find much here that is familiar. The book

is not particularly analytical, nor does it engage directly with the historiography on eighteenth-century commerce to advance any new arguments about topics such as the development of trade or the merchants' role in society. This audience will regret that Gauci does not provide a closer look at the rich archival material on which his understanding of the merchant group is based. Most notably, readers familiar with his excellent *The politics of trade* (2001) will recognize the influence of the 1690s sample of merchants on which that book is based, but will find no substantive discussion of the parallel sample of merchants from 1763 alluded to in the introduction of this book, nor what a comparison of the two samples could reveal.

In fairness, however, it should be noted that Gauci does not have the specialist audience in mind; rather, his goal was to write a book that will humanize the economic and social history of this period, bringing the overseas merchant to life. Seen from the perspective of specialists in other periods or the general reader interested in the development of London as a commercial giant, the book is undoubtedly a success; it is well written, engaging, and informative, and there is enough material in the notes to satisfy anyone interested in pursuing these topics further.

University of North Carolina Charlotte

JOHN SMAIL

Jon Stobart, Andrew Hann, and Victoria Morgan, *Spaces of consumption: leisure and shopping in the English town, c.1680–1830* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007. Pp. viii + 247. 15 figs. 9 tabs. ISBN 9780415424554 Hbk. £65/\$120; ISBN 9780415424561 Pbk. £21.99/\$39.95)

Two lines on the final page of *Spaces of consumption* sum up its argument neatly: 'Consumerism lay at the heart of the eighteenth-century town, and space lay at the heart of consumerism' (p. 195). As the title of the book indicates, the authors are concerned particularly with two aspects of 'consumerism': shopping and leisure. Their focus is on a specific section of the population: those provincial elites who were at the heart of the eighteenth-century 'urban renaissance', and whose consumer activities—the authors argue—both shaped, and were shaped by, the urban spaces where these took place. Indeed, space is at the heart of this book, its main aim being to explore the relationship between urban spaces, material culture, and consumption.

Spaces of consumption is thus organized in chapters that concentrate on different levels of space, starting with 'the region'; then sharpening the focus to 'the town', 'the street', and 'the building'; concluding with 'the individual' and the abstract spaces associated with advertisements. This arrangement works very well, with each chapter using a wealth of empirical information to focus on specific themes, while adding a further layer to the overall argument.

The book opens with an exploration of the shifting hierarchies of consumption in north-west England and the west Midlands, the regions on which the authors concentrate. Here they find that some towns—not only the largest and wealthiest, but also those best placed within a network of urban and rural spaces—could offer a greater (and growing) range of shopping and leisure opportunities, with towns at the other end of the scale dismissed by contemporaries as 'poor' or 'mean'. The construction of eighteenth-century towns as 'polite' spaces is considered next. This, the authors stress, was a project that required time, money, and effort on the part of the urban elite (and of commercial interests), whether it involved 'improving' the main thoroughfares, creating elegant residential squares, constructing leisure sites such as assemblies, or establishing civic enterprises such as infirmaries. Putting the physical infrastructure in place, furthermore, was not enough to ensure that a town acquired an identity as a civilized and fashionable place.

People's behaviour was also key, and public activities such as promenading, shopping, and polite conversation underscored a town's civilized status, a status that could be undermined all too easily by rude behaviour, generally on the part of the lower orders: hawking, begging, bull-baiting, and street markets were among the activities increasingly seen as 'repulsive to persons of taste and refinement' (p. 91).

The desire to separate the 'rough' from the polite was expressed most clearly in the context of the street. However, the authors also show that hierarchies of access also operated inside buildings devoted to polite sociability, and supposedly open to all those willing to pay the admission price: the practice of inviting favoured customers into separate spaces within the shop or the seating arrangements in theatres, for example, reflected individuals' varying claims to polite status. That said, while many consumers no doubt aspired to be part of a genteel elite, set apart from uncouth 'others', equally sought after was the more exciting social mixing of pleasure gardens or the races. Indeed, as the authors explain, 'motivations to consume urban material culture were nothing if not complex' (p. 166). An activity as straightforward as becoming a member of a subscription library, for example, could be motivated by a desire to acquire the social cachet and contacts that these institutions provided, by a desire to 'cultivate' one's mind, by a sense of public duty—or indeed by a mixture of these.

Perhaps inevitably, the authors are more successful at providing empirical evidence of efforts to provide consumers with venues where they could shop or have fun, than they are at demonstrating their further contention, that consumers were in turn influenced by such spaces. Thus, it is easier to show that shopkeepers—particularly those in the luxury trades—sought to create an ambience of refinement and opulence, including through sophisticated advertisements, than to demonstrate that (and how) these influenced customers' behaviour and desires. It could be argued that they provided possibilities, which consumers might take up, or might not.

This is just one area where this thought-provoking and thoroughly researched book both makes an important contribution to, and will hopefully spark further debate on, the nature of eighteenth-century consumption. As the authors demonstrate amply, a focus on space sheds new light not only on shopping and leisure, but also provides a useful perspective through which to view the web of relationships between all those involved in the act of consumption, including planners and architects, entrepreneurs, and landlords, as well as the buyers of the end product, not forgetting those who sought to acquire goods without spending any money, or who tried to have fun at others' expense.

University of Wolverhampton

LAURA UGOLINI

John V. C. Nye, *War, wine and taxes: the political economy of Anglo-French trade, 1689–1900* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007. Pp. xvi + 174. 19 figs. 10 tabs. ISBN 9780691129174 Hbk. £17.95/\$29.95)

Nye returns in this book to the provocative thesis he first propounded in an article in the *Journal of Economic History* (1991), where he suggested that not only was Britain's reputation as the free trade leader in the nineteenth-century world system undeserved but that the economy of 'Fortress France' was much more open than that of Britain. Such a startling reversal of both contemporary and historical opinion met swift rebuttal in some quarters, and Nye has rethought some of his previous positions carefully. He returns also to the charge reinforced by some recent developments in trade theory (particularly the Anderson-Neary model), which contribute to his important Appendix, measuring the welfare effects of British and French tariffs. Nevertheless, his central thesis remains that historians have overrated the importance of the repeal of the corn laws in 1846 while

underestimating that of the Anglo-French commercial treaty of 1860. Until 1860, in particular Britain had left in place her 'mercantilist' wine duties, a legacy of Anglo-French conflict in the late seventeenth century, but which had become central to the fiscal-military state in the eighteenth century. That state had protected systematically the brewers' oligopoly, ensuring the British became a nation of beer-drinkers, while Portugal, favoured for anti-French reasons, supplied the market for wine products. On the other hand, Nye argues, with a much slimmer body of evidence and explanation, that France was 'more genuinely free trade' than Britain. Britain's and France's relative positions with regard to openness of trade were therefore only reversed after 1870, after Britain had modified her wine duties in 1860.

Others will be better placed to judge the merits of Nye's statistics, but how convincingly does his impressively-supported revisionist argument displace the existing orthodoxy? First, we have to accept his measurement of protection, for he counsels us to abandon the idea that French prohibitions mattered quantitatively, while he discounts the traditional view that British wine duties were 'revenue' only, on the grounds that they had important distorting effects in combination with the Methuen treaty (favouring trade with Portugal) and state exploitation of the excise system in conjunction with 'big brewing'. (Incidentally, Nye here offers a novel interpretation of the excise crisis of 1733, as an exercise in rationalization which fell foul of the 'bargain' between the state and the brewers.) The distorting effects of the wine duties and their war-driven origins are presented with some plausibility, but it still requires a leap of imagination to believe that, at a time of growing industrialization, British coal miners and foundry workers would have happily slaked their thirst with a glass or two of French claret. Secondly, if the wine duties were 'mercantilist', we might doubt if Britain did abandon mercantilism even in 1860. Admittedly in 1860 the Liberal chancellor Gladstone (whose premiership on p. 30 Nye antedates by 15 years) had indeed wished to promote 'Gladstone claret' at the expense of the brewers but after an initial boost to French wine consumption (here Nye might usefully have consulted James Simpson's 'Selling to reluctant drinkers: the British wine market, 1860–1914', *Economic History Review*, 2004), a mass market failed to materialize. Contrary to Nye's assertion (p. 117), this did worry 'free trade ideologues', according to whom the real problem with the British tariff was that the wine duties had not been liberalized sufficiently in the 1860s and that Britain's dependence on revenue from beer and spirits remained an obstacle to her ability to consolidate the free trade treaty system initiated in 1860.

While, therefore, the Nye thesis is beset with difficulties, his account has some notable strengths. This is the first substantial attempt to analyse the importance of the wine duties to the fiscal-military state, and he makes his case with elegance and economy. Even so, here he pays too little attention to the attitude of the brewing industry to the removal of their 'mercantilist' favours in the 1860s. Nye's case that repeal of the corn laws in 1846 did not lead to a hegemonic role for Britain is also well judged, although it is a pity that he does not extend his understanding of free trade to include issues such as imperial preference and the Navigation Acts, whose abandonment gives some credence to the case for a wider revolution in the 1840s. On the French side, one cannot help feeling that Nye has not explained fully why so many Frenchmen were blind to the liberalization of French tariff policy before 1860 or believed that free trade policies under Napoleon III were a threat to the interests of the 'protectionist nation'. Readers ready to accept the author's contention that we should assess trade policy not by contemporary perceptions but by the 'retroactive tools of discovery' will therefore find this a more rewarding book than those whose historical interests lie beyond testing whether Britain was a free trader according to the latest standard of measurement.

University of East Anglia

ANTHONY HOWE

Alannah Tomkins, *The experience of urban poverty, 1723–82: poverty, charity and credit* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006. Pp. xi + 289. 9 figs. 22 tabs. ISBN 0719075049 Hbk. £55/\$85)

Within the last 15 years or so, studies of the old poor law have moved from analyses of how it was supposed to be administered to analyses of how it functioned in practice; what sorts and conditions of people made use of it; and how frequently and under what conditions it was used—in short, how it operated from the ground level upwards. Additionally, it has been linked to the rapidly developing studies of philanthropic and medical endeavours. Within these spheres, Tomkins has carved out a niche for herself as the historian of English provincial towns under the old poor law. This book considers English workhouses more widely, but at its core are detailed studies of Oxford, Shrewsbury, and York, with additional material from Northampton and Chester. Inevitably, this gives the book a bias towards non-industrializing towns, strengthened further by the decision to end the study in 1782. This can all be defended, and is so defended in the introduction. Examining those on the receiving end of the old poor law is not straightforward. The records might not survive in sufficient detail and town populations are very mobile, and thus difficult to pin down—hence the lack of urban family reconstitutions by historical demographers. The towns chosen here are reasonably similar and have good records. The time period is between Knatchbull's Act of 1723, which established the workhouse movement, and Gilbert's Act of 1782, which had quite marked effects on the administration of the poor law.

The balance of the book is a testament to how far the study of poor relief has progressed beyond the Webbs. There are essentially two ways of approaching poor relief from below. One way is to reconstruct life histories, which is feasible, for instance, in large Westminster parishes with populations over 10,000 and which organized their poor relief efficiently. It is sometimes feasible for the rural or small town parishes examined by Steven King. It is difficult for the larger English provincial towns. Tomkins has—probably wisely—chosen an alternative route; that is, to examine the totality of relief available to the poor, to take this as far down to the individual life as possible, and to link lives where they can be linked conveniently. Three chapters out of eight are on charities: 'traditional', medical, and educational. Another chapter is on pawnbroking. The introduction has some rather brief discussions of the administration of poor relief. There is one chapter—only one—on life in urban workhouses. This can be defended on the grounds that the workhouses housed about 2 per cent of their towns' populations in the 1770s, and charities, outdoor relief, and pawnbroking mattered much more, but there are problems with this. A workhouse such as St Martin-in-the-Fields in Westminster housed about 3 per cent of the population at any one time, but throughput was rapid, and the workhouse was particularly important for the old as well as for young single women, whether pregnant or not. This matters if one is dealing with life histories, but less so here. The time constraints of modern academic life, which militate against two or three years' additional work on a couple of chapters that may or may not be successful, impose restrictions.

On the whole, the limitations of the sources mean that the chapters on charity and poor relief are among the more successful chapters in the book. The chapter on medical welfare and provincial infirmaries relies on a good set of sources and is particularly well done. We are taken through parish medical relief, parish deaths and burials, short-term crises and regular relief, the discharge records of selected provincial infirmaries, and pauper patient experiences at Shrewsbury, Northampton, and York. Of course one wants more—the possible medicalization of parochial poor relief systems, the provision for those without a settlement in the town, the coming of dispensaries—but this is enough for one chapter. The chapter on 'traditional' charities is largely confined to Oxford, where there is information on almshouses, but it enables Tomkins to suggest that only about 10 per cent of town

charity disbursements went to people who received parish relief at the same time. There is a chapter on charity schools, which ranges more widely—charity schools had some mild success improving life chances, but not much, and at any rate in Oxford the children of paupers receiving regular aid tended not to attend the charity school. There was no great tension between charity schools and parish apprenticeships. The final chapter is on pawnbrokers, and marks a particularly welcome and novel widening of focus. A version of it has been published previously. In particular, it uses the painstakingly reconstructed records of a pawnbroker in York, who played a central role in the economy of the poor.

That leaves the chapter on life in the urban workhouse, where the absence of large numbers of life histories is more striking. For instance, we are given the breakdown between adult men, adult women, and children in the various workhouses, usually around the mid-eighteenth century. This may well be the first time such information has been brought together, but one would like more than three pages discussing the differences between towns and the similarities and differences of their paupers. More information on pensions would have been welcome. There is a long and rather good section on food provision in workhouses, but this would be better if it went hand-in-hand with estimates of how long people stayed in the workhouse, the use of the workhouse as a hospital (or at any rate as a place for recuperation—a two-week stay was common in St Martin's workhouse, quite possibly for medical reasons), and the age breakdown. Perhaps the evidence does not permit a satisfactory breakdown.

The experience of urban poverty is therefore a good account of the administration of poverty in some eighteenth-century English country towns, pointing the way forward for such studies. What it sets out to do, it does well.

University of Birmingham

LEONARD SCHWARZ

Anthony Twist, *A life of John Julius Angerstein, 1735–1823: widening circles in finance, philanthropy, and the arts in eighteenth-century London* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006. Pp. x + 606. 36 plates. ISBN 9780773455832 Hbk. £89.95/\$149.95)

Angerstein is one of those prominent eighteenth-century figures that any number of writers on trade, politics, and polite society make reference to, but of whom no one appears to know much. He is probably the most familiar name after Rothschild in the foreign-born merchants that settled in London but, at a glance, the literature on him appears little more than 1 per cent of that on the celebrated Jewish house. Reference to the article on Angerstein in the *Oxford dictionary of national biography* confirms how scant is our store of information. We are, therefore, grateful to Twist for his painstaking work in assembling this biography from many diverse sources and scraps of evidence.

Born in St Petersburg in 1736 of an English merchant father, Angerstein was connected with the Lloyd's register of shipping and underwriting from about 1760, though he did not become a naturalized British subject until 10 years later. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, some 500 British ships sailed to St Petersburg every summer, giving growing and ample scope for the marine insurance broker. This was Angerstein's bread and butter for most of his long career. His mercantile network and reputation (not least for integrity) made him the 'Father of Lloyds' and the doyen of his financial sector.

Various legends have become attached to Angerstein's name, including the story that he was a bastard child of Catherine the Great and, as a merchant, an owner of slave plantations in the Caribbean. Twist investigates these stories at length, and finds them and other exotic lines without substance. However, he does show how Angerstein's growing wealth led him to diversify into various enterprises including ship broking (mainly during the American War of Independence), ship owning, loan contracting, real estate (mainly in

Lincolnshire), and art collecting. He was a generous man, his name appearing high up on numerous subscription lists for good causes.

'Widening circles' appears appropriately in the subtitle of this book, and indeed it could have been titled justifiably *The Angerstein circle*. Angerstein acted constantly as a member of a syndicate, underwriter's list, subscription list, or pressure group, joining names assembled from his friends and connections round the City. Whether for his own economic gain, for national benefit, or for philanthropy, the same kind of procedure was employed. Twist investigates many of these connections, outlining their careers and contributions to Angerstein's multifarious enterprises. In short, the book is almost as much a study of the economic, social, and cultural life of the City of London as a life of one financier at the centre of it. The only thing that Angerstein failed to do was to enter Parliament, and that only because he was disqualified by his foreign birth, for he had numerous friends who became MPs.

The role for which Angerstein is remembered most is that of loan contractor during the Napoleonic Wars. Angerstein, Baring, and their friends raised a staggering £131 million for the government, while the Rothschilds transmitted much of it to the Continent to support the allied war effort. Angerstein's surviving notebook reveals the wide range of people that filled his subscription lists, some 250 names including the Prince Regent's circle, Jews, and Huguenots, but mostly the City professionals who had learned to trust his judgement over the years.

No researcher is more assiduous in collecting information than Twist, and he knows how to set his details in a proper context. However, despite the utmost dedication, there is a disappointing paucity of personal papers with which to identify and assess the real man. Angerstein was noticed and remarked on by a wide range of contemporaries, but there is still a problem of breathing life into the bones. At the end of a long book, we still do not know the real Angerstein, or what motivated him. Like so many respected public figures before and since, Angerstein remains well-recognized rather than well-known.

Southwell, Notts

STANLEY CHAPMAN

Nigel Goose, ed., *Women's work in industrial England: regional and local perspectives* (Hatfield: Local Population Studies Society, 2007. Pp. xiv + 402. 39 figs. 58 tabs. ISBN 9780954162115 Pbk. £14.95)

Since the publication of Ivy Pinchbeck's path-breaking *Women workers and the industrial revolution* (1930), historians have attempted to unearth the variegated patterns of female working during the nineteenth century. Formally, textile and clothing factories and domestic service provided the majority of women's employment opportunities, but many women engaged informally and intermittently with the labour market. The editor of this volume makes no claim for comprehensive or even representative coverage, but Goose's collection makes important strides in that direction. Any attempt to enhance our understanding of the nature of women's work during industrialization and beyond is to be welcomed. One which stimulates debate and propels research in new directions is to be applauded. One which combines important, previously published writing with novel research is performing a valuable function. This collection succeeds on all fronts and, therefore, becomes essential reading not only for historians of women's work but also for labour historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Thematic and methodological threads run through the individual chapters. Inevitably, the local and regional perspective is pursued vigorously and effectively; but there are other links, including the relationship between women's marital status and their engagement with work. Gender-specific life-cycle concerns shape several studies explicitly (Christine Jones, John McKay, Osamu Saito) and others less overtly so (Stana Nenadic, Nigel

Goose). The informality and flexibility of women's work is demonstrated in many essays, including Goose's imaginative investigation of Hertfordshire straw plait and hat trades. Most striking, however, is the ubiquity of the census, used by the authors with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Edward Higgs recasts his well-founded criticisms of the census, and Owen Davies, in a fascinating chapter on female healers, argues that as an indicator of the complex ways in which women raised an income the census is generally unrevealing. Such cautious approaches meet the bullishness of Leigh Shaw-Taylor and Michael Anderson, for whom the census roundly beats all other sources in the contest for evidential value. However, it is precisely by seeking and analysing sources beyond the material collected by and for a male-dominated state, that historians of women and gender have contributed most creatively to our knowledge of women's work hitherto; and there are plenty such examples in this collection. Among the most successful are the contributions of Pamela Sharpe and Nicola Verdon, which explore the position of women in agriculture; the former draws on a range of sources (including wage books) to demonstrate the diversity of occupations and tasks performed by women across localities, while the latter achieves an equivalent outcome by incorporating parliamentary records into her more qualitative analysis of farm accounts. Saito's essay, investigating carefully a combination of late-eighteenth-century local listings and nineteenth-century census material, not only shows the complex shape of women's work as influenced by major life events, but also that such patterns vary significantly from place to place.

Several further chapters contribute to the complex explanation for women's heterogeneous association with the labour market. Typically, young, single women have been seen to dominate most of the new forms of industrial employment as well as many traditional trades; yet the work of married women, often neglected in the historical literature and sometimes, arguably, by census enumerators, are given a more central place in this volume. This is especially true of Christine Jones's comparison of the significance of marital status for work in five contrasting areas; and one of Anderson's two contributions, which challenges vigorously Sara Horrell and Jane Humphries's research on household budgets, while making a robust plea for the greater use of the much-maligned census. Also in this category are John McKay's exploration of the relatively high levels of married women's factory work in Lancashire, which, he believes, was reflected fairly in the mid-nineteenth-century censuses, but acknowledges that more casual female work may be less rigorously recorded; Marguerite Dupree's analysis of the life-cycle issues represented in the unusual case of the pottery trade; and Eilidh Garrett's examination of the censuses between 1891 and 1921, which also provides a useful appendix on instructions provided to enumerators about women's work.

The editor has done a fine job of contextualizing the contributions with an expertly crafted critical historiography. This volume fulfils entirely its objective of asserting the scrutiny of women's work at the local and regional level, but is less explicit on how this might transform the national overview. Ultimately, it confirms the fruitfulness of local investigation (indeed scholarship adopting this approach is appearing all the time), the direction of future research, and the distance still to be travelled by historians of women's work during the period of industrialization and beyond.

University of Leeds

KATRINA HONEYMAN

Marjaana Niemi, *Public health and municipal policy making: Britain and Sweden, 1900–1940* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. xiii + 228. 24 figs. 11 illus. 2 maps. 2 tabs. ISBN 9780754603344 Hbk. £55/\$99.95)

We need to start with a number of slightly problematic issues. First, this is not, as the title implies, a comparative study of Britain and Sweden. Rather, it is a comparative study of

one British city—Birmingham—with one Swedish city—Gothenburg. It is not entirely clear on what basis these have been chosen, although the author does make a reasonably convincing case that they had much in common in the period under discussion. Second, this is municipal policy-making with, for the most part, the politics left out. To be fair, this is acknowledged explicitly early on and once again a reasonable case is made for the approach adopted (of which more presently), but it does give a rather partial feel to the book and a suggestion that, ultimately, political considerations were not especially important. Thus, for example, in the interesting discussion of why the Gothenburg authorities used sterilization for women ‘believed to be at risk of transmitting serious hereditary defects or infectious diseases to their children’ (p. 186) and why the Birmingham authority did not, it would have been useful to have acknowledged the broader political (and cultural and religious) differences between Britain and Sweden in this regard. When politics are discussed there tends to be little differentiation, at least in the case of Birmingham, between various political groups. Third, while the author has covered and engaged with a significant range of secondary material, there are gaps, most notably with regard to recent work on municipal health provision—for instance, the book on Leicester by John Welshman (*Municipal medicine: public health in twentieth-century Britain*, 2000).

However, the volume does have much to commend it. It provides a detailed case study of two important cities through, for example, a close examination of campaigns against infant mortality and against tuberculosis. Both cities are well described and well compared and there are some genuinely revealing insights, for example on the shifting dynamics of the public–private mix in health provision. Given that this is a work of urban as well as of health history, there is also a helpful chapter on the nature of industrial cities and how Birmingham and Gothenburg fit into more general urban patterns.

Perhaps the book’s most important contribution, though, is its impressive, original, and carefully argued discussion of the way in which advocates of municipal health reform would utilize the language of science to make their various cases. As the author points out (p. 6), although appeals to science were widespread in the period under consideration, this has not been fully understood or integrated into the broad historiography. What the book then proceeds to do is show how purportedly value-free science could be used to inform municipal health policy debates and practices; and how these, in turn, could be used in attempts to regulate unruly city life. It is in such a context that debates over sterilization—alluded to above—should be placed, these being part of a broader strategy which sought to enforce particular forms of family life on the urban working class, and particularly women. What the different outcomes of the sterilization debates also show, and as the author is fully aware (see especially p. 185), is that there was more than one version of what constituted scientific knowledge; that this changed over time and place; and that it was thus a highly contested field.

Initial reservations notwithstanding, this is therefore a stimulating and important work which deserves an audience not simply confined to urban and medical historians.

Glasgow Caledonian University

JOHN STEWART

David Sunderland, *Managing British colonial and post-colonial development: the Crown Agents, 1914–1974* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2007. Pp. xii + 296. 14 figs. 5 tabs. ISBN 9781843833017 Hbk. £50/\$85)

The Crown Agents performed a remarkable array of services for colonial and post-colonial governments, ranging from the issue of loan stocks on the London market to the procurement and shipping of supplies. Indeed, by 1960, the Stamp Bureau of this quasi-official body had even become the largest philately wholesaler in the world. Sunderland’s book,

which follows on from his *Managing the British empire: the Crown Agents, 1833–1914* (2004), is the first in-depth academic study of this institution's activities since the First World War, and as such makes a major contribution to the literature on colonial economic development as well as providing some significant insights into British economic policy-making.

A recurring theme throughout is the degree to which the effectiveness of the Crown Agents was hindered by internecine disputes within Whitehall, and interference from senior civil servants and Bank of England officials. The Treasury, for example, terminated the conversion of loans during the interwar period and immediately after the Second World War closed the market to colonial issues—both actions in the interest of ensuring that sufficient funds were available for British industry. Frequently the Bank also forced the Agents to act in the interests of the UK economy rather than its colonial clients, and during the 1950s and 1960s Threadneedle Street even went so far as to encourage newly independent countries to leave the Agency in the hope that the Bank itself would pick up their loans and investment business. Additionally, the Board of Trade blocked certain of the Crown Agents' supply activities to protect British overseas merchants. In the post-colonial era, meanwhile, a jealous and covetous Ministry of Overseas Development let various unfounded allegations concerning the Crown Agents' secondary banking activities go unchallenged. Moreover, the demise of the secondary banking project in the course of 1973–4 was ultimately the product of the Bank's insistence that Agency-managed funds be used to prop up the British financial system, and not through the alleged incompetence and inexperience of the Crown Agents themselves. Sunderland concludes that this sorry saga was 'nothing less than a tragedy' since the developing world was deprived of 'a far wider range of services' aimed 'at solving economic and social problems', 'many at below cost' (p. 219).

Even so, Sunderland's is not a one-sided defence of the Crown Agents. As he tells us, the excessive red tape and inspection regimes of the Crown Agents ensured that prices of colonial supplies were high, and orders were often delivered late. In purchasing 2 per cent of UK exports in 1962, it could be argued that the Crown Agents made a significant contribution to the ultimately damaging 'featherbedding' of British industry. On the other hand, the significance of the services provided by the Crown Agents is brought out by their survival and indeed revival in the era of imperial retreat after 1945. The number of personnel employed by the agents leapt from 790 in 1945 to 1,637 in 1967. New business was found in the arms trade, in engineering consultancy, and between 1967 and 1974 in secondary banking. Important new clients emerged too, notably the World Bank and the United Nations. Meanwhile, some Commonwealth governments—such as Ceylon (Sri Lanka)—were quite happy to retain the Crown Agents' services after independence, suggesting that the institution was not a completely exploitative tool.

The detailed analysis and complex technical issues do not make Sunderland's book an easy read. However, this is testament to the thorough research that the author has carried out, not just in the voluminous archives of the Crown Agents themselves but also in the Bank of England papers and those of various Whitehall departments. Touching on wider issues such as the colonial 'drain' debate, corruption, 'gentlemanly capitalism', and bureaucratic economic competences, this book will prove useful to historians of both Britain's twentieth-century economy and that of its empire, illustrating above all that neither can be studied in isolation.

Liverpool John Moores University

NICHOLAS J. WHITE

Denis P. O'Brien, *The development of monetary economics: a modern perspective on monetary controversies* (Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2007. Pp. xv + 265. ISBN 9781847202604 Hbk. £65/\$115)

This book is largely a collection of O'Brien's previously published papers on the history of monetary thought. There are nine chapters plus an introduction. Four of the chapters appeared previously as journal articles, three as chapters/appendices in books, and two are new. Five of the chapters are about individuals: Bodin, Law, Locke, Bagehot, and Joplin. Four are on well-known topics in monetary history: the currency/banking debate; monetary base control (the 1844 version); the lender of last resort; and financial stability. The title does not indicate that the discussion ends in the late nineteenth century with Bagehot. That is a pity. From a scholar as distinguished as O'Brien, two or three essays on the twentieth century would have been most welcome.

O'Brien argues that, in general, theories have cyclical lives. A theory rises, then becomes qualified and diluted, and then drops out of sight. It re-emerges at some point when it is realized that old truths have been lost, and so it goes on. Nowhere, he says, is this more true than of the quantity theory of money. It had a distant origin and was then mainstream until 1936. After that, it became relegated to a position of no importance—the high point, so to speak, being Radcliffe. Then in the rampant inflation of the 1970s it was rediscovered and brought back to some prominence. The cycle seems to shorten sharply after that, since before the end of the century it was in the process of being lost again. O'Brien suggests that the asset price inflation of the twenty-first century has been responsible for some policy-makers wondering if the marginalization of the monetary aggregates might have been premature.

Although the book's main focus is the quantity theory, it is about both monetary stability and financial stability—the core purposes of the modern central bank. The book is in three parts: early monetary debates; nineteenth-century British controversies; and macroeconomic models. The essence of the quantity theory is three interrelated propositions: causality runs from money supply to the price level; there is a stable (not fixed) demand for real money balances; and the determination of the volume of output is independent of the nominal quantity of money. The first part of the book looks at the early debates that underpin the second part, the nineteenth-century controversies. Jean Bodin led the way. He is identified by O'Brien as one of the earliest, if not the earliest, proponent of the quantity theory, a principal qualification being that he paid attention to the demand for money. John Law does not get as good a review from O'Brien (as, say, from Antoine Murphy) and is portrayed as advocating monetary growth as a means of stimulating output, and a source of economic growth. Concluding the first part, O'Brien seeks to rescue John Locke from two of his principal critics: John Massie and David Hume.

The second part is on the central British debates of the middle years of the nineteenth century. This section is addressed more to economists than historians. Formal models of different positions are drawn out of the writings and presented in mathematical form. Many of the key relationships identified are then tested econometrically. Central to the controversy is the part played by controlling the money supply and O'Brien argues that controlling the wrong aggregate could and did produce macroeconomic disaster. He argues that the private liabilities of the Bank of England did not control the country banknote issue—not in the decade before the Bank Charter Act and not in the decade following. Similarly, nor did changes in the monetary base determine the price level. For the lender of last resort, O'Brien brings Thomas Joplin to centre stage. Joplin has been ignored unjustly for too long. Finally, in part four, macroeconomic models are presented. There is Bagehot's model of the trade cycle, and Joplin's model set out 'in terms recognisable to those familiar with a standard neo-keynesian model' (p. 217), although Joplin's was considerably more elaborate. It is not going too far to say that Thomas Joplin emerges as the hero of the book.

This is a splendid collection of pieces that all with an interest in monetary economics and history will want to have.

CASS Business School, City University London

FORREST CAPIE

Gilles Dostaler, *Keynes and his battles*, Niall B. Mann, trans. (Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2007. Pp. vi + 374. ISBN 9781858982663 Hbk. £89.95/\$160)

Originally published in Paris in 2005 as *Keynes et ses combats*, this augmented and revised edition occasionally betrays its francophone origins: for example, the name of the German Prince Max von Baden appears as 'de Bade'. There has also been excessive reliance on the spellchecker, which has changed the name of the Yugoslav port of Rijeka to 'Reject'. Nevertheless, overall the translator has done a good job in making Dostaler's work available to readers who prefer to read about Keynes in English. The book differs from conventional biographies in having a thematic approach: two chapters are devoted to philosophy, two to politics, three to economics, and one to art. Keynes's contributions to these fields are placed in biographical and historical context, with Keynes's rejection of Victorian values providing the linking theme.

This approach has the advantage that one can study Keynes's ideas on philosophy, politics, or art over his lifetime. There is a clear exposition of the development of his economic ideas in three chapters, devoted in turn to monetary theory, unemployment, and the international monetary system. However, the separate treatment of these aspects of Keynes's economics also has disadvantages. Thus Keynes's 'battle against unemployment', covering the period down to the publication of the *General theory* in 1936, comes before the account of his opposition to the return to the gold standard in 1925. The separation of domestic from international policy is so complete that the effects of public works on the balance of payments are ignored, although Keynes drew attention in *The means to prosperity* (1933) to the need for simultaneous expenditure in many different countries so as to free central banks from their fear of foreign exchange reserve losses. There is nothing on Keynes's application of his theory to economic management in 1937–9, only passing references to *How to pay for the war* (1940), and nothing on Keynes's personal role in 1943–5 in the development of postwar employment or domestic monetary policy.

Dostaler seems to have only a limited grasp of the institutions with which Keynes had to deal. We are told (p. 112) that Reginald McKenna was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1923, although he held that post only in 1915–16, and by the early 1920s was chairman of the Midland Bank and a critic of the Treasury. Whereas Peter Clarke devoted two chapters in his *The Keynesian revolution in the making* (1988) to the formulation and reformulation between 1925 and 1930 of the Treasury view on public works and unemployment, Dostaler spends less than two pages on it, without a reference to Clarke's work (apart from citing his book in the bibliography). We are told (p. 170) that in the *General theory* 'emphasis is placed on budgetary policy and public investment', without any explanation of why there are only two references in the *General theory* to fiscal policy and two to budgetary deficits. The explanation is, of course, to be found in British public finance in the 1930s, when most public investment was outside the chancellor's budget, but Dostaler's interest in the history of economic thought does not extend to the institutional context.

Dostaler is concerned instead to emphasize the importance of philosophy and psychology on Keynes's economic ideas. The exposition of ethics, probability, and Keynes's belief that economics is a moral science not subject to mathematical treatment in the same way as the physical sciences is good, although hardly novel. Dostaler himself has previously published interesting views on Freud's influence on Keynes's ideas, and these views rightly find a place in the present volume. Historians of economic thought will find in it much

fascinating detail about all aspects of Keynes's life and work. However, the book is less than the sum of its parts, and the historical context of Keynes's ideas is the least satisfactory part.

University of Stirling

G. C. PEDEN

Alistair Black, Dave Muddiman, and Helen Plant, *The early information society: information management in Britain before the computer* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. xiii + 288. 2 tabs. ISBN 9780754642794 Hbk. £60/\$114.95)

Despite living in the 'information age', most historians have not engaged really with the history of information, in the sense of the history of the exchange of symbolic content over time and space. This has given license to a whole raft of 'techno-boosters' to claim that the current development of online information content and management is a complete break with previous human history. It is good, therefore, to see historians starting to explore the mechanisms and institutional forms that handled flows of information in the pre-internet age. The authors of *The early information society* combine both the skills of the historian and the broader conceptual frameworks of the information sciences in which their backgrounds lie. They are adamant that the history of information needs to be seen as socially and culturally situated, rather than as technologically determined.

The collection starts with a joint chapter debunking the notion that the history of information begins with the world wide web, and shows how information and its management have long been central to both capitalism and state development. Here they draw on some of the ideas of Anthony Giddens. This sketches out a broad vision of the possible development of information history. Individually authored chapters then follow, which examine various aspects of the history of information management in Britain in the early twentieth century. Topics covered include the role of the state in the development of information provision; the development of the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux (ASLIB); information in the capitalist 'learning organisation'; the rise of company libraries; the education of information workers; and the role of women in industrial libraries and information bureaux.

Two major themes run through many of these chapters. The first is the turf wars between librarians and information officers in both commercial and state organizations over the nature of information provision and professional development. Were the skills and culture of librarianship, and its professional bodies, appropriate for the new world of information management opening up in the period? The second theme is the role of the state in organizing information provision. The British tended to reject utopian, and generally left-wing, blueprints for the centralization of information provision and control in a few state institutions. Instead they opted for a dispersed network of public and private providers, with government aid underpinning key institutions and initiatives. Was this a lost opportunity, or a prescient adoption of the contemporary networked solution to information provision?

The authors have certainly done a good job in undermining the essentially anti-historical assertions of the likes of Alvin Toffler and Peter Drucker that we live in an age of total discontinuity with the past. They have marked out a space for future historical research, and provided some interesting and instructive case studies, although perhaps there is something of a mismatch between their broader outlook and their specific research agendas. Most of the essays are focused on the institutions and activities of information professionals—librarians and information scientists. There is rather less material on the use of information more widely. For example, how exactly did capitalist managers and civil servants use the information made available by libraries and information bureaux? Were

they selective in what they used; what proportion of their activities were based on such information; did they use information in differing ways; and so on? Might the key to information overload simply be for companies, institutions, and disciplines to specialize, and so simply ignore such excessive informational flows? More might also have been said about the use and uptake of information technologies, although this may reflect the authors' aversion to theories of technological causation. A nineteenth-century historian might also be somewhat chary of accepting the implication that the information society was a development of the early twentieth century. The authors' broader vision undermines such a truncated chronology, although their specific research agenda does seem rather stuck in the last 100 years.

This is a bold beginning, which opens up new fields of study, but there is still plenty of room for further explorations of the information society.

University of Essex

EDWARD HIGGS

Arthur McIvor and Ronald Johnston, *Miners' lung: a history of dust disease in British coal mining* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. xviii + 374. 3 figs. 10 tabs. ISBN 9780754636731 Hbk. £60/\$99.95)

Economic and social historians are familiar with debates about the quality of working life in industrial Britain. Different accounts of the costs and benefits of industrialization feature contrasting descriptions of the cruelty or paternal concern of factory masters, the exploitation of family labour, and the erosion or reconstruction of handicraft skills. It is surprising, therefore, that there have been so few detailed studies of injury and illness at the workplace, particularly when compared to the comprehensive research undertaken on mining and other industries by American and European labour historians. McIvor and Johnston's new account of dust-related diseases in the coal industry is a welcome and important contribution to our knowledge of respiratory illness among the massive coal-mining workforce during the twentieth century. This book follows their interesting text on asbestosis in Scotland and deploys a similar methodology, drawing heavily on an extensive range of oral history interviews, as well as considerable archival research, conducted in Scotland as well as south Wales and northern England. They map the damage inflicted on the bodies of industrial workers by the dust generated underground during the decades before and after coal workers' pneumoconiosis was recognized and compensated in 1943.

The authors divide their study into an assessment of the advance of medical knowledge, the industrial politics of respiratory disease, and an interpretation of the miners' culture, including an interpretation of masculine values at work and in the colliery communities. The bulk of the research and discussion is devoted to the two decades after the nationalization of the British coal industry in 1947. Rather than simply offering a victim-centred narrative of capitalist exploitation and neglect, McIvor and Johnston argue that the inevitable physical hazards of mining were exacerbated both by the profit-oriented pressures of the private colliery and by the 'productionist' management of the National Coal Board (NCB). Instead of seeking to eliminate dust in the pits, the NCB seized on technical and medical reports to establish tolerable levels of exposure, maximizing output rather than promoting a strong ethos of safety among the mineworkers. The National Union of Mineworkers similarly colluded with the NCB in prioritizing wage demands and employment over the education and protection of members who were embedded in a masculine culture that prized physical exertion and the pursuit of higher incomes via output incentives.

While the authors are sensitive to the difficulties inherent in the reliance on oral interviews, there remain some tensions in the interpretation they offer. There is a strong emphasis on the limited assistance provided by medical, engineering, and technical experts

to the cause of dust removal, belatedly recognizing pneumoconiosis and bronchitis and often framing their findings in ways which enabled managers to set practical targets for efficient output rather than optimal levels for the long-term preservation of respiratory health. At key moments it was union activism, including 'vigilant rank-and-file action at the workplace', which advanced the cause of health and safety rather than scientific enquiry. These critical assessments appear in conflict with the broader recognition that the NCB was constrained by the economic imperatives of increasing productivity in the postwar years. *Miners' lung* also concludes that a drastic reduction in dust levels during the 1950s implied an unrealistic and intolerable restriction on output 'within the economic situation in which the coal industry found itself' (p. 311). The hostility of the workforce to safety measures which impeded earnings linked to production targets is similarly apparent.

The question of the historic responsibility for diseases such as asbestosis contracted at the workplace has provoked fierce debate in recent years. *Miners' lung* indicates the limitations as well as the strengths of such debates. This book highlights a shift in the historical investigation of occupational injury and illness to a more sophisticated discussion of contemporary expertise in which the parameters of disease as well as the moral obligations of multiple actors changed over time. Contested interpretations of respiratory illness, as discussions on tobacco smoking among miners in the 1950s indicate, did not only reflect the clash of class interests. They also invoked different social and moral imperatives. Working people as a whole faced greater dangers from diseases of poverty and deficiency even in the mid-twentieth century than from the limited number of accidents and illness at work. Injuries to workers' bodies and to the environment inflicted by mining and other industries were weighted against the material gains achieved by capitalist and state enterprises. There is little sign that evidence concerning the risks and dangers of mining deterred mineworkers even in the era of full employment, though social tolerance of such hazards has diminished steadily in the past five decades.

The value of this text lies in its recognition that the indictment of culpable employers, experts, and union officials offers only a limited analysis of the complex causes of workplace hazard. Closer examination of the market constraints, institutional priorities, and cultural sensibilities in which actors made their decisions must include detailed analysis of employment contracts and the legal tolerance of serious risk to bodily and mental injury. The legislative and judicial empowerment of the employee, as well as the growth of environmental welfare concerns, substantially changed the terms in which producers' and community risks were understood during the later twentieth century. Societies with strong citizens' rights and developed economies no longer expect their own workers to pay for employment and higher wages with dirty lungs and chronic breathlessness in later life.

University of Exeter

JOSEPH MELLING

Peter Hennessy, *Having it so good: Britain in the fifties* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2007. Pp. xvii + 740. 61 illus. ISBN 9780713995718 Hbk. £30/\$37; ISBN 9780141004099 Pbk. £9.99/\$20)

Dominic Sandbrook, *Never had it so good: a history of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2006. Pp. xxix + 892. 46 illus. ISBN 9780316860833 Hbk. £25/\$30; ISBN 0349115303 Hbk. £9.99/\$19.95)

These books are both instalments of larger works on the postwar history of Britain. Peter Hennessy's volume on the Attlee period, *Never again*, appeared in 1992 and Dominic Sandbrook's *White heat* (2006) on the later 1960s has appeared recently. Both are aimed at a 'popular' audience, and they share an essential ingredient of that genre, a high level of

readability. Both, however, are heavily footnoted: Sandbrook is largely reliant on secondary sources, while Hennessy also cites a great deal of TNA and interview material. As general histories of roughly the same period they share some obvious reference points, especially Suez and the Macmillan governments. However, in many respects they are interestingly different in how they construct their narratives.

Commentators on *Never again* pointed out the book's fascination with the sayings and doings of the powerful, especially in London, complemented by vignettes from the lives of the masses. In the new volume there is much more Whitehall and much less Walthamstow. The fascination with the sayings and doings of the powerful can be justified if it is used to expose the inner workings of the state, as Hennessy has done previously with great effect. However, in this book there is little of that exposure, so we are left wondering why we should be so concerned. One of the puffs on the book's cover says 'If the Gods gossip, this is how it would sound', but gossip is only so interesting, and becomes tedious if treated too seriously. This is exactly what Hennessy is too often tempted to do. Thus, for example, when part of the analysis of Britain's alleged postwar economic decline is based on what Mervyn King (Governor of the Bank of England) scribbled on the back of a lunch menu we are entering parody territory. The problem is that the powerful are seemingly just as likely as the rest of us to utter banalities: King's points on economic 'decline' are as unoriginal as, for example, the comment of Michael Barber (Blair's education adviser) that what is distinctive under New Labour is a concern to make the welfare state work for the middle classes. Surely this has been a commonplace of the British labour movement since at least Tony Crosland? Another striking feature of the book is what can only be called its excessive niceness. While few of us want history written as denunciation, here we seem to have history where the critical faculties are not fully engaged. Figures whose legacies are ripe for sceptical scrutiny escape such attention. Two examples are Orwell and Tawney; politically congenial to many, and extremely powerful rhetoricians both, but men whose contributions to understanding postwar Britain are at least questionable.

Sandbrook's is the more engaging book, not least for the greater clarity about its assumptions. For example, it defends the substantial portion of the book concerned with politics by asserting (surely rightly) that 'the lives and livelihoods of millions of ordinary people often depended on the decisions taken by politicians' (p. xxvi). However, this concern with politics is coupled to a great deal of attention to social and cultural change, organized around the theme that such changes in the 1960s were less radical than many have claimed, and had their roots back in the 1950s if not earlier. This theme gives a focus to the narrative which Hennessy's book sometimes lacks. Sandbrook's breadth of coverage of social and cultural issues is impressive, and is well integrated with the political narrative, though there is less treatment of economic issues than in Hennessy's book.

For the economic and social historian, these books will offer little that is new; but that is not their purpose. More pertinent, perhaps, is to ask what they convey about economic and social issues to their 'popular' audience. Hennessy gives a useful account of some key economic incidents, such as the debate on ROBOT and the resignations from the Treasury in 1958. Both address the issue of declinism, though Hennessy at greater length. Hennessy recognizes early on in the book that this has become a hotly disputed area of late, but much of the later narrative seems to take such a 'decline' as given. Sandbrook is also inclined to a rather unreflective declinism, though he does not take much space to discuss it; his interests are elsewhere. The discussions on this issue in both books are somewhat disappointing, reflecting the continuing gap between where the scholarly literature is going and what is written for a 'popular' audience. Less forgivable is the relative neglect by both authors of the politics and economics of Macmillan's 'never had it so good' phrase they use in their titles. As Alan Booth has pointed out (*Historical Journal*, 2000), this speech needs to be seen as part of the crucial balancing act attempted by the Conservatives, trying to sustain confidence in a newly convertible currency while not alienating the British voter.

The social/cultural historian will be unsurprised to find both authors dealing with the Lady Chatterly trial, and the role of Richard Hoggart in that trial. Yet perhaps both show an unwillingness to go beyond rather tired dichotomies, in this case by locating Hoggart on the liberal or permissive side as opposed to the conservative/repressive. Perhaps the most interesting thing Hoggart said in the published account of his evidence was that Lawrence's book was profoundly 'puritan'. Apparently, the judge responded to this with some perplexity. Potentially, this remark opens up a way of thinking about how people understood the world in the 1950s and 1960s that the permissive/repressive duality entirely obstructs. The career of 'puritanism', in the sense of belief that all our actions should be subject to close moral scrutiny, is surely one of the untold stories of postwar Britain, with ramifications not only in private spheres of conduct, but also in the highly moralistic world of economic and political argument. It would be nice to see it given a proper place in the general histories.

University of Dundee

JIM TOMLINSON

Glen O'Hara, *From dreams to disillusionment: economic and social planning in 1960s Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007. 5 figs. 9 tabs. Pp. viii + 301. ISBN 9780230013476 Hbk. £50/\$74.95)

In turning his PhD thesis into a book, O'Hara has provided us with a detailed historical account of the emergence, development, and demise of planning in Britain in the 1960s. This is an important topic which relates to a wide range of issues including relative economic decline, the difficulty of achieving successful policy, and the desirable role of the state. Planning in the 1960s represented perhaps the apogee of confidence in the potential of state-centred solutions to economic and social problems, building as it did on the scientific and technocratic outlook of the early 1960s. That it failed to deliver, or more importantly, was perceived to have failed to deliver, led to disillusionment not just with planning but with state intervention more generally and helped pave the way for the Thatcherite critique of state intervention. Book titles such as Paul Ormerod's *Why most things fail* (2005) show how far attitudes have changed since the 1960s. Yet this is one of the paradoxes of the 1960s which makes it so interesting: the turn to planning was a response to the perception of relative economic decline and frustration at the inability of policy to deliver.

O'Hara begins his consideration of this topic by tracking the emergence of an elite cross-party consensus around 'planning' in the early 1960s as part of the 'great reappraisal' of the period. The remaining chapters each then deal with an aspect of policy—macroeconomic planning, the public sector, regional planning, housing and health care—before a brief conclusion tries to pull out some of the themes raised. O'Hara therefore takes an encompassing view of 'planning'; he does not concentrate on the 1965 National Plan as others have, but illustrates how planning informed a range of social as well as economic policies. Indeed, the chapters on social planning are longer and, in many respects, the most informative and novel.

Each of the areas of planning covered is dealt with similarly: there is a section on the postwar background and development of policy; the emergence of planning in that area; the development and implementation of these policy innovations; and the growing disillusionment by the late 1960s to early 1970s at the inability of planning to deliver what had been hoped. Each chapter ends with a short assessment by way of conclusion. These narratives are full of historical detail and are supported by extensive use of archival material and wide-ranging secondary references. There is much material for historians to glean here. The book's strengths clearly lie in its narrative, in its breadth, and in the detailed evidence presented to support the narrative.

This makes it a very different book from one of its most obvious comparators, Hugh Pemberton's *Policy learning and British governance in the 1960s* (2004). There is a much less rigorous engagement with social science theory here, the preference being for a much more empirically driven approach. Thus O'Hara defines planning by highlighting three common traits found in the 1960s: a tendency to look to the 'long term', an intention to be comprehensive, and the confidence with which aims were set out. Beyond this, he observes, there were as many ideas about planning as there were planners. Understandable as this is, given the problems of defining planning rigorously, this does run the risk of simply defining 1960s planning in Britain as what was done in the name of planning in the 1960s and makes it hard to distinguish planning from wider policy initiatives.

Similarly, the book's main contribution lies in building up a more detailed picture of planning and its development in this period. This is to be commended, but the reader should not expect a radical reinterpretation of the subject to be presented by O'Hara: the book fits very much into the conventional historiography in terms of its interpretation. Typical in this respect is O'Hara's concluding chapter. Here he judges the period against the overload thesis developed by Anthony King in his *Political Studies* (1975) paper. Seminal though this article is, many other analyses and models of British government have been developed since its publication over 30 years ago. It would have been interesting to see O'Hara commenting more explicitly on these more recent approaches in the light of his extensive empirical knowledge of the period. Nevertheless, together with Pemberton's work and Jim Tomlinson's contributions on economic policy, this book adds significantly to the detailed picture of policy-making in Britain in the 1960s which is now emerging.

University of Glasgow

NEIL ROLLINGS

GENERAL

Henriette de Bruyn Kops, *A spirited exchange: the wine and brandy trade between France and the Dutch Republic in its Atlantic framework, 1600–1650* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007). Pp. xiii + 371. 15 figs. 3 maps. 39 tabs. ISBN 9789004160743 Hbk. €99/\$139)

Scholars who study the economic history of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic's rise to commercial primacy have focused their research overwhelmingly on either the Dutch East and West India Companies or on Dutch trade with the Baltic, the so-called 'mother trade'. Though important, these long-distance trades comprised only part of Dutch commerce during its 'golden age'. Research into Dutch commerce along the Atlantic coast, with France or Iberia for example, has been much less often undertaken. In her book, de Bruyn Kops has attempted to present her readers with a study of Dutch involvement in the French wine and brandy trade in the first half of the seventeenth century, focusing on the trade between Rotterdam and Nantes.

The book's first chapter discusses the Dutch presence in Nantes and concludes, in mid-chapter, that the Dutch were in Nantes because the French had products (cheap wine that could be made into brandy) that were in demand in the Dutch Republic; not too surprising a statement. However, de Bruyn Kops goes on to point out that the French yielded control of their own export market to the Dutch. This caused discontent among the Nantais merchants who saw an ever-growing share of the trade in alcohol going to the resident Dutch merchants. The tensions between the Dutch and the Nantais during the late 1640s led to occasional violence, which only served to solidify Dutch privileges in the city when the Dutch complained to the authorities.

Since most of the Dutch wine and brandy merchants in Nantes were from Rotterdam, de Bruyn Kops examines the social and commercial milieu of the Rotterdam wine traders in the book's second chapter. She points out that Rotterdam's wine traders can be divided

into three distinct groups: merchants (international traders), wine buyers/domestic wholesalers, and wine sellers/tavern keepers. The international wine merchants were most often active in Nantes. They were quite diversified and engaged in a certain amount of what might be termed upward mobility. De Bruyn Kops mentions that kin networks were important in Rotterdam's wine trade with Nantes, but the author might have delved deeper into this important topic.

Using the port books from one year (1631), she offers a snapshot of the wine and brandy trade between Nantes and Rotterdam in the following chapters. She compares this trade with the wine trade in Bordeaux and other areas of France, but the sources for these places are less complete. Interestingly, the Dutch imported brandy stills to boost local Nantes production for export, though they also imported wine and distilled it in the Netherlands. Several Dutch artisans lived and worked in Nantes for the Dutch wine merchants. De Bruyn Kops does not say how many. She follows her discussion of wine and brandy supply zones with a sketch of the market for, and consumption of, wine and brandy in the Netherlands, focusing on the Rotterdam market.

De Bruyn Kops provides a good picture of the wine trade between Nantes and Rotterdam in this first part of her book, although for some reason each chapter is divided into many, many sections, often only one paragraph long. This odd format makes the narrative seem excessively muddled. The most glaring problem with the book is that de Bruyn Kops moves away from her main topic to discuss first, the Sephardic community's involvement in Dutch trade, and its role as the intermediary in the trade between the Netherlands and Iberia, without satisfactorily showing how involved it was in the wine and brandy trade. Secondly, and quite confusingly, de Bruyn Kops states that it was not, in fact, the wine and brandy trade that drew the Dutch to Nantes; rather, it was Dutch interest in Spanish silver 'coming into France as the result of its positive trade balance with Spain' (p. 276). This is simply an intriguing hypothesis that de Bruyn Kops throws out, rather than supports with specific evidence. Lastly, and in place of a proper conclusion (there is none), de Bruyn Kops discusses the Dutch coastal trade in an attempt to provide the larger context for her presentation of the Nantes wine and brandy trade. This chapter is fine, but might have been better placed earlier in the book.

In the end, *A spirited exchange* seems a book without a clear direction. De Bruyn Kops's research into the Nantes and Rotterdam wine and brandy trade cannot be faulted, but by not tying her discussions of the Sephardic community firmly to her main topic, she has created a disjointed study without a clear conclusion.

Brigham Young University

DONALD J. HARRELD

Michael Sonenscher, *Before the deluge: public debt, inequality and the intellectual origins of the French Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007. Pp. xii + 415. ISBN 9780691124995 Hbk. £23.95/\$39.95)

Sonenscher's remarkable book is a sustained account of the origin of political economy in debates over the significance of the eighteenth-century 'warfare state' (to borrow a term from David Edgerton) and the manner in which the equilibrium of states and domestic well-being could best be established. The study of conflicting conceptions of representation and monarchical rule, luxury and commerce, taxation, and public credit leads us into the territory hitherto associated most closely with Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff's collection *Wealth and virtue: the shaping of political economy in the Scottish enlightenment* (1986), a sustained reflection upon the conflicting views of commerce and civilization organized around the writings of Adam Smith. That work wrenched Smith out of the hands of historians of economics who, understanding him to be the founder of modern economic

thinking, persisted in approaching him in the terms established by James Mill, David Ricardo, and Robert Malthus: as a theorist of value and price, a proponent of free trade, and a critic of protectionism. Implicit in this understanding of Smith and English classical economics is an understanding of the domain of economic argument that runs through the work of Marshall and Pigou to the neo-classicism that became the dominant orthodoxy of the later twentieth century.

Sonenscher's trajectory is rather different. He sees the continuity between the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries not in terms of the construction of a 'scientific economics', but with respect to conceptions of taxation, representation, state debt, and warfare: the paradoxes of wealth and the nature of virtue. However, here the emphasis is not upon Smith, but on David Hume's essays on debt and commerce; James Steuart's conception of the virtuous circle of borrowing, lending, taxing, and spending; Montesquieu's reorganization of the tripartite Aristotelian conception of government, and the linkage of Mirabeau's early arguments about good government to the 'new science' of physiocracy. The lineage leads up to the French revolution, and issues from it in the writings of Jean-Baptiste Say, understood to turn upon a conception of value that turns back to earlier conceptions of virtue. In the conventional canon of the history of economics, Say is a 'populariser'. Here he is presented as an important link backwards to revolutionary politics, and forwards to a new political economy.

The book is organized as four very substantial essays. The first begins with the fear that the overthrow of the French monarchy will simply lead into state despotism, in which the military strength of the new France is the epitome of the power of the new tax state. The comparison with England is made along the axes both of fiscal-military power and constitutional government, a comparison made by many contemporaries, not least by Sièyes, whose writings play a major role in the book. The second essay is an extended assessment of Montesquieu's *Spirit of laws* (1751) and the manner in which the genesis of rulership developed by Montesquieu is traced not from Roman or Greek predecessors, but from the interaction of property and inheritance in the early history of northern Europe. Whereas Aristotle had classically distinguished rulership by the many, the few, or a single person, Montesquieu distinguished republics, despotism, and monarchy, the first of these resting on virtue. The problem of how a republican state might be strong without its means to power undermining this foundation in virtue shaped all subsequent argument.

The third essay, 'Morality and politics in a divided world', takes up this issue and traces argument over the new idea of 'civilization' from its early elaboration by Rousseau and Forbonnais to the arguments advanced by the 'new science' of the physiocrats. Their emphasis on a natural order as the foundation of civilization, welfare, and international peace was focused into a reliance on free trade to overcome the unnatural order that both fed conflict between states and impoverished their populations. The export of grain would make possible the expansion and rationalization of grain production, promoting the productivity of land and consequently releasing ever more producers from the agricultural sector. This, Mirabeau argued, would create a virtuous circle of growth so that, eventually, foreign trade would become largely unnecessary. The fourth essay, 'Industry and representative government', shows how the 'wealth of a nation' was imagined as based upon human industry of all kinds, and how this itself related to a republican conception of government. Commenting on Say's reservations in the second (1814) edition of his *Traité* concerning the way that political economy seemed now to deal only with commodities and marketable services, Sièyes commented 'Human industry and action seem to me to be very restricted if they are to be considered solely in terms of their vendible, or venal, products . . .'. The idea that the division of labour could underwrite both a representative system and the kind of 'virtuous circle' to which Mirabeau had alluded some 60 years earlier was one that, for Sièyes, pointed forward to 'the Goal Given by Man to Himself in Society and of the Means He Has to Attain It', the subtitle to his envisaged *Treatise on socialism*.

Sonenscher, therefore, links the political and economic thought of the eighteenth century to that of the nineteenth in a quite original and refreshing way.

University of Sussex

KEITH TRIBE

Francesco Guidi Bruscoli, *Papal banking in renaissance Rome: Benvenuto Olivieri and Paul III, 1534–1549* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. xxvi + 313. 15 tabs. ISBN 9780754607328 Hbk. £55/\$99.95)

‘May God keep me from being out of debt! . . . You’ve got to always owe something to *someone*. That way, there’ll always be someone praying to God that He’ll grant you a good, long, happy life—because he’s terrified that he’ll lose what you owe him . . . May Saint Babolin take my soul if, all my life, I haven’t seen debts as a tie, a chain running between heaven and earth, a unique link in human heredity—a connecting pin, it seems to me, without which the whole human race would soon perish from the earth’. So spoke Panurge in Rabelais’ *Tiers livre de Pantagruel* ([1546], trans. Burton Raffel, 1990, pp. 253, 255). According to Bruscoli in this study of the financial career of Benvenuto Olivieri, this principle also bound sixteenth-century merchant bankers both to the renaissance papacy and to each other. Thus any contract between bankers and the Apostolic Chamber involved a network of closely-tied shareholders, and over time it was increasingly difficult for these constantly shifting configurations of lenders to end their relationships with the Chamber, since repayments were consistently assigned to future revenues. Bruscoli’s book is based on a thesis completed at the University of Bari (1998), and published subsequently in Italian (2000). It relies principally on the papers of Olivieri, a Florentine banker active in Rome between 1516 and 1549. Located in the *Fondo Galli Tassi* at the Florentine state archives, these accounts and related documents permit a unique analysis of papal finances from the perspective of the private merchant bankers who underwrote and administered them.

The book’s first part examines the Florentine merchant banker community in renaissance Rome and the Olivieri family background. The Apostolic Chamber borrowed money in three ways: by contracting loans from bankers at an interest rate of around 12 per cent, guaranteed by revenues on future tax receipts; by setting up tax-farming contracts with banking companies; and by selling offices and bonds. Money was borrowed from consortia in which partners contributed different amounts in exchange for corresponding percentages of profits earned. After arriving in Rome, Olivieri first worked as an employee of his co-national, Bindo Altoviti, and by the late 1520s became involved in contracts brokered by Filippo Strozzi, the most influential Florentine banker in Rome under the pontificates of the Medici popes Leo X (1513–22) and Clement VII (1523–34). By the mid-1530s, Olivieri had come into his own, and for several years during the 1540s he was depositary general of the Apostolic Chamber: the first papal banker.

Part 2 then looks at each of the different sectors of the papal finances in which Olivieri’s firm was involved, as lender, revenue-farmer, administrator, or, frequently, all of these: the depositary of the Chamber, venal offices and *monti*, Roman customs revenues, the provincial treasuries of the papal state; indirect and direct taxes; and the administration of the Tolfa alum mines, the grain trade, and the Roman mint. The last two chapters analyse the balance sheet of Olivieri’s company for one particular year (here and elsewhere, the author emphasizes the remarkable complexity of the company’s operations), and then offer some concluding remarks. In addition to the theme of how debt cemented long-term alliances, another conclusion is that Florentine bankers remained crucial for papal finances even after the Medici pontificates, and that for a considerable period during the mid-sixteenth century, companies from both Florence and Genoa were prominent, before the Genoese became dominant by the century’s end.

Bruscoli also argues that 'the personal relationships that existed or developed among the various merchant-bankers were of great significance for their business relationships' (p. 209). Unfortunately, qualitative aspects of these relationships are not carefully investigated (perhaps because of missing sources, though that is not clear), other than brief references to family relationships or litigation. In fact, the book's evidentiary basis is almost exclusively quantitative. While this produces some interesting results, it also limits their utility, making it difficult to generalize about, for instance, what it meant for a banker to be 'Florentine' or 'Genoese,' particularly given the multiple, dense financial and business links that tied them together. How important was this 'national' identity to individuals, families, and companies?

West Virginia University

MATTHEW VESTER

Jens-Wilhelm Wessels, *Economic policy and microeconomic performance in interwar Europe: the case of Austria, 1918–1939* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007. Pp. 413. 11 figs. 15 tabs. ISBN 9783515084765 Pbk. €54)

This book uses interwar Austria as a case study for demonstrating the proposition that Schumpeterian changes in industrial structure had more effect on the fortunes of individual industries in particular countries than their governments' economic policies. To this end it studies the company reports, balance sheets, and other surviving information particular to individual firms, and finds that the diverse outcomes were due chiefly to the condition internationally of the industrial sector in which the firm operated, and the niche within that sector. The large, traditional coal-, iron-, and steel-producing Österreichisch-Alpine Montangesellschaft suffered from the general overproduction of the European steel industry in the 1920s, as did the locomotive-builders from overproduction in their sector. By contrast, in the 1920s leading Austrian paper-making firms benefited (along with German paper-makers) from rising European demand, and the all-Austrian electro-technical firm Elin AG enjoyed successful growth, as did the Austrian tyre manufacturer Semperit. Particular factors modified this picture in particular cases. The growth of the Austrian Siemens-Schukert Werke, and the Austrian AEG, was hampered by the limitations on the geographical range of their exporting imposed by their German parent firms; and the exports of the agricultural machinery firm Hofherr-Schrantz were restricted by the collapse of its Russian and east European markets, partly due to land reforms. By contrast, vehicle-makers Austro-Fiat and Gräf & Stift seem to have found a niche in the 1920s, making simple trucks for domestic and east- and south-European buyers, whereas Austro-Daimler and Steyr suffered eventually from the devastating competition of mass-produced foreign cars. The lace manufacturer Spitzenindustrie AG enjoyed a good recovery from a postwar low due to buoyant exports jumping high foreign tariff barriers. On none of these and the other companies studied did the deflationary domestic monetary policies of the post-stabilization years have much impact.

Similarly, in relation to the pre-1922 period, Wessels argues (in less detail) that the commonality of inflation cannot explain the diversity of performance of Austrian firms. For the 1930s, Wessels makes the case that since the deflationary character of Austrian economic policy was within the range of such policies in all European countries, it cannot explain the unusually depressed performance of Austrian industry. This he traces above all to foreign protectionism which, in turn, he explains largely as reaction to the Schumpeterian shifts in global competitive relations, and not to monetary disturbances.

In the course of his argument there are informative expositions of Austrian economic policy and comparisons of it with other European economic policies. This is an

extremely useful addition to English-language literature on interwar Austrian economic history.

University of Manchester

THEO BALDERSTON

Richard Rodger and Joanna Herbert, eds., *Testimonies of the city: identity, community and change in a contemporary urban world* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. xvi + 278. 42 figs. 1 tab. ISBN 9780754655602 Hbk. £55/\$99.95)

This book developed from a conference panel considering the role of oral testimony in constructing urban memories. In their introduction, the editors outline their ambition to demonstrate the usefulness of oral history in understanding the complexities of urban processes, and especially the spatial context of identities. A broad range of disciplines and international cities underpins this central preoccupation, with a concentration of chapters focusing upon cities in central and south-eastern Europe.

The book comprises four sections with chapters addressing 'Social identities', 'Community neighbourhood and daily life', 'Responses to urban change', and 'Migration and methodology'. In the first section, Ronnie Johnston and Arthur McIvor's presentation of interviews with workers in Glasgow's heavy industries is sensitive to the problems of selecting a particular cohort for interviews. Many respondents came from the charity Clydeside Action on Asbestos, but particularizing does not detract from the ambition to investigate the utility of oral history in understanding workplace culture. In the two remaining chapters in this section, Budapest is the site for the consideration of social identity during the socialist period in Hungary. Eszther Zsófia Tóth's interviews with members of an unskilled women's workers brigade are particularly evocative of the equivocal relationship to the Soviet Union. The women's accounts of Soviet soldiers in Hungary as keen entrepreneurs, with whom trade in petrol and other consumer goods was common, offers insights into consumption during the socialist period that traditional accounts may have neglected.

Meanwhile, the contributions to the second section attempt to challenge dominant discourses or official accounts of each city by showing how selected districts were experienced and organized. Valentina Gulin Zrnic offers perspectives of Zagreb based on interviews with residents in 'new Zagreb' that differ from the dominant discourses of modernist functionalism and the 'socialist city'. As an urban anthropologist she furnishes an interesting discussion of the interviewer in the research process—a resident of new Zagreb, Zrnic even considered the possibility of interviewing herself! Leen Beyers's interviews with the inhabitants of a Belgian mining town combine life-story accounts with other data, including census material, to demonstrate how ethnic boundaries evolved. Here oral history's benefits are emphasized while indicating new avenues of interpretation for 'traditional data'. This combination is equally effective in Caroline Varlet's account of daily rituals in Paris, where we see how developments such as the shortening of the working week impinged upon the organization of daily life. The accounts of domestic existence also offer an alternative to the dominant discourse of interwar Europe as a maelstrom of political and financial upheavals.

The third section on responses to urban change considers the creative and critical tension between public memory and the diversity of everyday experience. Maria Raluca Popa's chapter, the highlight of this volume, presents 'history from the inside', revising perspectives of the reconstruction of Bucharest during the 1980s. The interviews with architects and planners highlight their role in the development of the urban landscape and challenge traditional accounts of a process instigated by the very top of the party leadership. Meanwhile, Verónica Sales Pereira focuses on the contradiction between urban spaces

consigned to emptiness and 'death' in the de-industrialized São Paulo, and the life that is rebuilt, through interviews with inhabitants of these sites. Ruth Wallach's chapter is distinguished by its focus on public art and contested memories of immigrant communities in Los Angeles, and we are invited to see how oral testimonies have informed not only the research process but have also become part of urban public commemoration.

Both of the book's concluding chapters scrutinize the methods and conceptual challenges relevant to the oral history research process. Wladimir Fischer's account of ex-Yugoslav migrants in contemporary Vienna considers how oral history might redress the under-representation of such migrant groups in official publications. Both chapters highlight the importance of reflecting on the research process: in Fischer's case this was imperative since the problem of recent conflict impinged upon the interview situation, while reflecting on the research process helped to underscore the validity of the cross-cultural interview in Herbert's work.

Rodger and Herbert make a valuable contribution to the history of cities, one that is distinguished by the critical mass on cities in the former socialist states. It is produced attractively and where visual material is deployed it enhances the contributions concerned. On the other hand, the claim to have achieved a comparative perspective is not realized and many of the chapters read like discrete essays. Further reflection upon the book's four themes in cross-national perspective would have been welcomed. However, the central ambition is to defend oral history against the 'resistance among historians to oral histories as a viable research method' (p. 1). The richness and diversity of material presented in this volume is surely an affirmation of the integration and maturity of oral history as a valuable heuristic device.

University of Teesside

NATASHA VALL

Jose R. Torre, *The political economy of sentiment: paper credit and the Scottish enlightenment in early republic Boston, 1780–1820* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007. Pp. x + 251. 19 figs. 9 tabs. ISBN 9781851968855 Hbk. £60/\$99)

Torre begins with a question: how did men reconcile the loss of their ancient virtue to the corrupting power of commerce? To anyone who has spent time on a university campus, outside an economics department or a business school, this question lingers. The ancient notion that truck and barter—the inherent inclination which Adam Smith considered the defining feature of humanity—corrupts an otherwise virtuous people remains a commonplace in academe. Although Deirdre McCloskey (*The bourgeois virtues: ethics for an age of commerce*, 2006) extols the bourgeois virtues, hers remains a minority opinion. Torre's work falls squarely within the McCloskey agenda in that it traces the development of the bourgeois virtues in early America. Much has been written about the long-run growth consequences of the financial revolution, but few financial historians have stepped back to ask how and why, in the rush toward the use of paper money and other credit instruments, people severed the age-old connection of exchanging intrinsic value for intrinsic value. In its stead emerged an economy in which intrinsic values were exchanged for promises.

Torre tells us that the transition was not welcomed by everyone. Several years ago, I ran across Amasa Walker's satirical *History of the Wickaboag Bank* (1857). Walker's fictional history was a thinly-veiled excoriation of a gullible public too ready to accept the paper of who knows whom in exchange for the product of their labours. To Walker, the world had gone collectively mad. When I first encountered Walker's book, to me it seemed as much a piece of lunacy as contemporary attitudes toward paper money seemed to Walker. After reading Torre's book on the intellectual transformation surrounding the emergence of paper money, I have a new-found appreciation for Walker. Americans really were

wandering in a wilderness, albeit one strewn with paper money. That we now label it the Federalist financial revolution affords us the opportunity to confuse what was with what must have been.

In the first two substantive chapters, Torre explains the philosophical transition from Locke's empiricism to Scottish humanism. Where Locke saw money as so much intrinsic value conferred upon mankind by the deity, the Scottish Moral Sense philosophers viewed money as an instrument of man for the benefit of man. The Scottish enlightenment understood that value was a human construct: moral value derived from sentiment; aesthetic value sprang from the imagination; and economic value emerged from trust and confidence. Adam Smith's conceptualization of a 'self-conscious, reflective morality derived in part from the sociability and interdependence inherent in a commercial world' (p. 33) was based on a foundation laid by Anthony Ashley Cooper (the third Earl of Shaftesbury), David Hume, and Francis Hutcheson.

The third and fourth chapters explore how Americans embraced Scottish philosophy and applied it to novel circumstances. Bank credit and paper money reflected the American belief in the productive potential of a vast, unexploited continent. Financial manipulations were common and could have undermined the entire enterprise. Stock notes, interlocking directorates, nonexistent accounting standards, ineffective oversight, ignorance of good practice, ordinary incompetence, greed, and theft were all players in the drama. Given this, the remarkable thing is how few failures occurred. When they did, Americans learned their lessons and rewrote the law. While the third and fourth chapters address what Bostonian Samuel Blodget identified as the golden chains of financial associations between men, the final three substantive chapters investigate what he called the 'flowery bands of culture' that tied society together (p. 89). The Unitarian challenge to Congregationalism, the era's sentimental literature, and contemporary debates over the subjective nature of beauty were all of one piece. Although Torre does not state it so clearly, he describes how the American adoption of a Scottish enlightenment epistemology opened the door to the modern economic conception of utility-based consumption. That is, consumers do not only consume goods; they consume the feelings evoked by the goods. Thus the consumer can 'consume' the utilitarian seating services supplied by a Chippendale chair as well as the chair as art. In the abstract, these two acts of consumption are separable.

Occasionally, Torre overstates his case and, by focusing solely on the American transformation, fails to account for the social, political, economic, and philosophical changes occurring elsewhere. The first financial revolution, after all, originated in the Netherlands and England a century or so before Americans went paper-crazy. The paper craze originated elsewhere—Americans took it to the next level. In the later chapters, Torre's social historical interpretations of truth and beauty wear a little thin, but it is good for the economist to contemplate occasionally the connections between the economic and social spheres. Torre helps us do that within an historical context.

Lafayette College and NBER

HOWARD BODENHORN

Naomi R. Lamoreaux and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, eds., *Financing innovation in the United States, 1870 to the present* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007. Pp. xiii + 503. 26 figs. 36 tabs. ISBN 9780262122894 Hbk. £27.95/\$45)

Contemporary observers characterized the period as a new era, a time of unbounded optimism and unparalleled achievements: markets were expanding and energetic entrepreneurs responded, supported by venture capitalists, leading to further gains in technology and productivity. The time and place could be Cleveland in the nineteenth century, or Silicon Valley in the twenty-first century.

Economic history does not always fulfil its potential to inform and influence central issues of the current period, but this volume promises to do so by providing valuable insights into the links between financial capital and technological creativity over time and in different contexts. The editors contribute an effective introduction that connects the concordant themes from the individual studies and traces their evolution from the early nineteenth century through to the twenty-first century. Their coda reveals a refreshing optimism about the future of US competitiveness, in part owing to its creative and flexible institutions, such as those that supported inventive activity and markets in property rights in inventions. The two editors, with Margaret Levenstein, elaborate on these themes in a study of Cleveland, an example of a rapidly expanding high-tech locale that developed leadership in an array of key industries. They link information on patentees, patenting, markets for technology, and the financial sources for innovation. At the time of the second industrial revolution, the greater scale of capital inputs into innovation created the need for outside sources of funding, but financing for innovative enterprises typically did not come from formal institutions like banks or established securities markets. Instead, venture capital was mobilized from wealthy individuals who overcame transactions costs through access to specialized information, close monitoring, and managerial activities. Such conclusions are supported further by evidence from Steven Klepper's study of the Detroit automobile industry largely through to 1930.

The limited initial role played by organized securities markets in the provision of capital for innovative enterprises during this period is confirmed in subsequent chapters. Larry Neal and Lance Davis discuss the competitive differences among the core industrial countries in the provision of financial capital, and institutional modifications that likely resulted in differential paths of innovation and productivity growth. Mary O'Sullivan's fine study relates stock market finance to specific emerging technologies, and demonstrates that the role of equity markets varied across time and industry. In particular, she identifies a tipping-point in the 1920s after which the market did provide a financial conduit for entry by innovative firms in the radio and aviation industries. Tom Nicholas's intriguing contribution investigates whether stock market fluctuations reflected systematic factors (new technologies) or idiosyncratic ones (irrational exuberance). He argues that the run-up to the crash of 1929 owed largely to the accumulation of intangible assets, which investors incorporated rationally in equity prices.

A later chapter by Margaret Graham assesses the entrepreneurial and financial challenges that a traditional glass company, Corning Incorporated, faced in its entry into the fibre-optics market. Their financial algorithms extended well beyond the primary inputs into R&D, including considerations such as the firm's own internal controls, litigation and intellectual property strategies, and government policies. Kira Fabrizio and David Mowery's paper describes the link between federal financing and advances in electronic computers, software, and semiconductors. Steven Usselman's composition on IBM offers a counterpoint, for it detects a greater role for private enterprise and private funding in the computer industry than proposed conventionally. This revision of what is viewed generally as a moral tale for federal subsidization of large-scale technologies instead emphasizes that technology transfer from the military sector was at times difficult or even detrimental to commercial opportunities.

Josh Lerner focuses on private equity, biotechnology start-ups today, and mechanisms that can resolve problems of asymmetrical information and market failure. Such issues are especially relevant for attempts to tap into venture capital and to participate in alliances with larger entities. Michael Darby and Lynne Zucker show that modern investors are well able to process signals regarding the 'knowledge capital' and potential productivity of such emerging high technology firms. How does the effectiveness of property rights affect such markets? Ashish Arora, Marco Ceccagnoli, and Wesley Cohen's analysis of a survey of R&D labs in the 1990s confirms that effective patent protection can lower the transactions

costs for the exchange of rights in technological innovations especially for smaller entities. Their results suggest a modern-day revival of disintegration, whereby technology specialists increasingly appropriate returns through the marketplace, a trend that hints at a reversion to the nineteenth-century patterns that Lamoreaux and Sokoloff uncovered.

History has propelled many countries to the first rank of attainment, only to cast them down again, and it is the ultimate goal of economic analysis to understand the factors that influence variation in the wealth of nations. This volume is highly recommended for its systematic insights into significant reasons why the United States surpassed other nations in the economic sphere for well over a century. Its conclusions shed light on the function and malfunction of modern institutions, and are also relevant to the formulation of policy alternatives to improve the growth prospects for today's developing regions.

Bowdoin College and NBER

B. ZORINA KHAN

Susan Porter Benson, *Household accounts: working-class family economies in the interwar United States* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007. Pp. xiii + 233. ISBN 9780801437236 Hbk. £22.95/\$45)

When the author died in July 2006, she left a virtually completed manuscript which devoted colleagues (there is an afterword by David Montgomery) have prepared for publication. In researching *Household accounts*, Benson relied heavily on two key primary sources: first, reports on home visit interviews with female wage earners collected by field agents for the Women's Bureau during the 1920s and the early 1930s; and secondly, studies of families confronting unemployment who were assessed by settlement workers and other welfare officials during the late 1920s and the 1930s. Benson recognized that, while these sources provided valuable descriptions of working-class life, as most of the information was collected by women and presented from a female-centred point of view, there might be an obvious problem with bias. However, Benson, a noted historian of American labour and gender, employs her primary and secondary material with great skill. The result is an interesting study of family consumption patterns which she finds more strongly influenced by class than, as she had anticipated, ethnicity.

This work analyses sensibly the period 1919 to 1941 rather than concentrating solely on the depression years. Even during the so-called 'prosperity decade' of the 1920s, many working-class families had insufficient income to enjoy the benefits of mass consumption. The low national estimates for unemployment disguise the reality that a significant number of households suffered from the effects of short-term, or seasonal, unemployment. Total reliance on the earning power of the male head of household was a high-risk strategy for a working-class family. Additional sources of income, and the careful management of household resources, was essential merely to cope with economic uncertainty rather than to purchase luxuries. Inevitably, during the depressed 1930s more families were subject to economic strain, but for a number of those who occupied the bottom tier of the economic pyramid, life did not change dramatically from affluence to hardship.

Benson concentrates on the ability of the working-class family to earn, and its capacity or willingness to spend. She begins with an analysis of the traditional role of husbands as breadwinners and wives as the managers of households, and notes that men were more likely to use their earnings for items of personal satisfaction than women, who had to concentrate on managing the household with inadequate resources. Benson also examines the lifestyles of the more fortunate two-earner families, for whom life was less stressful. Indeed, one of the strengths of this work lies in its exposure of the complexities of working-class life where economic uncertainty ensured that planning for the future was so difficult that ad hoc arrangements to cope with emergencies were frequently necessary. The

relationships between parents and children were influenced frequently by the need for additional household income. In general, daughters surrendered more of their wage than sons, though the contributions of all children increased if their parents were unemployed.

Benson has a particularly insightful section on the strategies that families used to meet their housing needs. For the better off, home-owning often involved buying and sharing with other family members. However, the widowed, the divorced, those suffering from work-related injuries, the sick, and the victims of unemployment were compelled to move in with relatives. Sometimes it was necessary for families, especially large ones, to split up temporarily and seek lodging with several relatives. Compensation to the host family was a complex mix of the provision of services—cooking, cleaning, sewing, or child-minding—plus some cash. Women usually provided the labour and were instrumental in negotiating the arrangements. Working-class reciprocity was female dominated, which reflected both their vulnerability in the labour market and their experience as household managers.

Sometimes families had to rely on the goodwill of friends or neighbours, especially during an emergency, and reach some sort of arrangement about reciprocity, or compensation. Women usually negotiated these arrangements and, unsurprisingly, they provided most of the labour. Some better-placed working-class families were able to purchase services; they bought bread instead of baking, or sent out laundry so that wives could go out to work. Washing machines and irons were purchased in the belief that the easing of household chores would leave more time for paid labour. It is not surprising that many women were eager to escape the confines of the home.

This book could have been improved by a closer integration with changes in the economy, especially the labour force. It is also surprising that the provision of relief—private, local, or federal—does not figure more prominently in the text. However, Benson has produced an imaginative and sympathetic analysis of how working-class families managed their incomes in both national prosperity and depression.

University of Leicester

PETER FEARON

Randall E. Parker, *The economics of the great depression: a twenty-first century look back at the economics of the interwar era* (Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2007. Pp. xi + 257. ISBN 9781845422174 Hbk. £69.95/\$125)

In *Reflections on the great depression* (2002), Parker interviewed leading economists, such as Milton Friedman, Charles Kindleberger, Anna Schwartz, and James Tobin, who had written about the great depression of the 1930s after coming to economics during it. In this sequel, Parker interviews a dozen economists of the next generation who have shaped mainstream thinking about the depression: Peter Temin, Ben Bernanke, James Hamilton, Robert Lucas, Lee Ohanian, Christina Romer, Barry Eichengreen, Stephen Cecchetti, James Butkiewicz, Michael Bordo, Charles Calomiris, and Allan Meltzer. As in the earlier volume, only residents of the United States were interviewed (Parker gives no indication that not just Bernanke, but also Mervyn King, analysed the debt-deflation of the 1930s) and there is little suggestion that either post-Keynesians in the tradition of Hyman Minsky or neo-Austrians in the tradition of Murray Rothbard have had anything to say about the depression (although Parker does ask Temin about the Austrian overinvestment explanation of the depression). Parker does not interview historians such as Harold James who have written on the economic history of the interwar period (although some of the interviewees, such as Eichengreen, cite work by historians). Researchers of the depression

will be familiar with the articles and books written by the economists Parker interviews, but there is food for thought from listening in on these articulate and insightful scholars reflecting on the significance of their findings (and, sometimes, on the lack of larger significance of the research of their peers). In addition, the book provides useful supplementary reading for teaching, especially in combination with Parker's 2002 volume. Parker's 'Overview of the great depression' (pp. 1–28) and the chatty, informal but focused interviews provide a more accessible approach to students than jumping directly into the journal literature.

A recurring theme in these interviews is the crucial role of the gold exchange standard in constraining US monetary policy and in transmitting the depression from country to country. While Temin and Eichengreen emphasize the 'golden fetters' constraining US monetary policy, Romer (referring to joint work with Chang Hsieh) argues that the gold standard did not stop the Federal Reserve from undertaking a moderate monetary expansion in the spring of 1932 without triggering fears of devaluation and a speculative attack. However, she shares the general suspicion that a sufficiently large and sustained monetary expansion to restore the money supply to trend would have caused a speculative attack (p. 130). Bordo and Meltzer (pp. 199, 227) both note that the Federal Reserve claimed to be following Walter Bagehot's rule for a lender of last resort under the gold standard, but did not do so. Bagehot recommended that a central bank, when faced with an external drain and a banking crisis, should lend freely at a penalty rate. The Federal Reserve followed Bagehot on the penalty rate, but insisting on lending only on real bills, not on lending freely.

Another recurring theme is that the Roosevelt administration failed to understand that raising prices by restricting supply through the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) was not at all the same as raising prices by stimulating aggregate demand by leaving the gold standard, money expansion, and spending on public works. There is consensus that the NIRA and AAA slowed recovery from 1933. In the most controversial development of analysis of the depression, real business cycle theorists Harold Cole and Lee Ohanian (represented by Ohanian in the present volume) go beyond this consensus to argue that Roosevelt's New Deal policies as a whole stalled what would otherwise have been a strong recovery (due not to any monetary or fiscal stimulus to aggregate demand, but to positive productivity shocks). Ohanian tells Parker (p. 104) that 'there was very little recovery. Employment is 27 percent below normal in 1933 and remains 21 percent below normal in 1939', without mentioning that employment and output rose until the severe recession of 1937–8, which followed a sharp increase in reserve requirements on bank deposits and a swing from a full-employment budget deficit in 1936 (when the Veterans' Bonus was paid) to a full-employment budget surplus in 1937 (when Social Security taxes began to be collected). To illustrate how 'After 1932, the government intervenes in the economy in a really unprecedented fashion', Ohanian (p. 114) notes that it was no longer true that 'if workers in Flint, Michigan gave GM a hard time, the National Guard was called in and a few unionists would get shot'. To Ohanian, sending in troops to shoot strikers is not intervention; declining to do so is unprecedented intervention. Cole and Ohanian also hold that output fell from 1929 to 1933 because of negative productivity shocks; not because of deflation, the gold standard, mistaken monetary and fiscal policies, or the contraction of trade following the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act. Romer (p. 135) says of this work, 'I think it is wonderful when anyone works on the Great Depression. But, honestly, I think some of this research is a giant step backwards'.

This engaging book will provide entertaining and thought-provoking reading to anyone interested in current economic analysis of the great depression.

Brock University

ROBERT W. DIMAND

Dean Baker, *The United States since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xiii + 274. 2 figs. 15 tabs. ISBN 9780521860178 Hbk. £30/\$55; ISBN 9780521677554 Pbk. £10.99/\$19.99)

This book is part of a new series of studies designed to examine politics, economics, and social change in important countries and regions over the past two-and-a-half decades. This seems a useful enterprise, given that this year's new undergraduates were born after Ronald Reagan left office, and even younger academics could probably use a refresher on Jimmy Carter's 1979 'malaise speech'. Baker's volume is competent and thoughtful, arguing that the last quarter century in America can be viewed as episodes in one great drama: the turn to the right in economic policy. This framework offers him a hook from which to hang detailed chapters on the domestic and international policies of Reagan, Bush, Clinton, and George W. Bush. Baker manages to enliven even intensely studied episodes (like the saga of Willie Horton) with nuggets of forgotten information (like the point that it was Al Gore who first brought up the Massachusetts furlough programme in a primary debate).

As an introduction and a synthesis, the book should not be judged on its ability to offer new theories or break intellectual ground. Instead, it should be judged on the extent of its coverage, its accuracy, its ability to convey the complexity of ongoing intellectual debates and its ability to make sense of the recent past. By these criteria, unfortunately, the book leaves much to be desired. First, in terms of coverage: this series promises to explain 'politics, economics, and social change', but this book lands far short of that goal. A book that mentions the internet and information technology only in passing cannot claim to be examining 'social change' in recent America. If comprehensive coverage is impossible, a fairer test might be: given what he chooses to cover, does he get it right? Again, however, Baker does not do well here: for example, he believes that Howard Dean was the first to raise large amounts of money from small sources in a presidential campaign; but Ronald Reagan did that in 1980. One might consider this, too, to be an unfair test; who can know all the minor details? Thus a third criterion might be: does Baker at least try to present both sides of the major debates fairly? He does not. For example, Baker criticizes for good reasons various elements of American political economy as compared to the European social democratic model, but he does not mention that many European welfare states see themselves in crisis and are adopting elements of the American model—surely this has to be mentioned in any fair comparison of America with Europe? To give another example, Baker repeats unreflectively the Jacob Hacker line about increasing risk in the economy, but scholars have pointed out that income volatility means incomes that go *up* intermittently as well as incomes that go *down* intermittently: Hacker's measurements are partly picking up irregular labour force activity by the second earner in a couple, or the increasing prevalence of one-time income windfalls. Income volatility has become one of the central concerns on the Democratic agenda, but Baker does not seem to know the arguments well enough to present the full debate.

The book's strongest suit is its ability to provide an overarching thread to recent American history. Baker argues that the whole of this history can be read in terms of the US's drifting away from the Europe. There is something to this: in political economy, in incarceration rates, in religion, and in social and foreign policy, the US is different, and the last two decades have exaggerated these differences. Still, reading this book leaves one with no understanding of where these changes have come from, nor of what they mean. At this point, we collectively know quite a bit about why these changes occurred in the US, but Baker has not profited from that knowledge and cannot impart it. It seems that here we have someone arguing that the key feature of the last quarter century is the turn to the right and yet they have made no effort to familiarize themselves with the scholarship on the causes of the turn to the right. In short, if you want to give your undergraduates an

overview of recent US history, this is probably not the book. However, it would be a good choice to put on the 'recommended reading' section for postgraduate students, who could use it profitably to fill gaps in their knowledge.

Northwestern University

MONICA PRASAD

Prashant Kidambi, *The making of an Indian metropolis: colonial governance and public culture in Bombay, 1890–1920* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. xix + 268. 2 maps. 4 plates. ISBN 9780754656128 Hbk. £55/\$99.95)

Kidambi's excellent study of the emergence of the metropolis of Bombay comes to us at a crucial moment in the city's history. If the transformations of late Victorian ideologies of urban renewal into modern Edwardian ones marked the brutal opening up of the Indian parts of the city, then today the age of liberalization in a putatively global age is doing very similar things to the city's demographic and cultural ecologies. One element, separated by exactly a century, remains common for both drives: to fashion the modern city of Bombay in accordance with the needs of dromophilic regimes of passage of international goods and capital—the attempt to carry out a ruthlessly developmentalist drive through the pretext of improving the condition of the poor of the city. This is not to say that the ruthlessness of such drives necessarily attain their desired goal but to remark upon the fact that planners and developers in their alacrity to respond to the demands of the frenzy of certain phases in the history of global capitalism are willing to shake up the built environment of a city with urgency, the aftershocks of which leave behind a moth-eaten landscape of uneven development. Certain parts of the city sprout up as symbols of urban prosperity, while others present a sorry picture of a slew of overcrowded urban slums that have become the hallmark of Third World global cities. In the camp of the developers and visionaries we witness, as we do with Kidambi in his chapter on the Bombay Improvement Trust, a farcical drama of megalomania, pettifoggery, and betrayals that belie the grandiosity of the initial triumphalism that heralds such projects.

The initial chapters trace the history of the creation of modern Bombay through colonial statist fiat for the three decades from 1890. The plague of 1896 provoked a hitherto relatively non-interventionist colonial state to swing into vigorous action to reorganize the built environment of the city, first through the very measures taken to controlling the epidemic, and then through the flotation of the Improvement Trust to develop the city into more manageable sanitized units. Both efforts led to the scattering of the poor from their localities of habitation into densely overcrowded slums on the edge of developed land. Alongside the state's attempts to engineer a healthy urban subject, the government felt increasingly the need to take control of this subject's bodily movements in urban spaces in the face of rising communal tensions, labour strife, and petty crime. The Bombay Police Act, 1902, gave the colonial police unprecedented rights to take measures towards maintaining 'public order' in the city. Thus, disparate phenomena like disease, over-population, communal and labour troubles, and crime, converging and connecting in colonial sensibilities giving rise to the perception of the city as one vast mass of chaos, marked the inauguration of rule by governmentality for colonial Bombay.

Alongside this narrative of the state's attempts to rationalize a chaotic city, Kidambi also traces a trajectory of the city's development, starting from above in the hands of colonial rulers and distant indigenous elite, and over time being diluted by the groundswell of civic activism from below, powered by Bombay's rising middle classes. Indians were at the forefront of the development of the city in their various roles as Big Men, financiers of statist projects, and more directly as corporators of the municipality and as members of the Legislative Assembly. Covering the same ground as the state's interventionist

policies—that is, the realm of Bombay's poor and working classes—these movements staked their claims by locating themselves discursively in the 'inside' of society against a projected distant paternalism of the nineteenth-century elite. Over time, as the concluding chapters of the book narrate, a rising tide of Indian middle classes, marked mainly by their education and professional status, began to take centre-stage in the city's life through philanthropic and reformist movements and then increasingly through the nascent mass nationalist political movements beginning to make their impact felt after 1910. As Kidambi remarks, the ethic of selfless service to the poor was well in place among certain sections of the urban middle classes by the time Gandhi arrived on the scene immediately after the war. From this point on, Bombay's history would unravel through the successive routs of the reformist middle classes—traditional, left, liberal, and right, by waves of economic liberalization ushering in for our times the unchallenged hegemony of the rich at the top of city affairs, in cahoots with foreign capital. What we now need is Bombay's history of capitalism, which would provide the larger context for the story narrated in this book.

Mumbai

KAUSHIK BHAUMIK

Tetsuji Okazaki, ed., *Production organizations in Japanese economic development* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007. Pp. 249. 27 figs. 64 tabs. ISBN 9780415391801 Hbk. £75/\$135)

This volume, containing chapters by some of Japan's outstanding economic and business historians, is an important addition to the English-language literature on Japan's modern economy. Production organizations are identified as the vertical and horizontal relationships created by economic agents. Using a shared framework of comparative institutional analysis and concepts from game theory, the authors ask why certain forms of such relationships evolved in particular industries at particular times, and how this may have related to the process of technological change and economic growth. The result is an often highly detailed picture of the evolution of Japanese manufacturing that demonstrates the inappropriateness of any simplistic factory vs. putting out system in Japan's 'industrial revolution', as well as the distinctiveness of Japan's development from any Chandlerian model.

The introduction highlights the context within which organizational choices are made, arguing that such choices are dependent on transactions costs, factor prices, technology, and product mix, as well as on the institutional and organizational conditions needed to secure throughput. A preliminary econometric test of these claims is undertaken, using data from the weaving industry. These claims are followed through in the individual chapters, and, not surprisingly for a book on Japanese industrialization, four out of the seven remaining chapters look at the textile industry. Those by Tomoko Hashino and Masaki Nakabayashi focus on the silk weaving industry in the Kiryū region, where mechanization was relatively slow, and both authors depict the organization of production as one of 'flexible specialisation'. Hashino emphasizes the importance of product mix, with the eventual move towards mass production and mechanization in the 1920s explained by a tight labour market and demand shifts in the product market. Nakabayashi focuses in particular on the expansion and efficiency of the subcontracting (quasi putting-out) system, in which the existence of long-term relationships with a core of full-time specialist weavers offered flexibility in both product and scale of production. Both authors suggest that Kiryū was a classic industrial district that demonstrated many of the benefits of agglomeration. Ryo Kambayashi's chapter is also on the silk industry, but looks at silk reeling, and the need for private institutions to curtail labour poaching in the face of deficient market mechanisms or state action. He produces statistical evidence to show that two related institutions, the registration system and the grade wage system, stabilized the

labour market in this crucial industry by suppressing voluntary labour turnover and controlling incentives to poach, even though this may have been a less than optimal allocation of human capital. The chapter by Okazaki discusses the separation of management and ownership in prewar cotton spinning companies. The number of professional executives grew in the interwar period, although it was delayed in firms in which owners continued to act as executives, and Okazaki argues that this was not due so much to the scale of operation, but rather the complexity of activities.

The three other papers look at railways, toy production, and machinery, respectively. Taking as a case study the Nippon Railway Company, which moved eventually towards a divisional structure in 1903, Naofumi Nakamura argues that personnel management was a key determinant of the organizational structure. Reform was aimed at improving communications and work efficiency, reducing personnel costs and restricting labour activity. In consequence, the company improved productivity and seized the productivity gains. The paper by Masayuki Tanimoto on toy production (crucial for exports in the interwar years) follows through on earlier themes by focusing on relational transactions and agglomerational advantages. Small workshops in this industry, and in some others, were far more than pools of unskilled workers. The path-dependence of the distribution system caused dispersed production organization to work as a competitive production organization, and the coexistence of complementarity and competition among the many toy manufacturers and wholesalers in Tokyo was the main source of industrial dynamism. Finally, Kazuaki Kagami's chapter on the machinery industry outlines the evolution of its organizational structure from the Meiji period through to the 'subcontracting' system of vertical and quasi-vertical integration based on stability of relationships that generated a shift to dynamic performance in the post-1945 period.

As a whole, this volume sheds significant light on why certain ways of organizing production were adopted at certain times, and how these impacted on the production process and incentivized the economic agents involved. The research is of a high calibre, and while the level of detail in some of the chapters may deter the general reader, the findings of the papers, both individually and collectively, are of importance to all interested in comparative economic development. The authors offer an explicit challenge to any simple stage theory of industrial growth—whether neo-classical or marxist—and demonstrate that Japan's economic development is a much more complex story than some earlier writers have suggested. Readers of this journal may need less persuasion of this than some Japanese audiences, but this volume provides us with hard evidence.

London School of Economics

JANET HUNTER

David Edgerton, *The shock of the old: technology and global history since 1900* (London: Profile Books, 2006. Pp. xviii + 270. 18 illus. 2 tabs. ISBN 978861972965 Hbk. £18.99/\$26)

Few readers of this journal will be shocked by Edgerton's argument. He is impatient with a history of technology that focuses on invention and innovation and undervalues systematically the continuing social and economic significance of older 'things'. Bedazzled by electronic gadgetry, it is easy to forget that most of our technologies originated before 1900, and things that once seemed obsolescent—from condoms to bicycles and ocean liners—are being produced in greater numbers than ever before. 'In use-centred history technologies do not only appear, they disappear and reappear, and mix and match across the centuries' (p. xii). They also cross continents and resurface in new guises, not by some orderly process of 'transfer' but by creative adaptations ('creole' technologies), such as the building materials of shanty towns, the motorized Thai 'long-tailed boat', and the

cycle-rickshaw, which spread quickly through Asia during the mid-twentieth century only to surface a few decades later in London and Oxford!

If economic historians need no reminding of the long lags between invention and impact, the relocations of global manufacturing, or the disparity between national records of innovation and rates of growth, one aspect of a use-centred history of technology is certainly worth emphasizing: the 'twilight world' of repair and maintenance (chapter 4). 'Re-use, recycle, repair'—the mantra of today's Green movement—describes the lifestyle of the majority throughout history. Yet few historians have given the subsistence strategies of the peasantry, the second-hand trades, or repair workshops the attention they merit. Notoriously GDP figures omit household labour, which consists overwhelmingly of maintenance, but even in calculating market values we tend to conceptualize investment as the purchase of new capital goods. Edgerton draws on exceptional, Canadian data that show that during the period 1961–93, expenditure on maintenance and repair averaged approximately 6 per cent of GDP. Not only was this 'a very great deal more than expenditure on invention and innovation', but also the maintenance of equipment 'amounted to 50 per cent of investment expenditure' (p. 79). Moreover, maintenance and repair have often generated modifications, making equipment more reliable and efficient (most famously, Watt's separate condenser), while providing a major source of skilled and professional employment—for both the small trader and the academically qualified engineer (only a small minority of whom work on design and development).

Edgerton has produced two important monographs in his primary field of research (*England and the aeroplane: an essay on a militant and technological nation*, 1991; *Warfare state: Britain, 1920–1970*, 2006), and the present work bears their mark. He emphasizes the predominance of military priorities in twentieth-century technologies, with authoritarian, conservative consequences that are too often ignored. Two chapters, on 'War' and 'Killing', provide the book's truly shocking insights. While demonstrating the continuing prevalence of old instruments of warfare, judicial killing, torture, genocide, and routine slaughter (underpinned by refrigeration and the 'disassembly' lines that inspired Henry Ford), Edgerton pulls no punches as he counts the casualties, both human and non-human, and laments the near-total absence of these technologies from museums. For all forms of life 'the twentieth century was murderous' (p. 160), and its innovations were chiefly ones of scale. By 2000, Britain alone was killing 883 million animals for food every year, most of them intensively-reared chickens (a figure dwarfed by the US's eight billion).

This book's emphasis on many unheroic aspects of twentieth-century 'technology in history' provides a valuable break from relentless narratives of unalloyed achievement aimed at 'boys of all ages' (p. ix). Its iconoclasm gives no quarter to those late-twentieth-century innovations that have still to rival the impact made on society during the past half-century by the late nineteenth's. Electronic computing and digital communication and entertainment devices receive only the briefest mention, likewise GM crops and medical advances in general; reproductive technologies (except contraception) none at all. Despite Edgerton's laudable intention of writing for 'grown-ups of all genders' (p. ix), his perspective remains essentially androcentric; one flinches at the paragraph on female engineers that transmutes into a discussion of Greta Garbo's role in *Ninotchka*!

The greatest challenge of writing 'the history of technology-in-use' is sustaining the interest of a readership which quickly takes even its latest, shiniest gadgets for granted. Edgerton's formula is to move at a fast pace and pepper his subversive polemic with irony. Should you find this at times superficial or frustrating, remember his primary audience is not a specialist one—though it too may profit by an excursion through the looking-glass—and wish him luck in provoking both students and general readers, and ideally also policy-makers, to delve further into economic and social history.

University of Bristol

CHRISTINE MACLEOD

Michael J. Oliver and Derek H. Aldcroft, eds., *Economic disasters of the twentieth century* (Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2007. Pp. ix + 361. 18 figs. 43 tabs. ISBN 9781840645897 Hbk. £79.95/\$145)

According to Angus Maddison (*The world economy: historical statistics*, 2003), over the course of the twentieth century the population of the world increased from 1.5 billion to 6 billion, world real GDP increased eighteen-fold and world real GDP per capita increased almost five-fold. The twentieth century also witnessed rapid technological change, a huge demographic transition, and massive improvements in areas such as literacy and health care. However, this is a book that wants to view the glass as half empty rather than half full, by characterizing the twentieth century as 'the age of economic disasters' (p. 1). While no one could deny that the last century did witness major economic disasters, the editors offer no academic or historical justification for the notion that the twentieth century was more prone to disaster than any other century. Indeed, the only chapter in the book that tackles this issue explicitly is that by Capie, discussing inflation, who puts the experience of the twentieth century in a long run perspective and hence makes the case for its exceptionalism. There is also a failure to address seriously the definition of what is meant by 'economic disaster', which weakens the academic coherence of, and rationale for, the volume. Instead of grappling with this issue, the editors admit 'contributors have had a free hand to decide the significance of their subject matter and so determine their severity' (p. 2). Furthermore, there is an inconsistency in terms of style and methodology; for example, in discussing the great depression, Garside acknowledges the importance of political economy but shies away from it, whereas Ferguson in analysing the Second World War embraces it fully; the Beenstock chapter on OPEC is out of step with the rest of the book as it is the only one to include equations and explicit discussion of economic theory. Another potential problem is that there is overlap across many of the chapters, although this is possibly a virtue, as it can provide alternative views on a topic.

Despite these qualms, most of the chapters in this volume do offer very good summaries of some of the most important economic events of the twentieth century; for example, Singleton on the First World War and Garside on the great depression. Ferguson's chapter on the Second World War draws heavily on his *The war of the world: history's age of hatred* (2006) and as such offers a neat summary of its main themes. Capie provides a careful, cautious, and clear discussion on inflation which students will find very useful; he concludes that causation in 'extreme examples . . . runs from social disorder [such as war and especially civil war] to inflation' (pp. 79–80). Wood also keeps a clear focus on the notion of economic disaster in his discussion of stock market crashes. He starts by acknowledging that there is no agreement on what constitutes a stock market crash and therefore chooses to focus on some major episodes. For him, stock market crashes only become economic disasters for the economy 'if they are allowed to lead to a sharp monetary squeeze' (p. 254). In the context of the main theme of the book, the impressive Morewood chapter on the collapse of the command economies of Russia and Eastern Europe is rather strange: while it is true that in economic terms the short run effect was disastrous—for example, in the early 1990s, industrial output in these economies fell by between 28 per cent and 60 per cent—surely the more disastrous event was not the collapse of the command economies but their initial imposition? Indeed, the distortion of economies by political decisions is one of the main themes of the book and explicitly so in Aldcroft's analysis of post-1960 (sub-Saharan) African growth. While highlighting important problems such as population pressure, the neglect of agriculture, poor human capital, and the negative impact of war and civil war (but neglecting the devastation being wrought in some countries by AIDS), he concludes contentiously by arguing that the main fault lies with African rulers, stating that economic strategy was 'imposed from above by power-hungry bosses who saw the prospect

of enriching themselves at the expense of the masses, while blaming the West for the resulting predicament of their countries' (p. 347).

While it is a pity that the notion of what constitutes an economic disaster has not been tackled properly, possibly because it is too problematic, the fact that many of the chapters offer such good introductions to the debates surrounding some of the most important economic events in the twentieth century makes it likely that many will find their way onto economic history undergraduate reading lists.

London School of Economics

PETER HOWLETT

Penelope J. Corfield, *Time and the shape of history* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007. Pp. xx + 309. 29 illus. ISBN 9780300115581 Hbk. £25/\$45)

Historians generally consider themselves experts on time: chronology, periodization, change, and continuity—these are the stock-in-trade of the discipline. Geographers, anthropologists, and other social scientists are berated routinely for failing to pay attention to the dynamics of continuity and change. However, as Corfield argues, 'it is strange that historians, who are generally so careful to define and to justify their sources and methods, have not done more to explain and justify their chosen time frames' (pp. 202–3). Her substantial new study is an attempt—sympathetic yet critical—to open the field of historical temporality to scrutiny and to make historians think again about one of the most basic and important categories in their conceptual armoury.

Although wide-ranging in its grasp of the different fields in which time has been studied, from quantum physics to anthropology, Corfield's book is concentrated on a specific question: how historians (and others who study the past) should best comprehend the temporal processes that make up what she calls the 'shape of history'. This is not a matter simply of unpicking existing periodizations—medieval, modern, and so on—though that topic receives plenty of discussion. Rather, her concern is with the temporal dynamics of history, those dimensions of time which have structured historical developments and through which historians seek to understand them. Reviewing a remarkable variety of evidence across times, cultures and disciplines, the book's central thesis is that historical time has three basic dimensions: deep continuity, which encompasses cosmic regularities as well as certain cultural traditions; micro-change, whose main feature is gradual if differentially paced adaptation, apparent in biological evolution, human language, and much technical innovation; and radical discontinuity, epitomized by political revolution, natural disaster, and technological breakthrough. Superficially, the model appears to bear a passing resemblance to Fernand Braudel's famous division of historical temporality into the *longue durée*, the *conjuncture* and *l'histoire événementielle*. However, Corfield is quick to distinguish her three dimensions by insisting on their intricate interaction and—also *contra* Braudel—on the absence of a hierarchy of determination between them. Continuity, micro-, and macro-change are thus intertwined like a braid; they are, in her term, 'trialectical'.

Each of these dimensions of time is treated in turn in successive chapters of the book. They are followed by separate thematic considerations of the notion of the historical period or 'age', including a critical exegesis of the concept of modernity, and of stage theories of history, Marxism being the best-known example. Corfield's arguments about the 'shape of history' are then brought together in the final two chapters, which allow the full significance of her trialectical vision of history to be developed. Between chapters are separate sections or 'chapterlinks' on particular ideas such as time travel and time measurement, so that the architecture of the book mirrors the wheel of time with the links representing individual spokes.

What Corfield presents, therefore, is a complex, multi-layered study of historical time that works as both a synthesis of the subject and an argument about it. Part of its force lies in the rejection of cultural relativism; Corfield is sensitive to different theories of time, including Einstein's theory of relativity and temporal traditions outside the West. Ultimately, however, she insists that 'history's dynamic combination of persistence, adaptation and transformation can be seen everywhere' (p. 249), in human psychology, the natural world, and even the cosmos, as well as in the historical record. In one sense this is obviously the case, but, it could be argued, it tends to conflate the model of reality with the reality of the model. Is the 'trialectical' dynamic really there in the world rather than imposed upon it by the classifying gaze of the analyst or historian? Corfield's method, which is to pile one scientific or historical example on another, provides much empirical sustenance to the objectivist case. Yet it does so without dispelling the relativist suspicion that what we are left with is a sophisticated local view rather than a universal truth.

Nevertheless, *Time and the shape of history* is a superb provocation to historians and an eloquent plea for them to return to the big questions. It asks us to think outside the narrow confines of period and narrative, and to consider once again the process of history as a whole, including 'pre-history', however multiple, fragmented, and incomplete that process might appear to be. It places issues of causation as well as periodization squarely back on the historical agenda. As such, it should be required reading for all would-be historians and a catalyst for those already practising to debate that most foundational and elusive of historical categories—the dimension of time.

University of Leicester

SIMON GUNN

Gregory Clark, *Farewell to alms: a brief economic history of the world* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007. Pp. xii + 420. 78 figs. 25 illus. 65 tabs. ISBN 9780691121352 Hbk. £17.95/\$29.95)

Clark 'takes a bold approach . . . an unabashed attempt at *big history*' (p. ix). An overview of historical economic growth supports a stark hypothesis, rejecting institutional roots of economic growth in favour of '[p]eople's basic preferences . . . changing, shaped by Malthusian pressures' (p. 189) as a consequence of 'survival of the richest' (p. 188). He also sees these preference changes resolving the puzzle of why the whole world has not developed. How adequate is the historical summary? Second, how plausible are Clark's conclusions? On both these questions I think most readers of this journal will judge the book inadequate.

The historical summary emphasizes, reasonably, aggregate indicators, principally wages and population, and employs total factor productivity analysis in a non-technical manner. Somewhat surprisingly, 'The Malthusian trap: economic life to 1800' takes up half the text. Clark takes the reader easily through relevant demographic analysis and concludes that 'the Malthusian era was one of astonishing stasis, in terms of living standards and of the rate of technological change' (p. 166). He recognizes the uniqueness of the European marriage pattern as a mechanism of fertility limitation but also draws the reader's attention to other societies' successful limitation of fertility well below the biological maximum. In his view, similar Malthusian equilibria characterized the histories of major societies.

Clark identifies with Malthus's aim 'to establish that poverty was not the product of institutions and that consequently changes in political institutions could not improve the human lot' (p. 33). He argues that sophisticated and stable institutions characterized medieval England—the state taxed and transferred little, did not accumulate public debt, and had a stable, commodity-based money and a free market private sector—but generated little technological progress. However, what he does is destroy straw men: a society

governed by 'exclusive and moronic ruling classes' that suppressed 'all enterprise and innovation'; and a parody of the 'Washington consensus' in which economic growth depends on private incentives untrammelled by state interference. His cursory discussion fails to confront serious institutional arguments. Later discussions of the disappearance of trial by combat and the ineffectiveness of laws prohibiting usury do nothing to strengthen his case.

Malthusian dynamics certainly deserve centre stage, but Clark's near exclusive focus on continuous Malthusian equilibrium is surprising. He notes that demographers find that the English death rate fails to show the systematic negative association with income expected for fluctuations around a Malthusian equilibrium, but finds solution in the positive association between urbanization and mortality. 'Thus the development of trade . . . which fostered greater urbanization . . . also allowed living standards to rise, but by purely Malthusian mechanisms' (p. 104) and 'the relative wealth of the English . . . probably stemmed mostly from the relative filth in which they wallowed' (p. 108). Most economic historians and historical demographers, while recognizing the power of Malthusian forces, would question the adequacy of a single-minded focus on Malthusian equilibrium. The rise in real wages following the Black Death constituted a (temporary) removal of the Malthusian restraint and the subsequent decline in wages that began in the fifteenth century was a Malthusian force, but hardly equilibrium over most of the period. By the seventeenth century, much of Europe may have returned to Malthusian equilibrium, but the Netherlands and England diverged from the rest. High urban death rates are not the answer—England's overall death rate was unusually low. The economic history of early modern Europe extends beyond Malthusian equilibrium and whether Malthusian equilibrium or not much else of importance potentially happened (as Clark's later discussions imply).

Shifting to the industrial revolution, Clark focuses on the changed relationship between population and income and the acceleration of productivity growth that this implies. He surveys and rejects models of knowledge growth based on institutions and human capital formation. He also points out that in aggregate it is difficult to pinpoint the start of the 'kink' in the efficiency curve and highlights that the neo-Whig emphasis that Douglass North and Barry Weingast place on the Glorious Revolution is not supported. Then, in a contradiction to his previous emphasis on the stasis of Malthusian economies before 1800, Clark opts for 1600 (with a possible reservation) as the beginning of a gradual transition into modern economic growth. He also argues that the transformation apparent in nineteenth-century Britain is something of an illusion. Technological change had a greater aggregate impact because it occurred in textiles, a large industry, and faster productivity growth coincided with a population explosion supported by American land supply: 'Britain's rise to world dominance was thus a product more of the bedroom labours of British workers than of their factory toil' (p. 243).

Clark argues that technological progress accelerated in a peaceful and stable England, largely unchanged institutionally since the middle ages. Having rejected a conventional emphasis on institutions, he returns to demography. His earlier discussion introduces his main theme of Darwinian alteration of behavioural choice. He has discovered from early seventeenth-century wills that the rich had the most children. He then infers, despite the fact that inherited land was the source of most wealth, that the rich passed on middle-class values: 'thrift, prudence, negotiation and hard work' (p. 166). 'Modern man's' new preferences generated lower interest rates, greater literacy, and longer working hours. Initially, in a Malthusian equilibrium, these traits made no impact on the standard of living, but eventually they led to the end of the long Malthusian era. 'Thus we may speculate that England's advantage lay in the rapid cultural, and potentially also genetic, diffusion of the values of the economically successful throughout society in the years 1200–1800' (p. 271).

Finally, Clark considers the great divergence among today's economies. Because he has argued that good institutions were not the key to generating the knowledge that caused the initial breakthrough in growth, he maintains that the lag in growth in much of the world differed fundamentally from the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution was about how human society generated knowledge at a high enough rate to escape Malthusian equilibrium. Today, knowledge, capital, and management are available in a globalized world and need not be created. So why does divergence in incomes and real wages characterize today's world? Drawing on his earlier work (much of it with Susan Wolcott) on the history of the Indian cotton industry, Clark argues that 'that these differences in labor productivity must stem from differences in the quality of labor in production across societies, differences that stem largely from the local social environment' (p. 352). That is to say that Indians did not have the preferences for work and accumulation that 'survival of the richest' generated in Europe.

Overall, then, the book develops a consistent argument to explain development and underdevelopment that rests on two key elements, neither of which is established convincingly. First, Clark's astonishingly casual rejection of 'institutions' as keys to growth is unconvincing. Second, his proposition that children of England's rich had a differential survival advantage, and this transformed attitudes to risk and work in a way that led to the industrial revolution, is suggestive at best. It is not clear that the late medieval rich had the attitudes he postulates; the intergenerational transfer of these attitudes is not explored; and north-western Europe's difference from the rest of the world is at best weakly established. Overall, his rejection of institutional views is facile; his arguments for Darwinian transfer unconvincing.

University of Oxford

KNICK HARLEY