

Book Reviews

UK and Ireland

ROSAMOND FAITH, *The moral economy of the countryside: Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman England* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). xii + 235 pp. £19.99.

More than two decades after the release of her commanding survey of the English peasantry, Rosamond Faith returns once again to the vexing subject of relationships between lords and peasants in her latest monograph. Having worked on the agriculture, farmers, and peasantry of England and France for the better part of fifty years, Faith now turns her attention not only to the mechanics of how the peasantry were exploited but, rather, why lords in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were able to appropriate their labour. This is a particularly timely contribution to the field given something of a flurry of publications addressing the topic of early medieval peasant society (see, for examples, recent works by Constance Bouchard, G. G. Astill, Alexander Langlands and Charles West). Despite the focused nature of this question, Faith's monograph also seeks to intervene in another, much older debate: when did 'feudalism' appear in early medieval England? In a distant echo of John Horace Round, Faith argues that the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 marked a distinct moment of transition between a 'profoundly un-feudal society' to a 'profoundly feudal one'. This is not Chris Wickham's steady but sure march of the feudal mode, but, rather, a *mutation féodale*. Faith suggests that pre-Conquest lords and institutions controlled one of the two Marxist means of production: land. However, she argues it was only after the Norman influx that lords 'gained control' over the second: labour.

This ambitious work is divided into six sections: 'Rank'; 'Reciprocity'; 'Reputation and Witness'; 'The Wolf Sniffs the Wind' (a reference to the infamous Archbishop Wulfstan of York); 'The Aftermath of the Conquest'; and 'In the World of the Manor'. These sections are further sub-divided into sixteen chapters

– arranged in a broadly chronological order – in which she moves through each topic in a lively style, deftly demonstrating the various issues at hand. Using her hard-earned knowledge of the pre- and post-Conquest peasantry, Faith surveys an impressive breadth of evidence and the reader is guided through an extensive selection of narrative, legal, and archaeological evidence. In the first third of this book, Faith makes a case for a prevalent culture of reciprocity in pre-Conquest England – or, at least, a shared idea of fair reciprocal behaviours – and its potential roots; elements of which she traces to an idea of a shared, 'imagined past'. For those unfamiliar with the complexities of early medieval obligations, her examinations of customs such as *mannrædenn* (man-rent) and *feormian* (to provide hospitality) render a potential maze of relationships easily navigable. This makes way for the following exploration of dispute settlement, an increasingly commercialized rural environment, and the influential narrative literature of late tenth and early eleventh centuries. The last third, broadly speaking, focuses on the introduction of new legal concepts and new vocabulary after the Norman Conquest. The *Domesday Book*, *Lies Willelme*, and the procedures of manor courts form the backbone of this section and provide a glimpse of incoming Norman cultural ideas.

Given the title of this work, it is no surprise that the central argument of the book is underpinned by the idea of the 'moral economy'; a term made popular in academia in the late twentieth-century works of E. P. Thompson and James Scott. For Faith, the 'moral economy' of 'Anglo-Saxon' England – 'values which were shared across class and rank' – acted as check on lordly exploitation of the peasantry until the Conquest of 1066. Faith points to literary and legal sources which potentially evidence a shared sense of what were 'legitimising notion[s]'. For instance, Faith contends that *weorð* (entitlement) – unlike later chivalric ideas of honour – was a concept that included both peasant and noble. Although the common standards of the 'moral economy' changed across the sixth to eleventh centuries,

Faith argues that the Conquest wiped the slate clean of these shared values, as the installation of a new nobility left previous understandings of peasant entitlements adrift and paved the way for 'feudal' thinking. Given that Thompson noted that 'if values, on their own, make a moral economy' then they could be found anywhere, a fuller clarification of Faith's interpretation of this framework would have helped to robustly locate her findings in relation to more recent considerations of 'moral economies'. Nevertheless, this is a stimulating analytic framework and provides much food for thought.

Like her previous works, this is a dynamic contribution to the study of an often neglected but vital segment of society. Though attempting, as she does, to get into 'the hearts and minds' of the English peasantry is always fated to be an uphill struggle given the nature of the surviving sources, Faith admirably navigates this dense world of 'Anglo-Saxon' obligations in an approachable manner. Indeed, her stimulating and, at times, provocative conclusions regarding the development of 'feudal thinking' and the disjuncture wrought by King William's invasion will surely fuel debate for decades to come. While there are still many questions left to answer, this volume will become a valuable touchstone for future scholars studying medieval social relations.

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DAVID STONE and RICHARD SANDOVER (eds),
*Moor medieval. Exploring Dartmoor in the middle
ages* (Moor Medieval Studies Group, 2019). 210 pp. 44
illus. £15.

One would imagine that a region as celebrated as Dartmoor National Park in Devon would be well served by historical studies, and so it is, but scholarly monographs examining the medieval period specifically are rare, so this new volume is a welcome addition to the literature of this remarkable landscape.

The book has its origins in a five-year landscape partnership scheme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and promoted by the National Park Authority, known as *Moor than meets the eye*, of which Moor Medieval was a small though significant sub-project designed to engage the public through community-led historical and archaeological research. The investigation focused on six moorland parishes on the central and eastern side of Dartmoor, in which various aspects of medieval life and landscape evidence were explored. This book represents the published culmination of this effort.

The work has been led by David Stone, a specialist in agrarian history, and Richard Sandover a landscape

archaeologist. They are mainly responsible for the six chapters, each of which focus on a separate aspect of medieval Dartmoor. They cover diverse themes including approaches to medieval study, the medieval landscape, before and after the Black Death, the later middle ages, people, landscape, and communities. Within each of the chapters there are also double-page 'boxes', 35 in total, describing specific themes or examples of research in more detail. These boxes have been compiled by both amateurs and professionals involved in the Moor Medieval project and provide interesting snippets to complement the themes of the chapters.

In chapter 1 we are provided with a context for medieval Dartmoor and its study. This includes the nature of the landscape since prehistoric times, derived mainly from pollen analysis, and the various phases of human intervention that preceded the medieval period, as well as an introduction to the natural resources the medieval inhabitants enjoyed. Other topics covered include fluctuations in Dartmoor's medieval population set within a national context, historical resources available for study, and the usefulness of community archaeology. This is followed by an attempt to reconstruct aspects of the medieval landscape within the study parishes from Saxon times onwards, for each of which a map is used to present some of the conclusions. The evidence includes place name studies, examination of field patterns, records of transhumance, agricultural technology, the Dartmoor longhouses and their setting, as well as the less frequently discussed hall houses.

The very different worlds in England before and after the arrival of the Black Death are contrasted, with the discussion focused on changes to Dartmoor specifically. First, the composition of medieval Dartmoor before the 'pestilence' is set out. This includes the population, settlement, villages and hamlets, and the cohesive influence of the manorial and parish structures, where the formulation and consolidation of both institutions are also examined. Occupations of the residents, not unexpectedly, included those involved in the growing of arable crops or raising livestock. Also, in this upland environment, a living could be made from the system of transhumance (as introduced to us on Dartmoor by the late Harold Fox), whereby lowland stockmen would entrust the summertime grazing of their cattle to upland herders. Others were involved in the tin industry, and still others (the *carbonarii*) in the manufacture of peat charcoal, which was used as the fuel to smelt the tin.

The Black Death arrived in Devon in 1349 and spread to most of the west country over the next three years.

Its immediate affect and aftermath are examined for Dartmoor, where the changes were dramatic, explored by the authors through the increase in parish priest vacancies and the many changes in tenancies among the ancient tenements within the Forest of Dartmoor. In the latter case two-thirds of the tenancies had changed hands in the three years following 1348. Nevertheless, despite the ravages of the Black Death, in terms of prosperity, Dartmoor fared better than most areas of England and economic recovery was 'relatively swift', due to the continuance of summer pasturage, the growth of the tin industry and of wool production.

Aspects of this prosperity, rising population and increased consumption of goods, are outlined for the period covering 1400 to 1525. One intriguing anomaly explored is the apparent 'conundrum' of an increasing population and heightened economic activity at a period in the middle ages during which Dartmoor is known for the desertion of a great many of its smaller settlements. The authors dissect and evaluate the standard narratives of falling population caused by Black Death exacerbated by worsening climate in a marginal landscape and offer some new solutions of their own.

It is often quite difficult to succeed in bringing together all the strands of a diverse project of this type into a meaningful volume, especially where so many contributors are involved. However, the editors are to be congratulated on presenting so much new and fascinating material in a coherent and well-structured publication. The book has a glossy A4 format, an attractive layout with 44 colour illustrations and photographs, all of good standard, as well as an index. The text has scholarly authority, but is written in an accessible style, all of which combine to make this volume very easy to 'dip' into, or digest in larger portions.

One refreshing aspect of this work is the seamless coalescence of historical and archaeological sources and the introduction to Dartmoor's medieval study of several fresh themes. It is particularly encouraging to see, possibly for the first time at this level of scholarship, that the tin industry, which was so crucial to Dartmoor's socio-economic past, is integrated into the overall impression of medieval life, rather than being examined separately as has so often been the case. In a wider context, though seemingly a regional study, the research presented in this book will contribute important new material towards a more informed appreciation of medieval England as a whole.

PHIL NEWMAN
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JOAN BRIGGS, JOHN SMITH, JENNIFER TINDALL, ANN TUMMAN and XENIA WEBSTER (eds), *Sunderland wills and inventories, 1651-1675* (Boydell and Brewer for the Surtees Society, 2020). li + 234 pp. £50.

This collection publishes all the surviving wills, inventories and probate accounts dating from 1651-1675 for Bishopwearmouth and Monkwearmouth, the two parishes that made up early modern Sunderland. It follows on from an edition of Sunderland's probate documents dating from 1601 to 1650 which was published in 2010, and continues the story of the development of the town and port which by 1665 had a population of c.3370. The present volume contains the probate documents of 119 people, mostly preserved at Durham, but also in the National Archives and at York. These are presented with an introduction, a glossary, name index and subject index. The glossary is necessary given many obscure spellings and local terms found in the documents; and the subject index is particularly welcome, providing a time-saving shortcut for researchers interested in particular topics such as objects, rooms and occupations.

Comparing the society and economy documented in this volume with the edition on the first half of the century provides a striking contrast. Gone is the predominantly agricultural society and instead the documents portray a thriving centre of trade, fully involved in the political, religious and economic changes of the time. Among the individuals represented we find George Lilburne, the uncle of the leveller John Lilburne; Peter Greene, the purser of HMS *Resolution*, a ship lost in the Second Dutch War; and George Humble, a Quaker imprisoned for beliefs who died in gaol. The economic transformation can be crudely measured by changes in occupations: a quick analysis shows that in 1601-1650, 27 per cent of those leaving wills and inventories were yeomen and only 4 per cent had maritime occupations; by the 1651-75 period yeomen had fallen to 14 per cent and those with maritime occupations including shipbuilding had risen to 24 per cent. Crafts and trade had increased in importance too, while levels of wealth had risen noticeably.

The documents reproduced are full of interest and variety. Probate documents provide glimpses into the houses and families of people who otherwise left little or no record of their lives. Thus, for instance, the will of William Kell, a shipwright who died in 1658, survives along with a detailed probate account. He failed to appoint an executor but left his wife £100 and the residue of his wealth to his siblings. The church courts appointed his wife, Alice Kell, as administrator of his

estate, and the probate account she produced goes to great lengths to prove nothing was left after his debts and her £100 legacy were paid. The account itemizes even the most trivial of his goods and assigned them values down to the last half penny in a list that ran to three pages. Only 13 out of over 200 items listed were worth more than £1. As a consequence, things which many inventories summarize as 'old lumber' or 'unseen things' are described in detail. John Pearson, a gentleman who died in 1668 left a nuncupative will and an inventory. He left all his 'goods and chattels whatsoever, as well real as personal' to his wife, Elizabeth, 'who hath proved a loving and kind wife to me. And, seeing I got my means by her, I am unwilling to leave her worse than I found her'. He then refused to leave anything to his father, mother, brother or sisters. The inventory records a new brewhouse, £3 worth of strong beer, and malt and hops worth £10, as the only evidence of an occupation, and one that could well have been conducted by his wife.

Within the collection you will find the inventories of female farmers, merchants of imported goods, impoverished seamen, and investors in ships and coal-mines. Many of the documents are quite quirky, defying normal rules of probate: a number of inventories merge into accounts listing debts paid and funeral costs; others list the value of real property; some list no household goods. As such, this collection demonstrates the value of probate documents to historians: not just local historians and historians of the family but all those interested material culture and social and economic change, and provides an important resource for teachers, students and researchers.

JANE WHITTLE
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EMILY SLOAN, *The landscape studies of Hayman Rooke (1723–1806). Antiquarianism, Archaeology and Natural History in the Eighteenth Century* (The Boydell Press, 2019). xii + 212 pp. 37 illus. £60.

This book brings to light the achievements of an extraordinary antiquary and natural historian. In her introduction, Emily Sloan characterizes Major Hayman Rooke (1723–1806) as 'an unjustly neglected provincial figure' (p. 4). The succeeding chapters of her book prove that this claim is by no means special pleading. Sloan convincingly establishes Rooke's importance as a scholar and draughtsman, and she clearly defines his place within the intellectual and cultural networks of his age.

As this latter statement suggests, Sloan's book is much more than a biographical study. Her approach to Rooke's contributions to antiquarianism and natural

history is, as she explains, informed by her interest in 'uncover[ing] something of a broader culture of landscape' in Britain during the Hanoverian era (p. 8). This culture, as Sloan argues, was strongly conditioned by the epistemological tendencies of the Enlightenment; it was a culture in which empirical evidence and visual documentation were increasingly viewed as imperative. Rooke's work as a draughtsman and as a scrupulous researcher, when viewed in this context, distinguishes him as much more than just a notable regional figure. Rather, we come to see him as an exemplar of the sensibilities that helped to establish the standards of modern historical, archaeological and scientific research.

Sloan's book is divided into four chapters, the first of which presents a detailed account of Rooke's life. In addition to documenting his 24-year military career, Sloan delves into his time in Mansfield Woodhouse, Nottinghamshire, where he settled following his retirement from the army in 1761. Sloan situates Rooke at the centre of a noteworthy social circle in the Midlands, which included influential landowners, such as the Dukes of Portland, and cultural authorities, like Humphry Repton, as well as learned individuals, such as Samuel Pegge, and literary figures, like Anna Seward, who composed a poem in Rooke's honour. As Sloan points out, Rooke had earned a reputation as a competent draughtsman and engineer during his military career. He was, moreover, widely travelled, and his skills and social connections were an asset to the antiquarian and natural-historical research he chose to pursue in retirement.

Sloan addresses this research in the subsequent chapters of her book, and her second chapter, which deals with Rooke's studies of meteorology, arboriculture and agriculture, will likely be especially interesting to readers of this journal. In addition to paying due attention to Rooke's contribution to the *General view of agriculture in the County of Nottinghamshire* (1798), Sloan provides an insightful examination of the investigations of oak trees and ancient forests for which Rooke is principally known today. As she emphasizes, Rooke's interest in these subjects reflected 'his patriotic, political and patriarchal ethos', as well as his wonder in the marvels of the natural world (p. 83); it also affirmed the fundamental practicality of his inquiries. As the pamphlets and papers Rooke published make clear, he was interested not only in contributing to the advancement of knowledge, but also in bringing about improvements in planting and landscape planning.

Sloan draws similar conclusions in her third and fourth chapters, which deal with Rooke's antiquarian research. In these chapters Sloan considers Rooke's

studies of prehistoric and Roman Britain in turn, and she places particular emphasis on the significance of his commitment to precise documentation and careful excavation. As Sloan stresses, Rooke showed extraordinary care during his excavations at Arbor Low, in Derbyshire, in 1782, two years before Thomas Jefferson's often-cited excavations in Virginia. Rooke recorded not only the position and condition of the artefacts found, but also the steps taken during the dig. At a time when antiquaries such as Bryan Faussett and James Douglas were ripping through ancient barrows at the rate of a dozen a day, the methods Rooke applied were 'highly unusual' indeed (p. 104). What is more, as Sloan avers, these methods affirm the long-lasting influence of Rooke's military career, which also provided him with connections around the country. 'His army background', she writes, 'gave him not only the training in observation, topographical drawing and tactical manoeuvring which helped to inform his approach [...], but also supplied him with a ready network of friends and contacts through whom he gained access to a range of sites and artefacts' (p. 150).

In sum, Sloan's book achieves its stated aim of 'broadening our understanding [...] of eighteenth-century antiquarianism' (p. 4). This reviewer would have liked for her to have developed aspects of her argument further. Her discussion of the use of drawing as a mode of recording and communicating knowledge, in particular, could have been elaborated, and more connections could have been drawn with other recent evaluations of eighteenth-century topography. Still, Sloan's study of Rooke makes an important contribution to our knowledge, and it provides a useful contrast to the parodic depiction of provincial antiquaries that can limit our appreciation of their achievements. Rooke, as Sloan shows, was no jealous hoarder, and his wide-ranging research cuts against the grain of the county histories often associated with the learned culture of his age. He may have never produced a magnum opus, but he was a talented and good-natured man who shared his work and took a share in supporting the work of others.

Sloan's book is handsomely designed and illustrated with grayscale figures and colour plates of Rooke's watercolour and pen and ink drawings. The book also includes a set of appendices, which provide a bibliography of Rooke's publications and a chronology of his activities based on Sloan's original archival research. These additional resources further enrich this valuable book, which will be an indispensable aid to anyone wishing to learn more about Rooke and his world.

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AMANDA L. CAPERN, BRIONY MCDONAGH and JENNIFER ASTON (eds), *Women and the land, 1500–1900* (The Boydell Press, 2019). 306 pp. 7 illus. £25.

As Amy Erickson acknowledges in the afterword to this collection, it is 'worthy of note that in 2019 a book on the significance of female landholding ... should even be required'. However, 'it is still the case that a book on land may be written without reference to women, and yet it does not require the word "men" in its title. But a book on women's use of land must have "women" in the title'. Over the last 30 years in particular, work on women and property ownership has expanded, with Erickson's own 1993 monograph *Woman and property in early modern England* (rev. ante *AgHR* 43.1) remaining one of the most significant and influential contributions. Despite the patriarchal biases of primogeniture (an inheritance practice which favoured the first-born son) and the doctrine of coverture (in which men assumed legal ownership of their wife's property upon marriage), women nonetheless found ways to own property. Yet they are conspicuous by their absence from many histories of landscape and agricultural change.

The editors of this collection, *Women and the land, 1500–1900*, offer new histories of land and property in which women's lives are situated at the centre. Bringing together the work of historians, literary scholars and historical geographers, a broad conception of 'land' is taken to include landscape, residential buildings, and commercial and personal property. In its feminist agenda, the book has two main aims: to bring together work that quantifies women's land ownership in England between 1500 and 1900, and to develop a better understanding of what owning property meant to women across this 400-year period.

The quest for quantifying the proportion of land owned by women in England is ongoing but there is general consensus that female landowners represented a significant minority. In her study of the nineteenth-century acquisition of land for railway building, Janet Casson finds 12.4 per cent of plots acquired were owned by women, a figure that broadly correlates with estimates of between 10 and 20 per cent identified in studies elsewhere. Casson further notes that female landowners were not exclusively drawn from the wealthiest sections of society.

Several chapters in this collection demonstrate the effectiveness of adopting a life-cycle approach to assess women's property ownership. Jennifer Aston's study of mid-nineteenth-century Birmingham wills highlights married women's important role in continuing and creating their own businesses when their husbands died,

as well as their role in preserving wealth over generations through transfer of their estate, personal property and heirlooms. Joan Heggie's work on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century property transactions recorded in the Yorkshire and the North Riding Registers of Deeds reveals distinctive patterns across life cycle and region in female involvement in the property market. She finds that married women were increasingly able to participate in property transactions alone over the course of the period, suggesting the importance of the 1870 Married Women's Property Act and subsequent legislation. Judith Spicksley's chapter considers how much land passed to unmarried women in early modern England. Spinster landowners were not numerous, and patterns varied regionally; however, probate material reveals that some received land as gifts from relatives and friends, as a form of formal security for credit and in instances where the male line had failed. Interestingly, she notes that bequests of animals and livestock in single women's wills indicate that many more had access to land than probate documents suggest.

Unsurprisingly, the rebuttal of the 'separate spheres' ideology binds this collection together. While historical enquiry has shown time and again its flaws as a scheme for understanding male and female behaviours and roles, it continues to underpin many studies of agrarian development and society. This book situates women as key players in the economics of land and demonstrates their agency in its management. Using the quintessential example of Lady Anne Clifford, Jessica L. Malay details the role she carved out as a landowner in Westmorland and her queen-like approach to creating a 'benevolent feudal state' in the north. Stephen Bending echoes this in his chapter on Elizabeth Montagu's design and management of Sandleford estate. She did not buy a physical design from 'Capability' Brown but a mode of employment for local inhabitants. Her estate redesign was in part benevolent, scheduled around the harvest to provide the poor with employment on the estate at times of the year when labour was scarce; equally, the harvest festivals she hosted sought to both display the pastoral pleasures of the landscape and assert her landowning power. Using depositions of church and secular courts, Amanda Flather considers the spatial dynamics of land in relation to gender. She demonstrates that early modern female relationships with the land were not static or rigid but were shaped by a range of factors (including age, status and seasonality). Her chapter acknowledges the important role landscape plays in identity formation and flags this for further attention.

Chapters in the collection also consider female perceptions of land. Jon Stobart's exploration of

Lady Sophia Newdigate's eighteenth-century journal recording her tour of southern England and Derbyshire demonstrates her intellectual consideration of the landscape. Stereotypical female concerns such as domestic arrangements and social activities featured more rarely in her journal than her appraisal of design, architecture and artwork. Focusing on the account ledgers of fifteen elite Georgian women, Briony McDonagh highlights female aptitude in account keeping. Her work indicates the importance of estate management as an 'intellectual exercise' for female landowners and like Stobart, she connects their appraisal of the land with their physical experience of (and familiarity with) it, as they walked or rode across their estates.

In considering how structure and agency operated, the authors of this collection question how women navigated patriarchal society, with a view to integrating them into historical narratives and ideas of progress. Through the case study of the abduction and forced marriage of wealthy seventeenth-century heiress Arabella Alleyn, Amanda Capern carefully considers the dynamics of female agency: in this case, landownership was both empowering and a millstone around Alleyn's neck. This book makes no claim to be the final word and there is scope here for moving beyond the insertion of women into established narratives of land and agrarian development. Women were a significant minority of landowners but, as several chapters indicate, this does not mean that landless women lacked an economic, intellectual or emotional relationship with land. Overall, this is a rich and useful collection that answers existing questions concerning female engagement with the English landscape as well as raising new ones.

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HONOR LEWINGTON (ed.), *Stoke Mandeville: Wills and inventories, 1552–1853* (Buckinghamshire Record Society Publications, 2019) vol. xxxviii, 281 pp. 9 illus. £30 for non-members.

County record societies, of which there are a declining number, perform a great service to researchers in transcribing and making more widely available varied and often hard to access sources, setting them in their context, and presenting them in annotated, indexed volumes available in print or online. Buckinghamshire Record Society has been regularly producing volumes such as the one under review since 1937, covering many aspects of the county's history, from charters to minute books of Friends and descriptions of Lord Cobham's gardens at Stowe. Many of the earlier volumes are

freely available online via the Society's website. This latest volume is well produced, with an introduction, explanation of methodology, glossary of unusual words, alphabetical list of testators, and indexes of names, places and subjects.

It was decided to include only the wills and inventories of those who lived in Stoke Mandeville, with the exception of one case, Robert Buckmaster of Wing, who only held land in the parish. This decision keeps the volume to a manageable size. In total 134 wills and inventories (although only one inventory survives post-1650) covering a 300-year period, were transcribed by the editor and a team of five members of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society's palaeography group. The original material is held in a variety of locations: The National Archives, the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Oxfordshire History Centre, and Lincoln Archives. Only material held at TNA is online, so consequently the bringing together of papers from these diverse sources saves the researcher a lot of time and legwork. It could be argued that the volume's introduction could have been more analytical, but that does not detract from the very real benefits the publication brings, giving easy access to disparately placed primary material.

The volume has a particular poignancy about it since the original church of St Mary's and its graveyard, probably dating back to the Norman period was demolished in 1966, while the graveyard, left to the wiles of nature, is soon to be buried under the HS2 railway development. As Lewington writes in the introduction, 'the building of an essential HS2 works depot will ... obliterate the whole site which encompasses the old church, its graveyard, any bumps and lumps of the old village and the traces of the mill leet courses'. Thus, documentary evidence will soon be the only source for 'the old churchyard and the buried remains of possibly at least 2,600 people'. The volume's useful appendix details the remains of the old gravestones from a survey carried out in the 1970s and 80s. These graveyard records, added to the incomplete parish registers and the wills and inventories included in the volume, help to preserve for the future at least some aspects of the lives of some of those interred.

The wills and inventories come from a wide variety of backgrounds, although nearly all included in the volume had something to do with agriculture, as would be expected of such a rural county. Interestingly there are only seven named farmers leaving wills, the earliest being in 1775, with yeoman being the most common term for a farmer before that date. There are 14 named husbandmen, some of whom left possessions totalling over £200, and 13 named labourers. However,

as Lewington points out, the occupations stated are sometimes done so loosely. Most notably, perhaps, is the will and inventory of John Ledgingham who died in 1616 and is described as a labourer. Ledgingham's possessions were valued at £27 5s. 4d. He left cows and a bullock, sheep, pigs, corn in barn, wheat in fields and hens, capons and chickens. He was also owed money to the sum of £5. Ledgingham's wife Sybill, who died in 1619, took over the farm upon her husband's death but is described as widow rather than labourer. Women are represented by 17 per cent of the wills in the volume though none are described by their occupation.

Only around seven per cent of the population left wills, so it could be said that the volume is not typically representative of Stoke Mandeville's small population (in 1801 it totalled 248 persons) Familiar family names appear again and again throughout the centuries: the Browns, a yeoman family, are recorded over 200 years from the mid-sixteenth century, and the Hoare family for 200 from the mid-seventeenth century; the Clark family has 41 entries, while the Brudenell family of landowners, has 34. The Brudenells had held the manors of Oldbury and Newbury with the manor of Stoke Mandeville from the beginning of the fifteenth century, although they had disappeared from the Stoke Mandeville record by 1642. Their impressive late sixteenth-century monument was later removed from the old church and placed in the new Victorian edifice.

A lot of effort went into producing this volume, and the Record Society should be commended for continuing to produce such items, adding greatly to the history of the county, as well, in this case to ensuring an ancient site is not wholly buried in the name of 'progress'. The volume is a pleasure to use.

JOHN E. DAVIES
Carmarthen

ERIC L. JONES, *Landed estates and rural inequality in English history: from the mid-seventeenth century to the present* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). xi + 129 pp. £44.99, ebook (as reviewed) £35.99.

This short book, in the series entitled 'Palgrave Studies in Economic History', is also a Palgrave Pivot series book, designed to facilitate the rapid publication of material longer than a journal article but shorter than a monograph. It has a different format to many academic texts, each short chapter starting with an abstract of disjointed sentences, almost mirroring the style of late nineteenth / early twentieth century texts.

Eric Jones addresses a number of issues which he feels have been ignored or given insufficient attention in the past, by challenging current thinking on the

subject of landed estates. These include the erosion of public rights of way by such estates through addressing the economic impact rather than the architectural or landscape view. As for blood sports, he considers that they are an 'abuse of animals' representing status and the opportunity for male bonding. Similarly, he examines the abuse of social oppression, through the treatment of estate staff and tenant farmers. This economic study of landed estates also considers the investment of profits made in industry elsewhere into the land, during the nineteenth century.

In the first chapter, Jones reviews how the landed interest came to exist following the Restoration in 1660: whilst it already existed at this point, the opportunity to buy back lost lands or to invest in available confiscated lands, established the system of landed estates which this book examines. With the end of the Civil War, he notes that disputes were no longer settled by violence between different factions, but rather through legal or political solutions. He proposes that the conversion of merchants and manufacturers into landowners was a process which reduced the impetus of commercial activity, resulting in resistance to change and the re-direction of commercial profits into leisured activities in the rural environment, potentially harmful to the overall economy.

As an example of the investment of industrial profit, chapter 2 examines the purchases made by Lancastrian cotton manufacturers. These were made initially in Lancashire, then elsewhere in the north of England, before progressing to the south of England, where a provisional view based on Gloucestershire and Herefordshire is presented. Associated with these land acquisitions were the purchases of furnishings and paintings for the 'big houses', also providing status symbols: whilst these items are viewed as having potential resale value, estates were expected to provide an annual return from farm rents. The latter however were often consumed by landscaping costs and ornamenting the owner's private space. Further, for those who bought land during periods of agricultural prosperity, there was the opportunity to remodel their estate by rebuilding farmhouses and bringing farm buildings up-to-date.

Chapter 3 moves the focus from the landowners to the lower orders of servants: in particular, the way that landowners treated them, in terms of the social segregation achieved through separation of housing and reorganized household layouts, so that servants could do their work unseen. In a chapter entitled 'Expelling the people', the impact on the local inhabitants of the actions of landed estate owners is examined. The usual descriptions of walled estates,

villages demolished and villages relocated to provide privacy and far-reaching views are again rehearsed. It is noted that the agricultural depression of the later nineteenth century had little effect, in that money other than farm rents was funding many of these estates.

Under the heading of 'Road Capture', chapter 5 considers how roads within parks and estates were closed and new ones forced to be developed: this is exemplified by the right-angled bend in the road, with the park gate on the corner. The same issue applied to footpaths but on a larger numerical scale. Once again, such actions were taken to increase the privacy afforded to the landed estate owner.

The next chapter considers the hunting, shooting and fishing aspects of rural estates. With a late focus on the fox and pheasant as targets, the conflict between maintaining both on the same estate is described. Further, the balance between agriculture and sport is examined: in particular, it is noted that when farm rents fall during periods of agricultural depression, the renting out of sporting rights enable some estates to survive economically. As to why such activities are pursued, Jones suggests that male bonding and the affirmation of status through privileged access to land and water are at the root of such sports. The next chapter moves on to present two poaching cases from the Savernake estate in Wiltshire: these are used to exemplify the harsh enforcement of the Game Laws designed to protect landowners' sporting resources.

Examining the inequality existing in the countryside alongside the associated institutions, chapter 8 considers the migration of workers from the south of England to the coalfields and factories of the north, along with the interruption caused by the agricultural depression from 1880 to 1940, in which he suggests that 'market towns ... became backwaters with backwood societies to match' (p. 94). By reviewing the history of landed society over the past 370 years, Jones argues that the continuity of the estate system since the Restoration resulted in social stagnation. He concludes that the system is, and has been, a 'social and market failure on a grand and enduring scale' (p. 122).

References in the text are non-existent: there are no footnotes or endnotes to enable the reader to undertake further research, only a list of sources and further reading at the end of each chapter, in which there is not one single primary source, despite reference being made to sources in a local record office (p. 84). At one point when considering employment in stone picking, Eric Jones states that 'There are so many [instances] that it is needless to document them' (p. 41), yet on the same page, he notes that 'abstractions [need to be] given faces to allow the individuals of the past to

re-emerge'. At one point (p. 75), the author draws on works of fiction to make a point.

Overall, this book presents an orthogonal view on landed estates, one which many might challenge, if only the sources used had been explained.

ALAN WADSWORTH
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JOHN E. DAVIES, *The changing fortunes of a British aristocratic family, 1689–1976: The Campbells of Cawdor and their Welsh Estates* (The Boydell Press, 2019). 354 pp. 12 illus. £85.

This book is the first full-length study of one of the most significant aristocratic families in south-west Wales. It takes in a broad chronology in charting 'the changing fortunes' of a substantial landowning family. The chapters are arranged thematically, and as one would expect of one of David W. Howell's students, Davies's approach follows Howell's seminal study *Patriarchs and parasites* (1986, rev. ante *AgHR* 35.2).

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the Campbells of Cawdor, and to individuals we meet later in the volume, as well as providing an overview of the family's estates and landholding. The second chapter considers issues of estate administration and land management, including a section on the land agents, showing the variable relationships that existed between landlord and agent. The chapter provides insights into the structure of land management, followed by chapter 3's overview of agricultural practices. We see landlords as agricultural improvers, patriarchal interactions with tenants, and the nature of tenancies and leases. The Campbells were certainly living up to the ideals of the moral economy of the landed estate, as argued by Matthew Cragoe in his study of the Carmarthenshire landed elite, *An Anglican aristocracy* (1996, rev. ante *AgHR* 45.1).

The Campbells were ready to exploit the resources on their land, and chapter four details the industrial ventures they undertook, from lead mining to selling timber. They supported road building schemes, and the expansion of the railways in south-west Wales. Chapter 5 focuses on the Christian paternalism of the family, in particular within the spheres of religion and education. Charitable bequests were doled out, and financial support offered to church and school building projects, with a preference shown towards Anglican requests for aid. Indeed, the Campbells used their influence to uphold the status of the established Church and its schools within the locality. Within this framework, there was little sympathy or support for the Welsh language, with the Campbells conforming to the traditional image of an anglicized and increasingly distant elite.

Chapter 6 focuses on the Campbells at the local level, and how the family kept their status and position as generations served in local government. There is an interesting account of Baron Cawdor assuming the role of lord lieutenant in leading the force to see off the French during the last mainland invasion of Britain, at Fishguard on 22 February 1797. Others undertook their civic duties in less dashing ways, as magistrates and members of various committees and boards, increasingly against a backdrop of the declining power of the elites in this sphere over the course of the nineteenth century. The Campbells were political leaders in south-west Wales, as chapter 7 shows, and supported the status quo during the late nineteenth century, when critiques of the elite were presented by 'nationalist campaigns'. Significantly, as a Scottish family, they were seen as newcomers to the county. Another handicap was financial, with lack of money also requiring caution within the political sphere, with notoriously expensive electoral campaigns in the pre-reform years.

The eighth chapter begins with an appraisal of the development of the Stackpole mansion and surrounding landscape park. There was also a secondary seat, Golden Grove in Carmarthenshire. The chapter also provides an insight into household management and the role of servants. The country house was a hub for leisure and recreation, and a means of displaying wealth and status. Away from the estate, the 'London season' beckoned, as did continental travels, and in this context, absenteeism is discussed. All this came at a price however, and debt was an ever-present burden for many families to shoulder.

The final chapter, entitled 'The End of the Welsh Estates', charts a tale of decline, with the prominence of agriculture waning, the impact of the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894, calls for land reform, and threats to the lifestyle and position of the elite in society. Whilst the Campbells were hit by death duties, they were in a position to sell land to settle debts, unlike many owners of smaller estates. After 1906, the Campbells left Wales for Cawdor Castle in Scotland, leaving their Welsh estates to be managed by agents. With the ravages of the Second World War, and military requisition, Stackpole Court and Golden Grove suffered. Whilst Golden Grove was leased to Carmarthenshire County Council, later becoming an agricultural college, Stackpole Court was sadly demolished in 1962. During the 1960s and 1970s, the family set about selling their Welsh properties and possessions.

This volume is the result of scrupulous archival research, which comes as no surprise considering the author's former career as county archivist for

Carmarthenshire. Indeed, a range of collections in the Carmarthenshire Record Office were consulted, but also from the record office of neighbouring Pembrokeshire, the National Library of Wales, and further afield, including the Cawdor Castle estate papers still in private ownership. In appraising the source material available, Davies highlights the disappointing lack of sources about women in the Cawdor papers. Mere glimpses are provided by a handful of letters, a few diaries, and a travel journal. As Davies himself states: 'The silence of the women, or at least their lack of a direct voice, is a sad loss' (p. 4). Such are the limitations provided by some estate archives.

Whilst a number of Scottish families acquired Welsh estates, most notably the Bute family, who transformed Cardiff during the nineteenth century, significantly, the Campbells chose to establish themselves in Wales. Considering notions of identity, and the influx of newcomers, it would be intriguing to know how the Campbells appear between the pages of the Welsh language press, in particular, building on the reference to the 'nationalist campaigns' of the late nineteenth century alluded to in chapter 7.

Within this case study of a single estate, the multifaceted identity of the landed elite emerges. They were landlords, agricultural improvers, entrepreneurs and industrialists, and social and political leaders. The Campbells of Cawdor certainly conformed to this patriarchal ideal.

LOWRI ANN REES
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RODERICK FLOUD, *An economic history of the English garden* (Allen Lane, 2019). 416 pp. £25.

This volume will be as much of interest to garden historians, as to anyone who has enjoyed a stroll around the grounds of an English stately home. It lifts the lid on the sheer effort required to create these gardens, and exposes the enormous sums required to pay for them. It helps us to question how gardens were built, why they were constructed in certain ways, and how they have been maintained. The book's high quality derives from the author's stature as an economic historian. During his long career Roderick Floud has produced ground-breaking research, initially using quantitative methods to study economic history and later transferring these methods to the history of human health. The application of Floud's skill and experience to the economic history of English gardens has produced a book of great authority, with forensic attention to detail. Its major strength lies in Floud's ability to assess the garden industry in the context of the social and economic history of England.

The first chapter provides an overview of the book's arc, setting out the premise that gardening should be considered as an industry, providing a detailed explanation of the methods used to estimate relative costs, and putting rising garden spending into the context of economic and social change. The second chapter, 'Gardens and the State', makes a striking case that gardens built by the monarchy and paid for through taxation represented a state promotion of the garden industry, which should be seen as a process that continued with the nineteenth century building of public parks and the development of new towns in the twentieth. The structure of the remainder of the book traces the economic impact of all this spending, dealing in turn with the work of designers, nurserymen, gardeners and inventors and manufacturers. Floud concludes with chapters on 'The People's Gardens' and 'The Kitchen Garden', demonstrating how increasing prosperity in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries enabled the expansion of the suburbs and the widening of access to gardening. Throughout Floud has used trade papers, account books, family papers and probate records to piece together trails of who paid who and for what work.

Floud builds his case for the significance of the garden industry by establishing how much was spent and by comparing this spending with other sectors. In addition, he offers a fresh portrait of the garden designer as businessman. Capability Brown managed the labour and resources required to deliver major projects despite irregular income, geographically distant sites and a banking system that in the eighteenth century offered no protection from debtor's prison if payments could not be made. Consistently within this volume, Floud is able to put garden spending into context, for example comparing the profitability of nurseries with other retail trades, and to provide nuanced answers to questions such as why the nursery trade was clustered around London whilst its products were shipped across the country. The book makes a significant contribution to the history of technology in highlighting the innovation required to achieve the impression of a natural landscape and the amounts garden owners were willing to pay for this. These developments are seen in the context of the growth of industry more broadly, linking invention in gardening to the development of canal and reservoir building, steam engineering and central heating.

Throughout the book, gardening is situated as a manifestation of luxury, of spare time and spare money, separate from growing for sustenance. This separation is justified in the final chapter, in which Floud's understanding of the histories of economics and health come together to produce an excellent

analysis of the place of the kitchen garden in economic history. He makes a strong case for viewing kitchen gardening as an exercise for show or pleasure, both within the context of the Royal gardens at Frogmore, and the local garden contest with its outsize onions and marrows. The purchase of farmed produce was the most efficient option at all levels of society. This chapter is significant in counterbalancing nostalgic fictions surrounding grow-your-own in the present day and makes an important contribution to long running debates about land use and the relationship between farming and gardening. There are many reasons for growing your own fruit and vegetables but economic efficiency, within our current system, is not one of them. My only criticism of the book is that after setting out so convincingly the interrelation of gardening and economics, it neglects in the conclusion to consider the ways in which these practices might be changed by the advance of climate breakdown.

However, this book is thought provoking, even unsettling. It demonstrates the success of the artifice of the natural garden scene, onto which the nymphs and cherubs have wandered as though in a Sellar and Yeatman cartoon. These gardens were built to appear timeless, yet Floud has made their temporality crystal clear. In laying out exactly how vast sums were spent alongside evidence of pervasive malnourishment among the poor, we are confronted by the inequalities on which the English idyll was founded. That such a work draws attention to the sources of this wealth, for example that the house and gardens of Harewood were funded by slave ownership, is particularly pertinent to current questioning of the roots of racism in Britain. An important area for further research is the economics of plant collecting, which Floud acknowledges he did not have space to consider. Along with Floud's evidence on the sources of English wealth, such research would situate the economic history of the English garden in the context of Empire and Britain's place in the world. This work successfully argues that the garden industry was and remains a significant part of the English economy. The mark of this success is the number of questions that it provokes, both about England's past and about the future of the garden industry.

SOPHIE GREENWAY
University of Warwick

SIMON TOWNLEY (ed.), *A history of the County of Oxford, XIX. Wychwood Forest and Environs* (Boydell and Brewer, 2019). 429 pp. 116 illus. £95.

The Victoria County History moves forward in spite of the obstacles in its path, and this volume demonstrates the value that the VCH gives both its local readers and

the whole historical profession. It deals with twelve 'settlements' in west Oxfordshire centred on Shipton-under-Wychwood and the royal forest of Wychwood. There is no town among the group of parishes chosen for this volume but it has a unity based on the centrality of Shipton. This was the site of a minster church and a royal estate centre in the early middle ages, and in modern times has been a large village with a concentration of facilities. Most of the 12 villages have shared in the experience of living in or near to the royal forest. Cornbury House and Park, and its estate, though lying on the edge of the territory covered by the volume, has exerted much influence. Shipton station, opening in 1853, gave the villages a transport focus, and in the twentieth century the Imperial Wireless Station at Leafield became a centre of technology and employment.

This VCH volume continues the traditions of the VCH in its authority, careful referencing of information, and calm and confident tone. It is arranged according to the conventional template of themes such as landscape, economic history and local government, but that standardized ordering of subjects is essential if parish histories are to be compared. The volume can be repetitive, but this is inevitable in a work of reference in which readers expect each parish history to be complete in itself. Within the traditions of the VCH project, one welcomes the modernization of the terminology and approaches. We begin with landscape and built character, and landownership has replaced the history of the manor. Welfare is now a subheading under social history. The overview provided at the beginning of this volume is an excellent introduction to the overall development of the twelve settlements. It makes use of historical concepts, such as the multiple estate model, which suits Shipton very well, and the minster status of the parish church is important for understanding the evolution of the units of lordship. Archaeology is integrated into the history, and in particular shows the value of field walking for tracing changes in settlement. In analysing the modern villages they are found to fit the 'open' and 'closed' parish model. Long-term population changes are laid out in a table in the overview and explained separately for each parish. The operations of the poor law, old and new, have an important role in the social history of the parishes.

All aspects of agricultural history are covered, with information about the soils and topography under 'landscape', farming methods and land holding under economic history, while farmers and labourers figure prominently in the social history section. The documentation for agricultural history (particularly from the perspective of this reviewer) is not abundant,

but there is enough to establish the main outlines. The nucleated villages and open fields (mostly two fields) were established quite early, though some parishes have large areas of old enclosure, sometimes the result of assarting from the forest up to the fourteenth century. The open fields (practising sheep and corn husbandry) persisted, and one parish was not enclosed until 1854. The yeomen farms that developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were subject to amalgamation in later centuries until some parishes now have one very large farm, or all of the land is cultivated from a distance. For centuries the people of such villages as Shipton, Ascott, Ramsden and Leafield had access to grazing and other forest resources, claiming common rights but often taking wood and game illicitly. As on the fringes of many royal forests they established a distinctive way of life and mentality. Outsiders dismissed their behaviour as criminal. The ending of royal forest elsewhere was usually protracted, but in the case of Wychwood it was sudden and brutal, as disafforestation and the clearance of the woods all happened in 1856–8. Communities which had always been impoverished felt even more deprivation and, in the depression of the 1870s that soon followed, many migrated to Australia and New Zealand. Since those hard times Wychwood's villages have followed a familiar route of gentrification, the growth in commuting, and the death of the village shop.

The VCH is designed to be consulted, and cannot give extended attention to the many subjects covered. Readers are left with a desire to know more, which may mean following up the footnotes, or embarking on their own research. This agrarian historian was intrigued by the VCH's discovery of a wealthy demesne farmer, Thomas Sessions of Milton around 1500, and gives tantalising hints of his activities. Some may notice the strength of political conservatism. For example the village hall at Shipton was built in the 1880s on the initiative of the Conservative Association and named Beaconsfield Hall in honour of Disraeli. Some local people adopted contrary attitudes: a pauper rebellion against a select vestry at Ramsden in 1834–35 showed robust dissent against attempts to reduce poor relief. Ascott in particular became a centre of radicalism, at a popular level in 1873 when the 'Ascott martyrs' (16 women supporting the agricultural workers) were imprisoned, and in the early twentieth century with middle-class promotion of progressive causes, such as the WEA. Nonconformist religion also flourished in the villages. The VCH tells us about a popular culture of Morris dancing and mumming throughout the area, which predates the arrival of middle-class intellectuals, and we would like to know more about its roots. Finally,

the editors of the VCH, while discreetly maintaining their objectivity throughout, provide a clue to the area's notoriety in the second decade of this century, with a sentence (on p. 171) revealing that this was the epicentre of the 'Chipping Norton set'.

CHRISTOPHER DYER
University of Leicester

ANDREW CONNELL, *'There'll Always Be Appleby' – Appleby Gypsy Horse Fair: History, mythology, evaluation* (Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2019). 136 pp. 31 illus. £12.99.

This revised edition of the 2015 publication, *Appleby Gypsy Horse Fair*, develops the material presented in its predecessor with new evidence and analysis that, as the author explains in the Preface represents 'a more direct attempt to disentangle myth and reality' (p. xii). In particular the author interrogates the folklore and speculation surrounding the origins and legal status of the fair, along with a more extensive focus on the often fractious relationship between fairgoers, wider public and the authorities. Today, Appleby Horse Fair, which is held in the Cumbrian town of Appleby-in-Westmorland between the first Thursday and Tuesday in June, is the largest annual gathering of the UK's Gypsies and Travellers attracting around 40–50,000 visitors (p. 2). Connell draws from a range of primary materials from local sources as well as from reports, books and articles related to the historical and contemporary scholarly work on Gypsies and Travellers. Through a meticulous and thorough study of this evidence, Connell addresses two of the most enduring myths surrounding the Appleby Fair, and the Gypsies' role in its evolution and development which, with the 'reluctant involvement of the local authorities ... inadvertently contributed to its modern status as a culturally significant media event' (p. 9).

Firstly, the author takes issue with conventional wisdom that the fair stems from a Royal Charter granted by James II in 1685. The author notes that before the mid-twentieth century there is no mention of the fair having been granted a Royal Charter and neither does any evidence exist to suggest that King James II had any interest in, or dealings with, Gypsies. Connell's investigation locates the myth's origins to 1945 when a local Alderman, determined to find a way of ending the fair claimed that it dated from the supposed 1685 charter and that once it was found the Borough Council would have a mechanism to force the fair's abolition. The elusive charter is yet to be found, but the myth took hold and, as 'collections of photographs, tourist guides and websites proliferated,

the 1685 charter story would be routinely repeated as fact' (p. 18). Indeed, the failure to prove the charter's existence has saved the fair from probable closure; its continuance being based on 'prescriptive right' or custom, the fair 'is not an event with a programme and entrance fees to designated areas, organizers or owners [and so] the closure mechanism of the 1871 Fairs Act is of no relevance to it' (p. 100).

Secondly, evidence sheds light on the notion that Appleby is part of a centuries-old pilgrimage for Gypsies and other travellers. The author charts the evolution of Appleby Fair (or New Fair) which like other fairs originated as a market for livestock and which was, for much of its history, essentially a drovers' fair until the arrival of the railway in 1862. This spelled the end of the drovers' association with the fair which, by the late nineteenth century, was exclusively concerned with 'the exhibition and sale of horses of every description for which it is one of the best markets in the kingdom' (p. 32). The fair's association with Gypsies 'can be with some certainty located in the first decade of the twentieth century', when they were joined by itinerant potters, 'who mustered with great force from their encampments on the Moor' (p. 44). Connell gives short shrift to scholars who claim the exclusion of Gypsies from accounts of Appleby in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was due to their 'othering', noting that the scant attention given to Gypsies was due to their marginal participation at the fair as it was then primarily a drovers' fair. With reduced attendance during World War II, the Gypsies consolidated their monopoly of the fair, cementing its association with the 'caravan fraternity'.

The author details the periodic campaigns to close the fair (stymied through the lack of a mechanism to effect its closure) and those who have fought to keep the fair open. In the 1960s for example, the indomitable Gypsy, Silvester Gordon Bowell, whose skills at negotiating with the *gorgio* (non-Gypsy) authorities while simultaneously gaining the Gypsies' compliance, saved the fair from the threat of closure and returned it to its former Fair Hill location. Boswell had correctly perceived that the authorities were not united in their opposition to the fair, and the author charts the ambivalent social attitudes and images of the fair in newspapers, where coverage varies 'from the roseate to the bloodstained' (p. 83), and among local residents and businesses, whose opinions remain equally divided. The book is supplemented with a range of illustrations and photographs of Appleby Fair from the past and present. The Appendices include intriguing recollections from a life-long resident of Appleby of the fair during her childhood in the 1930s, and an elderly

Romany lady, whose late husband was a member of Boswell's Gypsy committee, who laments the decline of the fair following the increasing presence of *gorgio* 'so-called travellers' (p. 106).

This is an impressive book that achieves its aim of separating myth from fact through rigorous empirical investigation, while remaining sensitive to the strong sense of connection and importance that the fair holds for many of Britain's travelling communities who, if only briefly can become 'part of the process of recapturing a lost world, and affirming that the rituals of family reunion, display of possessions, courtship and campfire camaraderie live on' (p. 82).

DAVID M. SMITH
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SOPHIA DAVIS, *Island thinking: Suffolk stories of landscape, militarisation and identity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). xiii + 302 pp. 32 illus. £59.99.

The publisher's advertorial states that *Island thinking* is 'a cultural historical and geographical study of Englishness in a key period of cultural transformation in mid-Twentieth Century Britain', using 'a highly regional focus to investigate'. The book is not a systematic, complete analysis of the history of landscape militarization in Suffolk; as the word 'stories' and the term 'island thinking' suggests, it is more a selective highlighting of those aspects of landscape militarization which create, contribute to, or reinforce the notion that Suffolk is 'an island within' England or Britain – and how this is proposed, reflected or reinforced by literature about the county.

Literature is used to justify the choice of Suffolk and to make the case for its metaphysical island identity. O. J. R. Howarth's 1937 observation that East Anglia was 'self-contained within the limits of the sea to the north and east, the forest to the south, the Fen country to the west'; Tennyson's, that the Suffolk Coast is a translation of England into miniature form; Allan Jobson's 1948 description, in referring to Constable, that 'Suffolk is an emblem of the nation'; and Claude Messent writing in 1949 that agricultural Suffolk 'can claim in many ways to be the most English part of England'. Given however that it is Norfolk, not Suffolk, that is bounded on two sides by the sea, it would have been helpful if Davis had spent a little time here on saying why Suffolk had attracted this 'island' status rather than its East Anglian counterpart, and perhaps more generally, in order to test the central 'island thinking' premise of the book, whether Suffolk is unique in generating 'island thinking', and to what extent it can be found in other counties on the geographical periphery and without large metropolitan areas.

Of most interest in this first part of the book is where Davis considers countryside writing's 'struggle' with contemporary militarization. Here Davis' knowledge of landscape militarization suffuses her analysis of these writings. However, the rest of the chapter is dense with numerous sources and, whilst a valuable compendium of writing on rural Suffolk, is less compelling. Much of the literature referred to is taken at face value and of equal merit; looking at book reviews and sales may have provided some insight as to the relative significance of the various writings.

Davis offers a good account of how Britain was affected by preparations for war (and defence) through the case study of Suffolk. The writing is enlightening and perceptive: 'the extensive militarization of the Suffolk landscape produced a patchwork of inaccessible areas, transforming the meanings of the land and landscape in England's "farthest east" towards a felt sense of being on the front line, with the idea of invasion close to hand'. The anti-invasion areas of Suffolk's Coast represented a new form of enclosure, demonstrating the argument that new metaphorical, if not actual, islands were created within both the island of Suffolk, England, and Britain.

In a chapter on 'Birds and Belonging' Davis uses RSPB archives to describe the 'material circumstances' of landscape militarization that prompted the return of the avocet to England in 1947 and the development of 'pioneering' nature reserves, which encouraged the reintegration of avocets into Britain's wildlife. This and the subsequent chapter on nature reserves are excellent in highlighting how these reserves 'managed nature' to favour the development of the avocet over and above other bird species. Davis quotes from wartime literature and broadcasting portraying birds as 'the heritage we are fighting for' and 'expressions' of the nation. She argues that the birds became 'a vehicle for formulations of national identity and ideas of England as a home to which to return and belong', creatively weaving in references in literature to migrant birds and national identity, although I found the reference to post-war Commonwealth immigration to Britain under-explained in terms of its relevance.

In the chapter on rewilding and war monuments Davis focuses on the former experimental military site at Orford Ness – now a National Trust-managed nature reserve and monument to the Cold War, where rather authoritarian-sounding Trust volunteers have supplanted Ministry of Defence police. In support of describing Orford Ness, Davis introduces a new phrase to my lexicon at least, that of 'military-academic-industrial complex', but I can make a stab at understanding what it means. Elsewhere there's

the occasional lapse into impenetrable neo-academic verbiage, such as 'taskscape-mediated connection between land and sky', which no matter how many times I read it I am no closer to comprehending.

In contrast, in the 'Looking to the Skies: Post-war Radar Stories' chapter, Davis makes a strong argument for the two places in Suffolk at which radar was developed (Bawdsley and a distinct part of the Orford Ness site) being both 'island-like, even though neither were technically islands' – and the radar researchers, 'drove this characterisation process' by referring to themselves as 'islanders'. Further feeding the 'island' concept, as a major feature of our air defences, Davis argues that radar helped to maintain Britain as an 'island fortress'. (For readers of this journal the chapter will probably tell you more than you ever need to know about the development of military radar in Suffolk.) What is of interest is the link with avian life – how bird movements were an obstacle to radar development, but subsequently how civil usage of radar subsequently contributed to the developing awareness of bird migration patterns.

What may be most striking to readers of the *Review* is the almost total absence of reference to how landscape militarization affected agriculture in Suffolk. Davis writes that 'Suffolk's countryside ... underwent massive changes during the Second World War, from the movement of people to changes in land use, with anti-invasion defences on the coast, airbases and battle training areas, and more mechanised and extensive farming'. Yet a word search of the book brings up 'agriculture' only four times and 'airfields' and 'airbases' only six times each, even though new-build military airbases had an immense impact on Suffolk's landscape and agriculture, albeit, in many instances, temporarily.

By the end of the Second World War there were 32 military airfields in Suffolk – 23 of them built during the war – and East Anglia as a whole had the highest concentration of new-build military airfields in the country, predominantly for heavy bomber aircraft. Arguably the military airfields were the single largest example of Second World War landscape militarization imposed on Suffolk, but they barely get a mention. Instead, Davis focuses in depth on those aspects of militarization which feed the 'island' theme, and ignores those that seemingly do not – although one could argue that islands of crumbling concrete in and amongst Suffolk's present-day wheat and barley fields could have helped to support Davis' island concept at least as much as the Orford Ness experimental military site.

Readers should find the overview chapter on landscape militarization in Suffolk, and the chapters on bird life,

nature reserves, and the radar development and military experimentation sites extremely informative, even if they might not find themselves buying into the concept of them contributing to and/or reflecting a sense of island identity at county level. More importantly, the price of pursuing the 'island' theme is that more significant instances of landscape militarization are all but ignored because for Davis they don't serve the 'island identity' concept. Part literature review, and part socio-cultural, military and conservation history, the book falls between each of these stools (perhaps inevitably). It is more a documentation of the perception of change, rather than detailed historical interrogation of the actual change, although an optimum amount of factual contextual information is provided.

GARY WILLIS
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ANGELA CASSIDY, *Vermin, victims and disease: British debates over Bovine Tuberculosis and badgers* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). 390 pp. 20 illus. £20 / free open access.

This book is a history of the science and policy behind Britain's ongoing badger controversy. At last we have a full-length treatment of an important question at the intersection of society and nature: are badgers villains or victims in the spread of bovine tuberculosis (bTB)? On the one hand there is the discourse of farmers and fellow-travelling politicians with rural constituencies, who speak in effect about 'bad' badgers, and on the other there are ecologists and the general public, for whom badgers are an iconic species. The advantage of Dr Cassidy's book is that she carefully peels back the layers and reveals the full complexity of a situation that seems to have little hope of immediate resolution.

By the time bTB was first discovered in badgers in 1971 there had already been a century of public debate about the disease. The early focus had been on its spread from cattle to humans through infected milk, but by 1960 this hazard had been largely controlled through pasteurization. In the 1970s the confirmation of a wildlife reservoir of bTB gave the disease a new manifestation in both the public and the scientific imaginations. The story has been told before but Dr Cassidy adds significant value. For instance, she discusses the actors rather than the organizations involved, using oral history and a close reading of official documents such as committee minutes to identify the key participants and their decisions, their motivations, and the constraints upon them. There are enlightening character sketches, highlighting, for instance, the irritability of Lord Zuckermann and his condescension towards pro-badger campaigners; and

there are also in-depth discussions of enthusiasts such as Ernest Neal, Eileen Soper, and Eunice Overend, providing a background to the radical animal politics emerging from the 1960s onwards and its influence upon policy-makers.

The role of badgers in spreading bTB is just one of the knowledge controversies that have become embedded in Britain's cattle economy in the last 50 years. Others include Foot and Mouth Disease and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. In the case of bTB in badgers, several epistemic communities – professional and popular – are involved. In recent times it has been particularly difficult to find a consensus for action, possibly due to a reduction in deference to authority and the greater in-depth exposure of the issues in the press and social media. Even the credibility of science has been undermined, first by the casual indifference of politicians to any expertise that does not fit their ideological preconceptions, second by the poor record of the tuberculin test for identifying the disease in cattle, and third (a point made in my *A History of Uncertainty: Bovine Tuberculosis in Britain, 1850 to the Present* [2016]) by the naivety of scientists with regard to the experimental frames that are practicable in a hostile rural setting.

There have been nine official reports on bTB, from Zuckerman in 1980 to Godfray in 2018. Dr Cassidy's book is the most detailed summary of these and the many swings in policy, from the banning of snaring and gassing, to the re-introduction of extensive trapping and shooting, and, most recently, the expansion of the vaccination of badgers. She is particularly strong on the origins of the parallel views of badgers as either vermin or charismatic wildlife.

According to Dr Cassidy, the bTB infection of cattle and badgers has been framed in two ways. The first sees the problem as one of agricultural malaise, with farmers as victims of financial loss and emotional stress. Although they have some professional support in the shape of veterinarians, overall there is little sympathy for them amongst city dwellers. In the second framing the focus has been on environmental ethics, with an acknowledgement of animal suffering and an emphasis upon the need for ecologically based policies, such as vaccination rather than culling. Here the badger is seen as the scapegoat for a bTB problem that is principally the result of cattle-to-cattle transmission. The second frame has also deployed notions of care about badgers that are new in the last 50 years, making it difficult for civil servants and politicians to ignore arguments about the inhumane practices of culling.

The author does not shy away from making recommendations. Two that stand out are, first, the

need for investment in better technologies (for instance to identify the disease in cattle and provide suitable vaccination strategies for badgers), and, second, a call for regular personal interactions between the competing interests at national and local level. The first is complex and expensive science that will yield results only in the long run, while the second should be achievable through diplomacy and an attempt at mutual understanding; and yet such consensus-building seems to be as far away as ever.

Dr Cassidy's style is admirably clear, jargon-free and without artifice. While coming from a Science and Technology Studies viewpoint, her theoretical cloak is worn lightly and in a way that enables an impartial analysis of the arguments deployed by all of the combatants in the controversies she unpacks. In addition, there is thorough scholarship evidenced in over 900 endnotes, 45 pages of bibliography and a full index.

Whereas in the past I have complained in book reviews about the high prices placed upon monographs by commercial publishers, now I am pleased to report that researchers, students and general readers can download the text under review for free. This wholly admirable innovation is supported financially by the Wellcome Trust and forms part of the structural shift in academic publishing that is now taking place. If this trend is taken to its logical conclusion there will be less need for expensive hard copy library storage, though we readers will all require more hard disk space on our computers to store electronic books. Overall, it is not difficult to see where balance of cost and convenience lies.

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Europe and Elsewhere

CHRISTOPHER KISSANE, *Food, religion and communities in early modern Europe* (Bloomsbury, 2018). 226 pp. 23 illus. £26.09.

Food, religion and communities in early modern Europe traces some of the many cultural resonances of food though the varied, and often tumultuous, landscape of early modern religion. Christopher Kissane encourages his readers to think 'through' food, rather than 'about' food, arguing that by using food as a 'prism' of study it is possible to illuminate wider historical processes. The book is structured around three such historical processes and the role that food played in their development: Inquisition, Reformation, and witch-hunting. The book takes the reader on a journey from late medieval Castile, where religious tension was rife,

to sixteenth-century Reformation Switzerland, where food became part-and-parcel of religious debates, concluding in early modern Shetland, where food was considered key to the practice of witchcraft.

Part 1 of the book focuses on the role of food in late medieval Inquisition trials in Castile. Kissane demonstrates that dietary habits and food choices were used time and again as evidence of religious non-conformity. As Kissane puts it, whilst Inquisitors and accusers were unable to look into their neighbour's souls, they could instead focus on differences that might point towards 'crypto-Judaism' or insincere conversion to Christianity. Dietary habits were one such easily noticed difference. Abstaining from certain foods, most notably pork, cooking with ingredients associated with 'deviant' religious cultures, such as olive oil and aubergines, preparing foods in certain ways, such as baking unleavened bread, and organizing kitchens around non-Christian principles, for example by separating certain ingredients, were all deployed by accusers as evidence of potential heresy. Eating and preparing food could therefore be a perilous business, communicating religious identity and revealing to onlookers what an individual believed and potentially what their true faith and religious convictions were.

Part 2 of the book moves the analysis away from accusatory neighbours and 'heretical' women, to focus on the significance of food in debates over religious reformation in sixteenth-century Switzerland. Homing in on the hotly contested issue of fast-breaking, Kissane argues that the Reformation was not solely a theological movement, but also a process that incorporated lived religious experience. In many ways, it was food that united the everyday experience of the Reformation with the theological debates that underpinned it. As Kissane demonstrates, the system of fasting, alongside contemporary representations of the foods associated with it such as meat and dairy, was a microcosm of how the Catholic Church functioned and a distillation of reformers' arguments against it: fasting had no basis in Scripture, it oppressed the poor and needy by forcing them to change their eating habits, and it emphasized the fact that the Church was run by greedy clerics who did not follow their own rules. The issue of fast-breaking, then, demonstrates clearly the role played by food in debates surrounding religious reformation.

The final section of the book examines the ways in which food was seen to be integral to the operation of witchcraft in early modern Shetland. As Kissane argues, witchcraft was believed to be at work in the production, preparation, and consumption of food. The theft of milk, the destruction of crops, and the

consumption of inappropriate foods were all hallmarks of the witch's craft. Those accused of witchcraft became scapegoats for a range of problems associated with food, whether that be the constant threat of harvest failure, the very real experience of dearth and hunger, or the unpredictable nature of food production techniques such as dairying. As well as elucidating legitimate concerns surrounding food supply, the connection between witchcraft and food also reflected commonly held beliefs about what constituted nourishing and religiously appropriate foods. Whilst Christian feasts were centred on purifying and religiously significant foods such as bread, 'sabbath' meals left the eater unsatiated and encouraged them to consume foods that were foul and often highly unappetising. These beliefs speak to the kinds of fears that propelled witchcraft accusations, demonstrating that they were embedded in the environmental difficulties of the period and in wider cultural assumptions about what constituted an appropriate diet.

Kissane's book is richly researched, forcefully argued, and provides ample 'food for thought'. There are, however, a few issues I would have been curious to read more about. At several points in the book Kissane describes late medieval and early modern religious identities as 'embodied'. I would have been interested in reading more about the embodied aspects of religious identities and how these beliefs may have conditioned how people of various religious persuasions engaged with certain foods. Was there a fear, for example, that eating foods associated with other religions had the potential to irrevocably alter a person's bodily physiology and in turn undermine their piety? May this partly explain why suspected Jews and Muslims may have run the risk of continuing to eat religiously significant foods despite the dangers involved? Connected to this, I was also intrigued by an assortment of examples where health concerns were given as the reason for either abstaining from certain suspect foods, or partaking in them. Was Luis Hurtado successful in convincing the Inquisition that he had only committed the sin of eating meat during Lent because he had been sick with syphilis? Likewise, would Pedro de Villareal's claim that he only abstained from bacon as it exacerbated his gout have fallen on deaf ears? These questions are not meant to detract from the strength of Kissane's analysis, but to offer suggestions of how this rich and complex topic can be explored further, particularly in relation to how medical understandings of food interacted with, and perhaps challenged, religious perceptions of diet.

The book is beautifully written and represents a welcome, and highly accessible, addition to the field of early modern food studies. The central message I

am left with from Kissane's book is that food and its various cultural meanings, in times past (and perhaps present?), is both unifying and divisive. Food was used to define 'deviant' and 'normative' behaviour, and employed as a tool to construct theories of the 'self' and of the 'other'. The study of food, then, as Kissane shows, is critical to understanding human behaviour, relationships, and connections to the material world.

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JONATHAN FINCH, KRISTINE DYRMANN and MIKAEL FRAUSING (eds), *Estate landscapes in northern Europe* (Aarhus University Press, 2019). 290 pp. 199.99DKK.

This collection of essays on noble estates in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Britain is the first publication from the ENCOUNTER network (European Network for Country House and Estate Research), established in 2015. This network facilitates the comparative study of the social, economic and cultural role of country houses within rural society. Its first publication provides a wealth of research on Norway, Sweden and Denmark to Anglophone readers. Hopefully, the comparative approaches applied by ENCOUNTER and its conferences and publications will do as much to revivify the study of this subject as CORN (the Comparative Rural History Network) and its publications have done to re-animate debates in agrarian history more widely.

There is certainly scope for such a development. Studies of landholders and landed society exist in an odd combination of comparative and insular research traditions. Comparative studies of European nobilities have been going on for over forty years, stimulated by the republication (and translation) of Norbert Elias' seminal work, *The Court Society*. However, as Elias' work suggests, debates have centred on the role of the 'absolutist' princely court as a political mechanism to constrain and emasculate the European nobility. At the other end of the spectrum, the Brenner debate, and subsequent contests over the nature, timing and character of the 'second serfdom' in Central Europe have kept alive the comparative analysis of lordship and landlord power. Similarly, studies of the architecture of the post-Renaissance country house have always been comparative and European in scope. However, aside from the proponents of Arno Meyer's interpretations about nineteenth-century aristocratic survival, the histories of estates, inheritance and the economic and social fortunes of nobles have tended to be either national in scope, or more often focused on the history of a particular property or family. This specificity is

usually a function of the profusion of source materials in a particular estate archive, and results in work that reveals (even reveals in) the inner workings of processes of administration, social relationships, cultural expression or material consumption. The disadvantage is that this work sometimes loses sight of the 'big-picture' concerns that can be used to thread together these particular examples or experiences.

The question is, how should such comparative analyses be undertaken? One way is to abstract general trends, shared phenomena or common explanations and to write about them at a fairly high level of abstraction (and tedium for the reader). The other way, adopted in this collection of essays, is to place thoroughly researched, lively and interesting case studies side-by-side in order to let the reader draw out relevant comparisons (aided by an effective synoptic introduction and conclusion). This works, up to a point. In truth, on one level there is not much that unites Yme Kuiper's plea to overturn the urban bias in the history of the Netherlands, with Arne Bugge Amundsen's discussion of the Danish Protestant ascendancy in seventeenth-century Norway. However, more broadly, this collection succeeds in raising important questions in the comparative study of estates and estate history.

Firstly, there is the question of categories and nomenclature. These essays have been written in English, but several contributors point out that some of the foundational concepts underlying comparisons within this study do not translate well into the language. The distinction between *Gutsherrschaft* and *Grundherrschaft* is basic to concepts of lordship and landholding in north-central Europe, but translates only moderately well as 'demesne' farming/estates versus tenancy or rental farming/estates. As Mikkel Venborg Pedersen and Carsten Porskrog Rasmussen illustrate, in practice, the heavy hand of the landowner could be apparent in *Grundherrschaft* systems, even without extensive formal labour services. Do we need more pliable, but transparent, terminology, and can ENCOUNTER begin to create it?

This question of language feeds into a deeper issue, that really needs to be addressed in a comparative study – the 'institutional' issue of inheritance practices and their effects on estate formation, transmission and diffusion. Students of agrarian history are familiar with the supposed differences in the effects of systems of primogeniture and 'partible inheritance'. These essays are replete with such instances, whether it is the effects of the introduction of primogeniture on Norwegian estates after 1671 in Amundsen's essay, or the tensions that existed within *Stammgut* inheritance practices in Baden-Württemberg in Menning's study. However, as

Menning's study reveals, in fact this system had the paradoxical effect of holding estates *together*, because the increasing proliferation of heirs (and rentiers), meant that they could only be managed effectively as a single unit, and the heirs had a considerable financial interest in leaving the golden goose undivided. These essays explore the relationship between 'institutional' structures of noble status, privilege and rights, with the practices and practicalities of estate management, but they highlight how important comparative analysis could be in assessing their effects and their causal significance.

In addition, there is the question of change over time in the legal position and managerial practices of landed estates, and the causes and dynamics of change. These are detailed in some depth in quantitative analyses by Finch of the 1873 Return of Landowners in Britain and Ulväng through a detailed study of 530 manors in six regions of Sweden through to 1950. These analyses emphasize the importance of regional variation, as does Kuiper's study of the Netherlands. In Britain, noble estates were largest where land was cheapest, or rather, where estates were managed extensively rather than intensively (incomes did not, necessarily, match acreages). In Sweden, noble estates remained surprisingly viable in regions of higher quality agricultural land, or with iron-production, where estate incomes remained more buoyant and family trusts were left intact. In the Netherlands, Kuiper makes observations that we should not generalize about the insignificance of nobles based on their marginality in 'Golden-Age' Holland and Zeeland, but need to look at the revival of noble fortunes and estates in Gelderland, Utrecht and Frisia in the later eighteenth century. Here, they look much more like their prosperous, innovative, intensifying neighbours across the channel in Southern England. As the studies of Denmark, Sweden and Norway each point out, although Meyer and others may well be correct to point out the enduring political, economic and cultural power of nobles in the long nineteenth century, political Liberalism introduced a raft of measures to dismantle their legal, fiscal, inheritance and lordship privileges and customs between 1770 and 1870 (with Britain and Ireland as latecomers). These essays provoke questions about the comparative effects and the relative extent of these changes in neighbouring countries.

So, this volume is extremely worthwhile for the questions it provokes. It is also well worth reading in its own right. It is very handsomely produced, illustrated copiously in colour throughout, with very legible illustrations of contemporary maps and drawings. Each of the authors is an expert within each national historiography, but each writes extremely accessibly

and concisely for a non-specialist reader, and each has clearly condensed a series of thorny, complex debates into concise syntheses, in which they plant their own detailed empirical research. This work will be of value to those interested in country houses and country house society in countries that do not, conventionally, feature largely in Anglophone studies. It will be very welcome for undergraduate and postgraduate students seeking a clear introduction into this wide variety of subject areas within these countries. Hopefully, too, it marks the start of a series of agenda-setting publications in this series, which bring together scholars from across Europe (and, hopefully, those studying colonial contexts, too), in order to re-think, re-define, and re-conceptualize this important and fascinating topic.

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DAVID MOON, *The American Steppes. The unexpected Russian roots of Great Plains agriculture, 1870s–1930s* (Cambridge University Press, 2020). 352 pp. 1 illus. 6 maps. £89.99.

Russian influences are etched into the landscape of the Great Plains, as David Moon demonstrates in *The American Steppes*. Today, travellers may glance at a sign for a Mennonite museum, or they might hear the ubiquitous phrase ‘Germans from Russia’. These observations are not new. Moon introduces readers to a 1942 sculpture in Newton, Kansas, erected to commemorate the Russian Mennonites who ostensibly brought Turkey Red wheat to the Plains. The sculpture followed a 1941 radio play about a young Mennonite girl whose family brought seeds from the Crimea to the United States. These cultural documents gesture towards the power of an agricultural origin story. Moon’s book, however, reveals that this simplified legend is but one strand in a complex history of exchanges between the Plains and the steppes. These exchanges include wheat, but they also include soil science, shelterbelts, and tumbleweeds.

Moon argues that Russian immigrants, research, and science played a crucial role in the development of Great Plains agriculture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The author is uniquely poised to marshal evidence for this assertion; his extensive experience with Russian material, including a 2013 book on the environmental history of the steppes, allows him to assemble histories of contact between Russian and American scientists. Moon’s own journeys span state archives in Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and the United States, and include regional holdings from Odessa to Topeka. This archival feat is particularly evident in part II, where Moon details specific ‘transfers’. However, the

danger in such a topic is that the author will produce a Russian source for plains agriculture at every turn, even with scarce evidence. Thankfully, Moon skilfully avoids that fate by acknowledging barriers to exchange and noting archival absences.

Structurally, Moon assists readers by devoting the first three chapters to ‘context’. The first chapter offers a summary of European settlement on the Great Plains, with a specific eye on Russian and Mennonite settlers. Chapter 2 outlines the barriers to Russian-American exchange, among them the steppes’ reputation as a site of disaster, American perceptions of Russia as culturally ‘backward,’ and the political realities of Soviet Russia. As noted above, this chapter is particularly useful for such a project, because Moon does not dismiss the real impact of cultural prejudice or strained diplomatic ties. However, these barriers did not preclude numerous exchanges, facilitated by the bridges described in chapter three, including: travellers between the two regions, immigrants with Russian language skills, and international scientific communities. Helpfully, by the end of part I, key individuals will feel familiar to readers.

Part II is structured around two plants as bookends (wheat and tumbleweeds), with exchanges of science and technique sandwiched between. Moon begins with the most iconic transfer, the vaunted Turkey Red wheat, before working through the longer history of exchange. In chapter 4, Moon tells a more complete story that includes the USDA’s search for a hardy wheat and the relationship between American crop scientist Mark Carleton and steppes-born Mennonite immigrant, miller Bernhard Warkentin. Notably, the long and varied introduction of Russian wheat varieties to the plains was not distilled into the Mennonite seed story until the early twentieth century. Chapters 5 and 6 turn to a lesser-known site of Russian influence: soil science. Moon begins by noting that USDA publications in the 1930s describe plains soil as ‘chernozems’, the Russian term for black soil on the steppes. This designation demonstrates a Russian influence, but there were barriers (as Moon notes throughout). For example, into the twentieth century, American soil science remained rooted in geology, while Russian science considered soil formation in a wider context that included climate and organic matter. However, some scientists were determined to build bridges. Curtis Marbut, a director of the US Soil Survey, read Konstantin Glinka’s book in German, used his methods in Plains fieldwork, and even befriended his fellow soil scientist at a conference in Prague. Marbut’s unwavering efforts to implement Russian science in the US, and his friendship with Glinka, are highlights

of Moon's research. Chapters 7 and 8 survey both the Russian and American experience with shelterbelts as a technology for ameliorating drought and dust storms. During the New Deal, American foresters turned to Russian science to argue for the Great Plains Shelterbelt Project, largely due to the ambitions and efforts of Russian-born forester Raphael Zon. In fact, the US also looked to the steppes for shelterbelt tree species, including Russian olive and mulberry. Finally, Moon turns to another species transfer, and threat to young shelterbelts, the Russian thistle. Better known as a tumbleweed, the Russian thistle was part of the same transfer that brought steppe species to the Great Plains. Moon's final account of a plant traveller underlines the complex and global sources of plains agricultural history.

Ultimately, Moon's study is eminently convincing. He makes careful, evidence-based connections, though after reading it is tempting to search for Russian influences elsewhere – in the social realism of the Newton sculpture for instance. One admirable feature of Moon's text is his clear delineation of the book's aims. However, though he repeatedly notes the structures of settler colonialism that facilitated many of these transfers, Moon also relegates Native peoples to the past. Given that his period overlaps with the US government's assimilationist policies, of which agriculture was a central tenet, I found myself wondering if Russian wheat varieties were sowed on reservations. Or, if soil scientists, driven by Russian sources, conducted fieldwork on reservations? Certainly, Moon's research task was already expansive, but the book could have benefited from including contemporaneous Native people in the narrative. Still, *The American Steppes* is an important entry into the growing body of literature that positions the American West within global histories. Aside from the obvious audiences of environmental and agricultural historians, *The American Steppes* will be of interest to anyone looking for a transnational study that does not devolve into mere comparisons. Finally, Moon's book will appeal to Plains people who are interested in a more nuanced story of their Russian roots.

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SARAH HAMILTON, *Cultivating Nature: The conservation of a Valencian working landscape* (University of Washington Press, 2018). 312 pp. 21 illus. \$40.

The Albufera Lake south of the Spanish city of Valencia was recently awarded the title 'Threatened Lake of the Year 2020' by the international foundation, Global Nature Fund. Even though this information was not available at the time of *Cultivating Nature's* publication,

the book provides a historically well-founded explanation of how the degradation of this ecosystem occurred and why social and cultural factors have been of crucial importance in its demise.

Based on the revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation, *Cultivating Nature* presents the history of the Albufera de Valencia chronologically, from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The introduction takes the reader quickly through the local setting and international entanglements of the place, a coastal lagoon with surrounding dunes, fields and forests (known in Valencian as *la Devesa*). Hamilton offers a *longue durée* look at the history of Valencia and the Albufera from Roman times, through the period of Muslim rule, to the beginning of the twenty-first century. Besides introducing the main actors – including landowners, rice farmers, fishermen, hunters, city dwellers, politicians and scientists – she also provides information on the ecological importance of the wetland, for example, as a refuge for migratory birds, and highlights the historical link between the landscape and Valencian identity. Furthermore, speaking from an environmental perspective, she shows how many developments in modern Spanish history ran parallel to those in other Western European countries, such as the enthusiasm for nature in the early twentieth century that emerged from Romanticism, the consequences of agricultural intensification and the role of health and the environment in urban communities during the 1970s.

Contrary to the ideas of modernization based on the exploitation of natural resources that have prevailed since the monarchist restoration in 1874, Hamilton explains in the first chapter how a new discourse emerged that emphasized the protection of nature as an integral component of a modern state. She explains convincingly that in this process 'acrimonious relationships across the Western world between those seeking to protect valuable landscapes and those seeking to live within them' (p. 58) arose. This becomes clear in the Albufera, where rice farmers committed to agricultural modernization felt threatened by conservationists and recreation-seeking urbanites when the city of Valencia purchased the Albufera and its Devesa from the Spanish Ministry of Finance in 1911.

During Franco's dictatorship, the central government's modernization agenda continued and parts of the landscape around the Albufera were eventually destroyed for the development of tourist infrastructure, as Hamilton examines in chapter two. Particularly during the first phase of the regime, in which the country's self-sufficiency was emphasized, some scientists were successful in pointing out the importance of ecological

health for economic productivity. Hamilton argues that, unlike socialists and other obvious opponents of the regime, conservationists were not seen as a threat by the dictatorship and they managed to establish 'early precedents for a perception of scientific arguments in favour of conservation and sustainable use as apolitical and nonthreatening, thereby providing an avenue for certain types of low-level dissent' (p. 66). A subchapter also deals with the case of the Doñana National Park, which shows successful international cooperation between conservationists, and the regime's concession in favour of Spain's growing reputation in international relations with Western democracies.

A separate chapter is devoted to the final phase of the dictatorship (1970–74). One of Hamilton's central arguments in this part is that under the guise of nature conservation, a deeper criticism of the Franco regime arose which was supported by neighbourhood associations and environmentalists, among others. They united 'human welfare and social justice with the condition of the spaces in which people lived, worked, and played' (p. 96). Closely related to this was a 'neovalencianism' which gained momentum in the struggle for the public space of the Albufera from the 1960s onwards, contributing to an eco-nationalism and expressing itself, for example, in the fact that the Devesa was regarded 'as a Valencian commons' (p. 106). Under pressure from these groups and due to numerous critical newspaper articles about the condition of the Albufera, the city tried in vain to curb the criticism and protests by revising the expansion plan, which no longer revolved solely around the Albufera but also questioned the entire regime.

The last two chapters of the book cover the period of Spain's democratization and integration into the European Community. In order to halt the ongoing degradation of the Albufera, environmentalists, together with the city and the Generalitat Valenciana, set up the Albufera Natural Park in 1986. As in the early twentieth century, rice farmers were largely left out of the planning process and new regulations were imposed, an approach which, according to Hamilton, demonstrates 'a profoundly political preference for urban, progressive interests over rural, economic ones' (p. 145). Despite the ensuing strong protests by farmers, the ongoing ecological problems of the lake, which also affected agricultural activities, as well as the new marketing ('Protected designation of origin') and agri-environmental programs introduced by the European MacSharry reform in 1992, have led to a convergence between farmers and scientists and to a new awareness of many farmers as ecosystem conservators. Nevertheless, Hamilton stresses that there have

been further conflicts in the aftermath, and that 'this quid-pro-quo conservation is not culturally sustainable' (p. 185), as it is often still perceived by farmers as an imposition and restriction.

By the conclusion, it becomes apparent that Hamilton's book is a passionate plea for the consideration and involvement of the local population, especially farmers, in nature conservation issues. *Cultivating Nature* shows in an impressive way how much contemporary history can benefit from oral history. Chapters 3 to 5 especially have drawn a lot of information from the more than twenty interviews conducted by the author. In addition, the book is mainly based on archive sources, articles from newspapers and magazines, legal texts and a solid base of secondary literature.

Needless to say, in covering nearly 140 years of history in 200 pages, the book cannot answer all questions. For example, the reader learns quite a lot about individual scientists and conservationists, while the experiences and fates of individual farmers remain somewhat in the background. One could also ask whether they were really such a uniformly acting group as is suggested over long stretches of the book. And what role have Valencian actors played in organic farming since the 1990s? Overall, *Cultivating Nature* is a work written in a clear, engaging language, which is not only excellently suited for academic introductory courses on the agricultural and conservation history of Spain in the twentieth century, but also provides a good introduction for a readership outside the academic world that is generally interested in nature conservation.

ANDREAS JÜNGER

Rachel Carson Center

FERNANDO COLLANTES, *The Political Economy of the Common Agricultural Policy: Coordinated Capitalism or Bureaucratic Monster?* (Routledge, 2020). 116 pp. 7 illus. £31.99.

First published in Spanish in 2019 with the rather more revealing title of *¿Capitalismo coordinado o monstruo de Frankenstein? La política agraria común y el modelo europeo, 1962–2020* [*Coordinated capitalism or Frankenstein's monster? The Common Agricultural Policy and the European Model, 1962–2020*] this is not a straightforward study, or simple history, of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). It has loftier ambitions, asking for example: 'Does [the CAP] illustrate the virtues of the European model of coordinated capitalism, as opposed to US-style liberal capitalism? Or, conversely, is it an incoherent set of instruments that exerts diverse negative impacts and seems to have escaped the control of its designers?' (p. ix). Its author, who is Associate Professor of

Socioeconomic History at the University of Zaragoza, laments the rise of Euroscepticism, which has raised questions requiring answers such as: 'Is the EU really a triumph of democracy or, on the contrary, an institution with a serious problem of lack of legitimacy? Is it a bastion of Europe's tradition of social capitalism within a global neoliberal era or, conversely, an agent working against said tradition?' To help address these issues, the book 'analyses the socio-economic dimension of the problem through a case study of the Common Agricultural Policy' (p. 2). I have my doubts that a case study of the CAP is, by itself, capable of answering such deeply divisive questions.

It is claimed that the use of an historical political-economy approach results in two distinctive features distinguishing this from other analyses of the CAP. First, 'the book tries to consider the socio-economic and the political sides of the analysis in a more integrated fashion than has been common so far' (p. 3); and second 'the book aspires to providing a longer-run perspective than is usual in most available historical and social science studies, not to speak of journalistic coverage of the CAP' (p. 4). This is quite ambitious in the space of 112 pages, and quite understandably the author concedes that the book 'does not give ... a complete, once-and-for-all history of the CAP'. It is 'closer to a history-based essay than to a history monograph proper' (pp. 3–4). It relies on printed rather than archival sources.

Anyone new to the CAP, wanting to know the 'whats' and 'whys' of support for European farmers, may well need to search out additional material. Readers with more than a passing knowledge of the CAP and its history will not be too surprised by the book's contents, but may quibble over odd statements that appear. These include: 'Only during the Uruguay round of the GATT (1986–1993) was agriculture incorporated into international trade negotiations' (p. 40), and a confusing reference to 'farm income', when farm revenue (from sales and subsidies, before deduction of costs) was surely in mind (for example, p. 37). The author clearly has little time for 'neoclassical economists' and 'Marxist sociologists and other critics of neoliberal globalization' (for example, pp. 15, 108).

Chapter 1 introduces the concept of 'coordinated capitalism', a phrase that reverberates throughout the book. This is 'a variety of capitalism in which the state actively intervenes in order to pursue social, environmental and territorial objectives' (p. 107). The European Union's embrace of coordinated capitalism underpins the rhetoric surrounding the CAP: 'A common agricultural policy had the potential to illustrate the virtues of European-style coordinated capitalism' (p. 85).

Although the Treaty of Rome outlined a number of objectives for the CAP, the main concern of policy makers in the early years was a belief that farm incomes lagged behind those in other sectors. Thus a system of market price support, involving import taxes, export subsidies, and the purchase of 'surplus' produce was put in place, resulting for example in the infamous 'butter mountains' in intervention stores. Some analysts characterized this as an agricultural welfare state, even though the benefits flowed disproportionately to larger farmers (who had more to sell), and landowners. Others have claimed this was successful rent-seeking by the farm lobby. However, a 'change of paradigm was started by the MacSharry reform of 1992 and consolidated by the Fischler reform of 2003. ... The key to paradigm change was the substitution of a system of price support via market intervention with a system of income support via direct payments to farmers' (p. 41).

Chapter 3 challenges the 'monster myth'. It claims that the CAP was never as costly to taxpayers or consumers, or as disruptive to farmers in the 'global South', as its critics suggest. The pre-1992 CAP had a more modest impact on food prices than was commonly supposed, and with rising real incomes throughout Western Europe the proportion of the household budget spent on food declined; CAP's budget was only ever a small fraction of EU GDP (Gross Domestic Product); and the anti-agrarian policy bias of the global South was more problematic than the CAP for their agricultures.

But if the CAP was never as bad as its detractors made out, nor was it ever as good as its advocates alleged. Chapter 4 addresses this 'even greater myth': the claim that the CAP's coordinated agrarian capitalism resulted in an agricultural welfare state, and that it subsequently delivered effective environmental protection together with robust policies for rural development. Despite the progressive incorporation of these other concerns, Collantes concludes that the post-1992 policy mix 'did not trigger a substantial reorientation of those instruments towards social justice, environmental sustainability or rural development' (p. 101).

Consequently, in the closing pages the author declares: 'The CAP is actually a rather sad story. If all the stories that we can contrapose to Eurosceptic arguments are of this kind, no wonder Eurosceptics are ever more in number' (p. 110). Whilst many could concur that the history of the CAP is a rather sad story, some of them might suggest that this is more than counterbalanced by the wider aspirations and achievements embedded in the European project.

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