Review.

"Craig Benjamin, Empires of Ancient Eurasia. The First Silk Roads Era, 100 BCE–250 CE, Nueva York, Cambridge University Press, 2018" (316 pp.; ISBN 978-1-107-53543-5).

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Book Reviews

Ptolemy I and the Transformation of Egypt, 404-282 BCE

Edited by Paul McKechnie and Jennifer A. Cromwell

Brill, 2018, eBook, 259 Pages, RRP EUR€110/USD$132.00, ISBN 9789004366961

Scholarship concerning change in fourth century BCE Egypt principally focuses on the effects of Alexander the Great's conquest in the final decades of that century as well as the consolidation performed by his successor in the region, Ptolemy, son of Lagus. While both Alexander and Ptolemy's contributions were noteworthy and significant to the development of Egypt, the scholarly emphasis has obscured the reality that Egyptian society, politics and the economy were already in flux and that this would influence the extent of developments in Hellenistic Period Egypt.

This consideration is the subject of the book under review. *Ptolemy I and the Transformation of Egypt, 404-282 BCE*, edited by Paul McKechnie and Jennifer A. Cromwell, contextualises many of the changes attributed to Ptolemy, son of Lagus (and later, King of Egypt) as he secured control over Egypt. Originating from a conference at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia in 2011, the book features seven papers (turned chapters) covering a wide range of aspects of Egyptian politics, society, religion and the economy such as the calendar system, coinage and the political economy, temple building, a reassessment of the Satrap Stele and the practice of cremation in early Alexandrian cemeteries as a marker of identity.

The publication has many strengths, including its structure. While the predominant focus is on Ptolemy and his impact on the Egyptian landscape provides continuity across the chapters, each subject, be it coinage or calendars, is greatly contextualised and any relevant developments that took place during the fourth century BCE are addressed, with an extensive range of well-researched evidence cited. This contextualisation reinforces the dynamism of Egypt in this period, moving away from attributing change to Ptolemy as its sole agent. This approach is established by the two excellent introductory chapters by Dorothy J. Thompson and Paul McKechnie respectively. In the first, Thompson focuses on Ptolemy and how his character and later, agenda were well suited to the Egyptian society that he encountered. In the second chapter, McKechnie establishes a history of conflict in fourth century BCE Egypt and in doing so situates Ptolemy within a broader fascination with Egyptian territory and a desire to claim it. These chapters together help reveal the dynamism of Egypt and provide an effective basis for the remainder of the volume to demonstrate how the decisions of previous leaders and events affected Ptolemy's reforms.

In the first chapter following Cromwell's and McKechnie's contributions, Chris Bennett discusses the calendar and dating system under Ptolemy I (and briefly, under his successor and son Ptolemy II). Bennett correctly argues that the calendar was used as an act of imperial policy under the reign of Ptolemy and further enhances this view by establishing its connection to the cultural, economic and religious operation of the country. In doing so, Bennett's examination dismisses many assumptions about Ptolemy wholly unifying Egyptian and Hellenic culture in all capacities. Rather, the calendrical evidence provided by Bennett reveals that, among other things, both communities

had distinct economic processes and timelines well into the reign of Ptolemy's son, Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

Following Bennett's contribution, the outstanding fourth chapter by Henry P. Colburn on coinage and the political economy of Egypt in this period exemplifies this contextual approach. Disputing popular assumptions about Ptolemy's economic and numismatic reforms, Colburn shows through archaeological evidence that a shift toward using coins as a system of currency was in motion well before Ptolemy took control of Egypt. The discovery of Athenian (and later, imitation) tetradrachms that gradually took the place of other bartering tools such as staples like grain is discussed as one instance of evidence of the emergence of a currency system in Egypt well before Ptolemy was present. Colburn's chapter is a demonstration on how including history of the fourth century enriches understandings about the climate in which Ptolemy implemented his reforms.

In the collection's fifth chapter, Martina Minas-Nerpel goes on to discuss the relationship between Pharaohs and temple building. She elaborates that the extent of a building program, sacred buildings included, was seen as a practical reflection of their power and authority. After establishing the significance of this dynamic by citing prior Egyptian history, Minas-Nerpel goes on to situate Ptolemy's efforts and achievements within this specific dynamic. Despite the scarce archaeological remains, she is then able to determine that Ptolemy largely continued the projects left by Alexander and the preceding dynasties by repairing and extending existing buildings such as sacred avenues at Thebes and linking Karnak to Luxor. In light of this argument, Minas-Nerpel affirms that Ptolemy's building program was one of continuity and consolidation more than extension, an idea that is central to the thesis of this book.

This notion of Ptolemy making use of previous Egyptian history and convention is further supported by Boyo Ockinga's literary reassessment of the Satrap Stele. In the sixth chapter of the book, Ockinga explores the stele in exhaustive detail. As one of the most famous native Egyptian monuments and dating to 311 BCE, it offers insight into the perception of Ptolemy's official position as satrap. This is the basis of an analysis in which Ockinga examines each line, drawing parallels with Middle and New Kingdom literary conventions to provide insight into how the scribes and further, the Egyptian elite, perceived Ptolemy in light of the disparity between his expected and actual position. Ockinga suggests that Ptolemy was being described in terms befitting a ruling authority, rather than as an official. In this way, Ockinga demonstrates that an understanding of previous Egyptian history can enrich understandings of Ptolemy's position.

In the final chapter of the book, Thomas Landvatter contributes to understandings of ethnicity and identity in early Ptolemaic Egypt, by exploring the practice of cremation in the early Hellenistic period at Shatby, a cemetery just outside Alexandria. Here, Landvatter disputes the popular assumption that cremation instantly denoted 'Greek' and revises previous archaeological reports to suggest that cremation did not necessarily confirm a divide between the Egyptians and the Greeks but that cremations instead more broadly indicated 'Other' as opposed to a specific nationality.

Ptolemy I and the Transformation of Egypt, 404-282 BCE is a superb publication that bridges a gap between general studies of fourth-century Egypt and Hellenistic scholarship that focuses on Alexander's and Ptolemy's impacts on Egyptian political, social and economic infrastructure. By and large, the strength of this book is its ability to offer a number of a number of alternative perspectives from which the extent of Ptolemy's cultural assimilation (or lack thereof) as well as degree of continuity and change can be examined. As a result, this book is highly recommended

for a wide range of tertiary students and researchers studying Egypt in the fourth century BCE or specifically focusing on Ptolemy and his legacy.

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This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom

Martin Hägglund

Pantheon Books, 2019, Paperback; 464 pages; RRP US$18; ISBN 9781101873731

Philosopher Martin Hägglund's *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom* explores how a lack of belief in an afterlife may positively guide the lives of secular people. After making the case that without religion one is forced to recognise the fragility and finitude of existence and therefore prioritise the quality of one's current life above all, Hägglund moves to defending democratic socialism as the best method to achieving this goal collectively. He calls this project 'secular faith': a devotion of care towards projects with the possibility of failure (including people, who can die), and the recognition that such care is dependent on our continual, deliberate practice of it. James Wood of *The New Yorker* called *This Life* the "atheist manifesto of our time", and, significantly for atheism studies, at no point does the text attempt to demonstrate the non-existence of God ("If God Is Dead, Your Time is Everything," *The New Yorker*, 13 May 2019). Rather, Hägglund bypasses the played-out rationalist proofs to combine ethics and naturalism in an examination of the philosophical, social, ecological and economic implications of a lack of afterlife.

Using a deconstructionist methodology, Hägglund examines works by religious thinkers and analyses whether their content demonstrates secular rather than religious faith. In one example, the highly religious author C.S. Lewis grappled with grief upon the death of his beloved wife. Hägglund uses such grief as evidence that we can only care about people's existence if we do not believe we will encounter them again after their deaths. He also surveys the Bible and Buddhist philosophy, along with texts by religious philosophers ranging from Greek and Roman Stoics to Meister Eckhart, Martin Luther, Baruch Spinoza, Paul Tillich, Dante Alighieri and Charles Taylor.

The first part of *This Life* provides an account of why secular faith is necessary for genuine care, analysing the difference in concepts of time and eternity in St Augustine's *The Confessions* by contrasting it with Karl Ove Knausgaard's secular *My Struggle*, and concludes by investigating why, according to Hägglund, secular faith is necessarily at odds with religious believers' faith in eternity. Hägglund argues that being finite means a person cannot live entirely without the support of other people. It also means recognising that one's life will someday end absolutely. The traditional preference, being eternal, must in fact be undesirable as one's actions would have no purpose: the care, passion, and choices one makes are only animated by one's devotion to them despite the possibility of their failure. Infinity would render our actions meaningless because there would be no risk of loss involved. In a compelling example, Hägglund refers to Kierkegaard's examination of the biblical story of the near-killing of Isaac by his father, Abraham. Believing in the afterlife, Abraham is free to kill Isaac because there is no true loss involved. Abraham trusts that upon his own death he will be reunited with his son, and so no *permanent* death will occur for either of them. In this example Hägglund highlights that the fear and pain of loss are necessary to caring; without them, a father can justify the killing of his own son.

Hägglund initiates the second part of *This Life* by exploring the notion of freedom under the banner of belief in an afterlife. He argues that if the concept of freedom is only intelligible when people are free to decide what to do with their time, then actions resulting from belief in what is necessary to enter an afterlife are not freedom. A condition of *true* freedom, then, is understanding ourselves to be finite, and therefore living both *without* the shackles of needing to consider the implications of our current behaviours for an afterlife and *with* the higher stakes of making our current choices extremely important for our brief existences.

After illustrating the importance of our present existences, Hägglund turns to Marx to demonstrate how emancipation from capitalism's binding of labour and time can allow us space to make choices for our lives that are not merely based on economic notions of freedom. In revaluing wealth as *time* we must then necessarily take steps to consider what is needed of us to be a good society. Through a practical political call to action for greater social justice and material welfare, Hägglund provides an account of why democratic socialism would provide the foundation for an entirely secular but also fulfilling life, marrying the necessity of work with the freedom of choosing what to do with one's limited time.

Accessible at an undergraduate level and above to those with an interest in secular life, meaning and death, the aim of *This Life* is to loosen the dependence of atheism on theism, and return meaning to the finite life precisely because of its finitude. Secular people have traditionally prided themselves on being strong enough to withstand the disenchantment of anticipating an eventual perpetual nothingness, while charged by the religious as lacking a morality derived from the necessity of altering behaviour to fit the requirements of entry to an afterlife. Hägglund argues the contrary: it is their very secularism that gives their existence purpose and makes morality truly possible.

There are some statements that unfairly and incorrectly simplify religious belief: "the common denominator for what I call religious forms of faith is a devaluation of our finite lives as a lower form of being", without acknowledging the complex reality that many religious believers – those who subscribe to an afterlife, *and* those who do not – do in fact show care for their communities and people outside their belief systems (p. 6). Yet, as with most atheist texts, when the book stops trying to vindicate non-belief and instead explores how secular meaning is made, then the gold starts to shine through. For the most part, *This Life* gleams.

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The White Men's Countries: Racial Identity in the United States–Australian Relationship, 1933–1953

Travis J. Hardy

> *"We [Australians] seem to have the same likes and dislikes as you—and the same prejudices—and after all, one can't feel at home except amongst people that have the same prejudices as oneself." Richard Casey, Australian Ambassador to the United States at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. in 1940 (quoted by Hardy, 2020, p. 69).*

Travis J. Hardy's *The White Men's Countries: Racial Identity in the United States–Australian Relationship, 1933–1953* delves into two decades of foreign policy, from the Great Depression to the start of the Korean War. In seven chapters the book gives an overview of United States–Australia international relations, moving into focus through the interwar years, World War II, a sense of shared racial identity, the immediate post-war period, and conflict in Korea and the Cold War. Framed as a contribution to historians and students of American foreign policy (p. 10), this monograph is also a useful resource for Australian studies scholars engaged with race, national identity, and transnational history. Hardy offers a nuanced and logical account of Australia's relationship with the United States, examining how a shared affiliation with 'white' national identity brought about a greater alignment in United States and Australian interests, despite tensions around trade, politics and cultural differences.

While 'white' and 'black' were familiar binaries for Australia and the United States from the nineteenth century, each nation had its own inflection and their shared worldviews did not manifest an instantaneous bond. Hardy outlines fractious encounters between Prime Minister Billy Hughes and President Woodrow Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference, the impact of the Great Depression on trade, misconceptions by the United States that Australia remained part of the United Kingdom, and practical and ideological fears about Japan's rise in power in terms of regional and global politics.

As World War II broke out, Australia was under growing pressure to strengthen ties with the United States. While diplomatic efforts were made, bunfights over tariffs and regional security, as well as tensions between America and Britain, posed seemingly unsurpassable differences, until faced with a common ('non-white') enemy—Japan. When American ships did dock in Australia during the Pacific War, they were welcomed by "large enthusiastic crowds", representing "brief moments of harmony … on both the official and unofficial level" (p. 44). Where a multitude of other factors had driven wedges between the two nations, the common goal of defeating Japan, grounded in racist attitudes of white superiority, brought the nations together. While distaste remained, a new mode of foreign relations developed between Australian and the United States as they banded together to ensure that a non-white power did not take control of the Pacific region.

Hardy writes that when American troops arrived in 1941 it was interpreted as a sign of "white solidarity against the 'Yellow Peril' threatening Australia from the north" (p. 73). It is this section of the book (Chapter 4) that is the most powerful. Having set out the context of just how unlikeable Australia and the United States had made themselves to each other—listing countless diplomatic, economic and trade disagreements—Hardy is able to expose how significant it was

that attitudes towards race and the construction of Australia and the United States as 'white' nations were able to overcome these obstacles. Considering all angles, Hardy also draws our attention to the response of Australians towards African American soldiers. White racial identity was the point where "worldviews overlapped and connected" but the arrival of African American soldiers and labourers was considered hugely problematic by Australian policymakers (p. 74). The United States that the Australian Government wanted to be associated with was white. The presence of non-white Americans further complicated the relationship.

Facing everything from ambivalence to "outright rejection" in Australia, African Americans continued to be perceived as the 'Other'. Hardy concludes that "white Americans' racial views" reinforced a commitment by some to a White Australia (p. 89). For those Australians with a racist worldview, segregation and discrimination against African Americans made perfect sense and was another (shameful) hallmark of the allegiance. As the Cold War began, these racialised views extended to the United States–Australian outlook on the Asia–Pacific region: "The racial ideology of World War II helped both nations to see a bifurcated world of white against yellow." Entering a new phase post war, this became "white against red", reflecting not only shared racial identity but anti-communist views (p. 123).

From an Australian and transnational history perspective, this research builds on Marilyn Lake's and Henry Reynolds' ground-breaking study *Drawing The Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the Question of Racial Equality* (2009), although it does not actually reference this text. It draws broadly from history, sociology and political science, and incorporates foundational work by Australian historian Joy Damousi, but is otherwise largely from an American research perspective. It reveals the power of racialised views in shaping foreign policy and gestures to the ongoing influence of this period.

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Empires of Ancient Eurasia. The First Silk Roads Era, 100 BCE–250 CE

Craig Benjamin

Cambridge University Press, 2018; Paperback; 316 pages; RRP US$25.99; ISBN 9781107535435.

Empires of Ancient Eurasia is the third book by the Australian-American academic Craig Benjamin. In this title he combines two of the objectives of his previous books: the analysis of some of the Eastern Ancient civilizations (in *The Yuezhi: Origin, Migration and the Conquest of Northern Bactria*), and the analysis of the nature and application of the 'Big History' perspective in history and historiography (in the co-authored book *Between Nothing and Everything: Big History*).

In *Empires of Ancient Eurasia*, Benjamin intends to produce a brief account of the surviving hints and signals that allow us to reconstruct what has been named 'the first silk roads', that is, the commercial route between ancient China and the Roman Empire established before the third century C.E. And he achieves his purpose; his text is a clear, vibrant and not-wordy introduction to some ancient Eurasian 'empires' or, better said, 'civilizations', and their commercial interconnectedness. The book is divided into nine chapters, each one including, for commendable pedagogical purposes, its own introduction and conclusion.

The narrative surveys a variety of themes, such as exploration, art, human–animal relationships, cultural interchange, or political expansion. A close follower of Big History's methodologies, the author studies the 'history' of animals during ancient times, for instance, the histories of the horse (pp. 26–7) and the camel. Benjamin takes Big History as his 'theoretical' guide and delves into the ancient past of Eurasia; in the Introduction he delivers explanations around the meaning and objectives of 'Big History' (p. 7) or World Systems (p. 10). Nevertheless, his surveys on the nature and definitions of 'globalization' or 'tribe' (pp. 12–13, 20) are insufficient to understand the scope of Big History studies thoroughly, a deficiency that is understandable as this is not the main topic explored in the book.

In spite of its variety of themes, *Empires of Ancient Eurasia* has a remarkable coherence and unity: the *leitmotiv* (the first silk roads) never disappears completely in the book, something that cannot be said of recent texts on similar themes, like *The Silk Roads* by Peter Frankopan, or *Lost Enlightenment* by Frederick Starr.

The first chapter offers a type of second introduction: it concentrates on the origin and expansion of the Xiongnu and Yuezhi peoples, the civilizations that were to become the link between the two extreme ends of the first Silk Road, China and Rome. The second chapter describes the political origins of China, while the third chapter surveys Chinese political and military expansion. The fourth and fifth chapters are a deep immersion into the nature of the incipient first Silk Road of the world *per se*, analysing its Eastern and Western ends respectively. In chapters six and seven, Benjamin studies the role of the Parthian Empire and the Kushan Empire as intermediaries of the first silk roads. The final two chapters provide an interesting survey of the alternative maritime routes of commerce between East and West, and of the temporal collapse of the land silk route (the end of the first Silk Road).

Utilising a very didactic style, Benjamin establishes the importance of several factors for the construction of the first Silk Road: the invention of writing (p. 47), the ethical justifications made by the Chinese (Zhou) governments (p. 50), Confucian cosmology (p. 62), personal entrepreneurism (principally that exercised by Zhang Qian, pp. 88–9), and diminishing urban poverty in the last decades of Republican Rome (p. 127), among others. But, according to the

author, the factor that was most probably fundamental in the formation of such an ancient commercial route was the social nexus provided by the Parthian people (pp. 161–70).

One of the principal merits of the book, in my view, is that it underlines the role of civilizations which are relatively unknown to westerners in creating the first grand transcontinental route. We must therefore imagine the Parthians or the Kushans as the first enablers of 'globalization', a suggestion which must stir the student's curiosity to know more about such civilizations, and which supports the elimination of the predominant western-centric view of global history.

Near the end of his book Benjamin declares: "The ultimate significance of the Sasanians to world history, like the Kushans and the two Persian/Iranians empires that had preceded it, was their role of facilitators of cultural exchange. In the same way that the Achaemenids and Parthians had functioned as geographic bridges between Europe and Central Asia […], the Sasanians also acted as a spatial bridge between China and the West" (p. 254). Even if the author is correct in considering Persians, Sasanians, and Kushans, as players *sine qua non* for the ancient silk routes, I disagree with his declaration that the Persian-Sassanian-Kushan role of "facilitators of [commercial and] cultural exchange" constitutes their "ultimate significance" to "world history". The primordial significance of each civilization, of any civilization, must not be as 'facilitators' of another ('better') civilization(s): each culture or state that has existed in the world *has an intrinsic value* (as the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder once argued), and each one has a (certain) value for the history of this world.

It seems that Benjamin assumes 'world history' consists in a process pointing in one direction: the progress of cultural and economic globalization. And the societies pushing humanity in such a direction are considered more important than the ones which are passive in that respect. Linking different societies or civilizations is thus understood as the most transcendent human activity. In my view, therefore, *Empires of Ancient Eurasia* has only one significant flaw: it fails to acknowledge that we can never assume that even the most isolated civilization has no significance in 'world history'.

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Cinemas and Cinema-Going in the United Kingdom: Decades of Decline, 1945–65

Sam Manning

University of London Press, 2020; Hardback; 254 pages; RRP £40.00; ISBN 9781912702367.

Cinemas and Cinema-Going in the United Kingdom: Decades of Decline, 1945–65 is an excellent addition to the wider publications produced under the 'New Cinema History' banner. Exploring the everchanging nature of Britain's film industry and its products has been a point of interest for some time amongst film scholars, but only in the most recent decade have cinema attendance and viewer experiences become a central point of research. Manning's publication builds upon the ideas of several prominent film scholars, like Sue Harper, Vincent Porter and Stuart Hanson. Utilising qualitative and quantitative evidence, Manning addresses a series of social, economic and political factors to further understand the decline of regional cinemas in the UK from 1945–1965.

Manning's first chapter, "Cinema Going Experiences", is well-placed within this study. Due to its focus and heavy incorporation of interviewee responses, this section provides an engaging and empathetic account of cinema-going in the post-war UK. Manning addresses four primary points within this chapter: "Social and Economic Distinctions", "Cinema-going Habits over a Person's Lifecycle", "Film Memories" and "Audience Behaviours". Each section provides a well-balanced analysis of the social and economic motivators that influenced cinema attendance in Belfast (often overlooked in UK-based studies) and Sheffield. In many instances, interviewees often remembered cinemas for their aesthetics, their operations and management, and admission price. These were not the only influencing factors though. Manning highlights how the natural pattern of an individual's life also changed their viewing habits. From children frequenting Sunday matinees, to courting teens, to working young adults, to parents themselves; none could avoid how these life stages shaped their leisure habits. This inevitably altered how cinema-going was experienced and remembered. Interestingly, many interviewees linked their experiences to larger milestones in life, i.e. birthdays or the death of a loved one, and few addressed specific films or movie stars. Instead, there was a significant recollection of American culture infiltrating the UK and providing a touch of glamour in such an austere time in national history.

Manning's argument concerning the downturn of cinema patronage in Sheffield and Belfast is the focus of his next section, "The Decline of Cinema-Going". Again, divided into subsections, this chapter draws attention to a common misconception within film history, that "television caused cinema's decline". Manning's chapter disputes this notion and his micro-historical study of Belfast and Sheffield supports his claims well. He found that while television did contribute to the decline of cinema patronage over time, it was not the sole threat to the industry. Using statistical data and oral histories, Manning outlined how cinema attendance was stable in the UK until 1959. During WWII and in the immediate post-war years, the number of leisure activities that were available to citizens was minimal. This caused a spike in cinema attendance. By the 1960s the introduction and eventual affordability of television sets had settled and a variety of other activities, like sporting events, music/dance halls, and cafés, had lured visitors away from cinemas. Although considered through a regional lens and geographically uneven at times, Manning argued that the habits and experiences in Belfast and Sheffield are also identifiable in the national and international history of cinema's decline.

"Cinema-Going and the Built Environment" turns away from the personal histories and experiences of viewers. Instead, it considers how a series of administration issues, such as operational costs, location management, and ownership, contributed to cinemas' decline in Sheffield and Belfast. In particular, Manning examines how the construction of new cinemas and the closure of older facilities changed the social and geographical landscape. This differed in each

place. For example, in Belfast, modest suburban cinemas were opened to support the steadily growing communities within housing developments, while outdated establishments (those predating the 1930s) began to close. Sheffield's experience was quite different. Small cinemas did not emerge to support growing suburbia. The focus remained on city locales and while many older facilities closed, as they did in Belfast, a limited number of updated complexes emerged from companies like Odeon and ABC (Associated British Cinemas). Manning's discussion of cinemas' physical structures, operational strategies and geographical locations reiterates their commercial purpose and provides insight into the difficulties that exhibitors also faced as cinema began to decline in the UK.

The book's final chapters, "Cinema Exhibition, Programming and Audience Preferences in Belfast" and "Film Exhibition in Post-War Sheffield", provide further insight into attendance patterns, financial revenues, and evolving audience tastes/habits in Sheffield and Belfast. Although uneven in their decline, it is evident that the working-class communities in Belfast and Sheffield shared experiences but retained their own cinema-going quirks. For example, patrons in Belfast enjoyed Irish-themed films, particularly *The Quiet Man* (1952), and such features often ran over the general two-week length in cinemas. In Belfast, many cinema-goers were frustrated at the dominance of UK and US films in the general cinemas and sought alternative pictures elsewhere. Organisations in Sheffield, like the Library Theatre and the Sheffield Film Society, overcame this issue and provided opportunities for audiences to view foreign films and educational features. To support this discussion Manning relies on a series of sources, such as trade journals, fan magazines, archival records and oral testimonies, and his standard of research is reflected to the highest degree in these chapters.

This publication demonstrates that proponents of New Cinema History still have space to evolve and micro-histories to explore. Through his case studies of Belfast and Sheffield, Manning shows how detailed analysis can provide researchers with a method for connecting local cinema-going trends and changes to wider national trends.

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Roguery in Print: Crime and Culture in Early Modern London

Lena Liapi

Boydell Press, 2019; Hardback; 207 pages; 6 black-and-white, 3 line illustrations; RRP £65.00; ISBN 9781783274406.

Dr Liapi provides herself from the outset with the challenge of making her subject *Roguery in Print* as interesting as it sounds, and she succeeds masterfully. Straightforward prose is interwoven with well-balanced excerpts and case studies so that the subject matter speaks for itself. This book may be read almost as a cultural microhistory of the 'rogue', who Liapi identifies as an "urban deviant", a trickster figure associated with petty economic crime. This patchwork of studies gradually reveals how these figures were depicted in their own genre of literature, and the genre's place within the print trade and wider society.

Drawing from the bibliographical tradition of modern Book History, the author assesses 'rogue' print and its social environment, tracing its lifespan from creation to reception. Liapi embraces the belief that literature is socially generated, following the work of McKenzie and Love. In the process she defies what Adams, Barker and Bower have lamented as the relegation of bibliography to serve as the "hand-maiden" to other disciplines. Instead, she draws on all manner of fields, from literary analysis to histories of neighbourliness, economics and crime in order to construct her bibliographical study. Rather than use literary excerpts to "colour" social history as she claims some studies of rogue print have done, Liapi uses social history to understand rogue literature.

In style, *Roguery in Print* is a fine addition to the thematic case studies, such as Spufford's, *Small Books,* Watt's *Cheap Print* and Johns' *The Nature of the Book*, which evaluate a particular 'type' or genre of text and have come to define the very best of the field of Book History. This includes Raymond's work on pamphlets, to whose influence Liapi's ubiquitous references attest.

Any small issues with this study are superficial and relate largely to scope rather than substance. Liapi herself acknowledges two main routes for expansion, the need for comparative studies on other places and to trace the circulation of these texts. She also gives a detailed explanation of the term 'rogue' and how she has drawn boundaries around what constitutes rogue print, but her reasoning for this definition and the selection of her sample also leave room for development. The selection of extant 'rogue' texts through EEBO searches is methodical and while there is no doubt Liapi has found the surviving texts which meet her definition, her corpus of 122 texts (including reprints) over 80 years (1590–1670) feels rather small. She explains the issues of ephemerality well, but further study may consider the records of the Stationers' Company to give a sense of what number and type of rogue texts were registered but do not survive.

At times Liapi strays into speculation on aspects of the print trade. She says, for example, that in 1591–2 nine printers and booksellers were involved in publishing Greene's rogue pamphlets because they thought they would sell well. This could, however, have been a spreading of time and cost because they thought the opposite. Also asserted is that the period at the end of her study (1650–70) "witnessed a significant increase in the publication of pamphlets about rogues" without consideration of how much this represents an increase in survivals.

Generally, Liapi's attention to detail is skilful, including the excellent working out of the cost and sizes of rogue publications over time, of how they took inspiration from medieval tales, as well as her microstudies of individual rogues in print such as Hind and Clavell. Her long explanation of "Hectors" and the relationship between the perception of Cavaliers and criminality in the 1640s and 50s is a particularly fine example. Also noteworthy is her explanation of the role of trust in

early modern society and how this played out in these tales. Liapi uses rogue pamphlets to give some important illustrations toward broader arguments in the field, such as the significant impact of the 1640s on the style, substance and volume of print. Moreover, she convincingly shows how rogue pamphlets were part of broader pamphlet literature, a comment on English society and social values (especially regarding London) and that importantly they "participated in broader political debates".

This book is a striking example of the value of studying a form of text in all aspects of its world, from production to reception. It is a study from which examples and insights will be eagerly drawn by all those working on the histories of crime and print in early modern England. Defying boundaries and definitions of genre and discipline, Liapi skilfully embarks upon a careful balancing act. The reader is steered almost without appreciation of the complexity of the task as she uses several disciplinary 'lenses' at a time to cast her forensic eye over a small part of early modern English print culture. In doing so, *Roguery in Print* also surmounts one of the major hurdles for academic history writing, to be stimulating and engaging. The reader devours this book in much the same way that early modern readers would have savoured rogue print.

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Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing

Emily A. Winkler

Oxford University Press, 2017; E-book; 350 pages; RRP GBP£73.00; ISBN 9780198812388.

Why did the twelfth-century historians of England write their historical narratives? Emily A. Winkler's first monograph, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing*, examines high medieval English historiography, a topic of recent interest. It joins Michael Staunton's *The Historians of Angevin England* (Oxford University Press, 2017) and *Discovering William of Malmesbury* (The Boydell Press, 2017), co-edited by Rodney M. Thomson, Emily Dolmans, and Winkler, as other publications from 2017 concerned with high medieval English historians and historical writing. In *Royal Responsibility* Winkler argues that the twelfth-century historians held a shared goal of redeeming the English past, building on the argument that she made for this motive on the part of William of Malmesbury in her chapter in *Discovering William.* In *Royal Responsibility* William's historical account is considered alongside those of Henry of Huntingdon, John of Worcester, and Geffrei Gaimar to analyse how twelfth-century historians addressed royal responsibility. Her argument focuses on how these chroniclers retold and, notably, rewrote the two eleventh-century conquests of England: the Danish in 1016 and the Norman in 1066.

The existing scholarship generally proposes that the chroniclers were motivated by nostalgia, trauma, and patriotism. Winkler contends that these arguments insufficiently explain the creation of these histories. Noting the paradox of acknowledging England's defeat in the conquests while upholding the English as worthy, she aptly evidences her argument that these histories were written to redeem this past of failure, thus giving the English, who these historians considered themselves to be, a worthy history. Winkler evidences this intention by comparing how these historians constructed the two conquests against the eleventh-century accounts, notably the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (ASC).* She argues that the twelfth-century historians afforded greater causal and moral responsibility to kings than their sources had, shifting from a belief that the collective sin of the English had caused their defeats to one which stressed royal responsibility and thus "redeemed [the English] of victimization and shame" (p. 239).

The book proceeds in three parts, the first of which establishes the historical precedents of discussions of kingship and royal responsibility, using examples from Biblical, Classical, and Carolingian sources. It then provides an overview of the two eleventh-century conquests and contemporary narratives of them, crucially in *ASC.* This solid background makes it easy to follow Winkler's argument of the progression of ideas surrounding royal responsibility and her comparison of the twelfth-century narratives against the eleventh.

Parts two and three examine where and how the four twelfth-century historians' narratives diverge from *ASC* and probe the implications of these narrative shifts. Winkler argues that, like *ASC,* William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon placed royal responsibility within the context of providence, whereas John of Worcester and Geffrei Gaimar emphasised more immediate causes. However, all four assigned kings greater responsibility than *ASC* did. In discussing the English kings Æthelred II and Harold, William and Henry each emphasised that kings who failed in their duty were not true kings, which therefore legitimised conquests against them. Conversely, John and Gaimar focused on the positive traits of pre- and post-conquest kings. While John placed importance on intentions and Gaimar actions, both historians signified that kings' origins were unimportant: English kingship had a "continuity not of heritage, but of character" (p. 170).

In their quest to redeem the English past, Winkler argues that the twelfth-century historians were therefore characterised by an effort of "dissociating kingship from dynasty" (p. 287). Instead of

emphasising lineage, the historians indicated how the qualities of a king legitimise or disqualify them from rule. This meant that even foreign conquerors could become rightful English kings, which enabled connections to be forged between post-conquest kings and pre-conquest pasts. Winkler's observation that post-conquest historians constructed continuity with an English past is not unique, but her argument that they intended to redeem the English from failure extends this interpretation in new ways, notably for her focus on not only the Norman Conquest but also the Danish. Analysing these conquests together is a relatively new development and is also seen in the more recent *Conquests in Eleventh-Century England: 1016, 1066* edited by Laura Ashe and Emily Ward (Boydell & Brewer, 2020). This is the achievement of Winkler's text; as she argues, it is the similarities between how both are discussed that allows us to properly see why these historians wrote their histories.

Crucially, Winkler draws the audience's attention to the fact that these four historians have shaped our current perceptions of the eleventh century and that there is consequently "a need to re-evaluate the way we view England's eleventh-century past" (p. 278). Winkler not only offers a new perspective on twelfth-century historical writing but also presents that there are new perspectives to uncover regarding the events of the eleventh century and the relationship between them. Ultimately, Winkler's book is an insightful and convincing analysis of how and why twelfth-century historians afforded responsibility to kings; it is well worth reading for those interested in medieval historical writing.

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Earthkeeping and Character: Exploring a Christian Ecological Virtue Ethic

Steven Bouma-Prediger

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Environmental ethics is an area of keen topical interest, particularly at a time when governments often prioritise courses of action which are at odds with the scientific advice of global experts about environmental problems. Recently, there has been renewed interest in the area of virtue ethics as a complementary approach to more traditional deontological (e.g. rights-based) and teleological (e.g. utilitarian) frameworks for environmental ethics.

Steven Bouma-Prediger is one of the key writers in the field of environmental virtue ethics (or, as he prefers, ecological virtue ethics) from an explicitly Christian perspective. In his earlier book, *For the Beauty of the Earth*, as part of a broader examination of Christian environmental ethics, he developed a framework which examined biblical themes and motifs and then used these to identify ecological virtues and principles for ecological actions.[1] In this new book, *Earthkeeping and Character*, ecological virtues are the focus of the entire work and this allows him to present the material in a much more convincing and structured manner, and in a way that appeals to both academic and general audiences.

A common problem with virtue ethics is the selection of an appropriately comprehensive set of virtues. Wisely, Bouma-Prediger does not claim to develop such a set. Instead, he presents a group of eight ecological virtues without discounting other possible sets.

After an introduction which gives the history and drivers of the development of ecological virtue ethics, the book looks at the eight virtues in pairs: wonder and humility, self-control and wisdom, justice and love, courage and hope. Each chapter follows a similar structure, beginning with a story that illustrates the two virtues in question, or sometimes the vices associated with each virtue. Next Bouma-Prediger describes the traditional understanding of each of the virtues, and then he looks at how these virtues are consistent with the stories and teachings of the bible. Next he looks at how these virtues apply to ecological ethics and he closes each chapter with another story.

The final chapter gives examples of how this set of virtues can be put into practice. The examples are drawn from the author's own experience, so they are focused on an American context. The last section on how to nurture ecological virtues in one's personal life is quite brief. A deeper exploration of this area would be a valuable enhancement to the book. There is a useful appendix containing a brief literature review of the major writers in the field and their contributions.

Earthkeeping and Character is aimed squarely at a broad Christian audience, although others working in the field of ecological virtue ethics will find useful insights. The book is tilted more towards a general audience than an academic one in the sense that it assumes only a limited background in environmental issues and in ethics. Both of these areas are explained in sufficient detail that the reader is never lost or confused. Bouma-Prediger teaches at a Christian liberal arts college in the USA, and the book is pitched at the right level for a first-year university course in environmental ethics in such a college.

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[1] Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).

The book is easy to read, and its tone is encouraging and engaging, never dogmatic or accusatory. At the same time, the book is academically solid, based on the best current scholarship while also connecting with the historical development of ideas since Aristotle.

There are a few minor niggles, but not enough to detract from the usefulness of the volume. Bouma-Prediger makes a good argument for why 'ecology' is a better term than 'environment' for the object of ethical concern, but then tritely dismisses another candidate, 'creation', as "hopelessly expansive". However, in the next chapter he uses the example of the (expansive) night sky as an introduction to the virtues wonder and humility. In the chapter on wisdom, he neglects to mention Indigenous voices as a source of ecological wisdom. In the chapter on justice, his focus is on poor and disenfranchised humans, but he does not really deal with the thorny issue of justice for non-humans.

In the vast majority of cases, the book does an excellent job of identifying issues on which there are a range of opinions and introducing those different views. For instance, his defence of virtue ethics as academically rigorous is exemplary. In other areas, however, a range of viewpoints are glossed over. The book states that there is no vice of excess of justice, yet many others would claim vengeance or punitive justice is exactly this. It is a mark of the quality of the book as a whole that these minor shortcomings stand out.

Overall, *Earthkeeping and Character* is an excellent introduction to the field of ecological virtue ethics from a Christian perspective, and it is unique in its coverage and perspective. It would be a useful addition to any institutional library or any eco-theologian's personal collection.

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References

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1956: The Year Australia Welcomed the World

Nick Richardson

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"One of the hardiest clichés in Australian history is that the 1950s was a dull decade", writes Nick Richardson in the preface to his new book, *1956: The Year Australia Welcomed the World*. In a conversation over the book, a colleague agreed, revealing that, when asked to characterise 1950s Australia, his thoughts go to conservatism and little else. Despite the decades-long work of historians such as John Murphy, it seems as though there is a persistent public characterisation of 1950s Australia as 'deadly dull'. It is with this issue that Richardson has grappled in *1956*, bringing a colourful picture of the 1950s into public view.

1956 is intended as a trade publication, but there is no denying that, historiographically, Richardson's work finds itself in formidable company. The social, political and cultural aspects of the 1950s – alongside the individuals who informed its trajectory – have been analysed at length by eminent scholars over the years. Most notably, John Murphy's book *Imagining the Fifties* grapples intimately with the decade, while Murphy and Judith Smart edited a special issue of *Australian Historical Studies* in 1997 on the theme "the Forgotten Fifties". That ten-article collection included a piece by Graeme Davison entitled "Welcoming the World: the 1956 Olympic Games and the representation of Melbourne", Ian Britain's survey of the cultural role played by Barry Humphries, and Raymond Evans' exploration of youth culture and Rock'n'Roll, focussed on the notorious bodgies and widgies. These scholars demonstrated in the 1990s that the 1950s was anything but 'deadly dull'.

These topics can all be found in Richardson's book. In discussing these subjects – among many others – Richardson has selected a suite of events that relate to the 1956 Melbourne Olympics in one way or another, while also demonstrating the dynamism of 1950s Australia more broadly. This dynamism is refracted through a single year: 1956. Focusing on the history of a particular year or decade has proven popular in recent trade publications. Two comparisons come to mind: Frank Bongiorno's *The Eighties: The Decade that Transformed Australia* (Black Inc., 2017), and Michelle Arrow's *The Seventies: The Personal, the Political and the Making of Modern Australia* (NewSouth, 2019). Both award-winning books survey Australian history through a notable decade, providing Richardson with structural models for his exploration of the 1950s for a public audience.

But rather than explore the year thematically, as Bongiorno and Arrow do for their decades, Richardson deals with his subject matter chronologically. Taking his book from the summer of 1955–56 through the winter of 1956, Richardson flits back and forth between events and protagonists central to his story of 1956 Australia; several narratives unfold simultaneously. Individual vignettes point to Richardson's characterisation of Australia's history and, thus, identity in the 1950s. Australian sprinters Betty Cuthbert and Marlene Mathews demonstrate that Australia had world-class athletes competing in 1956 – they are examples of Australia's sporting promise. Walter MacDougall provides insight into the systematic 'forgetting' of Aboriginal Australians by the government during the British nuclear tests in Australia, whereas the nuclear tests more broadly illustrate the continued connections between Britain and Australia. Robert Menzies is cast as the cricket-loving Anglophile who dived feet-first into Suez. And a journalistic-style history of Australia would be incomplete without mention of the Murdoch press and the challenges faced by the media more generally. Richardson's narrative, elucidated through these individuals, points to several key themes, some of which warrant specific mention here.

Held during the Cold War, the 1956 Olympics inevitably plunged Melbourne into a melting pot of national pride, international diplomacy and interstate politics. It was an opportunity for Melbourne to prove itself more than a colonial backwater. Richardson asserts that it did so through various means. Perhaps most central to *1956* is the formative role played by television and the media. Television allowed Australia to demonstrate its cultural influences, not least through the broadcasting of Hollywood blockbusters, while the bodgies and widgies jived to films such as *Rock Around the Clock*. Furthermore, television would facilitate a broad international audience for the impending Olympics, altering the orientation of sofas in lounge-rooms across the country.

But embracing the cultures of the United States, while hanging onto British traditions, ensured that 1950s Australia was overcome by anxieties about the lack of an independent Australian culture in this period. Richardson demonstrates that the creation of comedy icon Dame Edna Everage by Barry Humphries is evidence of an emergent Australian culture, as is the fact that budding artists Sidney Nolan and Arthur Boyd were celebrated in a (relatively unpopular) arts Olympiad held in conjunction with the games. Nolan's and Boyd's works were displayed alongside those of Australian greats Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton. But, for Richardson, it was the artwork of Hungarian migrant Andor Mészáros that encapsulated the cultural spirit of the Olympic Games, and thus 1950s Australia.

Mészáros, a sculptor and New Australian, was tasked with designing the medallions for Melbourne. But his role extended beyond his artistry. Following the Hungarian Uprising, Mészáros assisted Hungarian refugees settling in Australia, including members of the Hungarian Olympic team. The spirit and contribution of New Australians is refracted through Mészáros' story. New Australians brought alternative food and culture, brightening up the suburbs of Melbourne with their very presence. They exposed White Australia to the vitality of multiculturalism. But the darker side of this history, encapsulated by Bonegilla migrant camp for example, avoids proper mention.

By focusing on these stories, among myriad others, Richardson leads us to his key conclusion: in 1956 Melbourne acquired "new-found maturity" within which "the rest of the nation could bask". This maturity involved demonstrating an interest in overseas culture, exposure to foreign foods and peoples, acknowledgement of New Australians' contributions to society, development of distinctly Australian art and theatre, and a move away from conservatism.

In its appraisal of the 1950s, *1956* provides insight into the quirks and characters that made up mainstream Australian society at the time of the Melbourne Olympics. It pays particular attention to Melbourne and alludes to the contradictions encapsulated by Australians in this period – the individuals captured within *1956* sought both comfort and change. As a result of this contradiction, Melbourne exists as the staging ground for "the collision of old and new attitudes", where both the British Empire and the influences of the United States loomed large, and where conservatism – politically, diplomatically and culturally – was beginning to fall away.

1956 provides light reprieve from the usually dense evaluations of the 1950s by academic scholarship. It does not demonstrate the nuance and critical evaluation of gender and race that leading Australian historians have explored through their own works on the 1950s. Nor does the book shy away from its preference for the stories of Melburnians. Irrespective of this, *1956* is an important addition to the shelves of non-academic readers for it exposes a public audience to the vibrancy of 1950s Australia.

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