REVIEW ARTICLE

THE THEORETICAL PAST: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY AND TEMPORALITY

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ZOLTÁN BOLDIZSÁR SIMON, *History in Times of Unprecedented Change: A Theory for the 21st Century* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), xiii + 209 pp. ISBN 978 1 350 09505 2. £85.00. US$114.00
DONALD BLOXHAM, *Why History? A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), xi + 396 pp. ISBN 978 0 198 85872 0. £35.00. US$45.00
ACHIM LANDWEHR, *Diesseits der Geschichte: Für eine andere Historiographie* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2020), 380 pp. ISBN 978 3 835 33742 8. €28.00
MAREK TAMM and PETER BURKE (eds.), *Debating New Approaches to History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), xiii + 371 pp. ISBN 978 1 474 28191 1. £75.00. US$100.00

History is in crisis. At least this is what a number of reports and articles imply. They suggest that academic history is suffering from a decline in public relevance, if not in graduate numbers.[1] Historians such as Jo Guldi, David Armitage, and Niall Ferguson have made the

[1] Benjamin M. Schmidt, 'The History BA since the Great Recession', *Perspectives on History*, 26 Nov. 2018, at [https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/december-2018/the-history-ba-since-the-great-recession-the-2018-aha-majors-report], accessed 15 Jan. 2021; Eric Alterman, 'The Decline of Historical Thinking', *The New Yorker*, 4 Feb. 2019, at [https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-decline-of-historical-thinking], accessed 15 Jan. 2021; Bagehot, 'The Study of History is in Decline in Britain', *The Economist*, 18 July 2019, at [https://www.economist.com/britain/2019/07/18/the-study-of-history-is-in-decline-in-britain], accessed 15 Jan. 2021.

case for renewing the public role of history, especially in advising public policy.[2] Yet calls for a more engaged relationship between the historical profession and the public have met with resistance. For instance, a resolution on 'current threats to democracy' passed by the Association of German Historians in 2018 precipitated a debate on the legitimacy of the profession taking a political stand against right-wing populism.[3] Criticism of the resolution, even from liberal historians and journalists, comes as no surprise given the ongoing debate on how to deal with the radical right in Germany. However, only one critical assessment of the resolution explicitly pointed out that the attempt to draw lessons from history seems to be at odds with the modern concept of history.[4] According to Reinhart Koselleck, the notion of *historia magistra vitae* became increasingly implausible at the beginning of the long nineteenth century due to fundamental changes in the experience of time. Instead of being seen as life's teacher, history came to be conceived of as a singular and irreversible process, implying at the same time a future open to human action.[5] Thus the eagerness among some historians to draw lessons for the present from the past is remarkable, and might indicate changes in the temporal horizons of Western societies.

[2] Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge, 2014); Graham Allison and Niall Ferguson, 'Why the U.S. President Needs a Council of Historians', *The Atlantic*, Sept. 2016, at [https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/09/dont-know-much-about-history/492746/], accessed 15 Jan. 2021; Virginia Berridge, 'Why Policy Needs History (and Historians)', *Health Economics, Policy and Law*, 13/3–4 (2018), 369–81.

[3] Association of German Historians, 'Resolution on Current Threats to Democracy', Sept. 2018, at [https://www.historikerverband.de/verband/stellungnahmen/resolution-on-current-threats-to-democracy.html], accessed 15 Jan. 2021; Thomas Sandkühler, 'Historians and Politics: Quarrel Over a Current Resolution', *Public History Weekly*, 18 Oct. 2018, at [https://public-history-weekly.degruyter.com/6-2018-31/vhd-resolution/], accessed 15 Jan. 2021.

[4] Manfred Hettling, 'Bedingungen möglicher Lektionen', *FAZ*, 31 Oct. 2018, at [https://www.faz.net/aktuell/karriere-hochschule/resolution-von-muenster-bedingungen-moeglicher-lektionen-15863786.html], accessed 15 Jan. 2021.

[5] Reinhart Koselleck, 'Historia Magistra Vitae: Über die Auflösung des Topos im Horizont neuzeitlich bewegter Geschichte', in id., *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt, 1979), 38–66.

In the last two decades, scholars such as Aleida Assmann, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, and François Hartog have detected a new way of connecting past, present, and future that they suggest emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. Hartog coined the term 'presentism' to describe this new 'regime of historicity'. Presentism is characterized by the all-encompassing dominance of the present in relation to past and future. In 'our broad present', as Gumbrecht calls it, the future is perceived not as an open horizon, but as a trap that is closing, while the past is no longer seen as an irreversible and limited space, but as something that haunts contemporary experience.[6] While these assessments may sound exaggerated to some, the discourse on environmental risks and climate change shows that new concepts of time are currently emerging. This becomes clear when considering the debate on the Anthropocene, a proposed geological epoch marked by human impact on the Earth's geology and ecosystems. The concept turns humanity into a geological force, thus collapsing the distinction between human and natural history that was crucial to the emergence of the modernist time regime.[7]

Debates on the Anthropocene and attempts to reverse the rejection of the notion of learning from history indicate that profound changes are taking place in our experience of historical time. New approaches to thinking about temporality have also influenced research on historical cultures of time. In the last decade, research on the practices,

[6] Aleida Assmann, *Is Time Out of Joint? On the Rise and Fall of the Modern Time Regime*, trans. Sarah Clift (Ithaca, N.Y., 2020); Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Unsere breite Gegenwart* (Berlin, 2010); François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité: Présentisme et expérience du temps* (Paris, 2003); Marek Tamm and Laurent Olivier (eds.), *Rethinking Historical Time: New Approaches to Presentism* (London, 2019).

[7] Will Steffen, Paul Crutzen, and John McNeill, 'The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?', *Ambio*, 36/8 (2007), 614–21; for the temporalities of the Anthropocene see Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *L'événement Anthropocène: La terre, l'histoire et nous* (Paris, 2013); Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History: Four Theses', *Critical Inquiry*, 35/2 (2009), 197–222; Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, 'L'arrêt du monde', in Émilie Hache (ed.), *De l'univers clos au monde infini* (Bellevaux, 2014), 221–339; Gérard Dubey and Pierre de Jouvancourt, *Mauvais temps: Anthropocène et numérisation du monde* (Bellevaux, 2018).

politics, and discourses of time and history has flourished.[8] The new history of temporality has also turned towards the temporal practices of academic history. Several studies have shed light on the production of historical time in places and institutions such as archives.[9] Thus the deconstruction of the modernist time regime in theoretical work and research on the temporalities of academic history have increasingly turned into a self-reflection on the practice of history.

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The four books reviewed here all entail reflections on the practice of history in the light of changing perceptions of historical time. Their perspectives range from philosophy of history to historiography. In this Review Article, I ask to what extent these works demonstrate fundamental shifts in the temporalities of historical writing.

Zoltán Boldizsár Simon, Assistant Professor at the Institute for History at Leiden University and Research Fellow at Bielefeld University, has made an ambitious attempt to reinvigorate the philosophy of history. His *History in Times of Unprecedented Change* starts from the assessment by Hartog, Gumbrecht, and others that the modern regime of historicity has ended. However, Simon differs in one crucial respect from his predecessors: he does not claim that the present predominates over other temporal horizons. Instead, he bases his account of the current predicament on the expectation of unprecedented change in the future. Simon's assumption references the debate on environmental and technological risks such as climate change, artificial intelligence, and genetic engineering. Even techno-optimistic visions of the future centre on the notion of disruption, thus negating more incremental concepts of change. Simon's account focuses less on the reality of unprecedented change than on the public expectation of the

[8] For a general overview see Allegra R. P. Fryxell, 'Time and the Modern: Current Trends in the History of Modern Temporalities', *Past & Present*, 243/1 (2019), 285–98.

[9] Markus Friedrich, *Die Geburt des Archivs: Eine Wissensgeschichte* (Munich, 2013); Philipp Müller, *Geschichte machen: Historisches Forschen und die Politik der Archive* (Göttingen, 2019); Sina Steglich, *Zeitort Archiv: Etablierung und Vermittlung geschichtlicher Zeitlichkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 2020).

unexpected. To the author, the idea of unprecedented change represents 'a disconnection between the past, the present and the future' (p. 20). He suggests that nowadays even the past is perceived as discontinuous, representing unprecedented change that has already happened.

Simon argues that such discontinuous temporalities challenge narrative theories of history that have reduced history to historical writing. He therefore structures his work along the difference between history and historiography. In the first part of the book, he asks how to conceptualize actual historical change, proposing a 'quasi-substantive philosophy of history' (p. 39). This is an attempt to offer a philosophical account of historical change that takes seriously the post-war criticism of all philosophies of history exemplified by Karl Löwith and Arthur C. Danto. Simon suggests a notion of history bereft of a unifying subject or a telos. By analogy with negative theology, this means a negative philosophy of history. Therefore, in contrast to Koselleck's concept of history as a 'collective singular' that unifies heterogeneous histories, he proposes a notion of history as a 'disrupted singular' (p. 41) that he characterizes as a 'perpetual transformation of unknowable "coming" histories into dissociated, apophatic pasts' (p. 56).

In the second part of the book, Simon turns his eye towards historical writing and investigates the possibility of historiographical change in times of unprecedented historical change. Notwithstanding the contemporary context Simon describes, he essentially proposes a general theory of historiographical revision, highlighting the epistemological specificity of historical writing by comparison with other modes of writing. Thus he investigates modes of expression that mediate between non-linguistic historical experience and historical writing. Simon conceives of experience as a momentary collapse of meaning—a rupture giving birth to a new process of expression. Like those representing realist currents in contemporary philosophy, Simon seeks to transcend the linguistic turn. However, he writes about the 'expression ~~of~~ historical experience', with the strikethrough ruling out any mimetic relationship between expression and experience. His phenomenology of historical writing pursues a realist ontology, assuming the reality of historical processes, but eschews any realist epistemology. According to Simon, all experiences of the historical

start with a sudden aesthetic encounter with the discontinuity of the past. Such encounters happen, for instance, when a historian is confronted with a source in the archive that seems to be at odds with contemporary experience. This short moment of non-sense initiates a process of interpretation and contextualization and thus of historical sense-making. Simon's account of historiographical change mirrors his concept of dissociated pasts in the first part of the book.

History in Times of Unprecedented Change offers an intriguing reflection on the conditions that make history and historiography possible in an age that has ceased to believe in a modernist concept of historical time. Simon demonstrates a profound knowledge of contemporary philosophy; however, his engagement with current historiography remains narrow compared to his discussion of historical theory and political philosophy. Rather like Slavoj Žižek, Simon seems to prefer drawing on examples from pop culture, such as Harry Potter, to make his point. In the first part of the book, which focuses on historical change as such, there are some allusions to global history and environmental history. The second part makes even less reference to existing historiography, even though it explicitly deals with historical writing. Historians such as Robert Darnton and Carlo Ginzburg are occasionally mentioned to demonstrate the strangeness of encounters with the past, but it is questionable whether these references to microhistory offer a convincing account of the challenges facing historical writing at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Simon could have found more suitable interlocutors in environmental history—an absence that is all the more surprising given the interest in the Anthropocene he demonstrates in the first part of the book. What is more, from the historian's perspective, the sudden encounter with the strangeness of the past is hardly the only initiator of historical sense-making. Not every process of knowledge formation starts with shock, and in his focus on discontinuity and rupture, Simon ignores the more mundane aspects of historical research and writing.

The same cannot be said of Donald Bloxham's monumental account of historiography in *Why History? A History.* The author, who is Professor of Modern History at the University of Edinburgh, offers a history of the rationales for historical writing. In contrast to Simon, Bloxham favours continuity over rupture, and he identifies

several means of legitimizing history that have been used since the beginning of historical writing in ancient Greece. Bloxham distinguishes between history as memorialization, travel, entertainment, speculative philosophy, moral lesson, communion, identity, and method. In the book's last chapters, he adds the more recent modes of history as emancipation and therapy. Bloxham traces these arguments in the Western tradition from classical antiquity to the present day. In his focus on continuity, he is wary of strict periodization, and hardly any of Bloxham's rationales for history are exclusive to a single period. For instance, history as travel encompasses all kinds of arguments favouring history as an experience of alterity from Herodotus to R. G. Collingwood.

Bloxham's study is outstanding in its grasp of two and a half millennia of historiography, and he traces his subject through time and space seemingly effortlessly. Across the chronological narrative, Bloxham picks up specific methodological and theoretical questions of historical writing, such as the relationship between context and causality. Although the chapters are organized roughly by historical period, the author is eager to highlight continuities across the ages—for instance, when he reveals how far medieval historians shared the assumptions of their ancient predecessors and their Renaissance successors alike. Bloxham displays analytical strength when he develops surprising analogies between authors who seemingly have little in common, but struggle with similar problems and questions. For example, he shows how figures as remote as Michel Foucault and Lewis Namier both worked on the interplay of structure and discontinuity (p. 251).

Despite Bloxham's impressive erudition, however, there are some serious problems with his history of the legitimization for writing history. First of all, although the author arranges his work chronologically to make clear his ambition to historicize the different rationales for historical writing, his account is not free of essentialism. Essentially, in presupposing the transhistorical continuity of most arguments for history, Bloxham answers the question that gives the book its title—*Why History?*—before he even starts his investigation, by simply enumerating these arguments. The neatly distinguished rationales for history and the lack of any inflection points in the narrative make

the book repetitive. Bloxham's narrative only gains momentum in the chapters on nineteenth-century historicism and on current historical writing, in which he describes the advent of the political rationales of history as emancipation and history itself as therapy.

Nevertheless, *Why History?* is a remarkable contribution to the history of historical writing that transcends traditional accounts of historiography. Bloxham decentres the shift to the modern regime of historicity at the beginning of the nineteenth century by embedding it in a *longue durée* account of debates on the writing of history. Moreover, he is fully aware of the dependence of modern historical writing on theory. Although Bloxham's narrative is based on the actual work of historians, he shows a profound engagement with authors from Augustine to Derrida. Thus, *Why History?* is a highly recommended self-reflection on historical writing.

Achim Landwehr is even bolder in combining the theory of history, reflections on the writing of history, and the historicization of time and history. Landwehr is Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Düsseldorf. In recent years, he has published a study on the construction of time in seventeenth-century calendars and a book-length essay on the theory of history.[10] It therefore comes as no surprise that he has published a self-reflection on the relation of historians to time that might be of practical use for the writing of history. His new book, *Diesseits der Geschichte*, bundles several essays and arranges them in relation to three questions: how do established concepts of history function? What are their flaws and are there any viable alternatives? And what would an alternative historiography actually look like? These questions offer a good overview of the scope of the thirteen essays, four of which have not been published before.

In the first essay, 'Das Jetzt der Zeiten', Landwehr introduces the fundamental concept of 'Pluritemporalität' (p. 61) for the co-existence of multiple temporalities in the present. Following Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems, Landwehr considers the present as the only perspective from which different temporal horizons can be conceived. Thus every past is necessarily the present's past; every future is the

[10] Achim Landwehr, *Geburt der Gegenwart: Eine Geschichte der Zeit im 17. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 2014); id., *Die anwesende Abwesenheit der Vergangenheit: Essay zur Geschichtstheorie* (Frankfurt, 2016).

present's future. In this respect, the present entails multiple pasts and futures, and the co-presence of temporal horizons is Landwehr's leitmotiv throughout the book.

In the following chapter, he gives an example of how to analyse historical cultures of time, explaining that during the seventeenth century, artefacts such as clocks and calendars shaped a new concept of time as an abstract resource that was open to interpretation. In the middle section of the book, Landwehr mainly deconstructs commonplaces of Western historical thought and proposes conceptual alternatives. For instance, in a masterful essay on the concept of the 'Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen', which is commonly translated as 'contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous', he traces the history of the metaphor from the art historian Wilhelm Pinder to Reinhart Koselleck. Landwehr then demonstrates how the trope of non-contemporaneity emerged in the wake of early modern European overseas expansion. Finally, he exposes the shortcomings of the concept in order to propose his alternative notion of pluritemporality. In other essays, the author delves into the concept of anachronism and the notion of the present, in each case examining them through the prism of conceptual history before exploring alternative uses of the term under discussion.

In the last section of the book, which mostly brings together hitherto unpublished material, Landwehr showcases experimental forms of historical writing that take into account phenomena of pluritemporality. He starts with a chapter on the concept of 'Chronoferenzen', referring to the entanglements between different temporalities and suggesting the concept of 'chronoference' as an alternative to linear models of historical time that have been predominant in the modernist regime of historicity and have come under attack in recent years. First and foremost, the term indicates the 'present absence of the past' (p. 245) from the present—the key concept of Landwehr's previous book on the theory of history. This present absence is mediated by historical sources and artefacts. In the following chapters, Landwehr sets out to sketch several exemplary cases of chronoference. A fascinating essay on the timescapes of Carlsbad, New Mexico, links the deep time of Permian caverns to the future of the nuclear waste repository nearby, proving the pluritemporality of every present. On

the one hand, the city's name intentionally refers to nineteenth-century spa culture, thereby erasing the alternative chronoferences of native Mescalero culture. On the other, the long-term nuclear waste warning messages at the repository represent an attempt to communicate with future generations. In a short postscript, Landwehr reflects on his approach to this case study. Starting from the problem of nuclear semiotics, he unearths the many and various chronoferences of a particular place.

Landwehr's essays display an incredible vigour in rethinking history and temporality. He makes use of theoretical concepts from systems theory, deconstruction, and semiotics with ease, but never loses touch with the actual challenges of writing history. Of course, it remains to be seen whether Landwehr's neologisms will stand up to scrutiny. For instance, it could be argued that the concepts of pluritemporality and chronoference mostly cover the same phenomena. Furthermore, some of the paradoxes the author wilfully introduces might dissolve when put to the test. However, Landwehr's essays are outstanding as they tear down the implicit division of labour between history and the theory of history. He convincingly illustrates that theory without history is empty, whereas history without theory is blind. Given the intricate relationships between history and theory in Landwehr's writing, however, there is one small disappointment: it would have been particularly interesting to read his thoughts about the conditions governing his own vantage point, especially in light of current theories of presentism. Although the introduction speaks rather vaguely about the growing uncertainty of history in our culture, Landwehr makes only passing reference to Hartog and Gumbrecht. So the question remains whether presentism might be the condition that makes Landwehr's courageous historical–theoretical endeavour possible.

The introduction to *Debating New Approaches to History*, edited by Peter Burke and Marek Tamm, more openly assumes the crucial role of presentism and 'the demise of the modernist time regime' (p. 3) in enabling new perspectives on history and temporality. This volume is of particular interest to those who want to know how changing concepts of time go hand in hand with methodological innovation in the writing of history. It echoes the volume *New Perspectives on Historical*

Writing that Burke edited in 1991.[11] *New Perspectives* contains essays on microhistory, history from below, women's history, overseas history, oral history, the history of reading, the history of images, and the history of the body. Twenty-eight years later, *Debating New Approaches* reassesses some of these threads: women's history has become gender history, overseas history has merged into global history, and the history of images has turned into a history of visual culture. Further, as Peter Burke states in the conclusion, *Debating New Approaches* features at least six topics which have no precedent in the 1991 volume. History of memory, history of emotions, digital history, neurohistory, environmental history and post-humanist history are the newcomers to the 2019 sequel. Clearly, a comparison of the volumes reveals that historical writing has undergone some profound changes in less than three decades. These changes cannot be separated from a deeper understanding of temporality and historicity.

As Marek Tamm argues in the introduction, the current discourse on time regimes coincides with a profound rearrangement of the temporal and spatial scale of historical research. Whereas global history has broadened the geographic scope of history, several new historiographical currents have adapted to the vast timescales of the Anthropocene. For instance, Gregory Quénet's intriguing essay on environmental history and the comment by Sverker Sörlin both contain reflections on temporality. Quénet even proposes overcoming the distinction between natural history and human history in order to better connect the respective temporalities of human and non-human entities. He historicizes the exclusion of the natural world from historical writing. Similarly, in her contribution on post-humanist history, Ewa Domanska reflects on the timescales of histories transcending the human world. The essay on neurohistory by Rob Boddice and the subsequent comment by David Lord Smail also deal with the 'deep' temporalities of epigenetics and neural development that until recently would hardly have qualified as worthy of historical inquiry.

Apart from these contributions dealing with phenomena beyond human timescales, there are also essays that approach time from a somewhat different angle. In his contribution on memory history,

[11] Peter Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge, 1991).

Geoffrey Cubitt makes an important point about how 'memory as a medium of perception disrupts temporal linearity and only intermittently concurs with the kinds of narrative ordering historians are used to imposing' (p. 142). This approach echoes Landwehr's thoughts on chronoferences and the present absence of the past. Moreover, Cubitt reflects on the changing media ecologies in which memory is produced and stored. Correspondingly, Jane Winters mentions in her essay on digital history that archival records 'will increasingly only exist in digital form' (p. 285). As Marek Tamm remarks in the introduction, digital technology will transform our relationship with the past. Yet it is open to debate whether the spread of digital media has played a particular role in the demise of the modernist time regime.[12]

Beyond its focus on temporality, *Debating New Approaches* provides an excellent overview of the state of the art in history. I will mention just a few of the insights to be gained from the essays in the volume. Jürgen Osterhammel, for example, reflects upon the current state of global history and makes some self-critical observations on the shortcomings of the field. According to Osterhammel, national history and Eurocentrism are 'two bogeys whose despicability is too often taken for granted' (p. 21) by practitioners of global history. Osterhammel then bemoans the lack of debate over concepts such as explanation, comparison, and circulation. Equally worth reading are Laura Lee Downs's essay on gender history and the comment by Miri Rubin, which show how the debate in the field has evolved in recent decades. There is much to learn about the emergence of 'the body' and 'emotions' as key terms after the linguistic turn. They also discuss the gendered context of universities, thus demonstrating how practices and institutions matter for historical writing. Of course, not every contribution gives such a convincing overview of its respective field. For instance, in an otherwise flawless essay on the history of knowledge, Martin Mulsow omits one of the most influential institutions in the field: the Center History of Knowledge at the ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich. Instead, he uses the essay mainly to promote his own work on 'precarious knowledge' (p. 170). Nevertheless, Lorraine

[12] Timon Beyes and Claus Pias, 'The Media Arcane', *Grey Room*, 75 (Spring 2019), 84–107.

Daston's comment offers an interesting account of the history of knowledge from the viewpoint of the history of science. In summary, despite some minor shortcomings, Burke's and Tamm's volume attests to the methodological and theoretical breadth of historical writing today.

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History is far from being in crisis. A lively debate is going on about its role in relation to radically altered experiences of time in the age of climate change and digital media. I would like to highlight three aspects of this debate: the shifting timescales in historical research; the movement towards non-human subjects and non-linguistic sources; and the intricate relations between the theory of history and historical writing.

Historians and historical theorists have discovered the long term, and not only as a consequence of the debate on the Anthropocene. Environmental history, Daniel Lord Smail's 'deep history', and certain proponents of global history have all developed a renewed interest the *longue durée*. Even cultural historians have become aware of time periods transcending the existence of the human species. For instance, Landwehr consciously incorporates geological timescales into his narrative on the temporalities of Carlsbad. The interrelationship between different temporalities—some of them reaching back well beyond the origins of humankind—which Landwehr has dubbed chronoference, is also present in environmental history, as Gregory Quénet remarks in *Debating New Approaches*. Quénet cites his own work on the environmental history of Versailles, which describes the interplay between the geological time of the place, the technological time of the castle's water supply infrastructure, and the short-term political history of the *ancien régime*. Such interrelationships between temporalities should be further explored.

The awareness of large timescales goes hand in hand with the discovery of subjects that cannot be reduced to human agency, such as cod, hurricanes, mosquitoes, volcanoes, or viruses. Similarly, approaches such as the history of emotions, neurohistory, and the history of the body explore the non-linguistic processes that were involved in

the production of written sources. The history of material culture—or, rather, the history of things, as the field is called in Burke and Tamm's volume—even works with non-linguistic sources. These attempts to go beyond written records should not be confused with naive realism or ontological naturalism. If historians respect non-human entities, they by no means embrace a strict notion of necessity. As Bloxham remarks, even natural objects are contingent. 'They are contingent on tectonic plate movements, volcanic activity, etc. Their ongoing existence is contingent, among other things, on their not being blown up by human-made explosives' (p. 347). The last aspect also resonates with Landwehr's reflections on nuclear waste. And the same thoughts on contingency hold true for the human body. Perhaps it is only in the Anthropocene that we have become fully aware of the contingency of nature, which opens up wholly new avenues in historical research.

Finally, we should reconsider the increasing convergence of history and theory, particularly in their shared perspective on temporality. In the conclusion to *Debating New Approaches*, Burke observes history's growing engagement with social and cultural theory, as does Bloxham. This entails a deeper self-reflection on history as a discipline, as most essays in the book edited by Burke and Tamm demonstrate. One reason for the growing interest in reflecting on the possibility of historical writing is clearly the crumbling of the modernist time regime. This process may gain momentum with the Covid-19 pandemic that has changed the experience of time at the level of everyday life. Such a situation demands new ways of writing history, and the books reviewed give hints about what historical writing that is aware of the demise of the historicist time regime might actually look like. In particular, Landwehr's essays demonstrate the playful character of historical writing that acknowledges the contingency of its approach to temporality. Or, as Gumbrecht stated at the end of a public debate on presentism in June 2019: 'We have an experimental situation . . . and I think instead of complaining about it, we should just use it almost in a surrealist way.'[13]

[13] Discussion 'Against Presentism', 26 June 2019, at [https://www.leuphana.de/en/research-centers/cdc/events/summer-schools/stanford-leuphana-summer-academy-2019.html], accessed 15 Jan. 2021.

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BOOK REVIEWS

B. ANN TLUSTY and MARK HÄBERLEIN (eds.), *A Companion to Late Medieval and Early Modern Augsburg*, Brill's Companions to European History, 20 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), xvii + 595 pp. ISBN 978 90 04 41495 2 (hardback). €228.00

B. Ann Tlusty and Mark Häberlein's monumental volume on late medieval and early modern Augsburg brings the history of this intriguing, and in many ways unusual, imperial city to a wider anglophone audience. The last few years have seen something of a trend for the publication of large edited volumes focused upon the most significant late medieval and early modern cities, including Andrew Brown and Jan Dumolyn's *Medieval Bruges* c.*850–1550* and Bruno Blondé and Jeroen Puttevils's *Antwerp in the Renaissance*.[1] The present volume brings Augsburg into this august company, and has already succeeded in attracting widespread interest amongst urban historians who are far more used to reading about the cities of the Low Countries and Italy. Any such volume faces a fundamental choice of how far it should focus upon acting as a comprehensive survey and introduction to its city, and how far it should aim to capture the state of the art in historiographical innovation as demonstrated in work on that particular city. This is no easy decision, and it is inevitable that no compromise will entirely satisfy all readers. Brown and Dumolyn's volume on Bruges tacked further towards the complete survey, with many authors collaborating on each chapter to create a rounded and consistent interpretation of the city's fortunes, while Blondé and Puttevils's volume on Antwerp is a collection of distinct essays reflecting the individual research interests of the contributors. Tlusty and Häberlein's volume on Augsburg embodies a compromise

[1] Andrew Brown and Jan Dumolyn, *Medieval Bruges* c.*850–1550* (Cambridge, 2018); Bruno Blondé and Jeroen Puttevils (eds.), *Antwerp in the Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2020).

between these two approaches. Most chapters are single or dual-authored, but generally survey quite tightly defined areas rather than reflecting particular interests.

The volume is organized into four thematic sections: 'The City', 'Economy, Politics, and the Law', 'Religion and Society', and 'Communication, Cultural and Intellectual Life'. The first section appears intended to serve as a form of extended introduction, for, unusually, the volume lacks an introduction in the traditional sense, and non-specialist readers are somewhat thrown into the deep end. Helmut Graser, Mark Häberlein, and B. Ann Tlusty's opening chapter on 'Sources and Historiography' situates Augsburg's importance in historiographical terms—not least in discussing the significance of Richard Ehrenberg's work on the Fuggers, which is well known in both English and French as well as German. Barbara Rajkay's chapter on topography, population, and visual representations effectively sets the scene for many of the issues discussed in later chapters, but in doing so it also highlights one of the most notable absences from the volume: maps. The half-page reproduction of Rogel's woodcut of 1563 is conspicuously the only map in the entire volume. On one level, now that spatial approaches are such an important element of contemporary urban historiography, we might have expected to see some chapters make use of thematic mapping; but more broadly, there is a real need for at least schematic maps identifying the locations, boundaries, and features discussed. The absence of even one such map from the volume is a real disappointment for this reviewer.

Claudia Stein's chapter on 'Invisible Boundaries' is extremely interesting and conceptually ambitious. Here, the now-familiar question of the early modern 'medical marketplace' is given a unique new dimension: Stein's 'invisible boundaries' are both confessional boundaries between Catholics and Protestants, and the boundaries of the body. Exploring these concepts in parallel offers a distinctive contribution to debates in medical history, while also powerfully explaining the reality of a bi-confessional city in a way to which the rest of part one only alludes. However, the nature of this chapter means it perhaps sits uncomfortably amongst its more descriptive neighbours in part one. Gregor Rohmann's chapter on 'Textual Representation' completes section one, introducing the wide range of

chronicle and related sources for the city in largely narrative fashion, but also considering the contexts and motivations behind their composition in a very insightful manner.

The second part of the volume focuses upon the broad but interrelated matters of trade, politics, and law, along with a digression into crime. Häberlein's chapter on production, trade, and finance sets out to look 'beyond the Fuggers'. Considering them in the broader context of fustian weaving, other merchants, and mining, he clearly proves that this was no one-horse town. Two chapters explore Augsburg's politics: Christopher W. Close considers the era of the dominance of the guilds over the city's government up to 1548, while Häberlein and Rajkay's chapter picks up the story with the patrician regime, which lasted until 1806. This regime-change aligned with the shift from an earlier embrace of the Reformation to what became Augsburg's distinctive bi-confessional nature. Together, these chapters offer a compelling narrative; yet some key aspects are explained only cursorily. While the closed patriciate might be familiar to historians of Augsburg and a good number of its neighbours, it is an alien concept to historians of many other European cities. More discussion of the formation, composition, and character of the patriciate—and, indeed, of the character of Augsburg's guilds themselves—would have made this section much richer for a broader range of readers. Allyson F. Creasman's chapter on crime and punishment does not lack context or explanation: the inquisitorial process and its implementation in the city are explained in a very accessible manner, making frequent comparisons with the wider European context. Likewise, Peter Kreutz's chapter on the civil law neatly balances a summary of the city's courts, processes, and legal code with a comparative analysis placing Augsburg in its context. The enduring influence of the 1276 *Stadtbuch*, although many neighbouring cities, by contrast, updated their legal systems with new Roman law-influenced codes during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, is striking, as is the late adoption of formal recognition for bills of exchange in the city of the Fuggers.

The third part of the book is entitled 'Religion and Society'—although, as we have seen, religion in this city had a great deal to do with its politics, and questions of social stratification and inequality are largely explained by its commercial life. Michele Zelinsky

Hanson's chapter on the urban Reformation provides a lively narrative of the changing tides of confessional policy in the city, helpfully expanding many of the points introduced in the pair of chapters on city politics (indeed, these three chapters should be read alongside one another). Marjorie E. Plummer and B. Ann Tlusty's chapter, 'Catholic–Protestant Coexistence', considers Augsburg's distinctive pattern of religious change and an unusual degree of tolerance through a welcome discussion of lived experience, offering an engaging picture of how this bi-confessional city worked in practice. Sabine Ullmann's 'Jews as Ethnic and Religious Minorities' offers an important reminder of the limits to the city's relative religious tolerance: Jews were expelled in the fifteenth century and not readmitted to the city until the early eighteenth.

Part three also includes four chapters on Augsburg's social structures. Mark Häberlein and Reinhold Reith's chapter on 'Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility' provides an overview of the city's tax structure, its increasingly diverse guilds and economic specialization, and its structures of poor relief. These are all quite typical stories for western European cities of this period, so it would have been interesting to see the detailed discussion of Augsburg's people and their fortunes contextualized in terms of its neighbours and competitors. Margaret Lewis's chapter on women, family, and sexuality makes the point that Augsburg's women experienced the same tribulations as most others in the Holy Roman Empire, but that the role of guild influence in the formative stages of the Reformation in the city gave them a particularly sharp burden to carry. B. Ann Tlusty's chapter on sociability and leisure is also framed around the influence of the Reformation on everyday life—especially in light of the fact that its support came more from the guilds than the elites. Nonetheless, there is much engaging detail on the city's inns, as well as intriguing leisure activities, such as sleigh rides around the squares. Finally, Andreas Flurschütz da Cruz addresses what has been sitting in the background of all the issues discussed so far during the seventeenth century: the experience of war. Rather than simply recounting the city's brushes with the Thirty Years War, this chapter provides an engaging cultural consideration of the city-dwellers' experiences.

The final section, 'Communication, Cultural and Intellectual Life', encompasses a broad range of arts and culture, beginning with print and the book trade. Regina Dauser's opening chapter on the dissemination of news connects Augsburg's centrality in financial networks to its centrality in news networks, first in manuscript and then print. Print then provides the focus for Hans-Jörg Künast's chapter on book production, which explores Augsburg's prominent role in the German print trade and its uniqueness in producing more vernacular than Latin texts, which is explained by the absence of a university. Wolfgang E. J. Weber's chapter on learned culture goes on to show that this absence of a university, however, did not prevent the emergence of vigorous humanist and intellectual networks—notably featuring an early embrace of the city's Roman origins and the natural sciences.

Victoria Bartels and Katherine Bond's fascinating (and richly illustrated) chapter on dress and material culture explores Augsburg as a city with a particularly rich clothing culture, and one possessed of uniquely abundant sources for fashion, including the illustrated manuscripts of Matthäus and Veit Konrad Schwarz. Their compelling analysis considers clothing as a key means of constructing status, identity, and gender in light of the city's complex social and confessional structures. Andrew Morrall's chapter on the arts—encompassing painting, printmaking, sculpture, and luxury trades such as goldsmithing—also illustrates Augsburg's distinctive richness, which resulted from the convergence of German and Italian influences. Alexander J. Fisher's analysis of music in the city also emphasizes the significance of this conjunction of Italianate and Germanic influences, along with the patronage of the Fuggers and their associates. Dietrich Erben's chapter on architecture explores a combination of influences in terms of 'competitive patronage', including the intriguing example of humanist mayor Marcus Welser's 1583 garden house, designed to exhibit Roman antiquities. The chapter also includes rich analysis of architectural features of the streetscape which greatly adds to the sense of the city that the early chapter on topography began to create; the two should certainly be read together.

There is no doubt that this volume must stand as one of the most complete and wide-ranging surveys of any single early modern city. However a volume like this is organized, readers might inevitably feel

that the editors could have done things a little differently, and that another structure or combination of chapters might have been better. It does seem, however, that the exhaustive structure of this volume actually creates some gaps through its segmentation, and some of the most interesting interpretative threads are left for the readers to assemble themselves. Surveying the whole volume, it becomes obvious just how indivisible the questions of religion and politics were in Augsburg (and how they influenced everything else), and it is tempting to think that it would have been both richer and clearer to weave the stories of Reformation and political change together into a collaboratively authored chapter. These areas of missed conjunction between chapters seem all the harder to follow in the absence of an introduction to provide an overall frame through which to interpret them, in addition to the absence of a map to navigate the places discussed in them. Context and comparison are strong features of some chapters, but are sparse in others, suggesting the question of quite whom this volume is intended to serve? The choice to publish in English rather than German marks it out as intended to reach a broader audience, many of whom might seek to employ it as a comparison in work on other cities; yet the reader who is less familiar with the region might sometimes be left lacking the contextualization required to really place the huge depth of detail offered. Regardless of any criticisms, however, the volume that Tlusty and Häberlein have put together is a supremely impressive achievement, and it will undoubtedly succeed in bringing the intriguing history of Augsburg to a wider audience for a long time to come.

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LUCA SCHOLZ, *Borders and Freedom of Movement in the Holy Roman Empire*, Studies in German History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), xii + 266 pp. ISBN 978 0 19 884567 6. £60.00

This study combines an examination of practices of safe conduct during the early modern period with wide-ranging reflections on mobility in general at the time. In return for a fee, holders of the right of escort (*Geleitrecht*) would provide armed guards, either mounted or on foot, for travellers within a particular territory or over a specific part of their route in order to protect them or—as in the case of noble travellers—to emphasize their 'honour'. Scholz has conducted substantial archival research into this subject, and his readers accompany him not only on early modern roads, but on waterways too. We explore the River Main between Miltenberg and Marktheidenfeld, along with the lower course of the Weser, and we learn of escort conflicts between the county of Wertheim and the prince-bishopric of Würzburg, as well as the struggle between the city of Bremen and the counts of Oldenburg over the *dominium Visurgis*. Along the way, we see that safe conduct often led to conflict between purported rights holders, and (partly as a result of these conflicts) was generally unpopular among those in need of an escort. Indeed, some travellers sought to avoid such protection and therefore went incognito or used relatively unfrequented minor roads. The rhetoric deployed by the holders of escort rights was charged with a special emphasis on security: 'protection . . . provided a powerful argument' (p. 202). In Scholz's view, this was merely a pretext; but if so, why did the rights holders go to such trouble? After all, although safe conduct came at a financial cost to those obliged to avail themselves of it, the granters of rights of escort rarely made a profit. Schulz suspects that the aristocracy 'valued safe conduct as a tool for negotiating honour' (p. 86), but his book also provides evidence to the contrary in the examples of nobles who preferred not to make a fuss of their rank so they could make easier progress, or who even slipped quietly through city gates in the early hours of the morning. In any case, *ius conducendi*—alongside other indicators, such as the exercise of judicial authority—was a marker of territorial sovereignty

Trans. by Jozef van der Voort (GHIL)

that granted legal and political authority to individual lords in the more fragmented portions of the Empire, where many small territories seemed to consist almost entirely of disputed borders.

By and large, the study sticks to its subject of safe conduct, but Scholz also casts a more general light on other aspects of early modern mobility, drawing on the rich body of literature on the topic—much of which examines local history. We see many of the tesserae that come together, mosaic-like, to form a 'history of free movement and its restriction' (p. 2), and we make acquaintance with the methods and motives—whether fiscal, economic, hygienic, or security-related—for limiting, channelling, or even promoting mobility. Yet the author speculates too casually over what outstanding experts on the Middle Ages (such as Ernst Schubert) have already demonstrated in far greater detail—that the medieval era experienced greater interregional mobility, while early modern societies were more settled overall.

Scholz's book frequently visits customs stations, which he notes were unpopular not so much for their financial cost as for the time they wasted. People objected less to the tariffs, which were often locally negotiable, and more to the various chicaneries practised at these stations, such as their highly irregular opening hours. Customs stations slowed down the flow of goods. Scholz also casts his eye over epidemics, quarantines, and *cordons sanitaires*; the condition of early modern roads; the *Kaiserliche Reichspost* and its competitors; and passports, which were by no means as crucial to everyday mobility in the early modern era as they are now, but which were issued by many different authorities and inspected on various occasions.

Elsewhere, the author repeatedly emphasizes that boundaries between states did not pose any major obstacles to early modern mobility, writing that 'up until the mid-eighteenth century, mobility was mostly controlled at checkpoints along roads and rivers and not at territorial borders' (p. 125). Does this mean that we tend 'to overestimate the importance of the countless boundary lines' (p. 8)? And were contemporaries 'confused' (p. 87) by the many disputed and overlapping borders of the era? This reviewer would not go quite as far as that. There was one central issue of the early modern period that did require clear categorization: that of confession. For this reason alone, travellers always knew exactly which polities they happened

to be passing through, and it is extremely rare to find localities incorrectly ascribed to territories in travel diaries (which Scholz has not evaluated here). Likewise, the legal literature examining borderlines is plentiful. And incidentally, even disputes over safe conduct often took the form of border conflicts, since lords needed to reach agreement over where the escorts accompanying their more-or-less noble charges would hand over to those of a neighbouring ruler. In short, we must confine ourselves to the conclusion—which Scholz himself presumably would not oppose—that borderlines were in fact reasonably important to everyday mobility in the early modern era. This too could be demonstrated by travel diaries, whose authors almost always assigned the locations they visited to the correct polity—thereby implying precise knowledge of territorial boundaries—but rarely stated the importance of borders in explicit terms.

Because 'the enclosure of movement can be seen as a key element of state-building' (p. 230), Scholz's wide-ranging study even seeks to correct 'anachronistic narratives on the history of state formation' (p. 5). 'Political orders can be understood as regimes of movement' (p. 11), he writes. This premise may be convincing in the mobile modern era (or what is currently left of it), but what specific results do Scholz's investigations produce? For one thing, he repeatedly floats the idea that the progressive monopolization of lawful mobility went hand in hand with the gradual establishment of a state monopoly over the use of force and the administration of justice. This implies an assumption of progress—an upwards trend. But do the many case studies in this book offer sufficient evidence for this? Scholz himself observes that 'The period witnessed manifold attempts by authorities to monopolize the legitimate means of movement, but this was an open-ended process that yielded different results in different settings' (p. 10), which is perhaps more suggestive of haphazard fumbling. 'There is no one linear direction in which the politics of mobility developed over the three early modern centuries' (p. 14). Customs tariffs, the value of passports, the inaccessibility of 'forbidden roads'—all these things were constantly renegotiated at the local level. This is in line with our current understanding of early modern statehood, whereby even 'absolutist' states relied on consensus and co-operation, were inefficient and fairly corrupt, and

failed to punish their crooks or maintain their roads. The author's observations on mobility in Japan, south-west Asia, and the Ottoman Empire are rather cursory, but nonetheless offer a contribution to the debate over whether Germany represented a special case: 'Polycentric, fragmented, and multilayered political orders were not an anomalous exception in the early modern world' (p. 37).

Now is of course an apposite time to place mobility regimes at the centre of an analysis of state formation, and Scholz is happy to draw parallels with the early twenty-first century. Future generations of historians will judge the durability of such comparisons; for the time being, however, we might question Scholz's decision to argue that the exact halfway point of the eighteenth century represented a decisive, all-encompassing watershed, instead of understandably admitting that he had to focus on a particular period and therefore could not look beyond it in any detail. The argument is not entirely convincing, since travel reports from the late Enlightenment inform us that roads were still in an atrocious state as late as 1770 or 1790. Likewise, passports did not acquire their paramount importance for mobility until the nineteenth century; the Franco-Spanish border only became a precisely defined and marked boundary line in the wake of the Treaty of Bayonne in 1868; and rights of escort lost their status as a primary guarantor of security during the establishment of the *Landfrieden* peace mechanism in the sixteenth century. That said, the author himself points out that the Dukes of Saxe-Weimar continued to claim the right of escort until 1831 (p. 134).

Scholz guides us through all manner of territories and local histories, and inevitably, given his broad scope, he lapses into inaccuracy at times. His chapter on 'The Old Reich', which draws largely on scholarship from the English-speaking world, is not exactly a reliable source of information on the political system of the Holy Roman Empire. If Scholz wishes to explain how relations between the Kaiser and the Imperial Estates were structured, he needs to include by far the most detailed text on this subject: the electoral capitulation (p. 28). Nor would it have hurt to include article IX.2 of the IPO (the *Instrumentum pacis Osnabrugense* of 1648, which ended the war between the Empire and Sweden), since this laid down rules governing mobility under Imperial law. Similarly, the role played by the more

active Imperial Circles in promoting central European mobility goes unrecognized. Why the lesser polities of the Empire 'owed [their] continued existence . . . to the Westphalian Treaties' (p. 52) also remains obscure, since it is unclear who sought to abolish them before 1648. Scholz repeatedly points out the importance of passports to the work of diplomats, but is evidently unaware that this was already a highly political issue prior to the Peace of Westphalia, as the peace congress in Cologne had (at least officially) been toiling in vain over the 'passport question' since 1636. The author seeks to set out the theoretical debate over interterritorial mobility, but his index omits the names of almost all the leading thinkers on international law—from Gentili and Textor to van Bynkershoeck, Vattel, Wolff, and Moser—as well as those of the most prominent German cameralists of the day.

Scholz is even at pains to trace troop movements, being interested in the practicalities of such manoeuvres (and earnestly informing us that soldiers sometimes ravaged the fields and readily engaged in looting; p. 71). However, though he also seeks to account for the theoretical discourses surrounding the topic, he fails to mention the many contemporary controversies on the subject that drew on political and military science, or the many treatises on the rights and obligations of neutrality. Given the countless wars of the early modern era, troop movements were the subject of intense dispute. Half a page (pp. 216–17) is not enough to provide an overview of the thorny debate over the lawfulness of troop transfers, and the description offered by Scholz is inadequate. There was nothing resembling a 'broad scholarly consensus' over the issue, and he also overlooks the bitterly disputed criterion of the justness (*iustitia*) of officially requested troop movements.

Scholz draws out many highlights and comparisons with adjacent topics, giving his book an almost pointillist effect, and as a result, his attempts to summarize his findings fall short: 'Early modern politics of mobility combined fluidity and friction, yielding widely different results for different social, corporative, religious, or economic groups at different times and in different places. Some roads were closed only at specific times. Letters of passage had to be acquired by some travellers, but not by others. Travelling persons of rank had to deal with bothersome symbolic practices and formalities, while many

peasants could move without bother. Whereas vagrants were forced into clandestinity, carters could move quite freely as long as they paid the required dues' (pp. 231–2.) Consider also the closing sentence: 'The ways in which societies channel mobility can be simultaneously promotive and restrictive, socially exclusionary, highly contingent, spatially dispersed, and morally ambiguous' (p. 234). Not all of the multifarious lines of investigation in this study offer profound insights, but many of them point to avenues for further research. Not everything has been thought through in detail, but much of it is stimulating in the best sense of the word. In any case, the book makes for an entertaining read.

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FRANZISKA HILFIKER, *Sea Spots: Perzeption und Repräsentation maritimer Räume im Kontext englischer und niederländischer Explorationen um 1600* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2019), 245 pp. ISBN 978 3 412 15171 3. €39.00

Based on doctoral research conducted at the University of Basel, this interesting study looks at Dutch and English maritime voyages between 1570 and 1620, an era which saw the first circumnavigations of the globe. Following recent trends in historiography, it seeks to direct closer attention at the oceans as an arena of sense-making and a culturally constructed space in their own right, rather than a space solely to be traversed in order to reach the shores beyond it. The study is inspired by theoretical work ranging from the oceanic turn and the spatial turn to New Historicism and New Criticism and quotes literature from various disciplines, including history, geography, and literary criticism. It relies mainly on printed (and a few manuscript) sources such as travel accounts, compilations, log-books, engravings, sea charts, and navigational treatises. Some of these, like the de Bry family's famous and richly illustrated collections of voyage accounts, published in twenty-five parts during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, are already well researched. Others, like Thomas Ellis's haunting descriptions and striking images of icebergs (1578) or Richard Hakluyt's pamphlet on the Strait of Magellan (1580), are less familiar. To this rich and diverse corpus, Hilfiker applies the method of close reading.

Central to the study is the concept of 'sea spots', which the author characterizes as 'maritime places . . . that, in the context of European expansion and colonial competition during the period under investigation, attained particular significance in being intensely sought after, navigated, experienced, and registered in various media, and thus became spaces of special meaning' (p. 36, translation by Sünne Juterczenka) The sea as a whole is conceptualized as a mosaic of individual 'sea spots', interconnected like a web, but each with distinct qualities that mark them out as desirable destinations and points of interest to European explorers.

The voyages at the centre of the study were led by navigators such as Martin Frobisher, John Davis, Willem Schouten, and Willem

Barents. New to the exploring scene and in competition with each other, the Dutch and the English bypassed routes controlled by the Iberian powers, challenging Spanish and Portuguese dominance and monopolies to the south and west by trying to establish alternative spheres of influence, especially in the Pacific and in the Arctic north. Pathfinding and reconnaissance in the Arctic Ocean, although marred by the harsh climate and difficult navigation amongst icebergs and drift ice, thus seemed to promise riches and kudos at a time when the Dutch and British strove to match and even surpass Iberian maritime prowess.

After a rather elaborate first part summarizing the state of research, contextualizing the voyages, and explaining her methodology, Franziska Hilfiker offers many fascinating insights in chapters four to six, which together form the most substantial part of the book. These chapters directly address maritime history's recently highlighted connections with research fields such as the history of cultural contacts and colonization. Hilfiker carries out a dense analysis of various encounters between explorers, maritime places, and coast and island-dwelling peoples. Closely following the sources, she identifies island coasts, maritime straits, and frozen Arctic seas as 'sea spots' especially pertinent to the experiences, observations, representations, and interpretations she seeks to reconstruct.

Representations of the sea, as Hilfiker shows in a chapter about the explorers' landfalls, were crucial means of articulating and interpreting cultural difference. In coastal areas and shallow waters, indigenous islanders often moved much more nimbly than European explorers who, by contrast, sought to avoid direct contact with water and considered entering it dangerous and inconvenient. Many island cultures, like those in the South Pacific, were intimately connected with the sea, and islanders comfortably inhabited coastal spaces. This astonished European observers, who discussed these agile swimmers at length and cast them as strange, amphibious creatures. Europeans also read the islanders' elaborate boat designs as indicating various degrees of 'savageness'; in other words, they constructed cultural hierarchies in their observations of coastal life.

In another chapter, the book makes a compelling argument that—just like islands, which have been widely acknowledged as

trans-oceanic stepping stones of the early modern period—straits and maritime passageways were relational spaces that became pivotal to the increasingly global thinking of European maritime powers. After all, such waterways were crucial to linking far-flung parts of the world (not least the oceans themselves) and to setting up commercial routes. Representations of the Strait of Magellan and of the much sought-after North-West Passage, according to Hilfiker, are especially revealing of this extending geopolitical horizon and of rivalries between the two newly risen and ambitious maritime powers, the Netherlands and England. They illustrate, moreover, that straits and passageways were rarely discussed in isolation, but were regarded as constituting a global system of interconnecting and intersecting paths.

The study furthermore offers a refreshing perspective on early modern interest in the Arctic regions, which the English dubbed 'Meta Incognita'. This interest has not typically been the focus of research on European expansion and colonization prior to the nineteenth century. While there is ample research on subsequent explorers such as Franklin, Scott, and Amundsen and their spectacular races to the North and South Poles, early modern attempts to enter the Arctic regions may have been underestimated as antecedents to those media events of the modern era. Hilfiker, meanwhile, is able to show how even the unsuccessful and unprofitable endeavour to establish a sphere of influence in the north that could rival the Iberian overseas possessions helped shape European imaginations. Devastating failure and prolonged suffering, as experienced during the exploration of the Arctic seas and indelibly 'inscribed' on the bodies, ships, and minds of the explorers, were regarded as essential aspects of pathfinding. They were even interpreted positively as signs of superiority over other exploring nations. The failure to master the hostile Artic environment was far from inconsequential. On the contrary, Hilfiker demonstrates that it left strong impressions on those who strove for more global influence, and that failure changed the ways in which the northern seas were perceived in Europe.

Hilfiker's observation that failure had an important role to play in the quest for global dominance raises the question of how acknowledgements of failure would later inform new initiatives to

enter the Arctic regions or find a route linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. So, for example, the eighteenth-century voyages of James Cook disproved the existence of both a navigable North-West Passage and the alleged vast southern continent of *Terra Australis Incognita*, whose existence had been posited by the ancient geographer Claudius Ptolemy and which was thought to border the Indian Ocean and counterbalance the continents of the northern hemisphere. Although Cook did explore and chart the coastline of the smaller southern continent of Australia, which had been previously discovered by the Dutch and was subsequently colonized by the British, his discoveries by and large disappointed hopes of compensating for the British loss of global influence after the American Revolution. Yet Cook's voyages were and still are considered the apex of exploratory achievement. It seems that shrewdly casting failure as success, as Dutch and English explorers did during the early phase of European exploration, may have contributed to a more general epistemological shift. After all, an appreciation for the negative results of exploration and the non-existence of much anticipated and hoped-for discoveries would later become crucial to key Enlightenment concepts like that of progress. These and other questions are outside the purview of Hilfiker's study, but they point to promising routes for further investigation.

The study's most impressive achievement, however, lies in showing how traces of early modern perceptions and interpretations of the sea can be detected in materials that have long been characterized as far removed from the 'actual' encounters and experiences of explorers and navigators and ridden with all sorts of distortions and inaccuracies. Hilfiker succeeds in showing how such perceptions and interpretations were processed and, through their circulation in texts and images, made accessible to a wider audience—not just in the Netherlands and in England, but also in the German territories through the de Bry family's publishing venture (for example). Engaging and enjoyable to read, *Sea Spots* certainly deserves interest from scholars outside history departments, and even from a wider public audience. Hilfiker does at times try the patience of readers not used to the soaring theoretical heights and abstract vocabulary of post-structuralism and constructivism. On the whole, however, this does not diminish the value of an original and well-written contribution to maritime

history: a thriving, rapidly evolving, and—in an age of climate crisis and intensified rivalries over newly accessible natural resources and trade routes—highly topical field of research.

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GRAHAM JEFCOATE, *An Ocean of Literature: John Henry Bohte and the Anglo-German Book Trade in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2020), xxxii + 540 pp. ISBN 978 3 487 15840 2 (paperback). €58.00

The British book historian Graham Jefcoate, a leading expert on the history of both the German and British book trades, fills an important gap in the research in his latest book. Using the example of the Bremen-based bookseller John Henry Bohte (1784–1824), he examines German–English trade relations in the two book markets in the early nineteenth century. Jefcoate's work is a continuation of his equally opulent study on German printers and booksellers in London between 1680 and 1811.[1] Little is known about the actors, structures, and conditions of the foreign book trade in both countries, about transnational transactions, and especially about the turbulent years following the Napoleonic Wars.[2] Over 500 pages, and relying strictly on source materials, Jefcoate has now traced the history of a hitherto completely unknown individual in the history of the German book trade, and has thus been able to make exemplary statements about the strategies, actions, and business areas of trade relations.

Taking Bohte's biography as a starting point, Jefcoate examines his bookselling and publishing activities against the background of the development of the bookseller profession and the history of the book trade. The study draws on extensive printed and unprinted source materials from libraries and archives in the UK, Germany, France, and even Australia and the USA. These include printed stock catalogues, correspondences, and order lists. As a young bookseller aged just 20, Bohte was in contact with Johann Friedrich Cotta in Stuttgart, Georg

[1] Graham Jefcoate, *Deutsche Drucker und Buchhändler in London 1680–1811: Strukturen und Bedeutung des deutschen Anteils am englischen Buchhandel* (Berlin, 2015). See the review by Michael Schaich in *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 39/2 (2017), 73–9.

[2] The foreign branches of German publishers have become the main focus of attention, while the retail book trade has been largely ignored. See the overview by Monika Estermann, 'Beziehungen zum Ausland', in Georg Jäger (ed.), *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, vol. i: *Das Kaiserreich 1871–1918*, pt. 3 (Berlin, 2010), 470–517.

Joachim Göschen, August Wilhelm Schlegel, Carl Christian Philipp Tauchnitz, and many others.

Bohte came to London in 1811 at the latest, where he opened his book import and export business at 3 York Street, Covent Garden, in 1813. At first, he specialized in importing German books and German editions of the Greek and Roman classics. At the request of 'many friends of German literature' (p. 115), he soon affiliated his bookshop with the 'Deutsche Lesebibliothek' (the German Circulating Library), which also stocked the most important German periodicals, such as the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, and other journals. Eventually, Bohte also became active as a publisher and prepared, for example, an edition of the famous Faust illustrations by Moritz Retzsch. From 1814 onwards, Bohte regularly attended the Leipzig Book Fair, where none other than the former publisher of Goethe and Schiller, Georg Joachim Göschen, became his commission agent, as did Leipzig's major publisher Steinacker & Wagner. However, Bohte was unable to attend the fair in 1817, which can now be seen as a stroke of luck from a book trade historical perspective as his correspondence with Göschen is particularly extensive in that year, providing information on book orders, offers, payment processing, and logistics. Göschen also supplied Bohte with antiquarian books, including some incunabula (p. 195). In 1822, Bohte even bought a Gutenberg Bible for the Duke of Sussex at an auction.

From 1820 onwards, Bohte was not only firmly established on the English book market, but also had excellent connections with the German book trade. He was, for example, in close contact with the director of the newly founded Bonn University Library (1818) and professor of philology and archaeology, Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker, and also supplied English literature. Jefcoate is able to dedicate a source-saturated chapter to this business relationship, as the correspondence between Bohte and Welcker is preserved in the Bonn University and State Library. On multiple occasions, Welcker ordered several hundred copies of English works at short intervals and took out subscriptions to English academic journals. Bohte also provided Welcker with information on interesting new publications. This resulted in a lively and close exchange over a period of several years.

Bohte's professional success led to the award of a Royal Warrant as 'Foreign Bookseller to His Majesty the King' in early 1820.

After examining Bohte's professional network, which included European professional colleagues, librarians, and writers, Jefcoate devotes himself to Bohte's publishing profile and range of products. To this end, Jefcoate has meticulously analysed Bohte's surviving printed catalogues between 1814 and 1826 (after his death). In summary, his programme included literature used in classical humanistic education, and offered a cross-section of German high culture.

After his death, his widow Sarah Bohte took over the company for a short time; however, in June 1826, she initiated the closure of the business for health reasons and took the last orders. In November 1826, the first part of Bohte's stock was auctioned off, but Andreas Stäheli, who had opened a 'Deutsche Buchhandlung' (German bookstore) in London at the end of 1826, had apparently already acquired up to two-thirds of the remaining books (p. 431). However, he sold his company to his London colleagues Koller and Cahlmann only one year later. The remainder of Bohte's stock was auctioned off in 1831.

Finally, Jefcoate traces the history of British–German book market relations beyond the death of Bohte and examines the long nineteenth century (1789–1914) in the same manner in which he profiles Bohte's predecessors in the London German book trade from 1749 at the beginning of his analysis. This approach is extremely useful because it allows us to place Bohte's merits in a larger context. Bohte was followed by the German booksellers Black and Co., Bohn and Son, Boosey and Sons, Koller and Cahlmann and Treuttel, and Würtz and Co.—some of which existed at the same time as Bohte's company.

Jefcoate (p. 458) lists Bohte's activities as importing German books and Continental editions of the Greek and Roman classics into England; exporting English books to Germany; establishing contacts with a wider European network of booksellers; selling printed material from his shop in Covent Garden to both personal and institutional customers; acquiring a Royal Warrant as Foreign Bookseller to the King; developing and maintaining a retail presence in Leipzig in collaboration with his agents there; supplying Bonn University Library and other German institutions; issuing specialist catalogues and lists of recent publications; running a circulating library in London

specializing in German books; developing a publishing programme focused on selected works of English literature, German literature, bibliography, and natural history; acquiring Cooke's Editions and other stereotype pocket editions of the classics and marketing them in both Britain and Germany; and establishing connections in literary and scholarly circles in both countries. As Jefcoate himself states, 'Few of these activities were unique to Bohte, and parallels for most of them can be found among his predecessors, contemporaries and successors. What may make Bohte unique is the sheer range of his activities during the eleven years of his business life as well as the scope of his personal ambition' (p. 458). Thanks to his detailed research, Graham Jefcoate's exemplary study succeeds in increasing our knowledge of the foreign book trade and transnational trade relations and in developing new research questions from these findings.

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WOLFGANG KÖNIG, *Sir William Siemens, 1823–1883: Eine Biografie* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2020), 270 pp. ISBN 978 3 406 75133 2 (hardback). €29.95

There are many reasons why a new and substantial biography of William Siemens is welcome. As Wolfgang König persuasively reminds us, Siemens was a highly significant figure in Victorian Britain in terms of the history of manufacturing and technology. He was a prominent player particularly in the development of steam engines, steel production, and, most spectacularly, telegraphy. Siemens was also, however, hyperactively and obsessively committed to experimentation in connection with mechanical enhancements and, as König makes clear, far more widely. He became a ubiquitous and leading figure across the many scientific and cultural societies that lay at the heart of Victorian (and global) endeavour, was extensively networked, and was particularly important in the professionalization and co-ordination of the British engineering sector. William Siemens was the main representative in Britain of the astoundingly successful Siemens *Geschwisterbund*, a network of siblings based and operating across Europe (and, as König hints, perhaps to an extent consciously inspired by and constructed on the model established by the Rothschilds). Taken altogether, Siemens is a fascinating and important figure for anyone interested in the history of technology, corporate history, and Anglo-German economic and cultural relations. On his death, a window was dedicated to him in Westminster Abbey, paid for by subscriptions organized by many engineering societies, and symbolizing the high esteem felt for him. As König argues persuasively, historical awareness of him has, however, become unfocused over time, given his cross-cultural context and uncertainty about his position within the wider family network.

This biography constitutes a detailed and direct reassessment of William Siemens's life and work. It makes use of a wealth of archival materials across the UK and Germany—most prominently those of the Siemens Historical Institute in Berlin, as well as copious printed primary sources. Many of these are by William himself—the biography contains a valuable comprehensive bibliography of William Siemens's publications—or by other members of his family or vast network of

acquaintances. Given the subject focus, the research has necessarily ranged across biographical and corporate history, the political histories of Britain and Germany, and cultural history, including the history of German immigration to Britain. It has also required detailed study of specific areas of technical development. The volume contains many fascinating and thought-provoking images, including of family, context, and inventions.

Born in 1823 in Mecklenburg-Strelitz near Lübeck, Wilhelm Siemens was the seventh of fourteen children (four of whom died early). After his father's death, Wilhelm came under the guidance of his older brother Werner, the leading player in the family. While Werner's studies and work focused increasingly on science and electronics, Wilhelm was drawn to the practical applications of scientific research, particularly to industry. After studying at Göttingen and completing an apprenticeship in Magdeburg, Wilhelm travelled to the UK for the first time in 1843 in order to arrange and sell the patents for Werner's inventions in the field of galvanic metal production. After further visits, he based himself there from 1847, taking British nationality in 1858. As König shows, William—as he then became known—started out in a somewhat subordinate role in the family firm as a salesman and proponent of technology developed by his brother Werner. This included the financially successful galvanic patent, as well as the less successful steam engine regulator and printing process. In 1847 Werner Siemens joined with Johann Georg Halske in the production of telegraphic equipment. William worked to promote the Siemens & Halske company's activities in Britain too. He was, however, increasingly making his own way.

Striking narrative dynamics within König's volume are William Siemens's astoundingly rapid and successful integration into British economic, scientific, and cultural life and his growing independence from Werner and the family firm. König traces the complex relationship between these aspects, which were interwoven—sometimes mutually supporting, but often in tension with each other. In addition to working for Werner, William worked independently for numerous British companies as an engineering adviser. He became increasingly interested in pursuing, promoting, selling, and applying the results of his own experiments—again with variable success. An area in which

William would take the leading role was the laying of telegraph cables beneath the sea, a technology first successfully applied with the cable laid between Britain and France in 1850–1. William directed the Siemens brothers' collaboration with British engineering companies such as R. S. Newall & Co. and would become independently involved in the sector as technical adviser, innovator, and entrepreneur. König provides dramatic illustration of the sometimes gargantuan scale of William Siemens's activities in this area, with his leading role in cables laid across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, his designs for and application of enhanced (and again monstrous) cable-laying equipment, and the enormous ship *Faraday*, specially commissioned by William Siemens from Mitchell & Co. in Newcastle and visited by Queen Victoria and the German Empress Augusta in 1876.

As the latter detail suggests, within three decades William had also gone from being a relatively unknown Germanic salesman to one of the most prominent, visible, and well-connected figures on the British national stage. König provides a wealth of detail and contemporary observation regarding William's personal characteristics. These played a significant part in his ability to form long-lasting and intimate friendships and technical and commercial collaborations. For those interested in the history of networks, König's account provides a wealth of information. William's entry to and relations with numerous leading societies are described, including the Royal Society, the British Association, the (Royal) Society of Arts, the Institutions of Civil Engineers, of Mechanical Engineers, of Electrical Engineers, of Naval Architects, and so on. With astounding and sustained energy, he devoted himself to giving presentations, building up connections, founding new establishments, and occupying leadership roles.

Not insignificantly in the context of his career, William married a cultured Scottish woman—Anne Gordon—who supported her husband domestically, through personal engagement, and by active participation. He also set up constructive and useful accommodation, with a town residence in Kensington enabling ease of access to the multitude of contacts and societies in London and a country seat at Sherwood in Kent, where he could conduct his experiments and receive guests. As König suggests, an invitation to stay at the latter could be an effective way of supporting and deepening friendships. Among William and

Anne's guests would be the Emperor of Brazil, the Crown Prince of Germany (future Emperor William II), and countless industrialists, musicians, and artists. König also describes how Sherwood became a showcase for electric power, with its own electricity generator powering water pumps, sawmills, greenhouses, and more.

König provides a convincing understanding of the evolution of the Siemens family network. Werner shaped William's early career and work. While Werner would remain the centre point for the family business, however, William would become in many ways an equal player, complementing Werner's science-based approach with his more technical, applied, and commercially minded activities. König also points out that the opportunities for impact were in some respects more conducive in Britain than in the German states. In addition to Werner and William, brother Carl looked after business affairs in Russia. Carl and his brother Friedrich also intermittently assisted William in Britain. The *Geschwisterbund* is revealed as not unproblematic. Werner and William were often not in agreement. Their intensive correspondence, however, reveals that they sustained throughout a positive, critical, and transparent discourse that possibly lay at the heart of the Siemens family's success. William's relationship with Carl and Friedrich, meanwhile, was more strained, with differences over commercial approach, attitudes to risk, and personality.

This volume contains excellent discussions in many respects. While necessarily focusing on the brothers, the account is gender-conscious in its description of the limitations of society life and the role of women in sustaining and enabling industrial and social interaction. There is an interesting and welcome acknowledgement of antisemitism among the brothers, which is depicted as to some extent typical, but also shown to vary in strength between them and, in William's case at least, is partly redeemed by a late rejection of such prejudices. There is a focused exploration of the role of intellectual and professional societies in Victorian life, and of William's significance generally in this respect as well as with reference to the professionalization of engineering, telegraphy, and electronic technology.

König provides highly useful information regarding William's—and his brothers'—involvement in German politics as their homeland passed through revolution, war, and unification. There are surprises,

such as the actual participation of the Siemens brothers on the ground in the First Schleswig War of 1848–9. William's connections with German emigrants in the UK are explored in some depth, focusing particularly on his close relations with J. G. Kinkel, Gottfried Semper, Richard Wagner, and Lothar Bucher. This account simply corroborates and underpins the allocation of William Siemens to the liberal camp. Though perhaps less enthusiastically than Kinkel and Bucher, William Siemens accommodated himself to German unification and shared patriotic, anti-French views after 1871.

König takes great care to explain and illustrate the scientific and technical findings at the heart of the Siemens brothers' work. As an exercise in publicly accessible science, this volume is excellent. As König shows, William Siemens's experiments, writing, and lectures were extensive and far-reaching. For this reader, the volume helps place William Siemens alongside the many other notable polymath Germans present in Victorian Britain, including figures such as Prince Albert, Baron von Bunsen, and Friedrich Max Müller. König's volume—presumably picking up on current trends—pays special attention to William Siemens's work in relation to environmentalism. This included, for example, innovations to reduce inefficiencies in coal burning, to support electricity as a more environmentally friendly mode of power and transport, and to capture hydro-electric power. But it is interesting that König devotes a chapter to William Siemens's work and publication on the power and life of the sun. Here, the reviewer is reminded of Max Müller's contemporaneous reflections on solar mythology.

The structure of the volume produces no little amount of repetition. It is highly irritating that no systematic distinction is made between 'England' and 'Britain', not least given, for example, the significance of Scottish scientific and cultural life with which William Siemens is linked. The treatment of societies is methodical and revealing, but also somewhat plodding. Discussion of the Siemens brothers' position on German politics is valuable, but it is also superficial and requires far more investigation. Werner's role as an MP for the *Fortschrittspartei* between 1862 and 1866 is mentioned. So, too, is the presence of Werner, William, and his wife Anne at the great meeting of German liberals in Coburg in 1860. These latter points, however,

might be placed under the heading of the reviewer's wish list. Taken as a whole, this is a fascinating and valuable addition to knowledge regarding the Siemens family, industrial history, and the history of Anglo-German relations. It provides much useful information for those working across a wide range of associated areas.

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LAURA PACHTNER, *Lady Charlotte Blennerhassett (1843–1917): Katholisch, kosmopolitisch, kämpferisch*, Schriftenreihe der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 104 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 720 pp. ISBN 978 3 525 31097 7. €90.00

In the early twenty-first century, Lady Charlotte Blennerhassett is known only to a few. Experts in reform Catholicism may have come across her correspondence with church historian Ignaz Döllinger, while historians of French–German relations will possibly know about her comprehensive biography of Madame de Staël. But in other scholarly circles—not to mention the broader public—her name is largely forgotten. However, when she died in Munich during the First World War, this German who took British nationality was not only mourned as the 'last European', but also well-known as a highly regarded writer of European cultural and political history. German historian Laura Pachtner has now published a comprehensive, diligently researched biography of this remarkable woman.

Charlotte Blennerhassett, born to a Bavarian noble family in 1843, is, indeed, a fascinating personality. Her life and career elucidate both the limited scope for personal development faced by noble young women in mid nineteenth-century Germany, and the agency and influence an outstanding personage like her could achieve even in this traditional milieu. Countess Charlotte von Leyden—from 1870 onwards Lady Blennerhassett—was a well-informed and strong-minded correspondent with links to Catholic intellectuals all over Europe. She published numerous historical books and essays that were highly acclaimed in her time. The mother of three lived a transnational life between London, Paris, and Munich. For many years, she was at the centre of the fierce conflicts between 'liberal' and 'ultramontane' (papist) factions of Catholicism over the position of the Church in rapidly modernizing societies. As a committed advocate of freedom of science and the separation of state and church, Blennerhassett always tried to mediate between the parties and warned against irreconcilable positions. After the conservatives prevailed at the First Vatican Council (1869–70), she was forced to hold back criticism that risked the schism of the Church.

Charlotte von Leyden's family of origin exemplified the transformations of the German nobility in a rapidly industrializing society in several respects. Charlotte's mother Franziska von Leyden, a devout Catholic from the von Weling family (previously a Jewish bankers' family that went by the surname Seligmann until their conversion and ennoblement), committed Charlotte to a traditional female upbringing which included an extended stay at a conservative Catholic boarding school frequented by the offspring of noble families. A ban on any scientific learning after her return home was meant to prevent her from spoiling her marriage opportunities. While the family strove to find a suitable husband for Charlotte (which proved difficult due to a rather small dowry), the intellectually active young woman eager for education was denied even the smallest personal freedoms. Only her acquaintance with Ignaz Döllinger, provost of the cathedral in Munich and an acclaimed liberal theologian more than forty years her senior, allowed her some intellectual and personal space. Döllinger provided her with scholarly books and, as his pupil, she was soon excellently informed about the controversies over the modernization of the church. When her family finally allowed her to travel to Paris and Rome, she was therefore able to send Döllinger detailed reports on the public and private opinions of the different parties abroad. Through him, she came into contact with many liberal Catholic thinkers of her time. Among them were the British historian and essayist Lord Dalberg-Acton and the French bishop Félix Dupanloup—both critics of the dogmatization of papal infallibility who nonetheless remained in the Church after its announcement by the First Vatican Council in 1870. Döllinger, by contrast, continued his harsh public criticism and was soon excommunicated. Marrying Charlotte von Leyden to the Anglo-Irish Catholic baronet and liberal politician Sir Rowland Blennerhassett, whom his protegée had met in Rome, was one of his last acts as a priest.

Through her marriage, Charlotte Blennerhassett escaped the strict surveillance of her family. But their economic difficulties followed her. Her husband's estate in Kerry was already in debt, and with the rise of the Irish Home Rule movement, his chances of obtaining revenue from the land diminished even further. Soon, the young couple could not afford their own house in London anymore. Charlotte and the

children spent more and more time in France and Bavaria, where living costs were lower. Increasingly, Blennerhassett, who had already published her first article (a report on liberal Catholicism in France) before her marriage, made her interests and profound knowledge of European history profitable as a prolific writer of scholarly articles, essays, and books, many of them on French history. Nonetheless, she would not have been able to provide her children Arthur, Marie Carola, and Willy with an education befitting their noble status without the help of her mother and her brother Casimir.

The recognition Blennerhassett received for her scholarly work was extraordinary. Her historical works—including extensive studies of culture and politics in eighteenth and nineteenth-century France, several publications on British history (such as a series of articles on Victorian England published in 1913–14), and biographies and biographical essays on both historical figures and contemporaries—were received very positively and often reviewed in highly respected journals. While she published several biographical portraits (including of Mary Stuart, Joan of Arc, and Marie Antoinette) that could be seen as part of the literature on women worthies, she also wrote on politicians and writers like Talleyrand and Chateaubriand. In the renowned German *Historische Zeitschrift*, where reviews of works by non-academic—let alone female—authors were scarce, Blennerhassett's three-volume biography of the famous salonnière and writer of Revolutionary France, Germaine de Staël, was highly praised for 'understanding the interplay between political events, the ideologies of the time, and Madame de Staël's life and works' (p. 400; all translations by Johanna Gehmacher). In 1898, at a time when German women were still fighting for access to universities, the University of Munich awarded Blennerhassett an honorary doctorate. Her nomination for this honour was based on her 'sharp judgement and masculine force of spirit' (p. 454), while a couple of years earlier her admission to the Bavarian Academy of Sciences had failed because of her sex (p. 452). France, by contrast, thanked her for promoting cultural understanding between Germany and France by admitting her to the 'Ordre des Palmes Académiques' founded by Napoleon in 1808 (p. 456).

As a member of a transnational aristocratic family and a Catholic intellectual with correspondents all over Europe, Blennerhassett bore

witness to the First World War in the last years of her life. Although her husband had died in 1909, she refused to apply for the reinstatement of her German nationality. In 1917, Charlotte Blennerhassett passed away as an enemy alien in Germany and never had the chance to rejoin her surviving friends abroad or her children living in the UK and overseas.

The extraordinary protagonist of this comprehensive biography is worthy of discussion for several reasons. First of all, it is noticeable that the study was published by the Historical Commission of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences—a fact that might be considered a late compensation for the failure to admit Blennerhassett to this prestgious institution. The significant role played by Blennerhassett and other aristocratic Catholic women as mediators and opinion formers in the debates and transnational political conflicts over the role of church and religion in secular societies sheds new light on the cultural and intellectual history of European Catholicism. It also raises questions about the gendered character of practices of intermediation in the heavily male-dominated institutions of the Catholic Church.

Second, this biography of a mid nineteenth-century female intellectual is also fascinating from a broader gender perspective. Blennerhassett herself once noted her generational position between two eras. The early nineteenth century was still influenced by the Enlightenment and by revolutions, which had raised women's hopes of emancipation at the end of the century in many countries, while in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, growing women's movements brought forward demands for educational and political rights for women. Between these more turbulent eras, however, restrictive ideologies regarding women's 'proper place' made it extremely difficult for a woman to obtain a higher education or take a public role as an intellectual. A closer look at journals of the time nonetheless reveals many female authors who often wrote under pseudonyms. In most cases, it is not easy to find out how these women, who were excluded from formal academic education and access to archives, acquired their knowledge. Blennerhassett is a good case in point for the alternative, often rather efficient informal networking strategies many of them used. Her example is therefore constructive in analysing the gendered history of knowledge and the informal

scholarly practices of a period that still deserve far more attention. The ways in which Charlotte Blennerhassett legitimized her extraordinary career are also instructive for the analysis of later debates on women's education. Although she had fought hard for her own education against the conservative views of her mother, she was far from demanding equal education for all women. On the contrary, she based her claim to be respected as a historian solely on her exceptional talent. This argumentative strategy provides historical context for elitist concepts of female intellectuality that were to turn up again in both feminist and anti-feminist arguments at the turn of the century.

Third, Laura Pachtner's work on Blennerhassett highlights some interesting questions from the perspective of transnational biography. It illustrates the challenges of all transnational biographical projects that must take into account archives in several countries and often require reading knowledge of more than one language. In the case of a member of the European elite connected with many eminent scholars, access to archives is comparatively straightforward (leaving aside the enormous amount of material Pachtner obviously had to deal with). In other cases, however, the distribution of archival material over multiple countries can make such a project unfeasible. Apart from these methodological issues, the case of Blennerhassett also opens up new perspectives on national, transnational, and global biographies of the nineteenth century. Biographical research often focuses on biography as a specific narrative closely linked with nationalism (best exemplified in national biographical encyclopaedias that nationalize individual lives despite all their complexities). Nations are also often taken for granted, with those moving between them (such as migrants, missionaries, adventurers, and refugees) seen as the exceptions to the national norm. However, when global religious communities such as the Catholic Church or transnational elites like the European nobility become the background for a European history of the nineteenth century, national identities become less self-evident and transnational lives a more common phenomenon worthy of detailed study.

For her book, Laura Pachtner has conducted extensive archival work in several countries and has documented her findings meticulously. Presenting Blennerhassett's life over more than 700 pages, she has undoubtedly surpassed earlier, more fragmentary research on this

eminent Anglo-German female writer and historian. However, it is not easy to pin down her specific perspective on the protagonist. She formulates several questions, including about the loss of status of the nobility as a background for Blennerhassett's childhood experiences, or about how she developed her transnational networks, but it is not clear how she links her research with recent arguments from any specific research field or with a specific theoretical approach. Pachtner's reflections on biographical concepts also remain rather implicit. She introduces the concepts of micro-milieus, transnationalism, and networks in the opening section of her book. However, in the detailed narrative of Blennerhassett's life (the first half of the book) and of her work and politics (the second half of the book), it is hard to see how she used these concepts or if she came to any conclusions about their utility. Throughout the book, she remains rather reserved about her own perspectives—and even when she seems to have an opinion, she hesitates to tell us. For instance, at one point Pachtner discusses different (gendered) approaches to history writing in English and German contexts and quotes from historian Bonnie Smith's claim that (female) 'high amateurism' formed 'the intellectual avant-garde of a general historical project to reach the past' (p. 463); yet she concludes that the validity of this argument must remain a 'matter of opinion'. As a result, the overall impression of this ambitious book remains ambivalent. It provides an enormous wealth of detailed information and will therefore doubtlessly become an essential work of reference for all future researchers working on this enormously interesting historical personality. Furthermore, a careful reading of Pachtner's study will open up several new research questions, including on the intellectual history of European women of the nineteenth century, on transnational lives in aristocratic milieus, and on the gender history of Catholicism. However, this highly recommendable book would have been far easier to read if the author had avoided some redundancies and had found a bolder structure for her narrative.

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ERIK GRIMMER-SOLEM, *Learning Empire: Globalization and the German Quest for World Status, 1875–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), xiv + 654 pp. ISBN 978 1 108 48382 7. £34.99

The history of the German Empire has for some years now been viewed and interpreted anew against the background of the globalization debate at the turn of the millennium.[1] Numerous individual studies, particularly on the interdependence of the world economy, have deepened and decisively differentiated our knowledge of essential aspects of globalization, such as internationalism and monetary policy, the professionalization of financial journalism, and the global interdependence and relevance of private banks.[2]

With his book *Learning Empire*, Erik Grimmer-Solem now provides another exciting perspective which finally puts the phenomenon of globalization in the second half of the nineteenth century into the wider context of the long-dominant view of Germany's outrageous 'grab' for world power. Although the German challenge has recently been repeatedly placed in the context of global imperialism and often relativized, Grimmer-Solem now offers a new, primarily economically motivated view of the period between the 1870s and the end of the First World War.[3] His study shows that Wilhelmine world politics was an 'improvised response'—a result 'of an accretion of insights' into 'opportunities and challenges'—in the context of a global trend involving all great powers and especially pitting the young ones, such

[1] Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Geschichte der Globalisierung: Dimensionen, Prozesse, Epochen* (Munich, 2003); available in English translation as *Globalization: A Short History* (Princeton, 2009).

[2] Cornelius Torp, *Die Herausforderung der Globalisierung: Wirtschaft und Politik in Deutschland 1860–1914* (Göttingen, 2005); Guido Thiemeyer, *Internationalismus und Diplomatie: Währungspolitische Kooperation im europäischen Staatensystem 1865–1900* (Munich, 2009); Robert Radu, *Auguren des Geldes: Eine Kulturgeschichte des Finanzjournalismus in Deutschland 1850–1914* (Göttingen, 2017); Verena von Wiczlinski, *Im Zeichen der Weltwirtschaft: Das Frankfurter Privatbankhaus Gebr. Bethmann in der Zeit des deutschen Kaiserreiches 1870–1914* (Stuttgart, 2011); Niels P. Petersson, *Anarchie und Weltrecht: Das Deutsche Reich und die Institutionen der Weltwirtschaft 1890–1930* (Göttingen, 2009).

[3] Andreas Rose, 'International Relations', in Matthew Jefferies (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Imperial Germany* (Farnham, 2015), 347–66.

as the USA, Japan, and Germany, against established powers such as the UK and France (p. 19). From the author's global economic perspective, the well-known German triad of 'world power as a goal', 'world politics as a task', and 'the High Seas Fleet as the means' therefore appears much less revolutionary and singular than has so far been suggested. Rather, this quest for global power proceeded from the logical conclusions of a liberal, imperialist elite, based on the lessons it learned from global developments since the 1860s in general and the British model in particular.

Using the approach of intellectual history, the author outlines the lives and cognitive paths of six influential national economists from Gustav von Schmoller's circle, all of whom had extensive national and international networks. These are Henry Walcott Farnam, Max Sering, Ernst von Halle, Karl Helfferich, Karl Rathgen, and Hermann Schumacher. He then traces the transfer of their insights and ideas into German economic, foreign, colonial, and social policy in the decades before the First World War. The result is a multifaceted study of how Germany perceived and reacted to the global situation during the period in question. The use of personal papers and publications by German national economists and social scientists provides an exciting change of perspective and distinguishes the study from the many works that draw upon diplomatic and military documents. A similar approach has been adopted in recent studies of the press as an actor in international relations. While these and other works have highlighted Anglo-German antagonisms, Erik Grimmer-Solem's selection of sources enables him to tell a story that stands out in four ways. First, there is the history of the UK as a role model that the emerging German nation sought to emulate. Second, he explores the history of the USA (pp. 29–78) and Japan (pp. 79–106), who were also newly emerging and provided the dominant frame of reference and parameters of comparison for Germany's own position in the world. Third, Grimmer-Solem presents the history of China (pp. 107–40), the Caribbean, and South America (pp. 119–58) as the last remaining outlets for the UK to play an active role in dividing up the world and its resources. And fourth and finally, this history is linked to another narrative that has hitherto often been overlooked—that of an empire which sought its own role in the world, orienting itself more by

contemporary examples and orders than by a desire to destroy them from the outset.

In three larger sections, divided into twelve chapters, the author develops a narrative that is initially (in the section 'Absent-Minded Empire, 1875–1897') devoted to the protagonists' experiences between 1870 and 1890 in the course of numerous journeys and observations, as well as transfers of ideas and expectations. The story is specifically concerned with the intellectual experiences of Henry Walcott Farnam (pp. 38–43), an American student of Gustav von Schmoller, and with the descriptions and impressions of industrial concentration and cartel formation that Max Sering (pp. 43–56), Hermann Schumacher, and Ernst von Halle (pp. 60–6) gathered and transferred to Germany during their extended stays in the USA (pp. 70–1).

The following chapters deal with Karl Rathgen's reflections on Japan and Schumacher's on China (pp. 79–118), which pointed to Germany's increasingly dangerous involvement in East Asia, and the South American expertise of Schumacher and von Halle (pp. 119–62). In the latter region, the goal of financial imperialism was dependent on the support of the UK due to the American Monroe Doctrine.

In the second section, 'Empire Imagined, 1897–1907', the author deals with the incipient exertion of influence of his protagonists, especially on the Chancellor of the Reich Bernhard von Bülow and Secretary of State of the German Imperial Naval Office Alfred von Tirpitz, and the implementation of political measures, from the building of a High Seas Fleet to enforce German trade interests (pp. 165–213) to the Anglo-German trade rivalry (pp. 213–50), the new mercantilism, the Bülow tariff, and the construction of the Baghdad Railway (pp. 250–388).

Grimmer-Solem devotes special attention to the importance of political and economic participation to the future of states in the twentieth century, as proclaimed by none other than the British colonial minister Joseph Chamberlain on 31 March 1897. His message was clearly heard, not least by German scholars and the German public: 'the tendency of the time is to throw all power into the hands of the great Empires, and the minor kingdoms . . . seem to be destined to fall into a secondary and subordinate place' (p. 159). The extent to which Chamberlain struck a chord in Germany is demonstrated by

the well-known quotation from the young Max Weber's inaugural lecture in Freiburg two years earlier: 'We must understand that the unification of Germany was a youthful prank which the nation committed in its old age, and which it would have been better to leave undone due to its cost if it meant the end, rather than the beginning, of a German policy of world power'.[4] According to Grimmer-Solem, this position was undoubtedly a legitimate and fundamental idea for German politics at the turn of the century (p. 172).

Finally, the third section of the book, 'Empire Lost, 1908–1919', deals with the failure of the Kaiserreich to keep pace with other global players. Here, Grimmer-Solem discusses the influence of the Hamburg Colonial Institute (pp. 397–407), German colonial interests in Morocco (pp. 416–20) and the Balkans (pp. 438–46), Sering and Schumacher's travels to Russia (pp. 431–8), the Baghdad railway (pp. 482–9), the July Crisis (pp. 496–509), the 'submarine professors' (pp. 519–41), and the war, various peace scenarios, and defeat (pp. 541–600), among other topics.

Overall, Grimmer-Solem provides an exemplary combination of modern intellectual history and classical political history. The book takes advantage of, and makes valuable contributions to, a growing secondary literature about transnational entanglements, global flows of ideas, and liberal imperialism. The depth and scope are impressive. Grimmer-Solem almost always succeeds in embedding the intellectual and political aspirations of his protagonists in constantly changing situational contexts and economic cycles, as well as in his own account of the changing constellations of national politics and the competition for great power status. He examines Germany 'in the world' along many different lines, including through the examples of the USA and Japan, Germany's infamous *Weltpolitik*, the Reich's hopes of overcoming the double standards with which it was treated in the British-dominated international system, the naval arms race, economic and financial rivalries in the Caribbean, public disappointments surrounding German colonial efforts in Africa, responsibility for the outbreak of war in 1914, and, not least, the failure of the post-war Versailles settlement. In each case, Grimmer-Solem scrutinizes

[4] Max Weber, *Gesammelte politische Schriften* (Munich, 1921), 29.

particular academics' links to power with the aim of refining, and sometimes revising, conventional wisdom about German policies in the run-up to war. In this effort he succeeds, demonstrating that members of the broadly liberal German economics professoriate had a larger role in shaping German imperialism than has hitherto been appreciated. It is particularly noteworthy that the author resists the temptation of an ex post interpretation for most of the book, consistently grants his protagonists the benefit of the doubt, and does not use their judgements and recommendations for an expansive political course as direct evidence of German fantasies of omnipotence or war. Instead, he presents their experiences, perceptions, and expertise as the international state of the art of the time and treats their argumentation in the best sense of a Rankean tradition. Neither Weber nor Chamberlain thought of a European war in 1895 or 1897. For them, world power politics meant participation and protection of interests. Like most of their educated contemporaries, a conflict between European great powers would have struck them as against all reason, which they saw as having reached its historical zenith in the developed capitalism of the industrial nations. Time and again, the author stresses the enormous importance of the emerging powers—above all the USA—in the eyes of his key witnesses. At the same time, he succeeds in showing that the UK, as the dominant world power and with its course of self-assertion in the Far East, South America, and Europe, played a far greater part in the destabilization of the world before 1914 than the Kaiserreich, which was handicapped by its geopolitics, resources, restricted capacity for negotiation, limited instruments of power, and sometimes catastrophic political decisions. Germany, he makes clear, was a reactive power; however—and here Grimmer-Solem agrees with recent international historiography—it made disastrous decisions during crucial events, such as in the July Crisis of 1914 (pp. 496–509).[5]

Nevertheless, some questions remain—including whether the professors he chooses as protagonists offer a representative selection of the Empire's professorial elite. It is striking that moderate voices

[5] Nicholas Lambert, *Planning Armageddon: British Economic Warfare and the First World War* (Cambridge, Mass., 2012); Christopher M. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to War in 1914* (New York, 2013).

and critics of the Empire such as Hans Delbrück and Lujo Brentano are largely overlooked by the study. The focus on the intellectual history of individual economists, especially during the 1870s, also overlooks the Peace of Frankfurt in 1871 as an essential and constitutive moment for Germany's role in the world economy, when Germany finally became part of the network of most favoured nations (Article XII).[6] The gold standard, like the most favoured nation principle, acted as a motor for global economic integration, helping to compensate for the disadvantages of international protectionism and making Germany the second-most closely integrated economy in the world behind Britain and just ahead of the USA.[7]

The focus on economics as a leading field of scholarly debate also automatically raises the questions of why the struggle for new resources was not known to have played a significant role in Bismarck's initial decision to acquire colonies, and how economists later justified the devastating balance sheet of German colonialism. It remains unclear where the author locates the boundary between economic expertise aimed at global economic penetration and the sphere of international relations. Grimmer-Solem rightly refers to recent studies of media and diplomacy before 1914 (p. 15). However, alongside many new findings on the interdependence of media and politics, the essential observation of these studies is that both fields followed their own rules. In this sense, Grimmer-Solem's impressive book clearly demands further research into the specific tensions between the economy and international politics as subsystems functioning according to their own rules, but nonetheless constituting integral components of an overall system of international relations.

[6] Andreas Rose, 'Otto von Bismarck und das (außen-)politische Mittel der Handels- und Schutzzollpolitik', in Ulrich von Hehl and Michael Epkenhans (eds.), *Otto von Bismarck und die Wirtschaft* (Paderborn, 2013), 77–96.
[7] Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, (Princeton, 2015), 730-34.

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ROBERT GERWARTH, *November 1918: The German Revolution*, Making of the Modern World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), xxvi + 329 pp. ISBN 978 0 19 954647 3 (hardback). £20.00

Starting in the 1980s, a virtual silence reigned on the subject of the November Revolution for several decades, with the event losing its prominent position in both historical research and public memory. It seemed that the Revolution was gradually being forgotten. Yet in recent years, the trend has begun to reverse, with the major centenary commemorations in 2018–19 in particular helping to rekindle interest in the radical shifts of 1918–19. Likewise, a desire to understand the present moment and a new sense of socio-political insecurity have resulted in closer attention being paid to the revolutionary awakenings and transformations of a hundred years ago. These modern-day needs have helped breathe new life into the stagnant historiography of the November Revolution. As a result, after a long intermission, we are seeing the publication of new general surveys of the Revolution—a genre of text whose absence has long been lamented.[1]

Robert Gerwarth's *November 1918* stands out as one of the most successful such surveys. Paradoxically, its German translation was published almost two years before the English-language original.[2] A broad comparison of the two versions reveals subtle amendments, omissions, and clarifications, but otherwise there are no major differences. The English version lacks the short chapter on the collapse of the empires at the end of the First World War, and instead includes a substantial preface that sets out the author's core assumptions from the very beginning. Here, Gerwarth explains the period he has chosen to study, which extends far beyond the 'November 1918' of the title.

Trans. by Jozef van der Voort (GHIL)

[1] For a comprehensive overview of the historiography of the Revolution, see Wolfgang Niess, *Die Revolution von 1918/19 in der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung: Deutungen von der Weimarer Republik bis ins 21. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 2013).

[2] Robert Gerwarth, *Die größte aller Revolutionen: November 1918 und der Aufbruch in eine neue Zeit* (Munich, 2018).

It also quickly becomes clear that he intends to paint the November Revolution in a more positive light than previous interpretations, which he sees as taking a more fundamentally pessimistic view. In so doing, he grants the Revolution a special status as 'both the first and the last revolution in a highly industrialized country worldwide prior to the peaceful revolutions in Eastern and Central Europe in 1989–90' (p. vii). In general, he makes the case for comparative perspectives, noting the importance of situating events in Germany within the broader context of the revolutionary era of 1917–23 in central and eastern Europe. He also argues that more room should be given to contemporary voices and to experiential history, which can help us to identify what options there were for the future. Finally, he convincingly suggests that the word 'revolution' itself should be detoxified, as it were, of its typical associations with totalistic fantasies of violent overthrow. Gerwarth's core focus falls quite rightly on the question of political regime change.[3] In this respect, the Revolution was successful, as in its wake, Germany adopted a democratic course for the very first time. In light of this basic fact, Gerwarth argues, it makes little sense to describe the German upheavals of 1918–19 as a 'minor revolution' (p. ix).

Gerwarth's study begins in the pivotal year of 1917, when the USA entered the First World War and the Bolsheviks successfully staged their coup in Russia. In Germany, after three years of war, there was little left of the national optimism of August 1914. Hunger strikes attested to the increasing weakness of the war-weary German Reich and highlighted a shift in the public mood that would later become obvious with the eruption of mass protests in January 1918. The systemic crisis of the monarchical order had been long in the making and gained urgency as the prospect of military defeat grew

[3] For more on this fundamental position, which I also share, see Alexander Gallus, 'Wiederentdeckung einer fast vergessenen Revolution: Die Umbrüche von 1918/19 als politische Transformation und subjektive Erfahrung', in Hans-Jörg Czech, Olaf Matthes, and Ortwin Pelc (eds.), *Revolution! Revolution? Hamburg 1918/19* (Hamburg, 2018), 14–31, esp. 15–16; and Alexander Gallus, 'Revolutions (Germany)', in Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, et al. (eds.), *1914–1918–Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War* (Berlin, 2014), at [http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10291].

increasingly inevitable. Among civilians and exhausted troops alike, the fervent longing for an end to the war became bound up with a desire for improved food supplies and the abolition of authoritarian command structures. Moreover, from 1917 onwards, new and sharper battle-lines were drawn, pitting democratic, Western, capitalist systems against socialist structures. Advocates of the latter in turn fought among themselves over the 'right' way to bring about a socialist state and society. While some sought to pursue a democratic, parliamentary path towards their goal, others advocated various forms of workers' councils and a sweeping revolution. The split among the Social Democrats, which became obvious in 1918–19, had a long gestation, and was further exacerbated by the new transnational ideological landscape from 1917 onwards.

Against this backdrop of war, defeat, and multifarious ideological ambitions, Gerwarth takes a positive view of the actions of Friedrich Ebert, the central figure in the German transformation of 1918–19. In Gerwarth's opinion, despite standing at the helm of an 'inexperienced government' (p. 130), Ebert achieved considerable success under distinctly unfavourable conditions ('his government succeeded in channelling revolutionary energies'; p. 19) and doggedly strove to establish a parliamentary political system with a liberal constitution. Ebert favoured the path of reform over a revolution that he feared would result in chaos, a loss of control, and conditions resembling those in Russia—a prospect that assumed the appearance of an imminent threat from 1917 onwards, though that perception proved to be exaggerated. In this context, Gerwarth interprets Ebert's oft-quoted remark that he hated the Revolution 'like sin' as a fundamental rejection not of change in general, but of a 'Bolshevik-style revolution' in particular (p. 69). Together with the Social Democrat majority, Ebert sought to bring about a socio-political transformation that avoided barricades or fighting in the streets.

Furthermore, Gerwarth rejects as misleading the idea that Ebert's use of the words 'No enemy has defeated you' in his address to returning soldiers before the Brandenburg Gate on 10 December 1918 helped promote the *Dolchstoßlegende*, or 'stab-in-the-back myth'. Instead, he argues, 'Ebert's words were born out of a desire to co-opt the army into supporting the new regime in the face of a potential

challenge by either right-wing opposition or those advocating a more radical revolution in Germany' (pp. 133–4). Ultimately, Gerwarth considers it a fallacy to interpret the agreements struck between the transitional government and senior army commanders in a phone call between Ebert and First Quartermaster General Wilhelm Groener on 10 November 1918 as a 'Faustian pact with the old imperial army' (p. 134). Instead, he describes the arrangement more soberly as a 'pragmatic agreement' (p. 134) that was entered into for understandable reasons on both sides.

Yet the reader would be mistaken to see these assessments as reflective of an uncritical approach to the government's recourse to military force from the end of 1918 onwards. Gerwarth passes particularly severe judgement on Gustav Noske (who referred to himself as a 'bloodhound') and the *Freikorps* he deployed. In his 2016 transnational comparative study *The Vanquished*, Gerwarth offers a detailed description and classification of the violence that took place in the defeated nations of the First World War.[4] In *November 1918*, he once again argues that a glance beyond the domestic German context will show that levels of violence in the November Revolution were relatively low, making its achievements all the more commendable.

Gerwarth has little time for the counterfactual reflections on missed opportunities and hypothetical alternative outcomes that have long shaped the critical debate surrounding the November Revolution. Instead of writing history as a collection of wistful 'what-ifs', he suggests it would be better to pay closer attention to the hopes, expectations, and disappointments of those who lived through the Revolution than has previously been the case. In particular, Gerwarth extensively quotes contemporary intellectuals in order to conjure up a lively picture of the upheavals, including Harry Graf Kessler, Victor Klemperer, Alfred Döblin, Thomas Mann, and the artist Käthe Kollwitz—with the latter's sensitive, meticulous diaries proving to be a superbly valuable source. Though Kollwitz's cautious, thoughtful arguments go back and forth, in general she welcomed the changes and the end of the war, was happy with the introduction of the right

[4] Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917–1923* (London, 2016).

to vote for women, and looked to the future with hope. In her view, there was no doubt that she had borne witness to a revolution.

For Gerwarth, voices like Kollwitz's are representative of the many contemporary observers who fundamentally approved of the Revolution and the end of the monarchy, but who spoke out in favour of pragmatism and muted radicalism during the events that followed. Building on this, his book offers a refreshing reminder that revolutions in modern societies should not primarily be defined in terms of armed and violent uprisings. Instead, he argues, true revolution consists in the introduction and implementation of new political principles and the expansion of civil and participatory rights. The Weimar Constitution set these things down in a single document, thereby creating 'probably the most progressive republic of the era' (p. 6). Yet to speak of a 'triumph of liberalism' (p. 160), as Gerwarth does in a dedicated chapter, seems somewhat exaggerated, since it underestimates the challenges and contradictions faced by a crisis-ridden liberalism at the onset of mass democracy in Germany.[5]

Gerwarth is correct, however, in emphasizing that the Weimar Republic was in no way a defenceless democracy, as his epilogue provides a cursory review of the 'defiant republic' (p. 212) between 1919 and 1923. Indeed, the German version of his book goes even further, with its talk of a 'militant democracy', and looking back from 1923, Gerwarth provides a summary that once again rails against the idea of a 'failed' or 'half-hearted' Revolution. On the contrary, he suggests that its achievements speak for themselves: 'Germany had a democratic government, a liberal constitution that granted its citizens wide-ranging basic political and economic rights, and a noticeably improving economy . . . Extremist minorities on the political Left and Right had been marginalized, and their attempts to violently topple the republic had failed' (p. 219–20). From a year of crisis in 1923, Gerwarth argues, the Weimar Republic emerged as a progressive democracy that was ready to face further tests. 'In fact', Gerwarth concludes, 'in late 1923, the failure of democracy would have seemed far

[5] On the difficult battles fought by liberals, who had been forced onto the back foot and still needed to strike a fundamental balance in their relationship with democracy, see the superb study by Jens Hacke, *Existenzkrise der Demokratie: Zur politischen Theorie des Liberalismus in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Berlin, 2018).

less probable than its consolidation. At that point, the future of the Weimar Republic was wide open' (p. 221). It was only in later years that the Republic would lose its way.

Gerwarth's solid and carefully considered account focuses on political history, but does not come across as old fashioned; rather, it takes communicational dynamics, experiential ambiguities, and transnational perspectives into account. All the same, much of his exposition feels familiar to the reader. Yet this cannot be held against him, given that detailed research into the November Revolution is still in its early, faltering stages, and that new findings are only gradually emerging.[6] Among the key strengths of Gerwarth's book are that it offers an account of the political transformation process that is polished and accurate in equal measure, and that it appropriately examines the use of violence during the Revolution from a comparative, transnational perspective. On the whole, he judges the rupture of 1918–19 positively as an important moment in the history of German democracy. Indeed, the German version of his book expresses this view in its title—'The Greatest of all Revolutions'—which quotes the early euphoric words used by the brilliant liberal journalist Theodor Wolff in the *Berliner Tageblatt* on 10 November 1918.[7]

By contrast, Gerwarth's former student Mark Jones offers a significantly more sceptical view of the events of 1918–19 in his book *Founding Weimar*.[8] Jones conjures up a terrifying landscape of violence backed by public and media support, which he lays primarily at the feet of the new government led by Friedrich Ebert. Given the violent birth of the Weimar Republic, Jones also draws a line of continuity from 1918 to 1933. In broad terms, Gerwarth and Jones represent different interpretive models, with each historian situating the juncture of the

[6] For other possible perspectives, see Andreas Braune and Michael Dreyer (eds.), *Zusammenbruch, Aufbruch, Abbruch? Die Novemberrevolution als Ereignis und Erinnerungsort* (Stuttgart, 2019); Klaus Weinhauer, Anthony McElligott, and Kirsten Heinsohn (eds.), *Germany 1916–23: A Revolution in Context* (Bielefeld, 2015).

[7] See n. 2 above.

[8] Mark Jones, *Founding Weimar: Violence and the German Revolution of 1918–1919* (Cambridge, 2016). See also the substantially reworked German edition, which goes far beyond a mere translation: id., *Am Anfang war Gewalt: Die deutsche Revolution 1918/19 und der Beginn der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin, 2017).

November Revolution differently within the development of modern German history. The paradigm of the emergence of democracy competes with one focused on violence and dictatorship. Yet Gerwarth's survey is successful above all because it emphasizes the opportunities for democratic development in 1918 without overlooking the early stresses on the Weimar Republic. Just as he is reluctant to fit the foundation of the Weimar Republic into a narrative of a German *Sonderweg*, or special path, towards the establishment of the Third Reich, he also refuses to put the beginning of democracy in Germany on a pedestal. In this respect, the sober title of Gerwarth's original English book does more justice to its contents than that of the German translation.

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ANNA HÁJKOVÁ and MARIA VON DER HEYDT, *Die letzten Berliner Veit Simons: Holocaust, Geschlecht und das Ende des deutsch-jüdischen Bürgertums* (Leipzig: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2019), 140 pp. ISBN 978 3 95565 301 9. €17.90
ANNA HÁJKOVÁ and MARIA VON DER HEYDT, *The Last Veit Simons from Berlin: Holocaust, Gender, and the End of the German–Jewish Bourgeoisie*, trans. from the German by Justus von Widekind and Jos Porath (Leipzig: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2019), 140 pp. ISBN 978 3 95565 316 3. €17.90

In July 1945, 27-year-old Etta Veit Simon wrote a letter to her mother Irmgard, giving her some insights into her survival in Theresienstadt concentration camp. She recalled her first year of imprisonment, when she had 'had one sickness after the other, and with a fever of more than 40°C every time: dysentery, angina, scarlet fever, kidney inflammation, jaundice, tonsillitis and abdominal typhoid!' (p. 120). She also provided her mother with details about the death of her older sister from tuberculosis in 1943, one year after their deportation to Terezín: 'By the end Ruthchen had galloping consumption, the larynx, lungs and intestines were flooded with tuberculosis bacteria. She ran a high fever for six months before her heart finally failed' (p. 120).

Quite a few letters of this kind were sent around that time. Many more could no longer be written because the majority of inmates, like Etta's sister Ruth, did not survive the German concentration and death camps. Some survivors had no one to write to because they were the last living members of their family.

In Etta's case, her mother survived the war as the Gentile widow of a Jewish man in Berlin. Somewhat unusually, Etta's letter to her mother contains the following remark: 'I believe I have made a good name for ourselves in Terezín; VEIT-SIMON is a name with a solid reputation here' (p. 120).

Who were the Veit Simons and why, despite everything she had experienced, was it still important for Etta to have a name with a reputation? The publication under review here, *The Last Veit Simons from Berlin*, sheds some light on the matter. Anna Hájková, Associate Professor at the University of Warwick and a historian of

the Holocaust, and Maria von der Heydt, Affiliated Researcher at the Center for Research on Antisemitism in Berlin and a partner in a Berlin law firm, have researched the background of the Veit Simons. In their book, they tell the dramatic story of one of the oldest and best-known Jewish families in Berlin.

The Veit Simon family had been living in Berlin since the seventeenth century, when one 'Jew Simon' received official permission to settle there. During the eighteenth century, the family started to consolidate their position as members of the upper middle class. For generations, family members worked as merchants and bankers and were also involved in Berlin's cultural life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After 1933, in spite of their former wealth, they fled their hometown or were deported and murdered in Auschwitz or Theresienstadt. The Holocaust marked the irrevocable end of the family's roots in Berlin, as was the case for almost all German Jewish families there.

Hájková and von der Heydt focus on the family's history, starting with Hermann Veit Simon (1856–1914), a well respected *Justizrat* (Judicial Councillor) who successfully combined his legal training with his family's commercial tradition. He and his wife Hedwig (1861–1943), née Stettiner, had four children. Their two daughters Eva (1884–1944) and Katharina (1887–1944) were deaf-mute as the result of a childhood infection with measles. The sisters lived together in *Katharinenhof*, a house specially designed for them north of Berlin, which was also used as a weekend home and meeting place for the whole family. With their mother Hedwig, Eva, a painter, and Katharina, a trained gardener, were deported to Theresienstadt three months after their nieces Ruth and Etta. Neither Hedwig nor her two daughters survived the Holocaust.

Ruth and Etta's father was Hermann Veit Simon's son Heinrich (1883–1942). Despite his father's opposition, Heinrich married Irmgard (1889–1971), née Gabriel, the Gentile daughter of a Protestant family friend. Though she herself remained Protestant, Irmgard raised their children in the Jewish faith and celebrated their bat and bar mitzvahs. The family lived a progressive liberal Jewish life of the kind represented by the prominent rabbi Leo Baeck, a friend of the Veit Simon family.

With their siblings Harro (1911–2011), Ulla (1915–2004), Rolf (1916–1944), and Judith (1925–2016), Ruth and Etta grew up in a typical bourgeois household with a maid, cook, and gardener in their villa in Dahlem, Berlin. The family hosted large dinners and parties with dancing and enjoyed travelling abroad. Their wealth was the result of the father's professional success as a lawyer and notary. His law firm in the heart of Berlin established itself as one of the most renowned, including far beyond the metropolis. He successfully protected his family from the economic crises after the First World War and managed to maintain a secure and comfortable lifestyle until he was murdered in 1942.

By the end of 1938, however, culminating in the events of the November Pogroms, the family had lost its social status. That same year, three of the Veit Simon children fled Germany. Ulla moved to London with her husband and their newborn daughter, Rolf emigrated to the Netherlands, and Judith found refuge in the United Kingdom through the *Kindertransport*. Since the oldest of the siblings, Harro, had already left for Spain in the early 1930s, only Ruth and Etta stayed behind in Berlin with their parents. Both were trained graphic designers, and Ruth illustrated a children's book before struggling with tuberculosis. She had to undergo treatment in various clinics over the years. Meanwhile, Etta was obliged to do jobs she hated, such as helping out in a Jewish school and doing twelve-hour shifts at the Zeiß-Ikon lens factory.

As *Geltungsjuden* (who were considered to be Jewish by virtue of their membership of the Jewish religious community), the sisters were fully exposed to persecution and were threatened by the Berlin deportations, beginning in October 1941. From 19 September 1941, they were required to wear the yellow star in public. Seven months later, Etta tried to flee with the help of her father—a vain attempt which resulted in their arrest and, ultimately in Heinrich's murder. Not long after their arrest, both sisters, Ruth and Etta, ended up in Terezín, whereas their Gentile mother Irmgard stayed in Berlin until the end of the war.

Hájková and von der Heydt's book reveals the story of an almost forgotten German–Jewish family that was well known and socially recognized until the Holocaust broke it apart. As one of the few wealthy bourgeois families, the Veit Simons might not be a typical

example of the German–Jewish fate. But they show how sooner or later a family's wealth and social status faded during the Holocaust, leading to escape or persecution.

The story is engagingly written, highlighting the biographies of selected family members, and draws on interesting personal primary sources in order to reconstruct the family's fate. The main body of this rather slim book is divided into twelve sections, each focusing on a specific topic relating to one family member, such as 'Ruth's Tuberculosis' or 'Heinrich's Murder'. The sections are roughly chronological, making it easy to follow the course of events. The authors also provide a helpful family tree at the beginning of the book (I would have preferred additional dates of birth and death for better orientation) and many images to illustrate the narrative. Unfortunately, they do not use the historical photographs as a primary source, leaving them a little disconnected from the text. An outstandingly concise appendix contains selected personal letters from the family's private papers, giving us an insight into the treasure trove that Hájková and von der Heydt have uncovered. Given that this is a short study of only about 100 pages in length, the reader is left curious to learn more about the last Veit Simons from Berlin.

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HANS WOLLER, *Gerd Müller oder wie das große Geld in den Fußball kam: Eine Biografie* (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2019), 352 pp. 29 ills. ISBN 978 3 406 74151 7 (hardcover). €22.95
HANNAH JONAS, *Fußball in England und Deutschland von 1961 bis 2000: Vom Verlierer der Wohlstandsgesellschaft zum Vorreiter der Globalisierung*, Nach dem Boom (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 314 pp. ISBN 978 3 525 37086 5 (hardcover). €60.00

Though the history of football, the most popular global sport, has a life of its own, it can also provide important insights into broader social trends. Evidence for this can be found in two recent books which tackle the history of the West German affluent society from the 1960s onwards through the lens of sport in different, yet complementary ways. One is a scholarly but elegantly written biography of Gerd Müller by a now retired senior historian at Munich's Institute of Contemporary History, and the first such book on football from the flagship history publisher C. H. Beck—a welcome development that suggests sports history is now a fully accepted branch of cultural history. The other book is a meticulously researched comparative history of football in Germany and England from the 1960s until the end of the twentieth century that takes in the post-Fordist shift towards the 'individualized consumer society'. This Ph.D.-cum-monograph by a more junior historian is one of the outstanding products of the Nach dem Boom research cluster at the history departments of the universities of Tübingen and Trier, and equally suggests a recognition among leading German historians that it has become impossible to write contemporary history without paying attention to the histories of sport and leisure.

The main context of Woller's excellent biography of the 'nation's bomber'—the FC Bayern Munich player who still holds the records for most goals scored in a Bundesliga season (40 in 1971/72) and best ever goal-to-game ratio (365 goals in 427 German top-division games)—is the professionalization and commercialization of football in the Federal Republic following the foundation of the Bundesliga in 1963. These processes were accompanied by a combination of important factors which have already been explored in depth in other scholarly publications, but which are given a specific regional

focus and grounding here. They included the oft-repeated assertion by Bundesliga clubs that the main reason for their existence was to benefit the public (*Gemeinnützigkeit*) by also catering for a host of amateur sports under their umbrella. This allowed them to claim tax relief despite operating as businesses and delayed the full professionalization of German football by more than a century compared to England, where clubs were run along corporate lines from the nineteenth century onwards. Other factors going hand in hand with the late professionalization of the game in the Federal Republic were various kinds of (often shady) tax avoidance schemes, under-the-table payments to players, and mutually beneficial relationships between clubs and local and regional politicians. While clubs benefited from these relationships in financial terms, politicians reaped political rewards by demonstrating their similarity to a mostly male electorate through their real or pretend love of the game.

Woller's most damning insight into the special treatment Bayern Munich received from regional politicians emerges from his access to the personal papers of the Bavarian finance minister Ludwig Huber, since the ministry's official documentation remains closed to his and other researchers' eyes. Woller shows that the Bavarian finance ministry actively encouraged the leadership of Bayern Munich to engage in illegal practices, such as hiding profits made during lucrative tours abroad to South America and elsewhere. Ironically, the club became a victim of its own success, as the income from these tours was urgently needed to foot a constantly rising wage bill. While these often extremely tiring trips revealed the players to be 'slaves of their own demands' (p. 105), the practice also deterred them from moving abroad in lucrative transfers to Spain or Italy.

In practice, this meant that, upon their return from foreign tours, the club's charter flights often made stopovers in Zurich to deposit cash in Swiss bank accounts. After arriving in Munich, the players were then smuggled through German customs with pockets full of dollars by a high-ranking politician who had accompanied the team on their tour abroad. Before television money became the dominant factor in club finances that it is now (which forms one of the central topics in Jonas's chapters on the hypercommercialization of football since the 1990s), practices such as this—along with other factors such as the newly built

80,000 capacity Olympic stadium and the ability to retain players like Müller, Uli Hoeneß, Paul Breitner, and Franz Beckenbauer—were instrumental in Bayern's rise to international fame and success in the 1970s. Arguably, they also laid the long-term foundations for Bayern to become the hegemon at the top of the German football pyramid and join the ranks of European super-clubs like Real Madrid and Manchester United. Such illegal practices came to a partial end in the late 1970s, prompting Müller and Beckenbauer to run from the taxman and continue their careers in the USA. Given the long shadow they cast over Bayern's success, it is surprising that hardly an eyelid was batted among German football officials and club functionaries after Woller's revelations—a fact that suggests Bayern and the Bavarian regional government were not alone in such behaviour.

Woller elucidates these broader contexts of the 1960s and 1970s while telling the story of the meteoric rise of the youngest son of a day labourer from a childhood in very modest circumstances in an industrial town in northern Bavaria to international superstardom, which culminated in Müller scoring the winning goal for West Germany in the 1974 FIFA World Cup. With much sympathy and understanding, Woller tells a tale of riches easily gained, but also quickly lost. He shows the heavy price Müller had to pay for his stellar career: constant press intrusion into his private life due to his status in West German society; serious injuries, which were given only a quick fix to make him match-fit, thereby causing long-lasting physical damage; and severe mental health problems, including a long battle with alcoholism. Combining archival work with oral history, the book follows Müller's career from provincial Bavaria to Bayern, then the Fort Lauderdale Strikers in Florida, and back to Bayern as a youth coach. All of this makes for fascinating reading. In essence, it shows a player who—much like the recently deceased Diego Maradona, the global football icon of the following generation—was happiest on the pitch. Yet unlike Maradona, when Müller hit rock bottom, he could rely on the help of his former club—especially Uli Hoeneß, his former partner in the Bayern frontline, who grew into the role of club strongman and patriarch from the 1980s.

Hoeneß, of course, was to become a key figure in the radical commercialization and marketization of German football and in shaping

the football boom from the 1990s, following a period of relative decline in the 1980s—a decade now mostly remembered for hooliganism and disasters like Heysel and Hillsborough. Providing a convincing comparative analysis of this recent and still ongoing process in England and Germany is perhaps the main achievement of Jonas's monograph, whose analysis rests on an in-depth study of German and English football association files, press coverage, and economic and other research on the game in both countries. Jonas interprets the history of professional football in Germany and England as a facet of a new wave of globalization during a neo-liberal age in which football is not only a metaphor, but one of the driving forces of globalization. Jonas takes a variety of factors into account to explain the hypercommodification of the game through the symbiosis of football, the media, and the economy over the past three decades. In the process, she also elucidates its accompanying symptoms, which are comparable in both countries, such as the rise of football people to global celebrity; the heightened importance of advertising; the influx of businesspeople into the clubs; an aestheticized presentation of the game which is now broadcast from televisually optimized 'football cathedrals'; and critiques of commercialization and the search for an 'authentic' football, which is itself often quickly marketized and turned into a simulacrum.

As other scholars have also recognized, football's 'big bang moment' in England was the foundation of the Premier League in 1992, which led to a massive influx of funds for the clubs in this newly formed division as a result of the competition for broadcast rights between commercial television stations. The German equivalent was the sale of broadcast rights to Springer and Leo Kirch's ISPR agency one year earlier. The second catalyst for the hypercommodification of the sport came with the 1995 Bosman ruling of the European Court of Justice, which concerned players' freedom of movement between European countries. The substantial increase in player mobility that resulted from this led to the internationalization of football clubs and—because clubs now competed against each other for personnel—an explosion in player salaries at the top level. It will be interesting to see whether freedom of movement for this particular European workforce will be included in a trade agreement between the UK and the European Union and, more generally, if and how the Premier League will be affected by Brexit.

With Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United acting as trail-blazers, many football clubs in England were floated on the stock market after 1995 to raise funds. In Germany, the professional sections of football clubs were finally permitted by the German FA to become corporate entities in 1998, with some, like Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund, also issuing shares. However, an important limit was imposed with the '50+1 rule', which makes takeovers by foreign investors like that of Roman Abramovich at Chelsea FC in 2003 impossible—though, as the current example of RB Leipzig shows, there are ways around such regulations. Interestingly, as Jonas argues, many of the developments of the 1990s were rooted in the 1960s and 1970s—for example in the removal of salary caps in England in 1961 and Germany in 1972 and the beginning of sponsoring. However, as the 1980s showed, without a new generation of business-minded managers and club directors in full control, and without commercial television or a new spectator boom, the hypercommodification of football was impossible at that time.

In the end, the hypercommercialization of football ought to be read as a lesson about the economization of areas of society in which economic factors previously played only a minor role. As Jonas quite rightly points out, these processes of marketization produce both winners and losers, and can also be observed in other areas, including higher education.

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