

Book Reviews

Britain and Ireland

BEN DODDS and CHRISTIAN D. LIDDY (eds),
Commercial activity, markets and entrepreneurs in the Middle Ages. Essays in honour of Richard Britnell (Boydell & Brewer, 2011). xv + 255 pp., 7 figs., 13 tabs. £55.

The present volume, celebrating the career of Richard Britnell, brings together twelve exciting and innovative studies by some of the leading authorities on the social and economic history of medieval England. Each study represents an original piece of research, based, in most cases, on archival sources.

The volume opens with John Hatcher's study of rural wage earners and their living standards in the post-Black Death period. Here Hatcher challenges the prevailing view of the (long) fifteenth century as a 'Golden Age of the Labourer' and offers a new perspective on the topic, arguing that this period, and especially c.1440–80, was also an era of economic decline and depression. In particular, he points out the inability of manorial accounts, recording agricultural wages, to reflect the real income of rustic inhabitants. In reality, it is essential to distinguish between real (daily) wages and real (annual) income. A close analysis reveals that there was an apparent gap between the two, and that an average rustic could not have been employed for the 260 days a year left after cultivating his own landholding: an unrealistically high figure proposed by some historians.

John Langdon offers a most valuable contribution to the history of late medieval wages. Unlike other historians, who were satisfied with 'average' wages paid to male workers, Langdon, utilizing royal building accounts (in itself a unique source), sets out to learn about the wages of 'marginal' workers, that is, women and children. In addition, he differentiates between 'mean', 'median' and 'mode' wages paid to the same employees. Basal (that is, minimum) wages for all groups remained constant for a long period of time. Intriguingly, the 1290s saw a sudden disappearance of women from building gangs, which may be explained by the ensuing period of 'baby boom' and unemployment.

Derek Keene compares three major instances of grain shortage and famine in London in the later middle ages, focusing on the difference in reaction to three crises. Thus, during the famine of 1256–59, food relief came largely from the initiative of a single person, Richard of Cornwall, who secured imports of corn from Germany and Holland. On the other hand, there is archaeological evidence of the emergency establishment of mass burial grounds, perhaps devised by the Bishop of London. During the years of the Great Famine (1315–17), Edward II extended privileges to alien merchants, while urban authorities enacted new market regulations. In the course of the 1438–40 crisis, the civic authorities used more sophisticated measures, which included the exploitation of the public reserve to purchase grain and build the first city granary between 1438 and 1444.

John Lee's study on grain shortages in early sixteenth-century towns (despite the somewhat misleading title 'Grain Shortage in Late Medieval Towns') represents a complementary paper to the previous article by Keene. Like Keene, Lee focuses on governmental (both central and local) responses to urban grain shortages, giving special attention to early Tudor Coventry. These measures included forced sales of surpluses, regulation of begging, control of ale-houses and unlawful games, tight supervision of markets, import of grain and construction of central granaries. Food riots were provoked not by hunger, but by the failure of civic authorities to provide an adequate supply of corn.

Lee's paper merges nicely into James Davis's article on market regulation in fifteenth-century England, through the prism of a single legislative document, the so-called 'Lansdowne Assizes' of the late fifteenth century. In effect, the 'Lansdowne Assizes' were a synthesis of earlier central (royal) statutes and assizes and local (civic, manorial) by-laws, related to various traders and their merchandize. This document attempted to regulate trade and traders and prevent forestalling, speculation and other mercantile frauds. It should be viewed as a part of a wider process of gradual standardization of assize legislation, which was a major element in the late medieval English market economy.

Davis's paper on trade legislation is followed by Mark Bailey's article on self-government in small towns in the late medieval period. Here, Bailey challenges the old wisdom that dwellers of small towns had little or no autonomy and that they lacked control mechanisms as an urban community. A close analysis of institutional arrangements within 'mesne' (*seigneurial*) towns reveals that burgesses managed to attain a fair number of liberties and control, particularly through the piecemeal leasing-out of towns by their lords. Although this phenomenon became especially widespread after the Black Death, there are numerous pre-Black Death instances, too.

The topic of small towns is continued in Christine Newman's article on the marketing and trading networks of three late medieval towns in County Durham. The three episcopal towns (Gateshead, Sunderland and Darlington) differed in their success and fate, largely dictated by their physical location, degree of commercialization and local specialisms. Thus, Gateshead and Darlington were important local trade centres that coped with the post-Black Death crisis fairly well, while Sunderland, whose commercial activities were rather limited, underwent an 'urban decline' in the post-plague era and it was not until the late sixteenth century that it was revived, thanks to the expansion of its salt industry and trade.

The fate of late medieval Durham is pursued in Peter Larson's paper on peasant opportunities in rural Durham in the fifteenth century. On the basis of court records of the Durham bishopric, Larson shows that the post-Black Death era saw an upsurge in peasant land-market activities, with peasants accumulating larger holdings of land, mostly from the demesne. Later on, entire demesnes and even villages were being leased. This process led to an inevitable stratification within local communities. Other economic opportunities included newly opened coal-mines and demesne mills, leased to local peasants.

Maryanne Kowaleski's study on shipmasters as entrepreneurs takes us from Durham to the southern counties. Late medieval shipmasters not only possessed all the essential navigation skills, but were also involved in an array of entrepreneurial activities. They played an important part in long-distance international trade. Some of them were employed by ship-owners and merchants, while some others were themselves ship-owners, and in particular owners of commercial vessels. Ship-mastering seems to have been a particularly rewarding profession in times of war, when shipmasters expected to receive a share of any prizes while on the king's naval service.

Martha Carlin's article deals with hitherto neglected,

but fascinating anti-embezzlement instructions for manorial officials, compiled by one Robert Carpenter in the 1260s. There are six possible frauds, connected to sheep management and cheese production. Whatever Carpenter's motives in putting together these instructions were, it is clear that they reflect the fact that embezzlement was a widespread practice in the late medieval rural economy. One important implication is that employee theft seems to have contributed to the late medieval shadow economy. An (accurate) translation is followed by an (equally accurate) critical edition of the treatise.

James Masschaele offers an article on the place of private charters in public land disputes in late medieval England. The success and validity of a charter were obviated by a number of challenges, including forgeries, and the age and physical and mental condition of its compiler. Charters were validated by being placed on an altar and read publicly at local courts. These 'legitimizing' rituals derive from kindred royal practices of validating royal writs. Charter witnesses played an important role in litigation concerning land disputes, either as local juries, or as evidence to each side's claims. The expansion of private charters reflects the expansion of other facets of socio-economic and cultural life in late medieval England.

The final essay, by Christopher Dyer, is concerned with the place of luxury goods in medieval English society and economy, over the very *longue durée* (c.650–1540). Dyer's findings are based upon both written sources and archaeological evidence. As he shows, between c.650 and 1100, nascent urban centres, patronized by kings, played the dominant role in importing foreign luxury goods, chiefly reserved for local aristocracy. Proliferation and disposal of luxury articles were rather limited. After c.1100, and mainly because of the concurrent processes of urbanization and commercialization, there was an increased proliferation of luxury consumables, in both small and large towns. In all cases, luxury goods were no longer limited to the aristocracy, but also enjoyed by various members of the urban elite.

The volume closes with a comprehensive bibliography of Britnell's works, down to 2010. These include 23 authored monographs and edited volumes, 91 articles and ten shorter notes and entries: a most impressive amount by any standard.

This *festschrift* has many apparent good points. First, it contains some important methodological and thematic contributions, whose quality reflects the high academic standards set by Richard Britnell himself and modelled here. For instance, there is no doubt that Langdon's article sets new methodologies for

studying the history of wages. Similarly, Dyer's article is an important reminder that, in many cases, a full picture cannot be assembled, unless both textual and archaeological sources are brought together. Second, the internal structure of the volume is very clear and easy to follow, with many papers flowing one into another thematically or conceptually. Finally, most papers are written on topics that Britnell has had a profound interest in during the course of his career. These include urban history (Keene, Lee, Bailey), trade (Davis, Newman), and the local history of County Durham (Newman, Larson), just to name a few. This volume is indeed a fitting way to pay homage to Richard Britnell and appreciate his impact on the scholarship of late medieval economy and society.

PHILIP SLAVIN
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JOHN HARE, *A prospering society: Wiltshire in the later Middle Ages* (Studies in Regional and Local History 10, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011). xvi + 240 pp., 7 figs., 15 illus., 33 tabs. £35.

The University of Hertfordshire Press is a publisher worth watching, as it has produced a number of excellent and engaging books in the last few years, and this present volume is no exception. Hare's study of later medieval Wiltshire provides an important addition to our knowledge of local and regional history. The book is clearly and logically structured, and divided into thematic chapters, which are organized in three parts. The first part considers the nature of the available sources, as well as the wider context of the study, the county as a whole, its constituent regions and types of settlements. The second part focuses on change in the later Middle Ages, after the arrival of the Black Death, in particular in the context of agriculture, demesne leasing and serfdom. Part three of the book looks at trade and local industries, especially the developments in the cloth industry. Maps, photographs and tables are clearly presented and well-integrated into the text.

Considering the continuing popularity of local history, regional studies such as this should find a broad appeal. This book is not only very welcome because it consolidates a lot of existing knowledge, but it also adds to our understanding and knowledge of the county of Wiltshire. Hare explores changes and continuities in the county mainly from about 1380 to 1520. However the real scope of the volume is considerably broader than this, as the author also considers developments in the earlier centuries, and a significant amount of space is devoted to the exploration of various aspects of the society and economy of Wiltshire before the arrival of the Black Death.

The first part of the book neatly sets out the wider as well as the local context for the study, discussing the nature of the available sources, settlements and demographic developments. Hare notes in particular the population decline following the Black Death, but he might even be underestimating death rates in the region, as – especially on Glastonbury Abbey manors – studies of death rates have frequently indicated population losses in excess of 50 per cent. (See for instance, M. Eccleston, 'Mortality of rural landless men before the Black Death: the Glastonbury Head-Tax lists', *Local Population Studies* 63 (1999), pp. 6–29.)

Chapter 4 contains an interesting discussion of local agriculture and often takes a satisfying comparative perspective, for example between the types of crops grown in the seigneurial agriculture in Wiltshire's chalk downlands and non-chalk areas. Following the excellent studies of Ben Dods, Hare uses tithe data from Winchester Cathedral Priory, which recorded tithes from demesne lands and tenants, to gain comparative insights into peasant and seigneurial agriculture. While he finds some interesting differences in the crops grown by lords and tenants, he also notes that there were regional divergences.

Alongside arable agriculture a significant amount of space is devoted to livestock, which grew in importance in the context of contracting arable farming in the post-Black Death decades. Sheep farming is discussed at length, but Hare also considers the importance of other livestock. Whilst the growth in rabbit farming on various estates from the fourteenth century onwards has been noted before, Hare also explores the significance of cattle- and especially pig-farming, which lasted well into the fifteenth century.

The developments in demesne leasing are discussed in detail in part two of the book. Demesne leasing was undertaken by people from varying backgrounds. However, in Wiltshire it appears to have been peasant families who were at the forefront in taking advantage of new leasing possibilities. The decline of serfdom in this period has also been linked to the development of demesne leases and Hare discusses this development in depth in chapter 8. He links the decline of serfdom to increasing mobility, while also drawing attention to the clashes between lords and peasants, which inevitably occurred as a result of the struggles over serfdom.

The third and final part of the book includes some very useful discussions of Wiltshire's hierarchy of towns, and the nature of industry and trade in the county. Of importance here was first the growth, then the decline and subsequent recovery of the cloth industry in the fifteenth century.

Overall this is a very satisfying and interesting study, and it will be of interest to historians of local history, students of the social and economic developments of later medieval England, as well as the interested general reader.

MIRIAM MÜLLER
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C. M. FRASER (ed.), *The court rolls of the manor of Wakefield from October 1433 to September 1436* (The Wakefield Court Rolls Series of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, xv, 2011). xix + 248 pp. £15 + £2 & P. From the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 23 Clarendon Road, Leeds LS2 9NZ.

This volume is the fifteenth in the modern series of calendars of a source whose importance was recognized in 2011 when it was enrolled on the Memory of the World Register (administered by UNESCO). This series, established in 1977, builds upon the work of earlier scholars whose editions were published as part of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society's Record Series. The continuity within the project is illustrated by the fact that the editor of the newest volume, Caroline Fraser, was also one of the editors (with Kenneth Emsley) of the first.

Dr Fraser acknowledges in her introduction that the choice of years for this volume was a somewhat random one, but her choice fits neatly between earlier volumes which covered the 1530s and 1330s. This volume represents the series' first foray into the fifteenth century. The span of years covers the death of the manor's owner Joan, Duchess of York, and its transfer to Richard Plantagenet, grandson of her first husband. This change of ownership (the new owner was fully occupied defending English-held lands in France) appears to have mattered little to the workings of the court: only one minor change of procedure was instituted.

Like the others in the series, this volume contains a wealth of information for a range of historians, including local and family historians as well as those interested in particular aspects of fifteenth-century agriculture, social relationships, court procedure, crime, tenant–landlord relationships and debt. The people and places index will be useful to many (although there is a small printing error in the B section of the index). The small special subject index only hints at the richness of the court rolls' information, and it is a shame that it is rather limited in size and scope. However, such indices do take considerable time to compile. One small point about the transcription occurs: in several parts of the volume the place names are in capitals rather than the usual lower case italics and it is unclear

if this change means anything or if these are printing errors.

As the editor points out, land transfers made up only a small portion of the courts' business. One such transfer records a holding to be sold by the vicar (if there are no heirs) with the profits going to benefit the service of the Virgin Mary in Sandal church. The next entry shows that the church was unlikely to benefit for some time as two members of the family had acquired life interests in the holding. As well as the standard record of the manor court, these rolls also contain the records of the sheriff's tourn, a rich source of information about the assize of bread and ale, forestalling and other misdemeanours. The ordinary business of the manor court was itself varied, and the descriptions make good reading simply for the picture that they paint of a community going about its business. There is the usual level of low-grade violent disputes, although the fights between members of the clergy always stand out from the crowd. The varied roles of women are apparent, including one who was the grave or bailiff and two others charged with felling green wood. In this volume one is struck by the numerous references to the care and exploitation of the areas of woodland, and in the later stages of the volume the leasing of waste land to various people. There are reminders too that everything in the medieval landscape had a value; several people were fined up to 2s. for cutting wood and thorns without permission.

MARILYN LIVINGSTONE
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MARJORIE KENISTON MCINTOSH, *Poor relief in England, 1350–1600* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). xiii + 352 pp. £60.

SAMANTHA WILLIAMS, *Poverty, gender and life-cycle under the English Poor Law, 1760–1834* (The Royal Historical Society/The Boydell Press, 2011). xiii + 190 pp., 18 figs., 16 tabs., 1 map. £50.

These two studies offer some important new conclusions about the English poor law system. This is a significant achievement in itself, given the number of previous books, articles and chapters on the subject. In fact, both are likely to become required reading for students of the subject.

Despite the crowded field, each monograph marks out new territory. McIntosh's national study offers a powerful corrective to existing orthodoxy, by claiming that the 1598 and 1601 Elizabethan statutes really represented only the culmination of a process of parochial levies for the poor begun by Edwardian legislation in 1552. By contrast, Williams's monograph achieves what a number of other studies have promised, but which they

have rarely delivered, namely a thorough dissection of how the poor law actually operated within the parish in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

McIntosh's book is the fruit of almost thirty years of detailed archival reconstruction in which she has identified the records of 1,005 hospitals and almshouses in operation between the mid-fourteenth and the late sixteenth centuries, not to mention churchwardens' accounts from 206 parishes between 1404 and 1598. She uses these materials to substantiate several arguments.

Firstly, she suggests that the variety, sufficiency and reach of late medieval parochial charity, and endowed institutions, was much greater in extent than has sometimes been suggested. While almshouses tended to concentrate their efforts on the elderly and the sick, their levels of provision probably met the prevalent levels of need, as well as being motivated by the purgatorial imperatives of the founders. Indeed, one could argue (although McIntosh does not), that institutional care may have been particularly important in a late medieval society characterized by high death-rates, comparatively sparse kinship networks and potentially high levels of geographical mobility.

Secondly, the dissolution of these parish endowments had an acute and immediate effect on provision for the poor within these parishes. McIntosh shows the creative way in which many parishes sought to convert their parochial endowments or simply to hide them from the commissioners charged with dissolving the chantries and other 'superstitious' uses after 1547. Even so, she emphasizes that the problem of poor relief generated innovative national and local responses. Nationally, the (historically neglected) statute of 1552 empowered churchwardens to record the names of all those capable of contributing to the relief of the poor, and then to nominate two collectors, who were to 'gently ask and demand of every man and woman what they of their charity will be contented to give weekly towards the relief of the poor'. The recalcitrant were to be brought before the bishop, while the collectors were to render quarterly accounts to the parish. McIntosh has done very important research on these ephemeral paper accounts, showing that, although rare, they survive often and widely enough to indicate that the system probably operated nationally with some degree of uniformity.

Thus, McIntosh suggests that all subsequent Elizabethan statutes (in 1564, 1572 and 1598) were, to some degree, merely developments of this initial departure, not radically new steps. She also explains something that has often puzzled the reviewer: why the 'Elizabethan Poor Law' appears to have been adopted so swiftly, completely and comprehensively, in southern

England at least. The definitive answer now appears to be that parishes had already had half a century of practice!

Williams's study is regional, rather than national, in scope, but it deserves a wide readership. She focuses on two Bedfordshire parishes, one the village of Campton, with 449 inhabitants in 1831, 80 per cent of whom were (under-) employed in agriculture, the other the small market town of Shefford, with 763 inhabitants in 1831, 40 per cent of whose families were employed in manufactures or trade. Both were located in the classic 'Speenhamland' region of rural immiseration during the Napoleonic era, where low wages, agrarian under-employment and (some) declines in rural industries led to an increasing dependence on poor relief, wage subsidies, work-fare schemes and the family allowances lobbied by Malthusian reformers.

This study is particularly important because it deals with the issue of rural poor relief in the round. Firstly, it gives meticulous consideration to the range of relief payments provided by these parishes, both weekly pensions and occasional payments, as well as the effects of payments in kind (clothing and footwear), and for services (particularly medical care). Secondly, it explores the changing profile of recipients in great detail. As in other studies, Williams finds an increase in the number of able-bodied families receiving relief, but only really during the crisis years after 1795. Her nuanced analysis shows that relief was targeted, with the most generous pensions continuing to go to those deemed 'most deserving' (widows, single-parent families, and orphans), and other payments being spread quite widely, but quite thinly, too. As a consequence, Williams finds no evidence to support the Malthusian critique that generous payments to pauper families encouraged 'improvident marriages', because the levels of payment were supplementary, and declined in value in real terms between 1795 and 1834. Thirdly, Williams devotes attention to the payers of poor rates, an essential but not wholly sympathetic group, who are sometimes overlooked in studies of poor relief. She shows that the rapid increases in expenditure after 1795 were matched by significant increases in the number of ratepayers, with perhaps 40 per cent of Shefford's population constituting rate-paying families by 1821 (but paying for recipients who perhaps amounted to only 12–17 per cent of the population). She then explores the local and national 'policy' implications of this increasing burden, drawing on the contributions of the local JP and MP, Samuel Whitbread.

Finally, and most importantly, Williams's detailed reconstructions of the life-histories of poor relief recipients in these two communities allows her to

engage in a fine-grained and forensic analysis of the effects of the life-cycle, gender, ill-health, and the effects of under-employment on the propensity to receive relief, its duration and its consequences. These chapters set the experience of these parishes securely within a regional context, showing (for example) that elderly men were more likely to receive pensions by the end of the eighteenth century, in part because they were being crowded out of the local labour market. They also provide the essential human detail of individual stories and family histories that is sometimes lacking in studies in which attention is concentrated on the abstraction of aggregates. The great strength of this study is its combination of well-conceived and nuanced serial analyses with carefully selected and highly appropriate examples to personify broader trends and highlight the effects of local labour markets.

Although McIntosh's work is national in scope, while Williams concentrates on a specific region, both are the products of immense scholarly effort, highly detailed local analyses, and careful consideration and presentation of the results. While neither makes dramatic claims of new discoveries, both advance our understandings of the poor law substantially. Williams's work offers a model of how to explore the mechanics of the poor law, its scale, reach and its texture within daily life. While its approach incorporates the incremental refinements in analyses provided by a series of local and regional studies post-1760, it takes these to a new level and produces a study of innovative depth, complexity and clarity.

McIntosh's study has achieved the same thing, but on a national scale. Yet, it has also done something else. As in all her other historical writings, particularly her monographs on local courts and crime, and women's work, she has burst the bubble in which early modern historians sometimes like to operate. Her work is a must-read book because it forces us to think of the evolution of poor relief in a much longer historical perspective, and because it treats the period from 1400–1550 as an important one in its own right, not simply as the prelude to 'early modernity'. By telling the first half of the story of the English poor law so coherently, Marjorie McIntosh forces us to rethink the meaning of the rest of the tale.

H. R. FRENCH
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RICHARD HOYLE (ed.), *Custom, improvement and the landscape in early modern Britain* (Ashgate, 2011). x + 317 pp., 10 figs., 2 tabs. £65.

This welcome collection of essays ranges from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries and in place

from Northamptonshire to the Scottish highlands. It focuses on the interplay of modernizing landowners and the customs and manorial traditions within which they operated. Three essays on general themes set the agenda. Richard Hoyle's introduction provides an overview of the themes of the book, and a fascinating discussion of the nature of early modern custom, which whets the appetite for his forthcoming study of early modern tenure. Paul Warde's dissection of the agricultural literature shows how slowly the modern sense of improvement developed towards modern concept of sustainable agricultural innovation, largely in the later seventeenth century. Henry French provides a national overview of urban commons 1500–1750, a neglected topic, and links the interplay of agriculture, industry, and commerce with the workings of custom in an urban setting.

Satisfying themes run through the case-study chapters, with rich interconnections. Most obvious is James Taverner's presence in both Richard Hoyle's and Nicola Whyte's studies of Norfolk. In Hoyle's he is a defender of custom in North Elmham, trying to restrain Lord Cromwell's encroachments eroding fixed fines and timber rights in Star Chamber cases from the 1560s to 1590s. In Whyte's, Taverner appears as Lord of Wighton manor, accused by copyholders of over-pasturing the fold course to their detriment. Battles over custom are part of the process of 'closure' in Matthew Johnson's sense of the narrowing and defining uncertainty in landownership in a society moving from under-population to the more crowded world of the seventeenth century. James Taverner was a Tawney-esque 'rising' entrepreneurial figure on the cusp of gentility, with brothers who were royal officeholders, translators of Erasmus, and evangelical reformers. As a younger son with a small inheritance, he combined local roots in Norfolk with access to kin legal and administrative expertise to consolidate and exploit his patrimony.

The Norfolk fold course is also dissected in Elizabeth Griffiths' chapter of Sir Hamon Le Strange's early seventeenth-century estate management at Hunstanton. Here the landscape is observed from family notebooks, estate archives, and Alice Le Strange's account books. Hamon revived family fortunes through land surveying, estate reorganization, and drainage, using wide reading of contemporary books on agricultural improvement to guide him. Yet he and his son always worked within existing tenurial systems, providing enhanced leases for tenants on better land in return for concessions to take over and improve poorer soils and marshlands.

Julie Bowring's chapter on the Bedford level drainage in Eastern England after 1663 looks at the aftermath

of a notorious courtier-driven project, to appropriate fenland at the expense of a peasant economy. The social dynamics of the post-drainage society reflect major ambiguities. Popular opinion was keen to ensure that the drainage corporation kept the dykes, banks and sluices in good repair so that farmers who had adapted to the changes did not lose out a second time. The decline of the drainage scheme was determined more by poorly understood ecological effects than by peasant opposition.

Popular verse enriches Bowring's analysis, but also articulated customary rights in Duffield Frith, Derbyshire, discussed by Heather Falvey who includes an interesting discussion of the interface between custom and its written articulation. Her poem was part of a wider corpus of writing by Anthony Bradshaw, a lawyer and property owner in Duffield but also a local office holder. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, his meticulous court records protected both his own and the Earl of Shrewsbury's rights in the Frith. Bradshaw was dismissed before Crown attempts to sell off land, and his accumulated notes were used in the defence of custom. His written customals gave tenants an enduring alternative point of reference.

Bill Shannon's valuable study of the Lancashire lowland landowners' improvement of mosses and meres includes an important discussion of the neglected term 'approvement' enshrined in the Statute of Merton (1236). Shannon's Duchy of Lancaster approvement cases peaked between 1580 and 1599 and all but disappeared after the Restoration. Collusive actions by landlords and tenants were unknown, while cases defining township boundaries and ending inter-commoning were numerous. Violence generally small-scale, dispute specific, and a trigger for court mediation, not prolonged local confrontation.

Briony McDonagh follows the well-documented activities of Elizabeth Prowse, a childless Northamptonshire widow who for 45 years meticulously ran, improved, and expanded the family estates. Elizabeth read improvement literature and also observed practice on her mother-in-law's estate, while her brother James, a London ironmonger, used her estate to test new designs for 'roller' cart wheels and other implements. McDonagh argues (with good evidence) that the female touch in estate management added both a social element of concern for villagers' welfare, and an aesthetic dimension in landscape design.

Alasdair Ross examines 'clearances' and improvement on the Grant estates in northern Scotland after 1762. A grand project to replace extensive highland pastoral 'shielings' with 'improved' arable tenant farms, initiated by the family's extensively travelled and well-read

tutor and later land steward William Lorimer, was undermined by tenants who preferred their profitable pastoral tradition, a poor local market for grain despite the founding of Grantown-on-Spey, and adverse climatic cycles and weather conditions. Many tenants with twelve or more years rent arrears were evicted in the 1790s when the Grant estates were in deep financial trouble. Ross argues that these 'clearances' served the Grant estates well by leaving only larger arable farms, and allowing much of the upland to return to extensive grazing, and eventually to deer forest or game shoots.

JOHN BROAD

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CHRISTOPHER JESSEL, *A legal history of the English landscape* (Wildy, Simmonds & Hill Publishing, 2011). x + 210pp. £19.99.

What does it mean to own land? Jessel explores this apparently simple question over time, showing why it mattered to the landscape, for example because a tenant on a short lease is unlikely to invest in improvement, while a great estate in fee tail was legally incapable of being broken up. Although a relatively slim volume, this work delivers more than it promises and is priced at a level where there is no excuse for agricultural historians not to have it on their shelves. A worthy complement to his *Law of the Manor* (1998), the new book differs in its broadly chronological approach. Although Jessel argues that perhaps 'the landscape changed more in the twentieth century than in all previous times put together' (p. 169), the narrative is punctuated by other occasions when the land changed out of recognition, from Bronze Age field systems, to the rearrangement of the pre-Conquest landscape, to the parliamentary enclosures, and on to the more recent explosion of the suburbs.

Running parallel with this narrative is that of the law of the land. The landscape is largely a man-made thing. Change inevitably produces conflicts, which can only be resolved by negotiation, by violence, or by the law. The law has to be seen as fixed and certain if it is to be effective, yet has to evolve as well. This tension has led to a relatively small number of significant changes over the years, separated by periods when processes of increasing complexity grew up, allowing the law to bend with the winds of change. Jessel's story really takes off with the emergence of the legal framework for feudal tenures, particularly after 1154 when the rule of law began to replace private conflict, while Magna Carta (1215) established that no one could be disseized other than by law. That broad framework lasted largely until the Tenures Abolition Act (1660), when military tenures were converted to socage, although copyhold was only

abolished in 1925 (Law of Property Act), at which time manors ceased to have any meaning. However, much had happened in between, as the market for land, both freehold and copyhold, grew up, and as leases took on greater importance. Both required security and legal fictions were developed to provide that certainty, whilst the natural desire of people to leave 'their' land to whomsoever they pleased led to two major pieces of sixteenth-century legislation, the Statute of Uses (1535) and the Statute of Wills (1540).

Medieval and early modern historians might have appreciated a little more detail on the period 1348 to 1660, but then of course much has happened since 1660 too, so the balance is probably about right. One way or another, by the seventeenth century a clear idea of property had emerged, with few constraints as to what you could do, providing no nuisance was caused to the neighbours. The famous aphorism derived from Semayne's Case (1604) reported by Coke, that an Englishman's home is his castle, was not a figure of speech. This then was the high period of property, when the great estates remodelled much of the landscape. By the mid-eighteenth century, though, Parliament was increasingly taking it upon itself to override property rights in the public interest, whether for enclosure or for infrastructure. The nineteenth-century introduction of death duties and the impact of the First World War led inevitably to the break-up of the great estates, with perhaps a quarter of the farmland of England changing hands between 1915 and 1923 as tenants bought their freeholds. The 'state', a concept which had not previously existed, came to play a bigger and bigger role in the landscape and, during the Second World War, by its requisitioning of land and control of farming, came to rule in as absolute a manner as any Stuart monarch. Since then, legislation has allowed public access to private land, and forbidden certain farming practices in the interests of conservation, while the Town and Country Planning Acts up to and including the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework not only require permission for all forms of development, but even in certain circumstances prevent a landowner from cutting down trees on his own property without permission of the Town Hall. Arguably, we are today as far from allodium, the unfettered absolute ownership of land, as at any time in the previous thousand years. Indeed, legally we continue to hold our land of the Crown, as tenants in fee simple, in free socage. Meanwhile, the law continues to shape the landscape, as it always has done, and Jessel ends by suggesting that, in the same way as the rights of owners have become subordinated to the state, so the future may need legislation which transcends state

borders, requiring new ways of making and enforcing such laws.

WILLIAM D. SHANNON
University of Lancaster

THOMAS FAULKNER, HELEN BERRY and JEREMY GREGORY (eds), *Northern landscapes: representations and realities of North-East England* (Regions and Regionalism in History, 12, The Boydell Press, 2010). xxi + 324 pp., 84 illus. £65.

The historical community is better served with studies of the North and northern identities than it was a couple of decades ago, and this recent historiographical trend informs much of the content of this useful book. Despite the work of a number of scholars, there remains much to be said about the interplay of urban and rural landscapes, economies and population. This wide-ranging book makes a valuable contribution to this literature and, through the discussion of landscapes and the processes by which they were shaped, aspects of a distinctive region emerge.

The book's eighteen chapters are grouped into five parts: 'the lie of the land', 'parks and gardens', 'living in the landscape', 'urban landscapes' and 'perceptions and representations'. The lengthy, though skilful, introduction valiantly attempts to bring coherence to the book by exploring broader themes, but the editors cannot compensate for the gaps and omissions left by the patchy coverage of the northern landscape in the remaining chapters. That this is a region of contrasts almost need not be said: here the picturesque, romantic, rural North is starkly contrasted with the mining and industrial landscapes of County Durham, Newcastle and the south-east of Northumberland.

However, for a region dominated by economic activities whose impact on the landscape is dramatic and large-scale (coal mining, heavy engineering and agriculture), it might surprise some readers to discover that none is given particularly full treatment in this book. Those who know the landscape of the region might be surprised to see large swathes of it completely absent from this book. The Cheviots and Kielder, representing sizeable areas on the margins of the region, are largely ignored, with the bleak uplands that characterize much of inland Northumberland not being fully explored. Urban landscapes too are skewed to the larger urban settlements exemplified here by studies of Darlington, Durham, Middlesbrough, and Newcastle, which are treated as separate entities rather than as part of a wider regional urban structure. Settlement patterns more generally are not dealt with. Village layout and vernacular domestic architecture, both prominent features of the north-eastern landscape

could have been more fully explored, as could the network of smaller urban centres including Alnwick, Berwick, Hexham, Morpeth and Rothbury. The editors were only able to work with the papers presented at a conference a decade ago, and the addition of a few chapters has not given the book the clarity, comprehensiveness and coherence it needs to really succeed. One cannot help but suggest that this book would have worked better as a monograph, where much more control could have been exerted over the content.

Nevertheless, the book does have insightful contributions, and the general lack of coherence does allow the reader to read chapters in isolation. Readers of this journal are particularly likely to benefit from the first two parts of this book. Cousins' discussion of the retrogressive study of Prudhoe is an extremely useful introduction to this analytical method, although larger maps and further discussion would have strengthened this chapter still further. Purdue's brief account of the impact of the landed estate on the landscape during a period of economic expansion and relative political stability in the two centuries following Anglo-Scottish union is genuinely regional in scope. The impact of the gentry and aristocracy provides a useful backdrop to Caunce's study of agriculture in the region. Few authors understand with such clarity the nature and distinctiveness of northern agriculture, and Caunce's holistic survey of the role of agriculture in the development of the region is a genuine highlight of the book. Not content to focus on the minutiae, Caunce attempts to analyse landscape and the agricultural systems it supported within the wider contexts of mechanization, industrialization and urbanization. His survey is necessarily brief, and direct and more complete comparisons with the agricultural systems of other northern counties might have benefited this chapter. This book, and Caunce's chapter in particular, make it clear that a longer survey of northern agriculture in the three centuries after 1700 is long overdue.

The section on parks and gardens places the emphasis firmly on the landed elite and the polite landscapes they created, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This section explores a narrow, though important, social group and their impact on the landscape with focused studies of individual properties (Desmond on Hardwick gardens and Betney on Gibside) and broader thematic surveys (Goulty on walled gardens and Green on the creation of public parks).

Overall this is a valuable book. It is extremely well produced, eminently readable, and the editors have done an exceptional job in bringing it together. The introduction itself is an extremely useful discussion

in its own right, not only of the content of the book, but of its intellectual origins and deeper purpose. The research base, wide-ranging methodologies and diverse themes make this a rich and valuable book which readers of this journal will find instructive; indeed, individually each chapter has considerable merit. Ultimately, however, this book offers a rather fragmentary account of the wider region and largely fails to convey a sense of a regional landscape that is the product of long-term processes, economic systems, underlying geology, transport infrastructure, population movement, cultural trends, and technological innovation. For a region that is widely held to have a robust regional identity, this has not been reflected in the intellectual framework within which this book has been written.

ANDY GRITT

University of Central Lancashire

SHAUN MORLEY (ed.), *Oxfordshire Friendly Societies 1750–1918* (Oxfordshire Record Society, 68, 2011). xiv + 508pp., 8 figs. £25 (available from The Secretary, Oxfordshire Record Society, Tithe Corner, 67 Hill Crescent, Finstock, Chipping Norton, OX7 3BT).

Fifty-five years ago, in an article in *The Amateur Historian*, Eric Hobsbawm, aware that friendly societies constituted the largest and most representative working-class organization in Victorian Britain, called on local historians to rectify their neglect by professionals. Few local historians have answered the call but, in this volume, Shaun Morley, in publishing a detailed annotated list of 755 Oxfordshire friendly societies, has more than risen to the challenge.

Using a wide range of sources, Morley provides the basic facts for each town or village club: the date established or first recorded; the date dissolved or last known to exist; the club headquarters, usually a public house; the anniversary or feast day; minimum and maximum age at entry; membership figures for certain years; and a list of primary sources.

The primary sources identified are almost solely the manuscript or printed rule books amongst the Quarter Sessions records at the Oxfordshire History Centre or those submitted to the Registrar of Friendly Societies now in the National Archives. Unfortunately very few collections of records of individual societies appear to have survived in the county, and only a couple of these include membership and minute books. Membership books are an invaluable resource, particularly for rural history, with information on occupations and fluctuations in membership figures reflecting economic and social change and, where annual address lists are given, they provide a unique source for mobility. In his most

useful, if too short, introduction Morley draws on the membership list of Stonesfield Friendly Society in 1881, which records over 45 per cent of the members as agricultural workers and 29 per cent as craftsmen, representing a high proportion of the villagers in these occupations. Similar figures are likely to have been the norm in village societies across the county.

The organizations recorded in this volume range from short-lived 'slate clubs' established at public houses and other societies that divided their funds periodically between members, through well-supported independent village clubs and branches of affiliated orders, such as the Oddfellows or Foresters, to the less successful county societies promoted by the county elite. Some of the organizations, including the Banbury Hail Storm Assurance Association and the Subscription Fire Engine Society, are out of place in a calendar that should be confined to societies that provided sickness and funeral benefits in return for regular subscriptions.

The volume has a number of useful appendices including a glossary, many extracts – largely from newspapers – of court cases, dishonesty and other disputes relating to friendly societies, and a list of 266 musical bands that were the essential ingredient of the club feast day. The development of the brass band movement, as much a feature of the village as the industrial town, owed much to the great expansion of friendly societies from the late 1830s.

There are a few minor errors, such as the wrong membership figures for the entry on p. 82, and the presentation would have been clearer if the place names had been in a larger and bolder font. However this is an important contribution to the study of friendly societies and it is to be hoped that it will lead to a fuller analysis of Oxfordshire societies and the publication of similar lists for other counties.

DAVID NEAVE
Beverley

JEREMY BURCHARDT and PHILIP CONFORD (eds), *The contested countryside. Rural politics and land controversy in modern Britain* (I. B. Tauris, 2008), viii + 212 pp., 6 figs., 2 tabs. £56.

Despite its subtitle, the controversies at the heart of this book are not really to do with politics or the land question. They are more directly about farming itself: about its place in the modern countryside and the problems of its public image. Published in 2008, but only lately sent in for review, the volume originated in a conference and presents eight contributions on the theme of 'The Contested Countryside', with a substantial introduction by one of the editors, Jeremy Burchardt. It sets out to offer historical contexts for

contemporary debates including the role of organic agriculture, responses to animal disease, the incidence of rural poverty and the future of field sports.

Issues of food safety became central to popular and political indictments of farming methods in the late twentieth century, as anxieties about the impact of genetic modification and the spectre of 'mad cow disease' reinforced criticisms of industrial-style agriculture which had previously tended to focus on ecology and animal welfare. Philip Conford explores a more extensive history of connections between health and methods of food production in his account of the organic movement's emphasis on the nutritional, physical and spiritual advantages of its approach. Paul Brassley takes a much longer historical perspective on his topic: responses to animal disease, from some of the earliest references to veterinary medicine and cattle plagues, to the involvement in the state in policing food quality.

Simon Miller's chapter considers the problems of reconciling modern farming practice with more traditional images of the countryside, beginning from a premise which runs slightly counter to the overall theme of the book: far from a 'contested countryside', his interest is in exposing conflicts which have not flared into public debate. Miller questions the failure to engage fully with 'tensions between use and beauty, and between production and amenity': tensions which were evident in the Scott report and the minority report which accompanied it, but which have, he argues, been largely excluded from political discussion in the post-Second World War period. The reconciliation of aesthetics and economics, leisure and production, is a topic returned to in Alun Howkins' wide-ranging essay on ruralism and rural England, studded with illuminating detail, which offers a concise and rewarding route into the topic for any reader. Surveying a long twentieth century, Howkins discusses the implications of dominant ideas about the countryside in English life, concluding with the irony that the version of rural England invoked in so many debates about town and country no longer, in fact, exists.

Conflicts pitch town against country over questions about land use, methods of farming, access and privilege. Essays by John Marsh and Berkeley Hill explore some of the difficulties of perception about the role of the agricultural sector within the national economy. Yet, the issue of 'whose countryside is it, anyway?' also rages within rural Britain. Paul Milbourne discusses recent traditions of studying deprivation in the countryside, suggesting that the issue has attracted less attention than poverty in an urban setting: his assertion that academic and political interest in the subject dates back

only to the 1970s, rather wipes Rowntree and the Liberal campaigns of the early twentieth century off the map. Meanwhile, Graham Cox's piece on the Countryside Alliance asks to what extent the countryside can be construed as a coherent community, arguing that the campaign engaged in the 'imaginative enterprise' of shaping an idea of the countryside as an interest group, albeit an interest group dominated by some very particular concerns. In an interesting piece on a provocative topic he emphasises the significance of the Countryside Alliance's insistence that rural Britain is about people, rather than landscape, and offers some thoughtful reflections on the notion of 'marginal moralities': the position occupied by 'country sports' in contemporary culture.

In his introduction to the book, Burchardt observes that, 'Countryside controversies may be a necessary, even perhaps healthy, part of the modern condition' (p. 15). The protests of the Countryside Alliance, set against the backdrop of the debates over the future of hunting, provided an extreme illustration of the conflicts examined in this collection of essays. Though the scope of historical perspective varies between contributors (from long surveys to more present-day emphases), the purpose of the volume is to lay out a deeper context to recent problems and tensions. Those problems and tensions are, of course, constantly evolving. But the essays serve as a reminder of continuities as well: the problems of evidence and perception, the distinctive experiences of agriculture as an economic sector, and the long process of accommodation between cultural ideals about landscape and community and the experience of real people in real places.

C. V. J. GRIFFITHS
University of Sheffield

JULIET CLUTTON-BROCK, *Animals as domesticates*.

A world view through history (Michigan State University Press, 2012). xi + 189pp., 74 figs. \$44.95. Given that there is only a solitary Anglo-Saxon paper in the 1960s, followed by Andrew Fleming's 'Bronze Age Agriculture on the marginal lands of north-east Yorkshire' (1971), the evidence would suggest that readers of the *Review* rarely travel into the realms of prehistory, or the Stone Age, in the ways that *Animals as domesticates* does. However, the book in question is worth perusing; this is a text that intrigues in its wide sweep and relative brevity. Thorough-going, it includes the classic literature, that is, Francis Galton and Charles Darwin; new material, citing current work by Sarah Blaffer Hrdy; and also established texts such as Canon Tristram's *Natural History of the Bible* (1867, though she dates it to 1889). Grounded in empirical observation and

findings from a number of disciplines, archaeological, biological, palaeographic, archaeozoological, and using molecular, organic, material, linguistic, literary and visual evidence, *Domesticates* tells the story of domestication from post-Ice Age Europe onwards. The book is well-illustrated, with useful plates that help to ground the points and observations made. There is also an appendix of comparative nomenclature, and in the introduction the taxonomic issues are established within current academic debate. While recognizing the complexities, debates and uncertainties within this material, the book as a whole is organized along continental lines, and then goes animal-by-animal, including birds and bees. In this way the text ranges out across the whole of the world from Eurasia and Europe through to the Americas.

The book fits very clearly into the 'animal turn' and is positioned within the emerging work that takes mutualism as its basis – hence, in discussing the rise of dairying, the text mentions the Neolithic European genetic adaptation for the persistence of lactase, which allowed the adult digestion of fresh milk (p. 42) – and argues that domestic animals have adapted their behaviour to diverse human needs and environments, as part of the process of domestication. It outlines human practices in the agricultural management of animals for their bones and hides, hair/wool/feathers, dung, meat, blood, milk, but also other uses – cultural, companionate, religious and decorative, as much as nutritional and mechanical. Humans, it becomes clear, have always used the whole animal, and domestication is an extension of the uses to which hunted wild animals are put. The book begins by situating the origins of domestication within the human ability to nurture not just one's own but also others' children. Initially, it is argued, 'cute' young animals were nurtured as pets. Those that became domesticated in the long run (in the case of prey animals, those who did not run far; in the case of predators, those who lived in packs) were tamed, separated and, as they fell under complete human control, passed down their genetic characteristics through interbreeding to produce the full domestic form, and its (increasingly wide) range of variants. This was and is an effect produced by natural as well as artificial selection, as climatic conditions lead to certain adaptations. Pastoralism and herding, meanwhile, lead to the absorption of the domestic animal into human culture, that is, human social structures, and to a change in the animal's own culture, which was also passed down. The broad sweep of the book demonstrates how human success (from the human point of view) in domesticating an animal is predicated on that animal's behaviour, both at the

level of the species' habits and the temperament of the individual.

The book could have been less narrative; though there is a lot of material to get through, there is slightly too much exposition and the book is at its strongest when engaging in analysis and argument. The structure at times leads to something of a shopping list of discrete bits of information; some sections – for example, Chapter 7 on Bali Cattle, *Bos javanicus* (p. 88) – are only a few lines long. The narrative does help to put agricultural history into context; references to early agricultural advice, in both the Roman period – for example in respect of poultry (p. 79) – and in Ancient Greece, reveal clear evidence of early anxiety about animal welfare, which we might otherwise consider a purely modern concern (p. 80). But, there are some striking observations, such as that on the question of hierarchy and the status of indigenous animals vs. imported European animals in Africa in the nineteenth century (pp. 115, 117), that go undeveloped. In this respect, the situating material explaining the theory of domestication in the Introduction, together with the issues addressed in the Conclusion, are especially important in ensuring that the text coheres.

The Conclusion links the book more generally to an animal welfare approach, as might be expected given the Foreword by James A. Serpell. In the conclusion, the author reiterates that there were three 'progressive' (p. 133) phases in the historic relationship between humans and domesticates: firstly, an early phase of settlement, during which certain animals became 'enfolded into the human environment' (p. 133). Secondly, a phase during which livestock husbandry spread worldwide: the 'pastoral phase' (p. 134). The third phase – beginning in the late eighteenth century with the drive for 'improvement' (p. 135) – is linked to modernity and industrialization. Within this model, modern agricultural methods are brought into question. It notes, for instance, that human beings took livestock with them and moved them around the world in the earlier pastoral phase, but those that adapted to the local environment have been subsequently erased, it is argued, by improvers seeking to raise productivity by introducing European stock to native and local breeds. The author is particularly critical of both this practice, which has all but destroyed 'adaptation to local environments' (p. 135), and also the methods employed within modern livestock farming. The most problematic aspect of the latter in the author's view is the focus on stock, rather than on the individual animal, wherein the animals 'are no longer seen as individual sentient beings, but as rows of food-producing elements to be cultivated and then harvested in enormous numbers.'

(p. 136). Though the author recognizes earlier instances of human brutality, it is the mass-production of modern times that holds her attention.

KAREN SAYER

Leeds Trinity University College

ANNIE POTTS, *Chicken* (Reaktion Books, 2012). 216 pp., 175 illus. £9.99.

This is a beautiful but powerful book. One of the latest in the Reaktion series on animals, it is richly illustrated, with some beautiful reproductions of paintings and pottery, as well as many photographs. But the author's purpose is far more than to produce the content for another consumer good. Rather, as the first sentence on the back cover blurb states, Annie Potts wants to show readers that 'No creature has been subjected to such extremes of reverence and exploitation as the chicken'.

Reverence first. The book begins with a summary of the natural history of the chicken, tracing the prehistoric and genetic evidence for the species' geographic dispersal around the globe. The 'hen craze' of the nineteenth century saw new breeds emerge, using selective breeding techniques, the Cornish, White Leghorn and Plymouth Rock breeds (the mainstays of the modern population) emerging then. Chapter Two surveys the evidence of chicken intelligence and social habits, emphasizing that the domesticated chicken, like all domesticated animals, is a highly intelligent species. Chapter Three then examines the relationship between the chicken and human religious worship. While we may all be familiar with the prominence of the chicken in Christianity (Jesus referring to his compassion for Jerusalem as a mother hen for her chicks; Easter Eggs celebrating his resurrection), and perhaps in Jewish practice (the Sabbath chicken), surely few readers will be aware of the remarkable presence of the chicken in other world faiths: in Ancient Chinese Shinto and Buddhism, in Ancient Greece and Hindu worship, as well as others, both eggs and roosters have had widespread significance. Chapter Four then summarizes some of the cultural references to chickens in literature and film in the twentieth century, where Potts suggests that prior to the industrialization of chicken farming, the bird's depiction in popular culture was balanced, but that since the development of the broiler industry, the chicken has become trivialized. This is a neat hypothesis, but one which needs to be tested. Equally, her assertion about chicken meat being relatively feminized (compared with red meat) and so a lower status, because chicken farming was largely the responsibility of the farmer's wife, is plausible. But there are many equally plausible

alternative explanations for the long-term preference for red meat.

The most powerful chapter in the book is Chapter Six, which focuses on the industrialization of chicken farming. While falling short of outright polemic, the author's sympathies are clearly with the bird, not the human consumers of its meat and eggs. Over 50 billion chickens are slaughtered each year for meat, almost ten per person on the planet; yet consumers are largely ignorant of the processes that convert live beings into meat on a supermarket shelf. If consumers were fully cognizant, it is truly debatable whether they would continue to accept the relegation of the chicken's status to a mere commodity. Yet humans want to eat meat; indeed, the richer they get, the more they opt to eat. Increasing global population and living standards add up to more meat being eaten around the world. And poultry meat is the healthiest, the most economical and the most environmentally friendly form of animal protein for human consumption. As consumers we may prefer to ignore such ethical dilemmas, but in the end we cannot. The book's greatest service will be that it will add to those works that seek to bring such currently hidden activities out into the open.

ANDREW GODLEY
University of Reading

VICTORIA DE RIJKE, *Duck* (Reaktion Books, 2009). 192 pp., 124 illus. £9.99.

Victoria De Rijke's *Duck* belongs to Reaktion Book's very striking Animal series of short, popular texts; a series, for those who are not yet familiar with it, which encompasses other birds such as the chicken and the sparrow, but also rather less ubiquitous animals such as the camel. As one of this series, *Duck* is beautifully produced and includes a total of 124 colour and black-and-white figures drawn from fine art, illustration and photography.

The book is written wittily and is wide-ranging. The first chapter on the natural history of the bird reads in places rather like a Victorian primer. The taxonomic history and description of habitat do not get any critical treatment, no placing or situating within wider academic debate, but, rather, draw on naturalists from the nineteenth century, who are then placed alongside twentieth-century field studies to delineate the duck's habits. This situates the animal within its empirical context by time and place, meets the needs of the wider audience, and introduces some early points about the duck's environment and relationship with (and interpretation by) the human species, which are developed later. The next chapter focuses on the various uses to which the duck has been put by its human captors and

keepers – it tackles the very many ways in which it has been trapped and hunted worldwide and throughout history, its domestication, its consumption, and its depiction in art and literature. The third, entitled 'The Duck's Quack' deals with its literal utterance 'quack', human descriptions of duck language and the human meanings attaching to 'duck' in idiom and slang. The next two chapters focus on the duck as represented in human culture – mechanical ducks, ducks in Disney films and fine art, duck ornaments, duck buildings, toy ducks and so on – and the conclusion addresses the meaning of ducks.

Duck is a catalogue of ducks and duck-ish things: it tackles the material and natural, as well as the cultural history of the bird, and contains some striking and thought-provoking observations, yet in many instances the author did not develop them further, and this is a real shame. The series to which *Duck* belongs means that the text is somewhat restricted, because of the limits placed on its length, which can be seen in a tendency to generate an inventory of interesting points in most of the chapters, and an almost breathless style. The book contains a number of astute observations, however, and is at its best when it dwells a little longer on them, such as those in connection with the use of decoys.

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Europe and Elsewhere

HARRY KITSIKOPOULOS (ed.), *Agrarian change and crisis in Europe, 1200–1500* (Routledge, 2012). xi + 364pp., 23 figs., 17 tabs. £80.

The idea of a later medieval crisis that followed several centuries of economic and demographic expansion is deeply embedded in writing on European economic history. Accounts of the timing and nature of the crisis vary; some discussions emphasize the problems of the early fourteenth century, while others focus on the Black Death of 1346–51 and its effects. The crisis was clearly a complex, multi-phase and long-lasting event, so it is not surprising that debate about its causes has raged. These essays further this debate, providing surveys of the state of knowledge relating to eight European regions. Many previous essay collections have addressed trends in these centuries, but this one is novel since it engages unusually directly with the concept of crisis and offers a relatively wide geographical perspective.

There are chapters on England (Kitsikopoulos), France (George Grantham), Italy (Paolo Malanima), Byzantium (Kostis Smyrlis), Spain (Ana Rodríguez), Scandinavia (Janken Myrdal), Central Europe

(Grzegorz Myśliwski), and Russia (Janet Martin). The editor provides an overview in a substantial introduction and epilogue. Although the geographical coverage is impressively broad, there are also (as the editor concedes) important gaps owing to the lack of chapters on the Low Countries and Germany. In the epilogue Kitsikopoulos brings in material on the former region, but a specialist's account of the crisis in the Low Countries would have added an interesting further dimension to this book.

Some of the contributors are based in economics departments, while the majority are historians. This mixture of backgrounds does not prevent a welcome evenness of approach. Virtually every chapter consists of a review of empirical findings under a number of common headings followed by an interpretative section on the character and causes of crisis. The only real exception to this pattern is Malanima's chapter, which provides a macroeconomic analysis of the Italian economy as a whole and gives less attention than the others to social structures.

The detailed conclusions of the different chapters are rather diverse. An underlying diversity among the regions is exacerbated by some striking variations both in the availability of relevant primary sources, and in the development of a secondary literature on the crisis. But some clear themes do emerge. One is the trend for economically damaging warfare to increase in its frequency in regions right across fourteenth-century Europe, from Macedonia to Sweden. Another general point is that there is a division between those regions which already faced the threat of a crisis caused by overpopulation at the start of the fourteenth century (England, France, Byzantium, Italy), and those which did not (Spain, Central Europe, Russia, most of Scandinavia). In the epilogue, the editor labels the former set of countries 'Group A' and the latter 'Group B'. For Group B regions, the crisis was instead associated mainly with plague and other factors like warfare, though Central Europe appears hardly to have experienced crisis at all.

Kitsikopoulos draws on the regional chapters to present his own distinctive general interpretation. He divides Group A further into 'progressive' and 'laggard' regions. The 'progressives' (for example, eastern England, Flanders) demonstrated a 'greater ability to cope with the spectre of the Malthusian trap' than the 'laggards' (for example, the rest of England, southern France, most of Italy), which in the early fourteenth century were at risk of 'imminent systemic implosion' (pp. 343–4). For Kitsikopoulos, the key difference between the groups was the institutional environment, which here largely means seigneurial institutions.

Favourable seigneurial institutions were an essential precondition for successful economic expansion through the growth of markets, specialization, and improvements in agrarian techniques and productivity. Kitsikopoulos argues similarly in his England chapter, suggesting that the English agrarian economy of c.1300 was a 'train bound for derailment, sooner or later' (p. 42). In emphasizing the determining effects of the strong 'feudal institutions' that characterized much of England, Kitsikopoulos rejects a view of the fourteenth century as a series of autonomous natural catastrophes which struck a population largely capable of being supported from the available resources. Here, of course, Kitsikopoulos is explicitly attacking the work of Bruce Campbell, though his fire is concentrated mainly on the latter's *English Seigniorial Agriculture* (2000), and it is less clear that he has absorbed the implications of Campbell's 2005 article on the early fourteenth-century crisis (*Past and Present*, 188).

This book is unlikely to find universal favour. As already noted, it gives relatively short shrift to arguments about deteriorating environmental conditions that are currently gaining momentum in discussions of the later Middle Ages. It also has little to say about monetary factors. Yet on the whole it is a useful and rich volume which deserves a wide readership.

CHRIS BRIGGS
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FLORENCE BOURILLON and NADINE VIVIER
(eds), *La mesure cadastrale. Estimer la valeur du foncier* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012). 258pp. €20.

Following their earlier collective volume, *De l'estime au cadastre en Europe: les systèmes cadastraux aux XIXe et XXe siècles* (2008), co-edited with Pierre Clergeot, Florence Bourillon (Université de Paris-Est Créteil) and Nadine Vivier (Université du Maine, Le Mans) have assembled a dozen essays that look back to selected examples of European experience during the eighteenth century, cover the development of cadastral systems in six countries during the nineteenth century, and embrace urban as well as rural examples.

In their introductory essay, they highlight three guiding themes: experimentation to produce appropriate methods for taxing landed property; determination of the economically and politically acceptable level of taxation in relation to land use, area and quality of land; and incorporation of changes in property and taxation levy following initial surveys. Taking the French model for constructing the *ancien cadastre* in the first half of the nineteenth century, which generated registers listing land use, quality,

surface area and ownership, as well as detailed maps covering each individual parcel of property, they reveal an array of differing approaches adopted elsewhere. For example, in European sections of the Ottoman Empire, taxation was reorganized by individual landowners rather than by rural communities as whole entities, whilst Spanish attempts to produce a genuine property-based taxation system failed during the second half of the nineteenth century. Calculating the appropriate fiscal levy for each parcel was achieved in varying ways, sometimes by looking back to earlier experiments from which adjustments were made, but more often by organizing special enquiries. These were administered by tax collectors and official land surveyors, or involved local experts (drawn from adjacent administrative units to minimize corruption) as well as civil servants. In Bosnia–Herzegovina, military surveyors played an essential role in the whole process of calculating tax as well as drawing up maps and registers, whilst in Spain declarations by individual landowners were of prime importance, doubtless contributing to the difficulties encountered. Not surprisingly, different territories adopted different methods to adjust and revise their cadastral taxation systems as fields and meadows were gradually replaced by suburbs as the nineteenth century progressed.

La mesure cadastrale is composed of three equal sections, each of four chapters, which reflect the volume's three guiding themes. Thus, experimentation is illustrated in the context of eighteenth-century Lombardy, Ottoman cities in the nineteenth century, Bosnia–Herzegovina under Austro–Hungarian rule, and nineteenth-century Spain; fiscal determination is discussed in *ancien régime* Languedoc, part of Upper Normandy, the city of Paris at the start of the nineteenth century, and the environs of Istanbul; and the dual challenge of cadastral and fiscal adjustment in the nineteenth century is exemplified by Belgium, Italy, the Parisian suburb of Gentilly, and sites in inner Bordeaux. These distinctive case studies are integrated with skill and ingenuity by the editors, and add important evidence to our knowledge of the operation of cadastrally-based taxation systems in various parts of Europe. Source material is indicated by a wealth of footnotes and most essays are illustrated by facsimiles, statistical tables, graphs or quantitative maps. These are valuable complements to the text and are usually very effective, but it is a pity that the three maps of northern Italy on pages 22 and 25 were not drawn to a standardized base (as is obvious by comparing the depiction of lakes and coastlines) and that there is no legend to describe the different forms of shading on the map on page 158 showing Istanbul and its

surroundings. At a mere €20, the Presses Universitaires de Rennes have once again produced an attractive and well-priced addition to their History list, which grew by sixteen titles during the first quarter of 2012 alone.

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JEAN-MARC MORICEAU, *L'homme contre le loup.*

Une guerre de deux mille ans (Librairie Anthème Fayard, Paris, 2011). 479pp., 12 illus., 23 tabs. €26.

In his *Histoire du méchant loup* (Fayard, 2007), Jean-Marc Moriceau investigated three thousand incidents of wolves attacking country-folk in France between the fifteenth and the twentieth centuries. In *L'homme contre le loup*, the professor of rural history at the University of Caen adopts a much wider time frame that extends back some two thousand years. He begins and ends by examining the drastic re-evaluation of the wolf that has taken place in recent years, from being seen as a threat to man and beast only fit for destruction, to being recognized as an endangered species to be protected. Having been eradicated from French territory during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, wolves returned to France in the early 1990s, coming from northern Italy into the Mercantour area of the Southern Alps. For many centuries, hunters who killed wolves were rewarded but, following French ratification of various European directives on habitat conservation and biodiversity, such action now gives rise to penalties and the full force of law. Just as woodlands are to be conserved rather than cleared, marshlands cherished rather than drained, and heaths protected rather than reclaimed, so wolves must now be tolerated to live alongside mankind and grazing animals.

Fifteen chapters draw on a vast array of evidence to depict the threat posed by wolves at various stages in the past. Sheep and goats were especially vulnerable, but wolves would also attack deer, other large animals, and human beings. Young children or old folk who were entrusted with watching over flocks were most at risk, whilst adults performed more arduous forms of work close to the farmhouse. Moriceau shows how the distribution of wolves varied through time and across space, becoming more numerous when human vulnerability increased during periods of famine or disease, and occupying transitional environments of heaths and rough pastures, where human densities were low, rather than intensively cultivated farmlands with higher densities of settlement. Thus, wolves were relatively rare in the Ile-de-France, Normandy and the basin of Aquitaine, but were numerous in and around the Massif Central, the Vosges, Alps, and Pyrenees.

Nonetheless, they also entered villages and towns, even venturing into the streets of Paris on occasion. Lighting fires, creating noise, employing effective guard dogs, putting grazing animals in pens at night, and praying long and hard were age-old measures to counter the threat. From the time of Charlemagne, an official body (La Louveterie) has existed to organize wolf hunts. With the passage of time, traps and poisons became more sophisticated but, of course, harmless grazing animals and careless humans could fall foul of them. The final phases in the story of the wolf hunt came during the nineteenth century, as financial rewards became more attractive and guns both more effective and widespread. The Association de Lieutenants de Louveterie still exists but its role has changed to controlling the proliferation of wild boar in many parts of France, and offering advice on the most ecologically sound ways of practising *la chasse*.

The new, protected status of wolves in France has created fury in sheep-rearing communities in the Alps and other 'transitional environments', and has attracted a great deal of media interest. Moriceau's book adds a valuable historical dimension to this ongoing controversy. It is illustrated with a dozen maps, two dozen tables, and eight pages of full-colour plates. The text is complemented by a detailed chronology, beginning with a law of the sixth century BC that attributed rewards for destroying wolves, and ending with reports of wolf attacks in the Vercors massif, near Grenoble, in early 2011. A very detailed bibliography, running to 20 pages of small type, demonstrates the wealth of historical research into this topic. Professor Moriceau's next objective is to extend his enquiry into the controversial relationship of wolves to mankind from France to the continent of Europe at large.

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PAUL BRUSSE and WIJNANDT W. MIJNHARDT,
Towards a new template for Dutch history. De-urbanization and the balance between city and countryside (Balance between city and countryside 4, Uitgeverij Waanders / Universiteit Utrecht, 2011). 113 pp., €19.

Despite the annoyingly high pretensions expressed in the title and parts of the text, this actually is in many respects a nice book on Dutch de-urbanization processes in the period 1750–1850. These processes are illustrated through a convenient English summary of three interesting and very recent Dutch monographs on developments in the economic, political and cultural realm in the Dutch province of Zeeland in the period 1750–1850, written by, respectively, the first

author, Paul Brusse, Jeanine Dekker and Arno Neele. Although urbanization seems to be a development which is not easily reversed, there are numerous examples of pre-industrial and industrial societies showing falling shares of urban population during long periods.

In what is now the Netherlands, and especially in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, a massive and rapid urbanization took place from the late middle ages until about 1680, making the Dutch Republic one of the most urbanized regions of the world. There then followed nearly two centuries of de-urbanization, initially due to an absolute decline of cities, but from about 1815 until 1850 also because the increase of the urban population lagged behind that of the rural population. As there were large temporal and quantitative differences between cities, the authors use a typology dividing cities into five categories: 1) government seats; 2) military cities and naval ports; 3) centres of international trade; 4) industrial centres; 5) centres of regional trade (agricultural centres). Later on, in addition to this categorization, the authors also point to some cities where the inhabitants owned extensive rural properties, which resulted in large income streams going from the countryside to the cities.

Although the authors acknowledge that cities can have a hybrid nature, the urban categorization proves useful, as they are able to show that Dutch urban decline took place mainly in centres of industrial trade or industry. The shift from urban to rural or agricultural was largely due to a loss of previous strong positions in international and industrial activities. As local and regional conditions played a large role in this loss, differences in the development between cities could be large. Dutch cities that functioned mainly as centres of an agricultural hinterland were hardly affected, because of the advantageous developments in agriculture from 1750 onwards. Though plausible, this analysis could have benefited from a more quantitative and systematic investigation of the urban and rural developments under consideration. This would, for instance, have shown that the continuous, slow de-urbanization process in the Dutch inland provinces had already started in the sixteenth century.

The authors propose to make urbanization and de-urbanization the central criterion for a new periodization of Dutch history, which would be less political than the 'old-fashioned' one which extends from the start of the Dutch Revolt in 1568 to the period around 1800 when the Napoleonic political turmoil ended in the constitution of the Dutch monarchy. This new periodization would better integrate economic, social and cultural factors, but is also designed to

produce Dutch history which is less focused on the urbanized main province of Holland, and which pays more attention to diverging developments in other provinces and in the countryside. The authors' attention to the rural farming elite as increasingly independent economic and administrative community leaders is also interesting.

The book closes with a concise new narrative of 30 pages summarizing Dutch history from the late middle ages to 1700, from 1700 to 1850, and, very briefly, the recent period. This review is not the place to discuss the many aspects touched upon in this often appealing new picture of Dutch history, which tries to integrate economic, cultural and political dimensions of developments from an urban-rural perspective. One major argument is that the economic and cultural roots of Dutch society today lie not in the impressively wealthy commercial Dutch Golden Age, but rather in the period 1750–1850, when a revival of the countryside resulted in a growing importance of agriculture.

A weak point, however, is the confusing use in the overview of ill-defined territorial demarcations, like the apparent inclusion of coastal Groningen and Friesland in the inland provinces, frequently also denoted as 'the East' as opposed to 'the West' (comprising only Zeeland and Holland). Unfortunately this results in a simplified picture, only substituting 'the West' for Holland as the standard against which developments elsewhere are measured. The authors even suggest a clear distinction line between a Republic of Burghers in 'the West' and a Republic of Nobles in 'the East'. This seems a very limited improvement on the previous 'Hollandocentric' historiography. Such a simplification does not take into account, for instance, that the rural parts of Northern provinces Groningen and Friesland were in many ways much more similar to Holland and Zeeland than to the inland provinces. Unfortunately, these simplifications and some exaggerations (like, for instance, depicting the newly developed nuclear household system within the Western Netherlands in the seventeenth century as extraordinary in a Europe still characterized by extended households) diminish the general value of this study.

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MATS OLSSON and PATRICK SVENSSON (eds),
Growth and stagnation in European historical agriculture (Brepols, 2011). 307pp., 46 figs., 56 tabs. €71.
Quantitative-econometric research on European pre-modern agricultural growth has strongly intensified during the last two decades. The present volume, which is based on contributions to a workshop organized by

Mats Olsson and Patrick Svensson at the University of Lund, presents a very good overview of the state of the art in this innovative field of recent economic history.

The contributions encompass a long period from the early medieval times to the post-war period after 1945. They mainly focus on the period 1700–1950. Two points distinguish this book. First of all, it does not concentrate solely on Great Britain and the Low Countries or even on north-west Europe but, rather, presents a genuine pan-European perspective. What becomes very clear in reading the book is that paths of agricultural growth differed across Europe. The lack of a full-scale agricultural revolution according to the 'British model' did not automatically mean complete stagnation. For example, looking at Spain and Italy it seems that despite all difficulties and long phases of stagnation their agriculture developed more dynamically than previously supposed. Additionally it becomes clear that in some cases liberal agrarian reforms had the potential to push agricultural growth onto a new and more dynamic trajectory, as convincingly proven for southern Sweden, but that in other cases long-term developments were much more important and any 'reform impact' much weaker. Consideration of the ecological aspects of agricultural innovations, as is done in the chapters concerning the Iberian Peninsula by Helder Adegas Fonseca and Jaime Reis on the Alentejo 1750–1850 as well as by Vicente Pinilla and Ernesto Clar on Aragon 1885–1985, is a promising way to deepen our understanding of stagnation or comparatively slower agricultural growth in the (semi-)arid Mediterranean region before 1950.

Besides presenting the astonishingly diverse European experience concerning agricultural growth, the second strength of the book is in the intense use of the concept of total factor productivity (TFP), which is the best measure to assess the performance of agriculture and to identify phases of growth and stagnation. Moreover, it is convincingly shown that despite all difficulties and remaining uncertainties the data-demanding concept of TFP can be successfully applied to the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, thus opening new perspectives for research.

The essays demonstrate that concentrating on a small region, for example Friesland in the Netherlands, 1700–1850 (Merjin Knibbe), Scania in Sweden, 1702–1864 (Mats Olsson and Patrick Svensson), the Alentejo in Portugal, 1750–1850 (Helder Adegas Fonseca and Jaime Reis), Navarre in Spain, 1780–1910 (José-Miguel Lana-Berasain) leads to really promising results of quantitative-econometric research for the pre-1870 period. The astonishing variety and density of quantitative archival sources, which is available for most

European regions even for the early modern period, offers new opportunities for research. To demonstrate this is not the least merit of the book. However, John Beckett and Michael Turner's chapter on English agricultural productivity 1700–1914 reveals that, by using farm records, a 'bottom-up approach' can be successfully applied even for an entire country.

Giovanni Federico's chapter on Italy 1861–1940 is exemplary in showing that dealing intensively and carefully with the available data necessarily leads to a reappraisal that challenges the hitherto conventional wisdom concerning phases of agricultural stagnation and growth. Carol S. Leonard tries the same for late Tsarist Russia using a much more disparate set of data. Comparing her results concerning Russian annual TFP-growth for the 1890s and 1900s to European ones in the book and in the literature in general suggests that Russia's agriculture not only escaped agrarian stagnation around 1900 but realized a very, if not the most, successful agricultural catch-up growth among the less developed European countries: a challenging thesis indeed, which we hope will lead to further debates and research.

Alexis Wilkin's chapter discussing agricultural growth during the Carolingian age indicates that there was more agricultural growth and development than assumed in the older historiography. His stimulating essay introduces the reader to one of the most controversial debates on the economic history of early medieval Europe. Likewise, Frank Konersmann connects rural social and economic history in discussing the important role of the so called 'peasant merchants' for the commercialization of agriculture and progress in farming in south-west Germany, 1760–1860.

This carefully edited sixth volume of the series 'Rural history in Europe' financed by the 'European Action COST A35' of the European Union presents an important contribution to modern agricultural history using state-of-the-art econometric methods and theoretic models. It should be read by everyone who is interested in the historical dynamics of agricultural growth.

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BJØRN POULSEN and SØREN MICHAEL SINDBÆK (eds), *Settlement and lordship in Viking and early medieval Scandinavia* (Brepols, 2012). 337 pp., 18 figs., 7 tabs., 16 maps. €95.

Compared to the enormous influence of authors such as Bloch, Duby and Ladurie in bringing studies of medieval feudalism and the western European

peasantry to an international audience, Scandinavian writing on medieval lordship and landed culture has so far had less impact. This is not because the field is devoid of useful, exciting research because, as this book shows, there is plenty of that. This handsome edited volume arises from an interdisciplinary conference at Aarhus in 2008, and includes contributions from the Scandinavian countries and the UK. Historical analyses are accompanied by contributions on settlement archaeology, burials, poetry, architecture and runic inscriptions. A core theme of the volume is in debating the transition between lordship in the Viking period and into the middle ages, characterized as one moving from a society based on warfare, paganism, tribute and personal relationships between lords and free peasants, to one based on serfdom, alienable land rights, Christianity, kingship and legal status. A recurrent contention throughout this collection of papers concerns the debate between those (termed 'primordialists') who believe that medieval estates in Scandinavia are direct successors of Iron Age and Viking practices of landholding, and 'modernists' who perceive a major step-change in landholding culture, coincident with religious conversion and economic changes, in about 1000 AD. Indeed, some may even feel that this collection conveys a hint of how landholding could have developed in England, had not the Normans invaded and eclipsed the legacies of Cnut and his successors.

Judith Jesch, Anne Pedersen and Lars Hermanson bring evidence from runic inscriptions (particularly those which contain references to land ownership), burial finds, and military organization, to bear upon the perceived ideological transition, where Christianity and its ideology of divine ordination of kingship eclipsed earlier reciprocal social bonds, to the extent that by the twelfth century churches were being built over high-status tenth-century pagan graves with no respect for, or even knowledge of, their presence. Inevitably in this context, the concept of status in rural settlement archaeology is explored in detail. Excavations of hall-houses and major medieval magnate farms in Jutland are explored in relation to their Viking Age antecedents by Morten Søvsø, and the archaeological evidence for the insertion of churches into these settlement complexes is explored by Jens Jeppesen. Landscape and architectural expressions of aristocratic status are discussed by Martin Hansson. These papers are accompanied by historical and toponymic studies of demesne farms, manors and parish formation in (Danish) Sjaelland and (Swedish) Östergötland by Erik Ulsig, J. G. G. Jakobsen and Clas Tollin. Further analysis of the impact of Roman Catholic institutions

on land is provided by Nils Hybel, while Carsten Porskrog Rasmussen provides an overview of related secular developments in Danish crown lands before and after 1230 AD. Bjørn Poulsen speculates on the types and impacts of taxes, rent and render, which may have existed in Denmark in the Viking Age to medieval transition.

Dagfinn Skre debates the changing role of Viking Age royal power in relation to trade and markets, testing concepts such as central place theory, and situates nascent urbanization in places such as Birka and his own excavation site at Kaupang in relation to magnate politics, local assembly governance, craft production and the development of central tribute-gathering estates. Søren Sindbæk contributes a historical and toponymic study of outfield development and the opening up of new lands and resources to agriculture, which keys with two other contributions later in the

volume. These, by Frode Iversen and Janken Myrdal respectively, focus on the role of slavery and freedmen, and the daily grind of agricultural production in the landscape, the latter adding a down-to-earth agrarian flavour to the synthetic and thematic overviews of several of the other papers.

The volume is a relatively dense collection of papers, well-freighted in research detail, and it also benefits from a useful and clear introduction which sets out its stall well. The illustrations are few and not of particularly high quality of reproduction, although the cover is attractively designed. It is by no means a cheap purchase. To active researchers in this particular field it will be an indispensable acquisition but many other interested scholars may decide to wait for their library to acquire it.

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