

Book Reviews

UK and Ireland

NICK ASHTON-JONES, *Landscape, wealth and dispossession* (Parker Street Publications, 2019). Parts I and II, 96 pp. and 164 pp. illus. £20.

Understanding the relationship of our economic system to the environment is no longer the preserve of specialist climate scientists. As the global environmental crisis has grown over the last decade a plethora of writers have wrestled with the question that Nick Ashton-Jones sets out to answer in these books: 'How did we come to this cruel and unjust state of affairs?'

Few of these writers have tried to analyse capitalism's rapacious nature through the sweeping historical approach taken by Ashton-Jones. These books, the first two volumes of a projected six, begin with an overview of British geology before moving to a discussion of pre-class societies in what would become the British Isles. Part II analyses the development of feudalism and what this meant for the interaction between humans and their landscape.

This long view ought to give the reader an appreciation of how exactly how we have arrived where we are. As Ashton-Jones explains, geography on its own can only explain a 'lifeless planet, but it is required to 'appreciate the impact of life ... upon the nature of landscapes'. This approach, which locates humans at the centre of the creation of the landscape we see today, is important but Ashton-Jones fails to get to grips with the nature of the historical change that happens in the period he covers.

A society's mode of production is a specific combination of different forces of production (technology, infrastructure, etc.) with the relations of production (the particular organization of society). Thus as modes of production change, relations between people change and, crucially for the topic covered here, so does society's relationship with the natural world. A hunter-gatherer society and feudal or capitalist modes of production have very different relationships with nature. The process of transformation is itself important because it shapes how the new society is organized. This dynamic ought to be at the heart of

Ashton-Jones's analysis but he tends to see continuity when a break with the past is more generally accepted.

So, quoting Yuval Noah Harai, Ashton-Jones says that the 'agricultural revolution was history's biggest fraud' despite it being clear that there are fundamental differences between nomadic societies based on hunter-gathering and sedentary, or near sedentary, societies based on farming. He tells us that 'William of Normandy made a point of respecting immemorial feudal English law' but after 1066 the Normans created a new set of feudal relations. As Marc Bloc explained in *Feudal society: The growth of ties of dependence* (1939, trans. 1961), 'No definite break with the past occurred, but the change of direction which, despite inevitable variations in time according to the countries or the phenomena considered, affected in turn all the graphs of social activity ... There were ... two successive "feudal" ages, very different from each other in their essential character.'

Ashton-Jones' claims of continuity stretch the bounds of credibility at times. For instance he argues that we can 'trace the state capitalism of the defunct Soviet Union to the Viking settlement of Novgorod a millennium earlier'. But the economic nature of the USSR was the consequence of a number of historical events that took place after the Russian Revolution – none of which were inevitable.

This approach is particularly problematic when it comes to the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Here the author focuses entirely on the alleged development of capitalism through the commodification of land under feudal society, a process that began, he claims, with the Conquest and a Norman state 'built upon a foundation of the ownership of land rights rather than ... personal loyalty to a superior lord'.

However, capitalism is more than the private ownership of land, or indeed the existence of commodities. Capitalism is a system of competitive commodity production very different from feudal society and its ascendance was not inevitable. The emerging capitalist class in England (which Ashton-Jones claims came to dominate Parliament following the Wars of the

Roses) needed the Civil War to defeat Charles I before capitalist relations could break free of their feudal chains. Similar processes on the continent failed to lead to the break-through of the bourgeois order.

Why does this matter? Well if capitalism is the result of inevitable processes begun when the Normans conquered England then there is no alternative. However, capitalism is a break from the past. The motivations of oil companies in driving the degradation of the environment and the exploitation of people in South America and Africa may appear superficially to be the same as William's grab of England, but the motivation is entirely different. Ashton-Jones claims that the duke wanted England 'with a sort of insanity' but if he did, it was only to satisfy the needs of his feudal lordship. The motivation of capitalist multinationals is the need to accumulate wealth or risk bankruptcy due to competition with other firms. Ashton-Jones, by contrast, argues for continuity. The 'characteristic colonialism of the British Empire started in England in 1066'. This approach devalues the horrors of colonialism and imperialism while simultaneously implying these were inevitable.

Oddly, for a series of books predicated on understanding the way that humans shape their environment, ordinary people, and their role in contesting or making historical change is almost entirely absent. A striking omission of his account of feudalism is any sense of the way that ordinary people challenged their lords, struggled for control of resources and opposed processes like enclosure.

As I write this review, appalling news of the scale of bushfires in Australia dominates my social media news feeds. Understanding exactly why, in the face of global and local environmental catastrophe, politicians seem unable to act requires a coherent analysis of the origins and nature of capitalism. Despite Ashton-Jones's long view of British history, his approach fails to offer the clarity we need.

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DAVID CROUCH (ed.), *The Victoria County History of the counties of England. A history of the County of York: East Riding, X, part 1, Howdenshire, the townships* (Boydell & Brewer, 2019). 352 pp. 63 illus. £95.

This is the latest volume of the Victoria County History for York and the East Riding and describes the liberty and wapentake of Howdenshire, excluding the town of Howden itself, which will be covered in part 2, due in early 2021. Until 1836 Howdenshire was an 'exempt franchise' of the Bishop of Durham, an enclave

which survived the Reformation and the Civil War. Occupying the south-western portion of east Yorkshire its ownership is a complicated story and the editor has taken the decision to organize this volume not by parish as is usually the case but with a separate description of each of the nineteen townships. Each section is divided into similar headings: landscape, land ownership, economic history, river defence and drainage, social history, religious history and local government.

The earliest record of Howdenshire is in a grant of King Edgar in 959 when it was a waterlogged island, an area of wetland carrs within a fenland landscape. It occupies an area of some 48 square miles on the left bank of the Yorkshire Ouse between the Derwent in the west and the Foulness stream to the east, the northern boundary formed by the old Derwent and associated drainage channels. Reclamation and water management began in the 1160s organized by Hugh du Puiset, bishop of Durham, with the construction of several major drains and sluices. Early riparian settlements were along the raised alluvial banks but the perpetual threat of inundation meant that this water management system was maintained with little change until the mid-seventeenth century.

The sluices were known as clows, clowers, or cloughs while structures known as staiths, paired timber-framed earthworks with stapled faggots of thorn and brushwood (yedders) jutting into the river, deflected the scouring effect of the current at ebb and flow and prevented it undermining the raised flood banks. The use of the term staith suggests these were also used as convenient landing and loading stages for small boats, as allowed by the water level. Between the staiths were pikes or hobs, lengths of reinforced bank strengthened with timbers and yedders. The inhabitants had customary obligations to raise and fortify the banks and costs were shared by the endangered townships, fines being imposed for lack of maintenance. The temporary abolition of the episcopal liberty in the 1640s during the Civil War and Interregnum was disastrous. By 1660, the system was in serious decay and the waters of the Ouse breached its banks resulting in its course shifting eastwards, and at Skelton the left bank had to be entirely reconstructed.

The damp sticky clay soil was usually more suitable for plantation and pasture than for cereals, but oats were grown. Flax and hemp were important crops, while sheep provided wool, all providing the raw materials for local weaving. In the eighteenth century the more successful yeoman farmers and gentry were able to improve the land by warping. Deep warping drains allowed the land to be deliberately flooded. The

alluvial deposits greatly improved fertility to a steadily increasing area of land as the process was completed over the years, and allowed the cultivation of wheat, barley and oats. This method was employed until 1950 when the £20 cost per acre meant that it was cheaper to use a combination of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This was the modern and progressive approach to farming but with the environmental costs that have become apparent, nitrate run off into our waterways and declining fertility of the soil. The farming collapse in the 1880s had resulted in abandonment of significant areas to grass until mechanization, combined with chemical treatments, made arable profitable again.

The late medieval common field system at Asselby survived as a working concern until the reign of Queen Victoria, but Barmby preserves the fullest evidence of a township's common fields. Blacktoft developed where the Ouse debouches into the Humber and began as a marginal fishing village. It provided a mooring point for river traders venturing from Trent Falls and in modern times safe anchorage at low tide and in fog for the traffic to and from Goole. Metham, though one of the smaller townships, was the seat of one of Yorkshires principal gentry families, the Saltmarshe family, who possessed the eponymous village until the death in 1941, without an heir, of Philip Saltmarshe whose photograph appears as a frontispiece.

The story of Howdenshire is very pertinent in the circumstances we now find ourselves in, with the increasing flood risk from extreme weather events. It is also evident that the more generalized approach to water control of current river authorities is inadequate and inferior to the detailed local response that was once the norm. The balance between the level of protection of urban and rural communities also needs to be addressed because of the large-scale housing developments on the flood plains of our major rivers.

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RICHARD BROCKINGTON with SARAH ROSE,
The Victoria History of Cumberland: Kirkoswald and Renwick (Institute of Historical Research, 2019). 118 pp. £12.

This remarkably illuminating, deep-time, microhistory of one 30-square-mile parish, Kirkoswald, reminds us what we lose when we analyse a whole county or even a country. It builds an increasingly vivid sense of place as it takes the reader from the late Stone Age through to recent times, analysing in impressive depth buildings, streets and many of the people who lived, worked and played on them. The book will undoubtedly be of immense value to local historians of Cumbria, but

it should also serve to remind academic historians of the fruits of exhaustive, detailed analysis in relatively small case-study areas that boast similarly voluminous archival records.

This edition is very good value, bristling with insightful colour images within a logical and easy-to-follow layout. It comprises a helpful glossary of specialist terms and some explanatory notes on the sources. The book is based on a great deal of original research at several archive holdings, reminding us of the wealth of historically important, qualitative records in local as well as national record offices. Inevitably, at times, its thoroughness contributes to an overly descriptive narrative, which leads the reader to ponder the wider significance of relatively minor local events, land transfers and changes in work practices. But ultimately, this is a price worth paying in return for such a thorough local history. It inspired me to want to read more local histories of Cumbrian parishes and to compare their stories in detail.

While this book does exactly what it promises, providing an excellent analysis of one parish, as I progressed through the chapters, I would have appreciated more information about how unusual the case study is in its county and national context. Kirkoswald's story is fascinating and in many respects lively and noteworthy, but how similar and how different were the experiences of those living in other Cumbrian and in other English villages? The book reminded me very much of Michael Wood's *The story of England* (2011), which seeks to unpack the major national events of English history as they were experienced by one Leicestershire village, Kibworth. Whereas Wood superimposes a national framework on local history through one village's eyes, Brockington and Rose seem to do the opposite by explaining Kirkoswald's local particularisms first and foremost and how they fitted into national history secondarily. Both approaches work well, but further comparison with other villages would have boosted the work's significance and reach academically.

After explaining the parish's main characteristics, and its landownership frameworks, the succession of thematic chapters works very well indeed, focusing on particular sub-disciplines of history (economic, social and religious), before explaining manorial, vestry and local governance in depth. The book explains a great deal about infrastructural communication networks, especially roads and bridges, and it is fully contextualized in its natural environment topographically, with the exception of flooding. I was surprised to find no references to the manufacture and installation of the tiled drainage tunnels that coursed through the

Cumbrian landscape well into the nineteenth century. It could have elaborated on the history of flooding and drainage management to provide valuable information about lessons learned in the past in order to inform the present and future. It might also have said more about the social and economic connections between Kirkoswald and Carlisle. For example, how important were Carlisle's weekly Saturday markets (general, horse and cattle) to the villagers, as sellers or buyers? I was shocked to find no index reference for markets or droving, as long-established droving routes passed near to Kirkoswald until well into the nineteenth century. Of course, the archival record limits the extent to which researchers can write about women and about the poor, but this volume is a particularly male-dominated history with a disproportionate focus on elite society. The 'Welfare' section (pp. 63–6) provides a brief overview of the major legislative changes and their impact in this particular parish, but the social history of these changes could have been much more widely contextualized. Further research might have drawn out more detailed analysis of particular women's lives and of the families who claimed poor relief. Architecturally, the book showcases some fantastic images of relatively modest buildings (e.g. the general stores building on p. 46), but it remains silent on the quintessential character of Cumbrian architecture and how it shaped this parish, especially in relation to other plebeian architecture. For example, were 'clay dabbins' built in this particular part of Cumberland or were they limited to the Solway Plain and how extensively was slate used as a building material?

Nevertheless, this is a fine and remarkably detailed parish history, which will undoubtedly be useful and important for local communities, historians and other researchers for the foreseeable future. It reconnects us to the minute and the micro- developments in one parish, and to its people's reactions to national legislation, and to local governance. By zooming in on Kirkoswald and Renwick, by reading this remarkable example of one parish's historical geography, we can better understand regional and national historical geography.

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DAVID STONE (ed.), *The accounts of the Manor of Esher in the Winchester Pipe Rolls, 1235–1376* (Surrey Record Society 46, 2017). lxxvi + 438 pp. £30.

The Pipe Rolls of the Bishops of Winchester provide a familiar and remarkable source for historians of medieval agriculture. It has been estimated that they include 10,000 manorial accounts. Yet this sheer quantity provides its own problem both in studying the

material and in their publication. Different approaches have been followed. We have editions of four complete pipe rolls (1209, 1211, 1303 and 1410) and a group from a single manor (Crawley). Now Dr Stone has provided an edition of 44 accounts for a single manor together with a scholarly introduction. This must be warmly welcomed by historians of both medieval agriculture and much else.

The bishopric of Winchester's estates ran from Taunton to Southwark, from the Isle of Wight to north Oxfordshire, covering a variety of manors and agricultural areas. Esher, in Surrey, was an interesting but atypical example. While most of the bishopric estate was based on Anglo-Saxon grants, Esher was not acquired until 1245. It was bought by a bishop of Winchester to endow a new monastic foundation, and was then re-acquired by his successor, in order to provide a new residence near enough to London, Windsor and the court, vital for their political and governmental roles. He re-acquired Esher, but the Dorset sub-manor remained with the abbey. Esher's documentary coverage thus began substantially later than on the other bishopric manors. It was never large or rich, and its soils were poor. Here demesne agriculture was given up and the agricultural land leased in 1365, much earlier than elsewhere on the estate, where this development was largely a product of the fifteenth century.

But this volume is much more than just a collection of 44 Esher accounts. The editor uses these and the other 53 accounts to provide a substantial introduction and account of the development of this manor, while each published account is given an introductory commentary, and the opportunity, in the course of the volume, to discuss a wide range of issues. Moreover, one of the great strengths of these records is their ability to provide a complete sequence of statistics with few gaps. The statistical appendices draw upon all the accounts, including those not published here and include arable acreage, livestock numbers, arable yields (supplementing Titow's figures for the whole estate with those for rye and large and small oats), and listing goods and produce entering and leaving the manor.

Esher was an untypical manor within the bishopric estate. Its poor soils led to arable farming being dominated by rye and oats. It comprised a patchwork of demesne fields and scattered farmsteads with convertible husbandry. But despite these variations it also reflected some of the common arable trends on the estate as a whole: initial thirteenth-century growth, shrinkage at the end of the century, the early fourteenth-century crises of weather and pestilence, and subsequent consolidation at a lower level in the

years leading up to the devastating impact of the Black Death. The response to this last crisis led to the end of demesne agriculture, but not before the accounts suggest its vulnerabilities in labour and management. Many of the bishop's lands lay in the chalklands of southern England, and they were among the greatest wool producers in England. Here the lord maintained a flock, although not large and with long periods when no sheep were maintained, between 1266 and 1270, and from 1316 to 1335. Pigs were not kept on large scale on the bishopric estate and here there were none after 1282. Cows ceased to be kept in 1316. One unexplained curiosity was why the goatherd was moved from Farnham in 1321–7.

While the strength of these records is in the details of the lord's demesne agriculture, they have much to show, as the editor makes clear, about the peasantry themselves. An appendix provides potted biographies of those who died during the Black Death of 1348–9. By working through all the accounts of a single manor, unusual documentation is revealed, as in the tithe returns for the parish in 1248 and 1335, which allow comparison of the relative importance of the various crops in peasant and demesne agriculture.

The manor had been acquired and developed as a residential site, so that in addition to information about the farm buildings, we learn of the investments in the lord's housing. Having acquired the manor, the bishops lost little time in developing it. A new free-standing chapel was completed in 1268, although sadly the previous account dealing with most of the construction is missing. There were frequent indications of some of the buildings present and of occasional large-scale upgrading as in 1376 when over £100 was spent. This was a major episcopal residence accommodating bishops and their distinguished guests from royalty downwards. The accounts show traces of some of these visits, and of the buildings and their materials. This residential role was reflected in the landscape and the accounts through the vineyard and fishponds, swans and peafowl. Sadly, subsequent rebuilding in the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries and demolition, has meant that none of the buildings featured in these accounts have survived.

The records are published in translation, which greatly increases their accessibility. This volume should prove to be both a valuable source for the agrarian history of Surrey and of the wider country. It has a great deal to tell us about the worlds of the lord bishop and of his tenants. Its scholarly mixture of sources, introductory text and statistics should make this a valuable entry to medieval agrarian source materials, particularly when used in conjunction with the

1302 Pipe Roll covering the whole estate (ed. M. Page, *rev. ante AgHR* 45.2, p. 202). Together, they should allow students to engage with the sources both to examine a medieval manor and its evolution and to compare Esher with other manors on this great estate. This volume is an immense achievement, and it is hoped that its welcome publication may encourage further work on individual manors of the bishopric.

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ALISON LOCKER, *Freshwater fish in England: A social and cultural history of coarse fish from prehistory to the present day* (Oxbow Books, 2018). 172 pp. 16 plates. £38.

Alison Locker, a highly respected expert in fish remains archaeology, has assembled a valuable pioneering overview uniquely combining zooarchaeological and historical approaches to the changing place of freshwater fish varieties in human cultures of what is now England. For investigators hitherto focused on matters terrestrial or marine the book identifies multiple freshwater issues in agrarian, landscape, dietary, socio-cultural, and general environmental and economic history. But students of historical fishing and fisheries in England will wish to follow arguments and discussions more complex than can here be summarized. The book's indubitable strengths and occasional problems may inhere in the very breadth of its subject – how have the English interacted with coarse fish?

After brief mention of the fish species, native and introduced, now inhabiting England's fresh waters, the book concentrates on 'obligate' freshwater varieties, those unable to live in salt water. This relegates to secondary attention such migratory or broadly tolerant species as Atlantic salmon, eel, sea trout, sturgeon, and various estuarine flatfishes. What follows is structured chronologically from prehistory to the early twenty-first century. The result is first a narrative of human diet and land use based primarily on archaeology and then another mainly drawn from the written record about leisure, sport, and human social behaviour. Though Locker does not emphasize the point, the transition occurred in generations centred on 1500.

From prehistory through the early Tudors, if inhabitants of southern Britain looked at all upon freshwater fish, they saw food. Palaeolithic and Mesolithic hunter-gatherers ate much freshwater fish; their agrarian Neolithic through Iron Age successors virtually none, perhaps because the latter granted to watery places a sacral status incompatible with economic exploitation. Roman conquest and culture restored some taste for fish, both the pungent briny sauces (*garum*,

salsamentum) fermented for everyday use and the large specimens that colonists and aspiring indigenes used to show off elite status. Post-Roman pagan Anglo-Saxon immigrants reverted to an Iron Age model, while surviving and introduced Christian dietary practices encouraged eating fish when meat was forbidden. Even before arrival of piscivorous Norse settlers, some sites and human skeletal material suggest that elites consumed a modicum of freshwater and marine fishes, notably the larger and more impressive species such as pike. Then, even before the Norman Conquest, signs of fish consumption increase, especially at urban sites. The new trend featured the growing dietary importance of marine fishes, first eel, then herring, eventually also cod, and both a relative and absolute reduction of freshwater species, which became ever more expensive objects of prestigious display. Those fish came from natural waters understood, like artificial ponds, to be private property. Up to the mid-1400s English ponds held native species and not the exotic carp. Towards the end of this period, recreational fishing also emerges in the English written record, notably in the anonymous *Treatyse of fysshynge wyth an angle* printed by Wynkyn de Worde in the second edition (1496) of the *Boke of Seynt Albans*. Locker treads wisely through the oldest surviving tracts on fishing, correctly observing that, while textual instructions in capture techniques – all in fresh waters – are now known from some earlier generations in England and elsewhere and some individuals did plainly fish for fun, before 1496 books on sport had ignored this activity.

Remaining chapters (5–8 and an ‘afterword’) trace out the further evolution of conditions adumbrated by 1500, namely the transformation of freshwater fish from dietary and economic elements to objects of cultural display and performance. The zooarchaeological record gives way to written traces of a new English engagement with recreational angling and fishes of the carp family, first natives and eventually common carp. Waters under landowner control offered opportunities to fish with rods, lines, and nets. A new genre of angling books culminating in Izaak Walton’s *Compleat angler* (1653) depicted an established gentlemanly pursuit of all freshwater fishes, supported by its own commercial infrastructure. With the first Industrial Revolution (1740s–1860s) came a new English social structure and an emergent division between ‘game’ angling (salmon, trout, grayling, often also pike) on privately owned waters and ‘coarse’ fishing mainly for indigenous cyprinids. The business of angling, shops with specialized tackle, tradesmen, angling clubs in several social strata, and a variety of angling literature, grew apace. Coarse fishing developed most actively

in and around Victorian cities, where working class fishers formed their own clubs. Fishermen (and this was a mainly male activity) of higher class often, but not exclusively, fished fly for game species.

Since the late 19th century all sorts of anglers came gradually to endorse a more ‘sporting’ ethos, whether defined by eschewing certain capture techniques or limiting the killing of fish. Newly emergent angling celebrities and specialized publications promoted both technical and social innovations, including a fashion of taxidermy to preserve trophy catches. The long-prized pike yielded angling priority to carp as the largest coarse fish and most difficult to master, reaching cult status by 1950. Nowadays the hegemony of carp among angled coarse fishes meets a general desire to capture big fish by basic methods, while at the same time intensively managed reservoirs provide recently stocked exotic American rainbow trout for another type of angler. Competitive angling, once the preserve of local coarse clubs in pursuit of roach, gained international status in contests to take carp on one hand and trout on the other.

Freshwater fish successfully portrays the remarkable 500-year English metamorphosis in the cultural role allocated to freshwater fish from a dietary to a recreational object. In part because readers familiar with archaeozoology and medieval diets may know less angling history and angling antiquaries have reciprocal blind spots, some broader observations are in order.

The shift from food to play at least roughly coincided with predominantly verbal sources replacing material evidence in present-day knowledge of past freshwater fish and fisheries. Both recovered fish bones and written instructional or literary texts offer skewed perspectives on how people dealt with fish. Readers would benefit from some instruction on the epistemological value and limits of each type of evidence, not least the limited ability of fish bones to reveal human purposes and the unstable relation between angling literature and angling practice.

Locker’s restricted attention to obligate freshwater species has reasonable biological grounds, but still fits uncomfortably with how people took food from fresh waters in the Middle Ages and their descendants take recreational values from the same. In writing a history, why not explore the entirety of freshwater fishing? But at the same time the book tends to deprive the fish and their aquatic environment from any active role in its story. Given Britain’s relatively depauperate natural fauna, how did the more diverse fish populations in those eastern waters once part of the Pleistocene ancestral Rhine, play out in fisheries? Subsequently, what may be said of responses by English fish species

to the successive changes in English agricultural systems, then in urban, industrial, and post-industrial landscapes, quite apart from fishing pressure itself? What role might the warming trend that began in the mid-nineteenth century have played in the availability to English anglers of grayling, trout, roach, and carp, each with its own temperature preferences?

Stereotypes of 'game' and 'coarse' fish and angling may be thought nineteenth-century constructs peculiar to England. They need to be historicized as such. Their use as analytical terms obscures historic commonalities and differences, including the importance of the 'all-round anglers' whom Locker identifies among leading lights from the seventeenth through even the early twentieth century. Nor did practitioners or writers of freshwater fishing in the Middle Ages or even the sixteenth century in England or elsewhere identify 'play' exclusively with angling as opposed to other forms of fishing. Ambiguities in contemporary approaches to those activities might better be acknowledged. Sport is as participants conceive it. The post-medieval evolution in England may have differed from that on the continent, but the grounds and process for this divergence remain unexplained. Quite possibly it is the unimportance of freshwater contributions to the English diet by the later Middle Ages that is central to that story.

Such questions, however, arise from the very breadth and success of Locker's innovative interdisciplinary survey. They rightly pertain to a future agenda that can test and build upon the sweeping story her book sustains. *Freshwater fish* deserves the attention of archaeologists, historians, and angling antiquaries alike.

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BRONACH C. KANE, *Popular memory and gender in medieval England: Men, women and testimony in the church courts, c.1200–1500* (Boydell & Brewer, 2019). 256 pp. £60.

This book sets out a compelling case for the importance of memory to popular culture in later medieval England. Where much recent historical writing on memory in the Middle Ages has focused on elite and learned contexts, it reveals the mnemonic strategies and markers used by ordinary rural men and women to remember and narrate their own lives. More particularly, it shows the way in which these strategies helped to reproduce the patriarchal ideas about authority, gender, and social relations that structured everyday life. The result is a richly detailed social history that displays a deep sensitivity to its subjects' world-views.

Most of the research underlying this comes from a study of witness depositions produced in the course of

litigation before the church courts of Canterbury and York, relating to disputes over marriage, defamation, and tithes, among other matters. These are technical and often complicated sources, which provide only brief and highly partial glimpses of the voices of the people who were called to testify. But throughout, Kane provides careful readings of the vignettes that they offer, seizing upon the telling details that take us beyond the formulaic language of the legal Latin, towards the lived experiences of the witnesses themselves.

After an introduction that makes clear the historiographical stakes in relation to medieval social history and memory studies, the first two chapters provide a survey of the two broad cultural contexts. Chapter 1 looks at the way in which ecclesiastical discourses about memory developed in both pastoral and judicial settings, influencing the way that witness testimonies were elicited in the courts, while Chapter 2 explores the ideas about female authority that emerge from legal arguments over the capacity of individual women to act as witnesses before the courts. While we might be unsurprised to find that these arguments drew on misogynistic tropes about female promiscuity and deceit, Kane also attempts to recover the affective networks of female kinship and sociability from which women often narrativized their memories.

The subsequent five chapters explore diverse themes, showing the ways in which memories of everyday life were grounded in ideas and experiences surrounding bodies and sexuality, kinship and marriage, custom and writing, and movement through the landscape. Readers of this journal will no doubt be especially interested in this last chapter, which brings together an array of evidence – much of it from tithe causes – showing the importance of the connection between memory and place; in line with recent work on early-modern England, it demonstrates that the agricultural landscape was understood as a repository of customary memory. But here as throughout, Kane's emphasis on gender also provides new insights into these familiar topics, showing the way that patriarchal ideas about authority leached into every aspect of the way that people remembered.

The book is full of tantalizing arguments, such as the idea that men and women constructed different temporalities in their depositions, the men's more linear, the women's more synchronic – or that women tended to remember with reference to bodies, aligning with normative perceptions of female social experience as embodied. Indeed, if the book has a flaw it is that such insights were sometimes left hanging, when they would have repaid more investigation; it seemed to me that they deserved more space, possibly at the expense

of the literature surveys that opened most of the chapters. Nonetheless, there were other subplots that were pursued effectively throughout, such as the way that women's memories often provided the foundation for those of men, even while they themselves were (informally) excluded from providing testimony in certain kinds of cases, such as those that concerned tithes or ecclesiastical rights.

Overall, the book represents a timely contribution to medieval English social history. Its attention to the way that medieval patriarchy contoured the structures of everyday rural life is illuminating, and it will be especially useful for teaching students about the ways in which gendered patterns of authority might marginalize men – particularly younger, poorer, and servile men – as well as women. In its main aspect, it shows the possibility of studying popular memory in the Middle Ages in a way that is mindful of the particularities of individual experience while still sufficiently broad to draw out a powerful cultural history. And in its suggestions around the forms of temporality, embodiment, and affect, it signals future directions for studies that seek to uncover the memories of non-elite people in the medieval world.

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ERICA FUDGE, *Quick cattle and dying wishes: People and their animals in early modern England* (Cornell University Press, 2018). 264 pp. \$29.95.

This excellent book explores the multifaceted relationships that existed between early modern people and their animals. It draws on a large dataset of 4,444 wills from the residents of Essex, and on a second comparative dataset of 2,013 wills from London and Middlesex, which cover the period 1620 to 1634. This extensive body of research (which is supplemented by a range of other primary source materials) allows Fudge to push far beyond standard accounts of the economic relations that tied humans and animals together, and to probe the nature and quality of their everyday coexistence. The frequency and mundane nature of these interactions are examined in colourful detail, with the characters of the testators and of animals fleshed out wherever possible. Fudge is clear from the outset about the interdisciplinary nature of her research, which draws on insights from history and the field of animal studies. Those interested in environmental history, new materialism, early modern material culture and economic history will also find rich pickings in this lively and beautifully written volume.

In chapter 1, Fudge sets herself the tricky task of explaining why specific animal bequests appear in so

few of the wills she examines. Just over ten per cent of them feature such bequests, and Fudge herself notes that the naming of animals was an 'exceptionally rare' occurrence. In rationalizing the relative silence of these sources about the pervasive presence of animals in the lives of Essex residents, Fudge takes us into very interesting methodological terrain. Fudge reflects on the 'messy' nature of the will-making process and reminds us that these complex documents often reflected the complex temporalities (and precariousness) of early modern life. Important questions are posed about the legal, social and spiritual function of wills, and the deliberately cautious and generalized nature of their provisions and language. These were often, Fudge suggests, a response to precariousness. Fudge also prompts us to think twice about seemingly familiar terminology in early modern wills and inventories. She highlights, for example, the blurred boundaries between 'cattel' and 'chattel', which did not always fall neatly into distinct categories of livestock and inanimate goods. The potentially capacious category of 'appurtenances', she suggests, might easily apply to everything on, and associated with the land that was bequeathed in so many wills. This might include, of course, the livestock that grazed on it, which in turn points to the implicit inclusion of many more animals in wills than is visible at first sight. Fudge also identifies what she terms 'collecting phrases', which may well have incorporated livestock but without direct mention of them.

In chapter 2, we encounter the will of the yeoman Christopher Fuller as Fudge focuses in on those testators who 'attempted specificity' when it came to the bequest of animals in their possession. Fuller's will included more than 20 animals and he listed his cows by name. His will, Fudge suggests, offers important insights into the everyday nature of human reliance on animals, which was critical to a family's wellbeing. Here, she is in search of the affectivity that may have characterized interactions between people and their livestock. Fudge assesses the relevance of Bernard E. Rollin's concept of the 'social contract' for her period. This was a contract that tied humans and animals together in bonds of mutual reciprocity, but that always had the 'shadow of slaughter' lurking in the background. Fudge offers an interesting perspective on how early modern moral law may have shaped the regimes of care that seventeenth-century animals experienced, and she is careful to distinguish the affective attachments of humans to animals according to particular species, their care regimes, and the length of their cohabitation.

Naming practices are the focus of chapter 3. Fudge persuasively argues that the 0.3 per cent of wills in

the Essex dataset that include named animals is not a reflection of 'reality', but of the recognition that wills were principally for the transaction of business, not for displays of emotional attachment. Equally convincing is her insistence that the practice of naming was not simply a functional labelling exercise, but the attribution of individuality and a signal of attachment. It is no surprise to discover that names were usually reserved for those animals with which humans lived longest, and with which they had the most frequent bodily interactions.

The spiritual associations of domestic animals are placed under the microscope in chapter 4. The 'value' of animals is here extended beyond their well-established 'material utility' as sources of economic productivity and nutrition. The care of bees and lambs, Fudge suggests, offered religious and moral lessons – and opportunities for self-reflection – as well as being essential for the extraction of useful, saleable materials such as honey, wax, and wool. A particular brand of Protestantism is prioritized here, and it would be interesting to see if, and in what ways, different confessional groups perceived the soteriological function of their animals. The 'feelings' that Fudge discerns in this chapter, and indeed throughout the book, might have benefited from a more purposeful engagement with the history of emotions field, but this chapter nevertheless remains suggestive and engaging.

The book's final chapter compares the Essex records with wills from London and Middlesex. A very different set of relationships are traced between people and their livestock, with the emerging urban sprawl of London seemingly fostering a more transient, short-term and violent species of encounter that lacked the 'kindness' of pastoral relations beyond the city walls. Early evidence of the commercialization of dairying is just one reason that Fudge identifies as a contributing factor to the shifting perception of livestock (and especially cows) as 'technology' rather than 'co-workers'. The book's afterword engages directly with the ethical challenges that frame many of Fudge's research questions, and that relate to the degraded status of livestock in the mechanized world of agricultural production. She is successful, I think, in uncovering a 'lost way of thinking' about the relationships between humans and their animals in the seventeenth century, born of a society and a culture in which these two species were deeply entangled and interdependent throughout their respective lifecycles. The animals depicted here were recognized and treated as active and sentient 'partners' in the human life course, even though their own life course lay in the hands of their human owners. Fudge does not suggest that these relations are recoverable in

the modern age. Instead, the value of her history lies in opening a dialogue with past agricultural practices that might well have important ethical implications for the present.

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MICHAEL SYMES, *The English landscape garden: A survey* (Historic England, 2019). viii + 96 pp. 104 illus. £20.

Gardens are a topic of perennial and growing interest for both historians and the public. This short book offers a bridge between these two sets of readers by offering a readable yet erudite introduction to English landscape gardens. It is well illustrated and grounded in examples of gardens across the country (many of which can be visited), and helps the reader get to grips with some complex ideas, from the iconography of statues and garden buildings to the definition and nature of the picturesque. In tracing the development of the genre, Symes provides a balanced view, giving equal weight to different forms, theorists and practitioners rather than focusing only on the big names. Whilst we get chapters on Kent, Brown and Repton, there is also discussion of Switzer, Langley, Whately, Shenstone, Bridgeman and many others. This is a story with many characters and many sub-plots: the English landscape garden is revealed as a complex and varied phenomenon, one that evolved over the course of the eighteenth century.

The first three chapters offer an introduction to the landscape garden and provide a framework for its development. Ideas, influences and practicalities are discussed in a (comparatively) lengthy opening chapter, followed by an overview of its evolution, and of the key theorists and writers who shaped its changing aesthetic and form. Symes does an excellent job of synthesizing a large body of research and allowing the reader to distinguish the wood from the trees: the detail is there, but the bigger picture is to the fore. Together, these three chapters provide context for the short topic-based chapters that make up the bulk of the book; but they also set out Symes's agenda and perspective: one that is largely concerned with design and aesthetics. What follows, then, are 13 chapters that focus on particular topics or individuals. In these, Symes explores in a little more detail many of the key ideas, people and forms highlighted in the introductory chapters. Their brevity – many are just four pages long – allows him to offer the reader an insight into a huge range of topics, but necessarily means that discussion is limited. As befits a survey, they are easily digestible summaries rather than fully developing the topics under consideration.

Symes takes a broadly chronological approach, tracing the landscape garden from the extensive or forest gardening championed by Switzer, through the 'artificial' garden of Langley and others, to Kent's pictorial garden and the mid-century circuit garden, and on through Brown's vision of landscaping, the rise of the picturesque and finally to Repton's pragmatic synthesizing of design elements. The reader is thus provided with a clear picture of how the English landscape garden evolved over time. But this is no simple story of progressive change: Symes is careful to highlight how key ideas persisted or re-emerged; how earlier elements survived subsequent remodelling in many places, and how a 'pure' form was very rare, either on paper or, especially, on the ground. Hybridization was not something reserved for the plantsman, and Symes is right to question the overweening importance of the big-name designers, arguing that they often worked within the aesthetic and physical framework left by their predecessors. Within this, Brown seems to come under particular scrutiny. Despite being acknowledged as the 'indisputable giant of landscape gardening' (p. 67), his impact is systematically dissected in a manner not attempted for Kent or Repton, for instance – a result, perhaps, of the scrutiny as well as the celebration of his work that surrounded the tercentenary of his birth.

Interspersed with these chapters on designers and writers are others that focus on particular elements of the landscape gardens. We thus have discussion of plantings (including the impact of imported plants); the use of iconography and the poetic associations of landscape gardens (especially grottoes); the *ferme ornée* and the relationship between garden and park/farm, and the terrace walk. As with the chronology, these chapters draw on a wide variety of gardens to illustrate the arguments being made – some famous and others far less familiar. Contemporary prints and present-day photographs serve to draw out particular points, making them more than simply pleasant adornments, but an integral part of the analysis. Symes again does a good job of balancing brevity and overview with detail and exemplification.

As a survey, this book has many qualities, but its concern throughout is with the evolution and implementation of design. Very little is said about how these designs were received, or about how gardens were used or viewed by owners and visitors – beyond a broad idea of approbation or criticism. Nor do we have any discussion of the economics of the landscape garden: what were the (relative) costs of different models of landscape garden and how did these impact on the choices made by landowners in terms of design and maintenance? Such factors undoubtedly played

an important role in shaping landscapes gardens, but maybe they lie beyond the scope of a short survey. More central to the approach that Symes takes to the subject, yet dealt with only briefly, is the influence of politics on the evolution and choice of design. Most fundamentally, there is the question of national identity: what made these landscape gardens English (as opposed to Welsh or Scottish, for example) and to what extent was English identity bound up with and communicated through this medium?

Unsurprisingly, then, a short survey has gaps in its coverage, but overall Symes's book provides an excellent and engaging overview of its subject: one that will satisfy many readers and encourage others to find out more.

JON STOBART

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ANTHONY C. RAPER, *The ancient and famous Weyhill Fair* (The Weydon Press, 2017). 207pp. illus. £12.00.

The fair at Weyhill has been in existence for at least eight centuries. This is Anthony Raper's second book on the subject and expands on his previous book *Weyhill Fair – the greatest fair in the kingdom*, published in 1988. Comprising 24 chapters of varying lengths, some as short as two pages, Raper examines the historical development of the fair from the first written evidence in a 1225 close roll. When the nearby town of Andover applied for a royal charter in 1599, it provided the first reference to Weyhill Fair by name, noting that it was held over three days, before, on and after Michaelmas. With the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in 1752 and the loss of eleven days that year, harvest-related events moved, with the fair being held around 10, 11 and 12 October. Legal disputes between the fair and the corporation of Andover were on-going in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: there were also disputes with Appleshaw fair, held a few miles north of Weyhill only two days before, along with disagreements between the various landowners where the fair was held, regarding the split of the profits.

Raper then examines the different fairs held, starting with the sheep fair: described as the largest in England, some 150,000 sheep were penned in 1825. The development of the improved Hampshire Down breed is stated as leading to the establishment of additional fairs in spring and summer, for the sale of lambs. However, the coming of the railways reduced the number of sheep sold at Weyhill: Raper gives the example of early lambing Dorset ewes being sold at Dorchester Poundbury Fair, after which they were moved by rail to their new owners, alleviating the need

to walk the sheep over the Downs to Weyhill. As for this latter activity, a short description of the drovers, their role and responsibilities, as well as the routes they travelled, is presented.

The cattle, or beasts, fair was held on the second day: beasts referred to cattle, oxen, pigs, goats and poultry. Whilst Weyhill was famous for cattle, local newspaper reports focused on sheep, horses and hops. With regard to the latter, Raper notes that hops had been sold previously at Stourbridge in Cambridgeshire. This fair declined at the end of the eighteenth century with the development of canals and improved roads: further, the hop growers of Farnham in Surrey moved their trade to Weyhill. In the nineteenth century, the hop fair ran for a whole week, although most sales were agreed after three days, local farmers having secured their supply of hops to brew beer for their workforce. By 1888, the fair reduced to two days with the Borough hop market in London starting to replace it, as farm-based brewing declined. However, Raper does not record the ending of the sale of hops at Weyhill.

As for the cheese fair, the cheese came primarily from Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Hampshire. Again, this fair had declined by 1825, further exacerbated by the railways enabling fresh liquid milk to be transported around the country. By 1889, only one cheese merchant attended: the cheese fair closed in 1920. The horse fair also declined according to Raper as a result of the large number of horses requisitioned during World War I and the increasing mechanization of agriculture. Brief consideration is given to the mop (hiring) fair and the leather fair, before the need for law and order at the fair is reviewed in the book. Initially, this was achieved through the court of Pie Powder, which enabled quick decision-making and arguments to be settled: however, it existed in name only after the seventeenth century and ceased in 1829.

Looking briefly at the parallel Gypsy fair held on the road outside the fairground, the book presents three traditions associated with Weyhill Fair – the wake, the balls and the ‘horning of the colts’. The latter was an initiation ceremony for newcomers to the fair, involving singing and beer. Other aspects of the fair were the trades fair ‘where anything can be bought’ and the pleasure fair with its sideshows and entertainments. A lengthy chapter then examines the literary links to the fair in the form of words, music and film: two silent films were shot partly on the site. Raper finishes by noting the decline of all three fairs: spring, summer and autumn, from the start of the twentieth century. The last remaining fairground booth, along with those of the Farnham hop-growers, are now listed buildings and form part of a Craft and Design Centre opened in 2003.

This book is superbly illustrated with photographs and postcards, primarily from the author’s collection, although the same image of the pleasure fair is used twice (pp. 131, 146). On several occasions, the author draws attention to details that are not visible at the resolution at which the images have been reproduced. From the opening paragraph of chapter 1, there are numerous typographical errors scattered throughout the book, along with several instances of repetition. For example, the horse fair song is presented as a small (unreadable) image of the score (pp. 86–88) with line 6 of the first verse and line 5 of the final verse missing: the whole item is later repeated (pp. 153–155) with readable score, albeit with verses 2 and 3 interchanged. A further example of duplication and inconsistency occurs in a newspaper report presented of a fire in 1764 (p. 70), whilst the report of another fire in 1786 is almost identical, although dated to 1784 (p. 71): finally, this report is again included (p. 120) as part of a larger extract from the 1784 newspaper. The glossary is incomplete (for example, ‘yea’ on p. 57 is not defined), whilst various terms are glossed within the text, rather than in the glossary (‘wind-galled’, ‘roarers’, ‘clickers’ are defined on page 88, and again on page 154). Referencing is minimal with a list of recommended books, rather than a bibliography. In summary, this self-published book contains some fascinating content about an important topic and whilst it is well illustrated, it is poorly presented.

ALAN WADSWORTH
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ANDREW ROSSABI (ed.), *Richard Jefferies: a miscellany* (Galileo Publishers, 2019). 304 pp. £9.99. Richard Jefferies was a prolific author whose essays on rural life, both human and nonhuman, helped to shape how late Victorians imagined England’s countryside. He was also an innovator of children’s literature through his ‘Bevis’ books and apocalyptic fiction via his novel of civilizational breakdown *After London*. Further, his memoir *The story of my heart* constituted a striking example of nature mysticism, chronicling Jefferies’ lifelong search for spiritual transcendence. His marginality in the literary canon today is due partly to his early death at 38, and partly to his tendency to express himself through short essays that give his oeuvre a fragmentary character. However, Jefferies strongly influenced later authors, from W. H. Hudson to Edward Thomas, and his sensitivity to the suggestiveness of landscapes is echoed by contemporary nature writers like Robert Macfarlane. The miscellany is thus an apt vehicle for introducing Jefferies to new readers, and it is hard to imagine an editor better placed to compile one than Andrew Rossabi, whose

mammoth, three-volume biography of the man (with two volumes still to be published) promises to be a milestone in Jefferies scholarship.

Instead of approaching Jefferies' work chronologically, Rossabi jumps around the publication timeline, tracing at once Jefferies' maturation as a writer and key stages in his life. This orientation coheres with Jefferies' simultaneous concern with the hard facts of life in the countryside and the intense feelings and imaginative visions that filled his inner world or 'soul-life' as he termed it. Rossabi admits that 'Jefferies was not a phrasemaker' and 'is not best served by excerpts', his power being 'accumulative' rather than epigrammatic (p. 113). Nonetheless, the passages of up to 16 pages give ample tastes of the immersive worlds that Jefferies' writing could conjure and will encourage readers to hunt down the full texts, most of which can be found online.

Rossabi's curation exhibits the rich variety of Jefferies' work. His early sensation tale, 'A strange story', indexes his interest in archaeology and fantasies of nature reclaiming the land from humans. His novels of village life like *The dewy morn* and *Amaryllis at the fair* resemble Thomas Hardy's combination of pastoral idealism with social realism. Conversely, extracts from Jefferies' children's books *Bevis* and *Wood magic* show him refining his mystical nature religion, which he would express directly in *The story of my heart*. Jefferies wrote of modern life leaving 'dust' upon the heart and enclosing the mind in 'a husk' for which nature was the only cure (p. 26). In his reveries triggered by the landscapes' sensual delights, the binary between humanity and the natural world dissolves, and Jefferies declared himself 'lost, and absorbed into the being or existence of the universe' (p. 29).

Yet, despite his reverence for nature, Jefferies also insisted on its indifference to humanity. 'If the entire human race perished at this hour', he wrote, 'what difference would it make to the earth? What would the earth care? As much as for the extinct dodo' (p. 147). This indifference is further underlined by extracts from *After London*, which depict England returning to primeval forests. Cultivated lowlands sink back into marshes while the wild descendants of domesticated dogs prey on sheep flocks and vermin hordes devour crops. These visions point to the tension in Jefferies' thought between Romantic idealizations of nature and more Darwinian views of it as a scene of ruthless struggle (although Jefferies was technically an evolution sceptic).

Among Jefferies' journalistic writing is a long letter he wrote to *The Times* on the condition of agricultural labourers, which established him as an authority on rural affairs. The letter reflects Jefferies' conservatism,

arguing that labourers were better off than unionists claimed while their employers' fortunes were often precarious. The letter also observes the rustic workers with the analytic detachment of an ethnographer. Jefferies describes their diets, changing sartorial tastes and distinctive gaits, shaped by their working motions.

Jefferies' sharp eye paints rural Victorian life in further vivid details in passages from collections such as *The gamekeeper at home*. He notes the unconscious ease with which the gamekeeper shoulders and fires his gun, conditioned by years of use to experience the weapon as 'almost a portion of his body' (p. 69). Meanwhile, in a corner of the gamekeeper's shed lies an old man-trap, left to rust since the outlawing of such devices. Jefferies depicts the trap as a 'relic' of more brutal times before modern policing and the gradualist diffusion of political power (p. 67).

Jefferies is equally acute in his observations of the religious and social habits of Victorian villagers. The tendency of non-conformists to marry early and remarry quickly when widowed reminds him of the Mormons in North America. This analogy leads him to speculate that the two groups, seemingly so far apart, possess a common 'cast of mind' characterized by unsentimental practicality and a strict division of public and domestic spheres (p. 225).

A persistent theme in the collection is how modern labour degrades body and soul, reminiscent of John Ruskin's social criticism. 'One of the New Voters' depicts the health-wrecking living conditions of an agricultural worker. Jefferies' description of summer landscapes is marred by the irony that those working in them are too malnourished, exhausted and uneducated to appreciate their beauty. Elsewhere, Jefferies praises the pigeons nesting in the roof of the British Museum as wiser than the humans who toil inside, forgetful of the gorgeous sunshine. Such sentiments appear most poignant in the extracts from Jefferies' last essays, written upon his death-bed, when he could no longer enjoy the great outdoors.

Aside from the historical interest of Jefferies' writing, this miscellany shows that he anticipated several concerns of recent nature writing. Like Richard Mabey, he problematized the rural/urban binary and constructed natural landscapes as therapeutic objects against depression and ennui. He also exhibited an early (or proto-) conservationist sensibility, lamenting the destruction of wildlife by hunting and industrialization. Moreover, his sense of humans' dependence on the natural world and his dark visions of ecological catastrophe could not feel timelier.

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Europe and Elsewhere

ERIKA GUTTMANN-BOND, *Reinventing sustainability: How archaeology can save the planet* (Oxbow Books, 2019). 192 pp. 59 illus. £25.

Reinventing sustainability is a vibrant, fascinating, and above all optimistic exploration of past successes in human relationships with local environments. The book takes a truly multidisciplinary perspective, with a substantial bibliography drawing upon literature from archaeology to urban planning, anthropology to water management, and agronomy to politics. The author's work falls primarily at the crossover of environmental sciences and archaeology, but owes a great deal to scholarship in an impressive range of disciplines. Taking a wide view of the problems of climate change and population growth, Erika Guttman-Bond draws examples from across the globe, and works on a time scale from the origins of farming, 11,000 years ago, right up to the present day, to argue that the technology and knowledge needed to improve countryside management already exists. Archaeology, she argues, holds the key to sustainable future land management and design, which are both beneficial to the environment and cost-effective.

The book is richly illustrated and accessibly written, introducing the reader to the key disciplines of archaeology and anthropology in a way that is understandable for the non-specialist. It includes inset boxes to explain key terms and ideas, and gives brief but readily understandable explanations of how archaeologists find information and come to conclusions in their research. The work makes a convincing case for drawing on multiple disciplines to fully understand the big issues we as a society face today, and for the use of archaeology in particular. Guttman-Bond acknowledges the impact of Rachel Carson's *Silent spring* in raising awareness of the problems associated with industrialized agriculture. However, reading as a historian, a more detailed explanation of where the work sits within the wider literature of the disciplines it incorporates would be appreciated.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to 'Learning from the past'. The book's focus on farming as a means to positive change as well as a cause of negative environmental impacts is welcome, and acknowledges the multifaceted nature of this complex and often controversial interrelationship. The author uses this relationship to frame the following discussion, and provides an interesting introduction to archaeological methodologies and the science of climate change. These sections provide a firm foundation from which to understand the numerous case studies given in the

following chapters, without drifting too far from the focus of the book as a whole.

Chapters 2 and 3 cover two contrasting environments; 'Wetlands and wetland agriculture' and 'Farming the desert.' These chapters reveal one of the key themes of the past, present, and future with regard to environmental management, to which the book returns frequently: water. The examples of past management practices are drawn from across the world, showcasing the truly global scope of the book. Accounts of archaeological methods and discoveries, supported by a robust bank of statistics, are brought to life by a liberal scattering of first-hand accounts of different landscapes from history, as well as by the lively style of the author. This allows a great deal of ground to be covered, including the impact of cultural norms on local governance of water resources and the way communities use their landscapes, beginning to add an anthropological element to the discussion of physical evidence and agricultural processes.

Guttman-Bond uses chapter 4 ('Food security') to set up the second half of the book, which highlights practical suggestions for the future. In this and the following two chapters, she advocates the utilization of some aspects of early technology alongside new discoveries in agroecology, science, and architecture to create a more sustainable future. Chapter 4 tackles the impact of the industrial farming techniques introduced during the 'Green Revolution' of the 1960s and 1970s, which is posited as a point of disruption to the traditional, sustainable systems of the past in terms of environmental management and cultural heritage. The theme of culture, interwoven with archaeological and biological evidence, is one of the great strengths of this book, reinforcing the broad, multidisciplinary nature of Guttman-Bond's insights into the nature of sustainability.

Chapter 5 ('Saving the soil'), follows on from the questions of diminishing soil quality under industrialized agriculture addressed in the previous chapter. It makes a particularly interesting case for an appreciation of the soil as a valuable resource in and of itself, in addition to being a crucial source for knowledge about the past. It reflects the author's clear passion for the earth, and the number of clearly explained illustrations devoted to bringing this much-maligned substance to life, including soil samples under a microscope, are, once again, extremely useful for readers who do not have a background in archaeology or soil science.

Vernacular architecture is the theme for chapter 6. Here, the ingenious solutions found by past cultures to the everyday problems of living in urban spaces in harsh or potentially volatile localities are explored. The

chapter addresses issues of comfort as well as of safety, looking at means of providing cooling ventilation and retaining warmth as well as resilience in the face of disaster events. This is something of a departure from the largely agricultural focus of the preceding chapters, and serves to highlight the influence of anthropology on the book as a whole, and the influence of cultural factors on the implementation of the suggested solutions to the environmental problems of the present and future.

In the final chapter, 'The Tao of environmental management,' the threads of this geographically and temporally wide-ranging, multidisciplinary study are brought together. This chapter is written from a more theoretical perspective, highlighting E. O. Wilson's concept of 'biophilia': the need for humans to 'affiliate' with other living organisms, and, crucially, the notion of symbiosis. Despite the bleak future sketched out in the subsections on oil, and biodiversity and climate change, the book ends on an optimistic note, citing the progress made by the environmental movement since the 1970s.

Guttmann-Bond succeeds admirably and persuasively in her ambition to offer practical solutions from the past to modern environmental management issues. At each stage, convincing connections are made between present problems and past solutions, but the author is careful to restate, several times, that she is not advocating for the rejection of science and innovation. But rather for an approach to current environmental issues based in a thorough understanding of past successes, and an adaptation of traditional practices to provide both environmental benefits and cost-effective modern agricultural techniques. *Reinventing sustainability* is an engaging collection of case studies which show how archaeological research can inform future sustainability in agriculture and human lifestyles. It will undoubtedly serve as a jumping-off point for future research and future innovation.

JANE ROWLING
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KEES KUIKEN, *Rural salvation markets: medieval memoria in Dutch village parishes* (Nederlands Agronomisch Historisch Instituut, 2019). 302 pp. €16.53.

This book aims for a comprehensive survey of late medieval liturgical commemoration, particularly the commissioning of prayers for the dead through the establishment of anniversaries and chantries. In line with the doctrine of purgatory, founders of such services sought to gain spiritual benefits – above all a speedier transfer of their own souls and those of

named beneficiaries to Heaven – in return for lifetime or testamentary bequests of money, lands or donations in kind. The innovative thrust of the approach is an unusually broad combination of secular and ecclesiastical perspectives by an author with a background in Religious Studies and a diverse portfolio of research interests. The empirical data derives from 56 parishes spread across the three dioceses of Liège, Munster and Utrecht in the northern Low Countries. All in all, many thousands of services can be traced in this sample, from a single one in the village of Hijum to no fewer than 3,020 at Oirschot (pp. 224–8). One of the great strengths of the study is the painstaking combing of relevant categories of evidence from over twenty archives as well as in-situ research, not just specialized *memoria* registers but also fraternity records, wills, deeds, population surveys and surviving clues from material culture (such as tomb slabs and armorial crests), to name just a few genres. Arranged in three main parts dedicated to aspects of economy, society and culture, the qualitative argument is supported by no fewer than 18 figures, three graphs and 23 tables in an extensive appendix, plus an index of place names.

In terms of major findings, the book traces the broad chronological outlines of the phenomenon: originally confined to large-scale endowments at religious houses in the High Middle Ages, liturgical commemoration received a major boost through the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which tied the cure of souls to the emerging network of parishes. The high point came in the 'long' fifteenth century, when parochial institutions like poor tables established themselves as major *memoria* providers alongside a range of internal and external competitors. At Warmond, near Leiden, which serves as a case study throughout the book, there is documentation for 1,201 different services, 998 of which were entrusted to the local priory, 114 to the parish fabric, 64 to a guild, 20 to a women's convent and five to an external fraternity. Worsening socio-economic conditions, related to demographic growth, and Reformation-inspired attacks on Catholic doctrine then ushered in a gradual – but not universal – decline of foundations from the 1520s until the region formally adopted Protestantism later in the century. Demand derived from a wide spectrum of social groups. At Warmond, the seigneurial Wouden family dominated the scene (with no less than a quarter of parish-based services catering for its members), but humbler groups were not excluded. Apart from getting themselves on the *bede* roll, affordable options included 'budget' anniversaries with a smaller number of candles, fewer celebrant priests and no alms for the poor. *Memoria* foundations, furthermore, reveal a matrix of reciprocal

(trans-)local loyalties involving the living and the dead, nuclear families and wider kin, villages of origin and subsequent places of residence as well as ancestral and more recent spiritual preferences, the latter allowing observant orders to grow their market share at the expense of other monastic communities.

Conceptually, the approach is informed by Erik Thoen's model of social agrosystems and Bas van Bavel's work on market economies (pp. 5, 174). Kuiken introduces us to distinct village types in the region, differentiated by soil types, landholding patterns and production regimes, relates the growth of the parish to the decline of demesne farming in the later Middle Ages (at Britswerd, parochial funds came to own 22 per cent of a surface area of 72 ha; p. 231) and emphasizes the commodification of commemoration, manifest, for example, in consumer choice of providers and tailor-made levels of investment. One hectare of land sufficed to set up an anniversary, while chantries with daily masses required ten. The undisputed market leader, a fraternity dedicated to Our Lady at 's-Hertogenbosch, became the 'single largest *memoria* provider in the medieval Low Countries' (p. 135) with tens of thousands of members. Its growth reflected a combination of affordable fees, tangible signs of belonging (such as the annual supply of a candle to each member) and a comprehensive network of agents promoting its interests, mirroring practices known from the sale of indulgences. Whether the fraternity always fully discharged its resulting obligations, however, remains doubtful.

Formally, the text can get a little dense. A great wealth of information on families, villages and foundations is conveyed in relatively short sections (pp. 112–18), sometimes in relation to several layers of conceptualization. Given constraints of space, there is not really the scope to develop each of these fully. This can be exacerbated by a few editing issues such as repeated passages (p. 47) or misplaced captions (p. 142). Another challenge is the meaningful definition of 'rurality' in such a heavily urbanized region. The solution here is to link town status to the possession of a charter, which seems a rather formal criterion, as the author concedes (p. 177). Looking beyond the Netherlands, one wonders whether the financial benefits from such a dramatic 'increase of divine service' over several centuries, i.e. the surpluses accruing to the various lay funds after payment of all associated costs, created the same sorts of tangible benefits for parish communities as Clive Burgess has identified for metropolitan environments like London and Bristol.

Overall, *Rural salvation markets* offers uniquely detailed insights into the commissioning, delivery,

and long-term evolution of liturgical commemoration within a particularly dynamic socio-cultural setting. Future comparative studies on city contexts as well as other rural regions would be very welcome.

BEAT KÜMIN
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STEPHEN HEYMAN, *The planter of modern life: Louis Bromfield and the seeds of a food revolution* (W. W. Norton & Co., 2020). 340 pp. £21.

'How ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm/After they've seen Paree?' asked a popular song of 1919. It expressed the fear that mid-Western doughboys, dazzled by their experiences in the French capital, would never again 'want to see a rake or plow'. But, to the writer Louis Bromfield (1896–1956), who was raised on an Ohio farm and volunteered to serve as an ambulance driver on the Western Front, the experience of French life brought a fresh perspective on agriculture: one which would ultimately make him the most celebrated farmer in the USA.

Stephen Heyman's biography of Bromfield places greater emphasis, as its title suggests, on his commitment to the soil than on his literary career, but by no means neglects the latter. Indeed, Bromfield's fame as a farmer could not have grown without his already existing reputation as a novelist. This reputation has not survived, though in his time he was an international best-seller.

Surrounded by the devastation of the Western Front, Bromfield fell in love with a beautiful rural landscape even as it was being destroyed. He had to wait six years, after his discharge, before he could return to France: a period during which he gained status as a journalist and novelist. At first he lived in Paris, among the American expatriates, but the call of rural France was strong and in 1929 he moved to Senlis. He became the town's most noted resident – initially, because of the many literary figures who visited him; later, on account of the splendid garden he created, which was admired by painters and horticulturalists.

A neighbour called Bosquet became for Bromfield a symbol of Gallic self-sufficiency. His two-acre holding was intensely productive, largely thanks to his skill at composting. He was 'allied with nature', and Bromfield, sated by a hectic life of celebrity, wanted to experience that sort of stability. With the guidance of a peasant, Victor Picquet, he created a fertile soil; this required the use of methods entirely different from those which were devitalizing the land in Ohio.

By the time he wrote his semi-autobiographical novel, *The farm* (1933), Bromfield believed that 'no nation can exist or have any solidity which ignores the

land' (p. 86). The 'Dust Bowl' was clear evidence that the USA had made a catastrophic error in treating the land as an inexhaustible resource. Bromfield was influenced by a tour of India he undertook in 1933, during which he visited Sir Albert Howard's agronomic institute in the state of Indore. Howard had retired by then, but Bromfield was impressed by the scientific composting carried on there, and became an early advocate of his methods. India also provided the inspiration for Bromfield's novel, *The rains came*, which in 1939 was made into a highly successful Hollywood film. With the wealth this brought him, Bromfield was able to build what Heyman describes as 'one of the most influential farms in American history' (p. 147).

Returning to America in 1938, Bromfield simply wanted to raise his children on the sort of farm – Jeffersonian, democratic – which had sustained his grandparents. His was no 'hobby farming'. He was determined to make his farm profitable, and between 1939 and the mid-1940s transformed its worn-out land into an agricultural showpiece, using methods which were in tune with the ideas of Howard and of the US soil scientist, F. H. King.

Like the British organic school, Bromfield saw a thriving agriculture as vital to the stability both of rural communities and of the nation as a whole. Whereas industrial civilization imposed a state of economic insecurity on its inhabitants, Bromfield wanted to create a 'thrifty island of security' (p. 173) as an example to other American farmers. He was also, like the organicists, opposed to specialization: Malabar was a mixed farm, a challenge to the mechanized agri-business that made it practically impossible for a family to live off the land.

During the war, Bromfield grew critical of government policy; from having been a very left-wing Democrat, he shifted to supporting the Republicans. He became a spokesman for ordinary farmers at a time when, in his view, everything was being done for the sake of industry and to the disadvantage of food producers. It is possible that his attacks on the Roosevelt administration helped alter certain aspects of its policy in favour of the farming sector.

There is no doubt, though, about Bromfield's impact on the work of the ecological group, Friends of the Land, founded in 1940. Invited to Malabar Farm the following year, the Friends were powerfully boosted by his support. He became their Vice-President in 1942, speaking on their behalf at a wide range of venues across the USA.

The story of his own achievements was now more interesting to Bromfield than any fiction could be, and he enjoyed a new lease of life as a writer of autobiographical

books such as *Pleasant Valley* (1946) and *Malabar Farm* (1949). His fame as a farmer led to him appearing as a congressional witness on aspects of food policy, including the use of DDT. For a time, he supported the work of entrepreneur and health promoter Jerome Rodale (another of Albert Howard's disciples), but came to consider him too much of an organic 'cultist'.

Malabar Farm proved not to be commercially successful, and Bromfield was forced to accept a move to greater specialization. He poured his wealth into the project, but sales of his farming books did not match those of his novels, and he ended up in financial difficulties. His final few years are a story of sad decline.

The sub-title of Stephen Heyman's book surely over-states the case. As Heyman points out, less than one per cent of America's arable land is organically cultivated: this hardly amounts to a 'food revolution'. Nevertheless, Bromfield drew attention to social and ecological issues that remain of critical importance, and Heyman has performed a most valuable service by producing such a lucid account of this extraordinary and appealing man.

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R. DOUGLAS HURT, *The Green Revolution in the Global South: Science, politics, and unintended consequences* (University of Alabama Press, 2020). 280 pp. 18 b&w figs. \$49.95.

The American agricultural historian, Douglas Hurt, has set out to write a dispassionate analysis of a controversial historical episode: the 'Green Revolution' (GR) in the global South since the 1940s. The book devotes chapters to Latin America, South Asia, East and Southeast Asia, China, and Sub-Saharan Africa and includes a chapter on recent debate over the introduction of agricultural biotechnology in the South. Along the way there are brief but interesting accounts of GRs in countries rarely mentioned in the secondary literature (e.g. Ethiopia, Guatemala, Vietnam). And in its discussion of recent developments where the scholarly literature is sparse, the book makes good use of newspaper articles and other media.

Hurt's aims in writing the book were two-fold. On the one hand, it is an attempt to 'synthesize the literature' (p. 4), offering an overview of the GR which 'will provide an understanding of its agricultural history' (p. 5), and 'a usable introduction' (p. 7) for non-specialists. Such a book would be very welcome since the literature to date consists mainly of specialized monographs. On the other hand, for those with a specialist interest in the GR, he seeks to '[trace] the acceptance or rejection of the GR over time' (p. 4),

providing 'a survey of the ways that agricultural and social scientists ... have considered the GR' (p. 6). Effectively a history of the controversy surrounding the GR, this, too, would make it a novel addition to the literature. As admirable as both aims are, however, the book does not succeed in either respect.

When turning to a 'synthesis', most readers expect to find a discussion of all the major works comprising the literature in question. One problem with the book under review, however, is that (to judge from the bibliography) a remarkable number of important books and dissertations on the subject have been left out. The chapter on East and Southeast Asia, for example, does not refer to studies of rice research by Edmund Oasa or by Anderson, Levy and Morrison. Similarly, in the chapter on Latin America although important work is listed in the bibliography (e.g. books by Jennings or Hewitt d'Alcantara on Mexico), it is then not referred to in the text. Moreover, there is a disturbing tendency to rely upon news media as sources, not in addition to specialist primary literature or well-established secondary works (which is legitimate) but instead of them (e.g. chapter 3). The book does not, therefore, provide a reliable review of the secondary literature.

Nor is it suitable as an introductory text. Some generalizations about the GR are repeated many times; highly condensed accounts of technical issues need to be unpacked; there are abrupt shifts within the narrative; and important technical terms are left undefined. Furthermore, although the book is rich in information, its interpretations are poorly sign-posted so that students will find the text hard going.

As far as the history of controversy is concerned, one might expect such an analysis to identify the kinds of argument which were used by the protagonists at different time periods, as well as to identify where the critics/defenders were 'coming from' (e.g. discipline, institutional affiliation). In the case of the GR this could be highly illuminating: starting with largely uncritical support during the 1950s and '60s, followed by prolonged criticism during the 1970s, a lull in debate during the '80s and '90s, and the re-emergence since then of controversy over the advisability of a 'second' GR. Unfortunately, what we get instead is an overly generalized discussion of the debate which reports that 'some critics said X while others said Y'. To make matters worse, the book uses a referencing system that restricts references to the endnotes and allocates one endnote per paragraph. Since many paragraphs include more than one claim, it is often impossible for the reader to attribute a specific claim in the text to a specific source in the note. In effect, therefore, the controversy is dealt with at arm's length.

In some respects the book's characterization of the controversy is useful. It points out, for example, that proponents of the GR were more concerned with increasing production than with the GR's possible social and environmental consequences. But Hurt's repeated characterization of the controversy – as a dispute between 'agricultural scientists' who defended the GR and 'social scientists' who criticized it – is a serious distortion. Some of the most prominent defenders of the GR were in fact agricultural economists while the critics included agronomists of ecological orientation. The major fault line in the controversy, therefore, lay not between disciplines but between those who were narrowly focused upon production and those who took a broader view of what 'agricultural modernization' should entail.

To conclude, in its attempt to discuss both the science and the 'politics' of the GR, it seems to me that the book has missed a fundamental point. For example, although his case studies clearly demonstrate the necessity of state support in order that GRs succeed, in his lengthy discussion of failed GRs in sub-Saharan Africa since the 1980s, Hurt makes no mention of the World Bank's policy of 'structural adjustment', which systematically eroded the strength of African states. Similarly, his discussion of GRs in several countries lends abundant support to the view that land reform has often been a major factor in the success of a GR. While conceding that it played a role in China, however, Hurt never addresses it as a systemic issue of general importance. Lastly, the book has almost nothing to say about rural political conflict unleashed by the GR in several countries. All of this suggests that the author is reluctant to acknowledge a conclusion that other analysts drew some time ago: that the outcomes of agricultural 'modernization' schemes are usually attributable to the political and economic context in the host country.

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ESTHER KINGSTON-MANN, *Women, land rights, and rural development: how much land does a woman need?* (Routledge, 2018). 174 pp. hbk £125, pbk £36.99. A comparative history of women's land rights is long overdue, and this book provides a thought-provoking comparison of the land reform movements in early modern England, and late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russia and Kenya seen through a gendered lens. The radical restructuring of land ownership rights in the name of 'improvement', 'modernization' or 'development' had particularly harsh consequences for women, and historians have paid little attention to the

gendered nature of these movements. Kingston-Mann, an expert on the Russian peasantry, highlights the potential for comparative history to 'generate better understanding of the issues' as well as its inevitable tendency to 'oversimplify and frustrate the specialist' (p. 1). This is not a long book and each of the three substantial chapters hurries through a complicated history of each country that interweaves discussions of traditional land rights, the political roots of ideas of ownership, changes to property regimes, women's agricultural work and legal rights, and protest movements against property reform. The book's dual arguments are that the adaptability and productivity of peasant agriculture have been consistently underestimated by top-down reformers, and women's contribution to agricultural production has been almost universally overlooked.

The chapter on Russia runs through a list of state-led policies imposed on the rural population. These stretch from the establishment of peasant communes after the abolition of serfdom, through the Stolypin reforms, War Communism, the NEP, Stalin's forced collectivization and consequent famines, de-Stalinization, and Perestroika up to 'shock therapy capitalism' in the 1990s. Throughout all but the most disastrous phases, women retained control of garden plots on which they grew a significant proportion of their families' food. In 1938, '45 percent of Soviet agriculture's total farm output' was produced in these gardens (p. 71), on which women carried out 80 per cent of the work (p. 72). In the economic instability of the 1990s garden plots accounted for 25 per cent of national agricultural output, and female garden cultivators outnumbered men 2:1 (p. 80). Yet women's contribution to food provision was consistently overlooked by policy-makers and subsequently by historians.

In Kenya, as in most of sub-Saharan Africa, women dominated agricultural production in the pre-colonial era. Kingston-Mann concentrates on the Kikuyu of Kenya's Central Highlands, tracing women's agricultural labour and land rights through the brutal impositions and atrocities of the British twentieth-century colonial regime. While women's agricultural labour was widely exploited, their rights to land were extinguished and their agricultural expertise never acknowledged. Instead women were blamed for environmental degradation and lectured on how to cultivate unsuitable north European crops. Forced relocation and 'villagization' were followed by the Swynnerton Plan that gave private land rights to African men but removed them from African women. Nonetheless, 'Kikuyu women have retained their role as the primary food producers' (p. 128), and rural women's groups and agricultural initiatives have flourished since

independence, despite hostility or indifference from the government.

The English case study examines the early modern enclosure movement. Kingston-Mann's depiction of the seventeenth-century village as a place where 'male run village councils (juries) acknowledged multiple, overlapping, long- and short-term land claims, universal land access for men and for women, and common lands open to all' (p. 12) bears strong similarities to Russian peasant communities. English village councils 'apportioned land to adult male household heads, established the size and location of women's gardens, and regulated access to cultivated fields, pasture lands and common land', but 'all-male juries nevertheless guaranteed women exclusive rights to use kitchen gardens that ranged up to 10 acres in size' (p. 13). It is also asserted that 'Women were the household's primary food producers' (p. 13), that 'few rural households regularly produced a surplus', and that 'peasants were in general unwilling to assume that they could survive independently of one another' (p. 14). Unfortunately, few agrarian historians of England would agree with these statements. English villages did not redistribute land on a communal basis: tenants had specific rights that were bought and sold. Women did not have a separate right to garden plots: gardens were attached to houses and farms that were leased or owned. Women were not the primary food producers; the latest estimates suggest women carried out about one third of agricultural work. Rather than being communities of households of roughly equal wealth, English villagers ranged from wealthy gentry to impoverished landless labourers.

As such, this study does indeed show the benefits and pitfalls of comparative history, and of covering very broad sweeps of history in relatively few words. Inaccuracies creep in; it is not always easy to follow the narrative. But the book is brimming with ideas and suggestions for future research, and full of interesting observations and references. Its overall point, that women's contribution to agricultural production and their rights to property in land have been woefully ignored in existing studies is undisputable. However, some of its other assertions are wide of the mark or fail to take into account existing studies. In particular, while the conclusion concentrates on the failures of top-down development policies, it fails to mention Barbara Roger's *The domestication of women: Discrimination in developing societies* (1981), perhaps the most searing critique of developers' unquestioned gendered assumptions.

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JULIAN CRIBB, *Food or war* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). 350 pp. £18.95.

Drawing on a range of archaeological and historical sources, in *Food or war*, Julian Cribb provides an analysis of the extent to which food security, reliant on access to land and water under certain climatic conditions, has been a more important cause of war than political, religious, ethnic or national differences. He describes how, as a general rule, civilizations and empires emerged in fertile river valleys such as the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates, the Indus and the Ganges, the Yangtse and the Yellow, the Mekong, the Tiber, the Rhine and the Danube because they needed surpluses of agricultural produce to maintain the armies on which they depended for their expansion and survival. He is aware of non-agrarian and non-environmental explanations as to why civilizations disintegrated and empires declined across Europe, Africa, the Middle East or Asia, such as corrupt and abusive governance; limited technological innovation and stagnant economic performance; ruling class divisions and civil wars; foreign incursions and domestic rebellions; and imperial overreach and associated fiscal mismanagement.

Nevertheless, by and large, Cribb defaults to the crucial interrelations between the breakdown of food production, climate change and population growth that combined with wars to devastate farming communities and contribute to the outbreak of famines. He concludes that: 'If the pathway to war, government failure, or the collapse of a civilization can be thought of as a series of dominoes, collapsing one upon another, the fall of the food domino and the climate domino lie very early in the sequence and have irresistible impact and consequences.'

As he traces the lineages of a variety of antiquities and feudalisms, Cribb refers to pertinent examples where famines and plagues correlated with the overthrow of monarchs and Emperors, when the capacity to pay and feed their armies was reduced, so that they mutinied and even joined foreign invaders. However, Cribb's method, which predisposes him to emphasize the role of ecological constraints on food production, leads him to neglect the propensity of states to go to war for territory that may or may not have been suitable for agriculture, which may not have been motivated primarily by food insecurity. There is evidence that pre-modern rulers, who allowed for the diffusion of authority among a broad governing elite, tended to resort to pre-emptive wars to extend borders onto terrain, not necessarily or mainly because it was productive land, but instead to establish provinces, protectorates or colonies with armies to discourage or

withstand sudden attacks by neighbouring peoples. By contrast, those monarchs and emperors, who concentrated power in their own hands and were a law unto themselves, were likely to embark on expansionist wars for private gain, because, after all, it was by conquest that they obtained extensive agricultural estates.

More generally, whatever rulers suspected or thought they knew when they decided to go to war, expectations as to the overcoming of food insecurity by taking control of high-yielding land were often superseded by the narrow interests of bankers and manufacturers, who stood to benefit from state borrowing and military spending, as well as by the influence of psychologically robust political ambitions, exaggerated prospects for glory, delusional forecasts of victory, and emotionally charged civilizational beliefs, nationalist ideologies and atavistic attitudes. To give Cribb his due, he is cognizant of how land has been associated with sovereignty, ethnicity, identity and community, whereupon it has proven to be an effective way to mobilize peoples behind warlike leaders.

Of the more than 200 million people who have perished in wars between nation states since the 1850s, Cribb records pointedly that more than half have died of starvation. Whilst Cribb tends to shift his focus between struggles over agricultural or pastoral land and food security as causes of war and war as a source of starvation and malnutrition in the everyday lives of civilians, he explains that many of the fatalities from hunger during wars were due to deliberate policies to control occupied peoples or to deny them sustenance in order to feed invader armies. Additionally, from the outset, famine resulted from the seizure of their produce by a people's own rulers to supply their military; from sieges and blockades that halted an enemy's food imports; from the disruption of farming by defensive scorched earth policies; and from the reduction or cessation of the productivity of farmland by the displacement of rural populations.

As Cribb develops his narrative, he reports that the World Peace Foundation has compiled cases of mass starvation or induced famine since 1870 responsible for at least 105 million deaths that resulted from post-revolutionary economic policies as well as from ethnic and religious genocides. He elaborates commendably on how, for a high percentage of internal armed conflicts and violent outbreaks of unrest in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, between 1946 and 2006, their similarities were more pronounced than their differences. This was because they were connected to disputes over natural resources, such as access to or use rights over agricultural or pastoral land and available supplies of water, as well as mineral deposits,

intensified by prolonged drought in what were often dry ecosystems.

Although Cribb does not give sufficient regard to the ways these intra-state wars were complicated by outside interventions by current and former colonial powers or by the United States and the Soviet Union, which acted out their international Cold War competition through proxy wars in developing countries, he does acknowledge the influence of local ethnic, regional, cultural and religious rivalries. This was especially so in circumstances where ecological pressures were intertwined with extreme inequalities and fragile institutions where there was unbending opposition from privileged groups against demands from deprived groups.

Looking to the future, Cribb focuses on the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the projected increase of the world population to over and above 10 billion in the 2050s, when he expects that food production could potentially require close to 70 per cent of the world's usable soil and around 79 per cent of fresh water. He is not alone when he warns that, unless there is a sizeable reduction in carbon emissions and a substantial expansion in environmentally sustainable agriculture, access to soil and water will be increasingly relevant to global, regional and national strategic calculations.

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