

# BOOK REVIEWS

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*River City and Valley Life: An Environmental History of the Sacramento Region.* CHRISTOPHER J. CASTANEDA and LEE M.A. SIMPSON, eds. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013. vii+406, maps, images, index. \$27.95 paper. ISBN 978-0-8229-6250-2.

This fascinating urban environmental history provides a wide-ranging overview of the diversity of landscapes both natural and built that make up the understudied Sacramento region. The book is divided into four distinct sections: Boomtown Sacramento, Valley Reclamation, Government Town, and Reclaiming the Past. It ambitiously covers the time period from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century. Each author's contribution provides depth and breadth to a growing body of knowledge of the organic relationship between environmental history and the history of urban growth and development in the American West. Each author attempts, successfully on the whole, to come to terms with "the paradoxical nature of Sacramento's 'commingling' of nature and culture" (p. 5) from a variety of perspectives ranging from Sutter's 'Indian business' and the Gold Rush to the American River Parkway, one of the largest urban parks in the country. Each essay contributes to the overarching notion that Sacramento was a city unwelcoming to urban development and explores the engineering feats required to create a city out of a region that, on the surface at least, was inhospitable to urban growth and development.

The book opens, appropriately, with a nuanced reflection on Sutter's "Indian business" (p. 26) which ran the gamut from slavery to coercion to paid labor. This, according to Hurtado, ultimately led to the situation in which "Indian labor exacerbated the conditions that led to Indian dispossession and dependence" (p. 30). The reader is presented with a three-dimensional story of Indian experience rather than the too-often used outdated, simplistic representation of Indian as victim. The chapter on the Gold Rush offers a new way to consider it by examining the pressure that the Gold Rush population explosion exerted both on the human community and nature. Gold Rush histories tend to represent the population explosion as primarily transient while

Owens considers the “ordinary people who decided to stay and make this place a home” (p. 60). These are the people who ultimately grew into a middle class that turned to urban planning, engineering, and technology to carve a city out of an unfriendly natural environment. We are introduced in this first part of the book to the geopolitics of urban planning and the influence of the railroad. The chapters on early urban planning and the railroad offer new insights into the relationship between these activities and the ecology of the region. In short, the authors in this section successfully depict the birth and growth of Sacramento as a “war against nature” (p. 35), a war, of sorts, that included such ‘weapons’ as building levees and diverting the course of the American River rather than relocate the town site off the floodplain.

The chapters in Part II interweave stories of swampland, water, farmers, state and federal governments, grassroots activism, and increasingly sophisticated engineering that contributed to the transformation of the Sacramento Valley. The process of ecological and environmental alteration shaped Sacramentans’ relationship with their city and their region. The relationship between California and Federal flood control initiatives clearly illustrates the politically charged business of controlling access to water in California. The final chapter in this section seems, at first glance, like it doesn’t fit the overarching theme of the book with its focus on boosterism, suburbs, and narrative, but one quickly sees the connections with the other topics. The development of ‘agriburbs’ and agricultural boosterism were built on the alteration of the natural environment highlighted in the previous three chapters.

Part III provides an enlightening synthesis of the disparate effects of New Deal projects, World War II military installations, and nuclear energy on the landscape, both human and non-human. There is a relative dearth of academic analysis on these topics in this region that the reader feels the section offers new and interesting analysis on this aspect of Sacramento’s history. Sacramento was hard hit by the Depression and benefitted from New Deal programs that resulted in, for example, construction of the iconic Tower Bridge, which connected Sacramento to itself (across the river) as well as to the San Francisco Bay area. The Depression saddled the city with crippling unemployment and Hoovervilles filled with desperate people who couldn’t afford homes. The chapter on the military influence provides an in-depth examination of the role the military played, and continues to play, on defining the region both in terms of human population and natural landscapes. The story of Rancho Seco is one of social responsibility and a grassroots movement to shut down the problematic nuclear reactor. It is also a story of people from different backgrounds and different political stances coming together to work for common cause. This has, in other eras and other situations, at times been the story of Sacramento.

The three chapters in Part IV explore the development of the American River Parkway, Indian gaming, and historic preservation of Old Sacramento. The American River Parkway is considered the crown jewel of Sacramento. This large urban park was first envisioned over a century ago. The brief, but thorough, exploration begins, appropriately, with the river itself. The reader is taken through the political, economic, and social processes and consequences of establishing such a massive park that remains “for the most part a natural environment rather than a rendition of a landscape architect’s vision” (p. 241). Perhaps the one weakness of the book is the chapter on Indian gaming. While environmental change has a place here, it is on the margins of the essay. It also seems too wide-ranging for a book on the Sacramento region, as it is more about the state than Sacramento. I found myself wanting the author to focus on Sacramento and explore the impact and importance of Indian gaming there more deeply. However, when taken in the context of the development of a tourist industry with the Parkway, gaming, and historic preservation of Old Sacramento, it belongs. The chapter on Old Sacramento presents a vision of contrasts between preservation of the past and urban development for the future. The author asks questions that have not yet been answered and leaves it appropriately to future generations to determine the value of historic preservation and where it fits in urban development.

The Epilogue ties up loose ends and situates Sacramento in place in the Great Central Valley while exploring political, social, and environmental contrasts between the southern and northern ends of the Valley. As Smith argues, whatever the future for Sacramento, understanding “the region’s environmental history before and after the gold rush” (p. 320) is central to meeting the political, social, and economic challenges lurking on the horizon. This volume, accessible to the layperson as well as academics, provides some of that important foundation. It also makes the reader want to revisit (or visit for the first time) the city of Sacramento armed with a new understanding of its rich, varied, and sometimes troubling history.

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*Southern Waters: The Limits to Abundance*. CRAIG E. COLTEN. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014. Pp. xiv+264, maps, diagrams, figures, tables, notes, index. \$29.95 paperback. ISBN 978-0-8071-5650-6.

Craig Colten traces the geographic history of the US South’s relationship with water in *Southern Waters: The Limits to Abundance*. Using extensive research of court cases, federal and state agency documents, and historical sources, Colten examines the South’s policies and procedures related to water quality, conservation, and management. He carefully outlines how the South differs from the West in policy and procedure, explaining why, despite the fact we assume that the humid South is a region of abundance, there is a limit to the precious water resources, a limit that becomes more real every year.

The book begins with a brief introduction placing it in the context of other water studies both within and outside the South and situates water in the southern narrative. Colten examines how settlers viewed water as a resource, but also a risk that brought floods and waterborne disease. He then briefly addresses the changing situation from abundance to shortage in the South in modern times. Colten clearly outlines the thesis for the book: how and why has the South undergone this extreme transformation from surplus to emerging shortages. He claims this squarely places *Southern Waters* inside a larger body of literature in sustainability, asking how we can define long-term trends as a means of predicting future needs and supplies.

Before examining the two different states of water in the South (abundance and shortage), Colten uses Chapter one to examine water’s differing meaning to various groups from Native Americans to European explorers to African slaves. Each group’s opposing views shapes and impacts the interactions they had with one another regarding water. This chapter also introduces the methodological and ideological frameworks the author blends and uses to interpret historic documents, setting the stage for what will follow.

Chapters two, three, and four address the issues of excess water in the South, examining wetland management policies, flood control policies, and public health measures to control waterborne disease. In Chapters five, six, and seven, Colten then addresses issues of shortage in the South, focusing on conflicts over shipping lanes, limits to the abundance of fish, and issues of shortage not in quantity, but in quality. The concluding chapter brings the story of water in the South to the present, focusing not only on the increase in awareness of shortage in the South by the entire US, but also the escalation in unsustainable water use in the region, despite mounting evidence that there are limits to abundance.

Colten admits in *Southern Waters* that regional studies have fallen out of fashion in geography. Yet, he justifies his decision to write a regional study, stating that the climatic and cultural cohesiveness of the South makes it an ideal framework for understanding the changing narrative of water abundance and shortage throughout the US. He also defends his choice of the South as a framework, citing numerous calls for work in the region. Most water sustainability studies have been done in the arid West. The reality in the humid South is decidedly different and the history of policy and practice is longer. Conflicts over water in the South are couched in issues of race and socioeconomic status. To understand water rights and access in the region today, you have to merge the Old South with the New South. No other region of the US faces these types of cultural and historic challenges.

*Southern Waters* presents an interesting history of the South's changing relationship with its water supply. For those seeking a book focusing on water policy in a region where shortage was traditionally not an issue, this is a good read. If someone is looking for good examples of presenting massive amounts of information effectively, this may not be the appropriate book. The author does do a number of things well. Each chapter begins with a clear introduction of the issues it will tackle and the point that is being addressed. In many cases Colten is able to effectively pull together research by geographers in numerous sub-disciplines to craft a well-honed message that looks at both the historical and legal context. For each issue examined in *Southern Waters*, whether it is flood or drought, the author presents a number of examples from different states, never focusing solely on one state over another. These examples sometimes drone on to excess, however, repeating themes over and over again. In other places, the narrative seems lacking of good concrete examples, such as the discussion of European toponyms for water bodies that were discarded by governments in favor of the Native American place names.

In another case of excess, each chapter has a concluding section, often a nice feature to summarize important ideas. Colten's concluding sections in each chapter are, however, redundant. Ironically, the entire book has no real conclusion, though. The last chapter, titled Conclusions, actually reviews the current limits to abundance of water in the South. There is no concluding section that pulls together all the author's thoughts to tell us what it means, not only for the future of the South, but what other regions can learn from the southern experience. Colten's extensive research on water policy and history in the South would have been more effective if he had put as much time and effort into summarizing the book in the last pages as he did in summarizing each individual chapter. After the lengthy introduction that placed the book into a larger literature of geographic studies of water, it would have been nice to have a solid conclusion that tied everything together.

In short, *Southern Waters* is an excellent piece of research and an important part of the regional narrative of the South. It is, however, a book that you may want to take apart. Individual chapters provide excellent historical and legal context with a rich set of examples, but the book as a whole lacks a clear conclusion to tie it into the larger body of research on water sustainability policy and practice in the US. In the introduction Colten claims that his thesis places *Southern Waters* in the core research area of sustainability, but there is no concluding evidence to support the book's connection to a larger sustainability narrative. In the end, it is simply another disconnected regional study that lacks a broader context.

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*North American Odyssey: Historical Geographies for the Twenty-first Century*. CRAIG E. COLTEN and GEOFFREY L. BUCKLEY, eds. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014. Pp. xiv + 445, maps, diagrams, index. \$65.00 paper. ISBN 978-1-4422-1585-6.

The history of historical geography has been marked by the regular appearance of books reassessing the subject and pointing toward the future. Nearly all such retrospectives, including the present volume, begin with Carl O. Sauer's, "Foreword to Historical Geography," which was his presidential address to the Association of American Geographers given at Baton Rouge in 1940. By the sixth sentence Sauer had revealed his purpose. "We can hardly claim to be getting our chief intellectual stimulus from one another," he wrote, "waiting impatiently on the research of colleagues as needed for our own work." And he continued, "So long as we are in such a condition of uncertainty about our major objectives and problems, attempts must be made from time to time to give orientation to ourselves along a common course." *North American Odyssey* continues this tradition of seeking a common course just as it illustrates Sauer's observation regarding "uncertainty about our major objectives."

In the usual application of the labels we all use, Carl Sauer is rarely called an historical geographer. As perhaps the only American geographer who needed no label, Sauer delved deeply into the past to find satisfactory answers to the questions that interested him. James J. Parsons once recalled that Sauer's North America course at Berkeley was "relentlessly historical," and "had Daniel Boone 'peeping over the crest of the Appalachians' at the term's final lecture" (*Annals*, AAG, March, 1979, p. 11). Ralph Brown's classic *Historical Geography of the United States* (1948) made no mention of a Civil War for the simple reason that it took place after the period Brown wrote about. Did historical geography require a buffer, a gap in the record of a century or more, between its own focus and that of, say, the economic geographer whose research only extended back to the previous Census? It is a foolish question, but one that I suspect has been the subject of heated discussions in doctoral examinations and faculty meetings.

No answer to the "what is historical?" question will be found in this volume, nor is there much interest in it nowadays. Instead, Editors Craig E. Colten and Geoffrey L. Buckley sensed what they call "the need for a fresh tack" and asked their authors to prepare chapters "based on topical and methodological approaches." The result, predictably, is an amplification of the uncertainty about objectives that Sauer identified.

Both the old and the new are included among these twenty-two essays and more than a few echo what geographers wrote about in times past. Karl Raitz brings back the free-wheeling urban system models developed by John R. Borchert. Michael Conzen's essay is reminiscent of what once interested James E. Vance, Jr. Geoffrey Smith and Andrew Sluyter present graphical models of diffusion and flows reminiscent of the many contributions made by Terry Jordan-Bychkov and Donald W. Meinig. Land survey systems have survived the test of time and are illustrated in the chapters by Timothy Anderson and William Wyckoff.

New directions include chapters on urban planning by Edward K. Muller and Jasper Rubin who add a perspective that surely belongs under the heading of historical geography. African-Americans are brought into the picture by Derek Alderman, Joshua Inwood, and E. Arnold Modlin, Jr. Tourism, Native Americans, gender, wilderness preservation, wildlife, labor, and environmental justice add still more chapters to the already broad array of subjects. But apart from a brief mention in the chapter by Mona Domosh, house types seem to have disappeared from the geographer's landscape, as have barns, fences, and nearly everything rural and agricultural. A focus on images and icons, supported by black-and white photographs of the sort found in numerous archives, has replaced the former emphasis on data and maps. Material culture, once regarded as a key to tracing historical lineages, is reduced to icon status as well.

Broad though the scope of this collection is, there are some puzzling gaps. One gets the sense that historical geography has become more of a teaching subject than a research orientation and that “themes” have taken the place of research questions. Historical geographers in times past were proficient data manipulators, but the authors of *North American Odyssey* make little use of the routine data analysis techniques that are now clickable on everyone’s computer. What would historical geographers of old been able to accomplish had the Excel spreadsheet been available to them? (One can imagine the delight Andrew Clark would have had using a spreadsheet to calculate sheep-swine ratios in Nova Scotia.) Historical data are available to all of us, free of charge, and in downloadable form that can be copied, cut, and pasted straight into a GIS mapping program, but there is little hint that this matters in historical geography. Advances in biological genetics made possible by genome mapping have answered questions about agricultural origins and dispersals that intrigued Carl Sauer and his students. That research should interest today’s historical geographers, but none of it is mentioned in this volume.

One has to agree with the editors (p. 1) that *North American Odyssey* proves that historical geography is “alive and well,” but it seems to have been shorn of the big questions that once guided it. Will reorganization around popular themes in current geographical scholarship guarantee the subject’s future? One will have to wait another decade or two – for the next volume in what has become something of a series – to learn the answer.

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*Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and Loss of Aboriginal Life.* JAMES DASCHUK. Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013. Pp. xxii+318, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN 978-0-88977-296-0.

James Daschuk’s *Clearing the Plains* is a devastating read. This might be expected, as a detailed study in the “loss of aboriginal life,” but the most forceful elements of Daschuk’s work come in unexpected ways. The overarching narrative of Euro-American (in this case, Canadian) role of disease in demographic declines and dispossession of aboriginal peoples is familiar to scholars in various fields. In the nineteenth century, it was a declensionist narrative told with clearly defined aggressors and victims. In recent decades, however, considerable work has been done by scholars to problematize those simple narratives by emphasizing indigenous agency and resilience, introducing theoretical frameworks of settler colonialism and later, decolonization, and so forth. *Clearing the Plains* fits within these historiographies, but introduces a number of novel analytical points. In the end, by fleshing out the government policies and bureaucratic mechanisms behind indigenous death and dispossession, Daschuk both deepens our understanding of, and broadens the scope of, a very shameful history. Historians, geographers, political scientists, and others would do well to familiarize themselves with this work and integrate it into their own scholarship and pedagogy.

The text is divided into two parts, with five and four chapters respectively. The first five chapters attempt to lay out the deep context for the “organic” factors in aboriginal population decline from pre-contact to the early nineteenth century. The role of biology, he argues, is a necessary backdrop for understanding the role of human agency in aboriginal history. For many, this will be the portion of *Clearing the Plains* with the most familiar content and concepts. It is also where the study feels rushed. The first chapter, for instance, glosses over the topic of pre-contact indigenous health and environmental relationships – a rich topic with deep historiography and

scientific literature – in merely ten pages. Indeed, it need not be the focus of the text, but a topic worth a slightly more robust literature review. As the narrative introduces Euro-Americans into the continent, the role of fur traders, and Native involvement in developing and expanding trade routes and networks illustrate how disease spread, affected communities, and eroded aboriginal health conditions into the period of the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly. These chapters are challenging, but fall in line with familiar narratives of Euro-American geographic expansion and its effects on aboriginal peoples. Though familiar, Daschuk successfully argues how the subsequent history of destructive Canadian policies must be contextualized in the ongoing biological history of Native health and demographic decline.

With that context as foundation, Daschuk builds a damning narrative of how Canadian policies hastened the decline of First Nations health conditions and failed to mitigate various preventable catastrophes. These last four chapters move fully through the remainder of the 1800s. Chapter 6 explores the role between late-stage epidemics (smallpox in 1869-70) and Native desires for treaties. Experience pushed some during the late numbered treaties stage to demand that medical provisions be included in the treaties. As Canada pushed onto the plains, carving out sections for settlement and completing treaties with regional Natives, ongoing health issues were compounded by the precipitous collapse of bison herds in the late 1870s and widespread starvation, tuberculosis and other attendant ills. Daschuk explains, "Half-hearted relief measures during the famine of 1878-80 and after, which kept plains people in a constant state of hunger, not only undermined the government's half-baked self-sufficiency initiative but also illustrated the moral and legal failures of the crown's treaty commitment to provide assistance in the case of a widespread famine on the plains (p. 100-101)." Here, the full weight of Daschuk's study is revealed. Disease and death on the Plains were spread through Euro-American contact for centuries, and in the broadest sense, Canadians shoulder some blame for that. At this late stage, however, Canada's expansion and the disease and famine it brought unfolded within a legal relationship where Canada was responsible for providing care. The very legal frameworks by which the Canadian state legitimized their geographic expansion also bound them to save Native peoples from the disasters they were introducing. In these obligations, Daschuk shows, they failed.

If the broad indictment of Canada's failure to fulfill its treaty obligation is damning, the last two chapters' description of on-the-ground abuse proves even worse. Through the reserve system, local officials held tremendous power through the control of food and medical supply distribution. Often, they used that power to not only personally profit (through various unethical business practices) but control indigenous behavior. Misappropriated funds, distribution of spoiled food, withholding of desperately needed supplies and rations, sexual abuse, and other mistreatment led to widespread rebellion in 1885. Finally, the completion of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway accelerated white settlement of the Plains. This led to even greater restrictions of Native peoples, further abuse in the withholding of food and supplies, worsened health outcomes, famine, and death. It is difficult to read.

In the end, what does all of the condemnation mean? First, it helps dispel the still common mythologies of friendly agricultural expansion onto the Plains. Both before and during widespread Canadian settlement of the region, natural and consciously-made Canadian policy cleared the Plains of indigenous control in the most horrific ways. The general sense of guilt or, in the least, cognizance of the indigenous lands upon which Canada is built, is not uncommon in contemporary national rhetoric. Even the violence of warfare is commonly acknowledged. However, the manmade mechanisms by which the land was wrested from aboriginal peoples through preventable epidemics and starvation are rarely discussed. The prevention of Native death by disease and starvation was well within the capabilities of Canada's settler colonial project

during the 1800s. The failure to do so must be integrated into national conversations about the region's past and present. Daschuk's concise and direct study should help drive that conversation. It is with no small amount of irony that the book won the 2014 John A. MacDonald Prize from the Canadian Historical Association, being named after the very politician who oversaw much of the policies condemned by Daschuk. The award is well-deserved.

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*Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capital*. MATTHEW T. HUBER. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. Pp. xxi+253, 27 b&w photos, 3 tables, index, \$25.00 paper. ISBN 978-0-8166-7785-6, \$75.00 cloth ISBN 978-0-8166-7784-9

Despite being the second word in the title, the subject of Matthew T. Huber's book is not oil itself, but rather the American society that is built around and runs on oil, hence the name *Lifeblood*. Just like oil is used to power cars, Huber uses oil as a vehicle to understand the creation of the American society and the American dream. In his own words: "This book centers upon oil and the role of energy in shaping a particular regime of mass consumption" (p. xviii). In order to do that, he examines four distinct periods in the long-term development of petro-capitalism in the United States: overproduction and collapsing prices in the 1930s, the era of stable and cheap-enough oil between 1945 and 1973, and the oil crises in the 1970s and 2000s.

Those who are looking for an overview of American oil production and consumption, or energy use in general are advised to look elsewhere, for example Michael J. Graetz's *The End of Energy: The Unmaking of America's Environment, Security, and Independence* (2011), which by the way would complement *Lifeblood* wonderfully.

Essentially the book describes how ill-suited the American dream, as it was built under times of cheap oil, is for times of expensive oil and the current time with the need to cut down our consumption of fossil fuels to combat climate change. I do not buy Huber's claim "that oil's relation to the "American way of life" is central to the rise of neoliberal hegemony in the United States" (p. xv). For sure; the "American way of life" would be much different without the mobility provided by oil. But is it enough to explain the rise of a particular form economic and political ideology? In a simplified way, the argument is the following: mobility provided by cheap oil allows the creation of mostly white suburbs fostering petite bourgeois strata of mostly white suburban homeowners increasingly distrustful of high taxes, the public sector and redistribution of wealth.

For sure cheap oil explains the fact that the United States consumed in 2010 over one fifth of the total world consumption of oil, double that of the second biggest consumer, China. "Overall, 71 percent of U.S. petroleum consumption goes toward transportation, and 93 percent of all energy consumed in transportation comes from petroleum" (p. ix). Considering how important a role oil plays in the American society, it is interesting to read how difficult it is to get its price right. Whatever the price of oil, it always seems to be wrong. For example, in the 1930s the main worry was that the price of oil was too low, as in some parts of Texas, oil was selling for as little as \$0.02 per barrel. Fearing the prospect of violent revolt, the governor of Texas, former oil executive Ross Sterling, declared martial law in the East Texas fields, and four thousand troops were sent to enforce the field's "allowable level of production as dictated by the state's conservation authority" (p. 49). Quite a contrast to events decades later, when prices skyrocketed following the OPEC oil embargo or several instances where troops were deployed to oil-producing countries in order to keep the oil production undisturbed.

To be honest, I first had difficulties cutting through the Marxian jargon in the beginning of the book, but the readability increases as the book proceeds, as well as the interest of the content. My efforts were rewarded in the concluding chapter: *Energizing Freedom*, with Huber's insightful questioning of linking oil to freedom. "I found it quite ironic that a gas station could have the audacity to proclaim itself a site of freedom, with all oil's associations with various forms of unfreedoms—war, despotic petro-states, and social and environmental injustice along the commodity chain" (p. 155). Huber leaves the reader on the last pages of the book with the question: What kind of energy for what kind of freedom? Unfortunately, he does not answer this very crucial question. While I opened this review by criticizing his far-flung claims, here I would have hoped for some visions. This is not to criticize the book, the first step in finding a cure, is having a diagnosis. Huber for sure provides one diagnosis. You might not agree with it, but for sure it raises thoughts.

Personally, after reading a book whose main content is to describe the large contribution the American notion of freedom has had in creating the current climate crisis, I started to wonder whether this same powerful notion of freedom could be turned into a solution of the same problem. What if the middle class consumer would use its purchasing power to buy electric cars, freeing them from queues at the gasoline pump forever? What if city planners and authorities would re-create walkable and bike-friendly communities with good access to public transportation, providing freedom also to those who cannot afford buying a car, as suggested in *Transport Beyond Oil: Policy Choices for a Multimodal Future* (2013)?

Huber is criticizing the return to "localization" as the solution to our energy and climate predicament for not only being based on a romantic nostalgia for a preindustrial age of small-scale agriculture but also for naïvely downplaying the extent to which modern society is fundamentally entangled within fossil-fuel forms of globalized production. But what if American farmers would reframe the notion of freedom as a freedom from imported oil, and would power their tractors with biogas produced from agricultural waste, while the remaining product would serve as an effective fertilizer freeing them from energy-intensive nitrogen fertilizer?

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*Northscapes: History, Technology, and the Making of Northern Environments*. DOLLY JØRGENSEN and SVERKER SÖRLIN, eds. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013. Pp. 324, figures, maps, index. CDN\$34.95 paper. ISBN 978-07748-2572-6. CDN\$95.00 cloth. ISBN 978-0-7748-2571-9.

I begin my Geography of the Arctic undergraduate class with a deceptively simple question: where is the "Arctic"? Is it the Arctic Circle (66°33'N latitude)? Is it the 10°C July isotherm, which similarly, though much less straightforwardly, encircles the globe's high northern regions? How about latitudinal treeline (which maps closely onto the isotherm, but with much fuzzier boundaries) or the limits of permafrost? Perhaps it would be better to simply settle on the Arctic Ocean basin and littoral states—though that raises the thorny issue of Denmark's inclusion or exclusion, via Greenland. These state-centric boundaries also risk ignoring the important material and cultural presence of Arctic indigenous territories like Sápmi and Inuit Nunaat. And these contemporary geographical manifestations of an indigenous Arctic intersect in complex ways with longstanding "southern" imagined geographies of the Arctic, whether classical notions of Ultima Thule or more recent geographical assessments of "nordicity."

Similar definitional conundrums are encountered, investigated and provided new insight in this excellent collection of essays. To the debates over “what is north,” the authors and editors of *Northscapes* contribute a novel critical focus on the “technology-environment” nexus in the north and its role in shaping place and environment in the region. Rejecting the notion of the north as empty frontier or Arctic sublime, the collection’s focus on technologies (from the transformative to the mundane) highlights the complex interactions of northern peoples, northern environments, and exogenous actors, from explorers and settlers to sheep and crops. “Technology” is here conceptualized in the broadest of terms to encompass a wide variety of material and conceptual mediations between humans and the non-human environment, from systems of knowledge and classification, to agricultural practices and home-building techniques, to more conventionally understood technologies such as railways and aircraft. In so doing, *Northscapes* develops a provocative understanding of the globe’s seemingly “remote” northern spaces as (to quote the epilogue by Finn Arne Jørgensen) a networked region (internally and externally connected), a hybrid landscape of nature, culture and technology, and a site of consumption (by insiders and outsiders) (p. 277-78).

Unlike many edited collections, *Northscapes* is at once diverse yet coherent in its approach to its subject. Emerging from the activities of a new Nordic Environmental History Network, the chapters include case studies from around the circumpolar Arctic, with the notable exception of Greenland (which is, nevertheless, touched on in the opening chapter on the natural history of the Arctic). Organized into four main themes (Exploring, Colonizing, Working and Imagining the North), the temporal range varies considerably, from the Viking-Norse period (AD 850-1250) to more or less contemporary expressions of place and history. This geographical and temporal diversity opens up interesting opportunities for comparative reflection on the Arctic experience, both within and between chapters. For instance, in her chapter on Soviet northern colonization, Julia Lajus explores how the nascent Soviet state looked to models and practices from Norway and Canada to guide its conquest of Arctic lands and resources. Similarly, the emphasis throughout the volume on environment, land and resources at the expanding peripheries of Euro-American societies invites comparisons between the chapters on the assimilation of these territories into regional and global networks of settlement, colonization, knowledge and trade.

Readers interested in the historical geography of the Arctic will find much of interest in these pages. Authors tackle topics including the circulation of knowledge about the north, Nordic cultural landscapes, agricultural landscape transformations, technology and urbanization in the north, and imaginative geographies of “northernness.” What they will not find are many geographers. The bulk of the authors are themselves historians (joined by an anthropologist and archaeologist), and while the selected bibliography features many geographers, from Braun to Wynn, one wonders whether even greater conceptual coherence and depth might have been provided through a more explicit engagements with geographical concepts around peripherality, frontiers, and resources, such as those emerging from the “new” resource geographies. The generally excellent final essay, for instance, relies on William Cronon’s excellent, but now somewhat dated *Nature’s Metropolis* to frame a discussion of the north as resource hinterland, yet considerable work by resource, economic and, yes, historical geographers since that book’s publication have both expanded upon and refined this concept considerably (including in the Arctic context).

These comments aside, *Northscapes* represents an excellent contribution to the burgeoning environmental, historical and geographical literature on the Arctic. Through its theme of technologies (including both “tools” and systems of knowledge), it brings a novel focus to bear on the region’s human-environment dynamics and highlights the deep continuities in the long-

term human effort to adapt to and transform the Arctic's intemperate landscapes. The collection should remain an important contribution to the historical-geographical study of the changing Arctic for years to come.

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*The True Geography of our Country: Jefferson's Cartographic Vision*. JOEL KOVARSKY. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014. Pp. x+144, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth. ISBN 978-0813935584.

In *The True Geography of our Country*, Joel Kovarsky reviews the role of maps and geographic information in the life and career of Thomas Jefferson. In the introduction, Kovarsky states that he intends to "demonstrate the importance of geography and maps as the foundational scaffolding for his [Jefferson's] varied lifelong pursuits" (p. 3). The eight chapters describe Jefferson's interest in land surveying, his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, his geographical library, his role in planning government expeditions to explore the American west, his correspondence on geographical and cartographic topics, his role in the development of the ideology of Manifest Destiny, and his interests in astronomy and other geographically-related subjects. Kovarsky has succeeded in compiling a review of materials and sources related to Jefferson and geography, but he has neither provided the reader with a cogent thesis nor with any new interpretations or analysis of Jefferson's geographical work or significance. These limitations of the work are troubling for at least the following reasons.

First, there is already an ample – perhaps bloated – body of literature on Thomas Jefferson that includes published versions of his writings and other primary documents. It is thus puzzling that so much of the text of this book consists of lengthy quotations from Jefferson's correspondence and other writings. For example, if Jefferson's instructions to Meriwether Lewis had never been published, then it would be understandable for the letter to be quoted at length. Kovarsky even prefaces this quotation with an acknowledgement that Jefferson's instructions are "well-known, lengthy, detailed, and oft-quoted." Similarly, the chapter about Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* is largely a summary of Jefferson's descriptive work with several lengthy quotations. The chapter on Jefferson's library is only four and one half pages in length and consists mostly of quotations and lists. More troubling than the superfluous text is that there is rarely an attempt by the author to interpret Jefferson's writings or to discuss the historical or geographical issues raised by the text that he quotes. Kovarsky simply informs the reader that these writings provide information about the maps and geographical knowledge that Jefferson possessed or sought. My criticism is not so much that Kovarsky wastes ink by publishing lengthy quotations of primary sources that have been published before, but that he fails to engage the reader in an analysis of the historical and geographical significance of these materials.

Second, Kovarsky does little to engage the secondary literature on Jefferson. Although multiple sources are cited, there is little discussion, analysis or interpretation of this work in light of the primary materials that the author has reviewed. The reader is left wondering what Kovarsky has to offer that has not already been presented by Donald Jackson, John Logan Allen, James P. Rhonda, or other scholars concerned with Jefferson's place in the history of geography and cartography. The author seems to dodge the question of how this book contributes to Jeffersonian scholarship (or scholarship on the history of cartography or the American West) by dismissing the prior literature as voluminous and discussion of it as beyond the scope of the book. This is

particularly unfortunate. Despite the strengths of the scholarship of Jackson, Allen, Rhonda, and others, there is still much that could be learned, brought up-to-date, or otherwise revised and improved upon when attempting to understand the enigmatic Thomas Jefferson and the early years of American geography.

Third, if the author is excused for not being a Jeffersonian scholar, then it might be expected that his expertise in cartography would shine some new light on Jefferson within this field. While Kovarsky presents a few maps that are more limited in availability, most of the maps in this book are easily accessible online through the David Rumsey Collection, the U.S. Library of Congress, or other sources. Not only are these maps readily available, but they are printed in this book in grayscale, in a small format, and are occasionally broken across the binding. I question what purpose it serves to publish small and unreadable versions of well-known maps such as Humboldt's *Carte Generale Du Royaume De La Nouvelle Espagne*, Arrowsmith's *Map Exhibiting all the new Discoveries in the Interior Parts of North America*, or Melish's *Map of the United States*. More importantly, why are these maps presented with so little original interpretation or analysis of them in the text? Once again, the inclusion of numerous previously published primary sources and, more importantly, the failure to engage in interpretation and evaluation of those sources in the text is upsetting.

Finally, if there is a central thesis of the book it is that maps and geographical knowledge were important to Jefferson. Not only is this thesis rather weak and uninteresting, but it is argued through circular logic: Jefferson wrote about maps and geography therefore maps and geography were important to Jefferson.

In sum, this book will prove to be a disappointment for those seeking original and substantive scholarship on Jefferson, his influence on American geography and cartography, or his geographical knowledge. The one exception is the chapter entitled "Foreshadowing Manifest Destiny". In this chapter, Kovarsky discusses the roots of Manifest Destiny and Jefferson's geographical thought. This chapter is an exception in that Kovarsky relies less on lengthy quotations and is more focused on interpretation beyond description. Unfortunately, the remainder of the book fails to provide many fresh insights or interpretations. Charitably, the book offers a worthwhile description of key sources and would be a useful introduction for those seeking a brief review of the landscape of Jeffersonian geography.

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*Mastering the Niger: James MacQueen's African Geography and the Struggle over Atlantic Slavery.* DAVID LAMBERT. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013. Pp. viii + 309, maps, diagrams, index. \$50.00 cloth ISBN 978-0-226-07806-9. \$7.00-\$40.00 e-book ISBN 978-0-226-07823-6.

*Mastering the Niger* is a comprehensive and complex account of the engagement of the Scotsman James MacQueen (1778-1870), in one sense and location a "sedentary" or "armchair" geographer, with various forms of the production, dissemination and reception of geographical knowledge and their relation to opposing discourses on Atlantic slavery, notably at the time up to and beyond the British abolition of the slave trade (1807) and slavery (1833) with particular reference to Granada, the West Indies, the River Niger, and West Africa. Three contextual chronologies are offered for this analysis: "from the emergence of the British anti-slavery campaign to the peak of humanitarian influence on the early Victorian state; the intensification

of British exploratory activity in West Africa, the solution of the so-called Niger problem, and the subsequent commercial and humanitarian expeditions up this river, and the institutionalization of British geography as a field of knowledge and set of practices" (p. 7).

The book is in three parts, prefaced by an introductory chapter entitled "Mastering the Niger," which narrates MacQueen's production of *A New Map of Africa* in 1841, incorporating over twenty-four years' assembly and analysis of geographical data, its publication in journals such as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, and its links and those of earlier maps that he had produced in relation to the question of the course and termination of the River Niger. MacQueen correctly asserted, in 1816, that the Niger terminated in the Atlantic Ocean between the bights of Benin and Biafra, a fact confirmed by the Landers' expedition in 1830. His map also linked with the Niger Expedition of 1841-42, intended, among other things, to help eradicate slavery from non-British territories through a substitution of legitimate commerce. From 1796 to 1821 MacQueen was manager of a sugar estate in Grenada in the West Indies, from part of whose labour force he had extracted knowledge of West Africa. The growth of abolitionism towards the end of the eighteenth century had promoted debates about the "representation" of Africa through intertextual debates, "fought not only on worldly and textual sites, but also *across* them, as those on both sides cited earlier accounts and made comparative points to substantiate their arguments" (p. 9).

The first of the three parts of the book, entitled "Sources," analyses anti-chronologically the detail and sophisticated inter-linkages of many different sources of geographical knowledge, starting with MacQueen's ideas and proposals from 1821 and 1822, moving to his commercial occupation in Glasgow in the early 1820s, and a demonstration of links between commercial bookkeeping methods and later systems of geographical data collecting and processing, and then to his experience in Grenada. Actions and ideas discussed include proposals for the establishment of a West Africa Company; the contexts of geographical research in the late eighteenth century; and the Atlantic culture of commercial speculation and MacQueen's construction of his Niger theory.

The second part, "Courses," incorporates responses to his Niger theory and related African proposals, tensions and contrasts between "armchair" knowledge and first-hand observation; the outcome of consideration and attempted practice of his ideas for Sierra Leone and for the Niger scheme, including the Niger Expedition of 1841-42. The final section "Termination" analyses the main issues between the early 1840s and 1870, the year of MacQueen's death, with particular reference to such questions as the source of the Nile and the Livingstone Zambezi expedition, together with his increased contacts with the Royal Geographical Society, which had changed since the early contact with John Barrow, who had charged MacQueen as being a "closet" geographer in a review of his *A Geographical and Commercial View of northern central Africa: containing a Particular account of the Course and Termination of the Great River Niger in the Atlantic Ocean* (1821), in *The Quarterly Review* in 1821.

The essence of the Lambert book is described by the author, following Ian Baucom, as comprising not only a struggle between competing theories of right (slaves' right to freedom and traders' right to trade), but also the context of the links between geographical knowledge, African exploration and Atlantic slavery - a struggle between competing theories of knowledge, so that "Geographical discourse played a dual role...providing a means for debating slavery and representational forms for doing so, but also helping to reveal the competing theories about the locations - literal and figurative -from which credible knowledge concerning slavery could be produced" (p. 27).

David Lambert has produced in many respects a highly original and innovating piece of research and writing. Its structure, outlined above, is quite unusual and differs from conventional chronological narrative structures and sequences. The prime reason is that it is written mainly

about attempts to master knowledge within a fairly restricted geographical context. The arguments are tightly reasoned, and raise many new questions about the moral geographies of slavery and sources for related knowledges, not least the provision of geographical information by the slaves themselves of the regions from which they had been forcibly exported.

This sophisticated book is very well referenced and illustrated, with a good bibliography and index, including links to many manuscript and printed sources. It contains interesting maps, though the scale at which some are reproduced makes for some difficulty of interpretation.

The innovative style of the narrative does periodically pose problems of interpretation of what is presented, with occasionally slowing of the pace of the argument, sometimes by the partially helpful periodic *vade mecum* summaries of where we have got to and where the author tells us we are going, and in some other sections, where the density of semiotic technicalities again slows the pace.

The wider contexts of slavery and its moral/immoral geographies are rather taken for granted, and the non-expert reader could have been helped a bit more with this. On the whole, however, this is a work which contributes much to the knowledges underpinning and forming a history and historical geography of a crucial topic, and does so with an impressive technical and conceptual expertise. It is undoubtedly a significant trail-maker in the field of the historical geography of knowledge and its attempted applications.

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*Racial Cleansing In Arkansas, 1883-1924: Politics, Land, Labor and Criminality.* GUY LANCASTER. New York: Lexington Books, 2014. Pp. v+166, illustrations, notes, index, bibliography. \$80.00 cloth. ISBN 978-0-7391-9547-5.

Coupled with racialized landscape theory as presented in *North American Odyssey: Historical Geographies for the Twenty-first Century* (Craig E. Colton and Geoffrey L. Buckley 2014. chap. 15, p. 273) and “Teaching Jim Crow Pedagogy” theory in *Teaching Ethnic Geography in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (National Council for Geographic Education 2015. chap. 8, p. 68), this statewide analysis of racial cleansing could catalyze a new race relations research paradigm in Arkansas. Logically organized, clearly written and easily readable, this book deconstructs a temporal (1883 to 1924) and spatial (state, county, city) social movement to establish “whites-only” counties and cities therein throughout Arkansas.

For divergent reasons, two research methodologies stood out in this book: archival newspaper content analysis and oral history interviews. The author artfully utilized statewide and local newspaper archives and “uncovered enough events of geographical and thematic diversity” (p. 8) to create a representative and multifaceted database of racial cleansing practices in Arkansas. To the contrary, however, despite the availability of an African American oral history archive with a focus upon white segregationist tactics including racial cleansing within the context of African American Jim Crow culture and society, the author chose not to rely on oral histories as another primary research source “because there continues to be a prejudice among those who might be defensive about their communities’ reputations” (p.8). Therefore, he overlooked the 2001 Duke University Oral History Project and book with Arkansas as a target state, *Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell About Life in the Segregated South*. By ignoring African American oral histories, voices expressing African American agency and resistance to racial cleansing were minimized if not absent from this book.

The Introduction (Chapter 1) and Conclusion (Chapter 6) flowed as a cohesive, carefully crafted race relations essay. Chapter 1 provided a review of pertinent racial cleansing literature, a multidisciplinary definition of racial cleansing, an explanation of place-based racial cleansing cognitive mapping, along with a clear articulation of the audience and goals for the book. The author also asserted the significance of a solid historical groundwork of racial cleansing research to raise shared consciousness and provide critical terminology as the first step in moving beyond the legacy of the past and undoing (generational) “enduring injustices” (p. 17). The subtly crafted Conclusion (Chapter 6) described racial cleansing as an exclusionary strategy, positioned racial cleansing in an economic geography context, delineated the phases of racial cleansing along a continuum and framed racial cleansing in relationship to national/global policy and practices. However, references to Jim Crow and African American social justice agency were missing from this essay.

The remainder of this book, Chapters 2 through 5, delineated a historically sound temporal and spatial database of racial cleansing case study and case vignette descriptions of discriminatory incidents across Arkansas’s racialized landscapes. The chapter headings set forth a topical framework for identifying racial cleansing events. Successively, reflective of white motivations, these terms -- politics, land/labor, criminality, unknown and multivalent causes -- (re)presented racial cleansing as a continuum rather than as an absolute (p.140).

Two books central to the author’s literature review provided contextual frames for deconstruction of the book: James Loewen’s 2005 *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* and Elliot Jaspin’s 2007 *Buried in the Bitter Waters: The Hidden History of Racial Cleansing in America*. Three major differences stood out.

First, Loewen and Jaspin demonstrated how census data and population geography could be used to define the respective spatial scope, scale and locations of segregated Sundown Towns and racial cleansing counties in the United States. Lancaster chose not use a similar approach to describe the spatial scope and scale of racial cleansing as a statewide phenomenon in Arkansas. Because of the statewide density of racial cleansing events in Arkansas, a statewide map or map series would have strengthened the visual (re)presentation of the scope, scale, locations and places of racial cleansing in Arkansas.

Second, Loewen positioned the Sundown Town movement within the context of Jim Crow laws and culture as the defining foundational white supremacist ideology and strategy during the “nadir” of American race relations from 1890 to the 1930s. Surprisingly Lancaster did not similarly frame racial cleansing within this ideological context. Consequently, missing an opportunity to use racial cleansing to further amplify Loewen’s conclusion that “most Americans have no idea that race relations *deteriorated* from 1890 to the 1930s in the United States” and that “Sundown Towns could not be understood outside this historical period” (p.25).

Third, in terms of the place-based dimension of racial cleansing, Jaspin used county and state maps to contextualize each racial cleansing case study. He graphically illustrated the scope and scale, locations and places of racial cleansing events. Notwithstanding Lancaster’s clear place-based descriptive narrative, maps were noticeably absent in this book.

As a Jim Crow segregationist tactic, racial cleansing measurably created white racialized county and city landscapes throughout Arkansas. Lancaster powerfully situated these racialized landscapes in terms of black and white Arkansans having two entirely different mental maps of Arkansas (p.14). Characterized as “enduring injustices,” he also speculated about Arkansas’s legacy of racial cleansing and its impact upon African American agency after “being driven into exile and away from property then left forfeit to local whites, and being intimidated into avoiding these areas that later offered some measure of prosperity, as exemplified in the economic boom

experienced by those Ozark communities along the White River and its upland tributaries when the Army Corps of Engineers created lakes that transformed rural areas into popular resorts or even the boom that hit northwestern Arkansas" (p. 15).

A recent *Jonesboro Sun* article "Mayor denounces pro-white billboard" (May 2, 2015) illustrated the continuation of Arkansas's racial cleansing legacy into today's society. Located in mostly white Pope and Boone County, the anonymously purchased billboard space proclaimed "It's Not Racist To Love (heart symbol) Your Own People" at both sites. As an African American female born, raised, educated and employed for eighteen years as a college geography instructor, Lancaster's book resonated with me. Beyond "tree of talking" reconciliation (p. 16), this historical text, when integrated with historical geography theory, themes, and methods has unique potential to make race relations discourse more place-specific, to make natural resource management economic development policy and practice more racially equitable in Arkansas and to serve as a place-based research model and laboratory for similarly situated states.

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*Outside the Hacienda Walls: The Archaeology of Plantation Peonage in Nineteenth-Century Yucatán.* ALLAN MEYERS. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2012. Pp. xi+219, maps, diagrams, notes, b&w photos, tables, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paper. ISBN 978-0-8165-2995-7.

Meyer's book, representing some twenty years of fieldwork and research in the Yucatán Peninsula, is an excellent example of the power of interdisciplinary scholarship. This volume is primarily about Tabi, one of the many privately owned towns that dotted the Yucatán landscape between Mexico's independence in 1821 and the Mexican Revolution beginning in 1910. Although Meyers does discuss and describe in some detail the hacienda compound of Tabi, he is interested in the core buildings of Tabi (the owner's palace, the sugar mill, the church, and so forth) only to the extent that they shed light on the social conditions of households that lived in debt peonage outside the hacienda's walls. His goal is to reconstruct the plan of Tabi – its roads, households, parcel boundaries – and the social hierarchies of individuals and families revealed through the analytical methods of archaeology supplemented by oral histories and other historical records. In Meyer's opinion, the latter is elitist, constructed by literate actors (what Redfield would have called part of the great tradition), but archaeology is democratic, unearthing the material relics of daily life and thus allied to the little tradition of the masses.

The author introduces the reader to Tabi's layout via the one old surviving map of the estate that dates to 1817 and is found in Tulane's Latin American Library. That map is a rather stylized representation of the hacienda not drawn accurately to scale. Antonio Benavides Castillo, a Mayanist Archaeologist, carried out an archaeological investigation of Tabi in the 1980s. His survey was unscientific, but it did reveal a number of occupied blocks arranged in a grid pattern around a central plaza. Thus, the stage is set, and we can see that Meyers is taking on a huge project to reconstruct an accurate spatial plan of Tabi. Fate, however, also aided Meyers in his project. The Yucatán Caste War (1847-1855) was an extremely violent Maya revolt against high taxes and encroachment on their lands by Yucatecos (whites and mestizos residing in the Yucatán), and sugar haciendas like Tabi, located just south of the Puuc Ridge in north-central Yucatán, were a prime target. Although Tabi was damaged in the war, its main buildings were largely spared, possibly because the hacienda served as a headquarters for Jacinto Pat, one of the Mayan leaders in the revolt. The hacienda gradually recovered only to have the Constitutional Army

of the Mexican Revolution in 1915 torch the cane fields and peon debt records and then order the inhabitants to leave forever. That man-made disaster helped preserve Tabi in a Pompeii-like state. Finally, the State of Yucatán converted Tabi and several thousand acres around it into an ecological reserve. When the State transferred control to the Yucatán Cultural Foundation, an NGO, archaeology was included in the heritage management, opening the door to a team of researchers from Texas A&M University to locate Tabi village structures.

Meyer's analysis of Tabi begins with the historical record, which provides a fairly rich account of the individual owners and the estate's changing areal extent and production statistics. He reviews the apparent origin of the estate in 1733 as a cattle ranch and its enlargement and transformation by the 1780s into a sugar hacienda whose labor requirements led to large-scale debt peonage. The hacienda probably peaked in size and resident laborers in the 1890s, but despite a modernization of production methods, debt peonage persisted. The historical record, unfortunately, is spotty with regard to the debt peons. Meyers finds the oral history records from court documents and the like sparse and contradictory. Censuses, taken irregularly, do not reveal the occupations of the peons. Although census data do indicate a good deal about the ages and family status of the villagers as well as the presence of imported Korean and Chinese laborers and significant ethnic intermarriage, the demographic record sheds no light on the spatial arrangement of Tabi village, either physically or culturally.

Where history stops, archaeology starts for Meyers. The meat of this book, what sets it apart, is his discussion of some twenty years of intermittent fieldwork, starting in 1996, to locate and delineate the roads, plazas, cemetery, property boundaries, house foundations, backyard patios of Tabi. After receiving permission to dig in some house sites, Meyers and his team used a transect method to establish equidistant sample points in selected residential blocks. Pits were then dug and the exhumed soil sifted for artifacts, mainly potsherds of earthenware, most coarse but some refined. The former were correlated with stockade-cottage plots of the peons and the latter were associated with masonry-house plots of salaried workers, principally *mayacoles* (field foremen). Other evidence of social distinctions included bone-species diversity and rim sherds (remnants of vessels), all more prevalent in the masonry-house plots, which were found adjacent to plazas or along main roads. To further refine his spatial model of the village plan, Meyers draws on the studies of rubbish by Hayden and Cannon, Thomas Killion, and Rani Alexander to test for soil phosphorous of organic residues of human activity. This field method facilitates the estimation of household size and the delineation of specialized areas within houselots (e.g., cooking areas and rubbish zones) where no visible surface traces remain.

Although rather specialized, this volume is highly readable and well illustrated. Students of geoarchaeology will get a good sense of how a field project in the Yucatán is developed, organized, and effectively executed over many years. They also will come to envision haciendas, at least those in late-colonial and nineteenth-century Yucatán, as integrated in a world economy of commodities and labor. Researchers considering an investigation of one of the many other haciendas in Mexico can benefit from a study of Meyer's methods for artifact and soil-chemistry sampling. If we want to better understand the full historical meaning of peonage, its diversity, and its subtle spatial expressions, this reviewer is persuaded that we need more archaeology of haciendas and their villages.

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*Key Concepts in Historical Geography*. JOHN MORRISSEY, DAVID NALLY, ULF STROHMAYER, and YVONNE WHELAN. London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2014. Pp. xiv + 308, index. \$39.00 paperback. ISBN 978-1412930444.

Historical geography encompasses an expansive field within human geography. Any particular study of geographies of the past can at times inhabit many subfields of human geography. Consequently, historical geography does not lend itself well to a one paragraph definition or to a few theoretical maxims. Any new student of historical geography can find the variety of content daunting. Newcomers to the field would be well-served by a detailed overview of academic historical geography. With the publication of *Key Concepts in Historical Geography*, such an overview exists.

John Morrissey, David Nally, Ulf Strohmayr, and Yvonne Whelan served as joint authors for this text – a text that is part of a wider series by SAGE Publications focusing on the most important concepts in several of the social sciences. (Similar *Key Concepts* books exist for different sub-disciplines of geography, including political geography, urban geography, and economic geography.) The *Key Concepts* series editor prefaced that this historical geography text allows for deeper explanation than a dictionary, broader understanding than a monograph, and more background material than a textbook. This is an excellent description of the strength of content found in *Key Concepts in Historical Geography*.

The book is arranged in a logical structure with eight broad category sections: “Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies,” “Nation-building and Geopolitics,” “Historical Hierarchies,” “The Built Environment”, “Place and Meaning”, “Modernity and Modernization”, “Beyond the Border,” and “The Production of Historical Geographical Knowledge.” Each category is not a chapter by itself; rather, these sections contain three defined concepts each. For example, the “Historical Hierarchies” section contains entries covering “Class, Hegemony and Resistance,” “Race,” and “Gender.” Morrissey, Nally, Strohmayr, and Whelan each authored six chapters.

All 24 concept chapters (each about ten pages in length) include conceptual explanations paired with the related methodologies or applications of a given concept. For instance, Yvonne Whelan’s excellent piece over the “Landscape and Iconography” concept is separated into an introductory section that discusses the historical understanding of landscape from Sauer to Meinig, a section on new cultural approaches to landscape since the 1980s, a section addressing memory and identity from the 1990s (including a mini-case study on Dublin), and a conclusion section that addresses critiques of landscape studies while appropriately situating current research within academic geography. Throughout each chapter, relevant scholarship is mentioned – the “Landscape and Iconography” section identifies specific works by Cosgrove, Daniels, and Duncan when discussing new cultural geographies of landscape.

Yet, the text is not a monotonous literature review. Foundational pieces of scholarship and the intellectual evolution of ideas are intertwined in this very readable book. A well-culled list of suggested readings follows each chapter. Perhaps most useful to historical geography students are each section’s concluding “key points” that succeed in providing clear, summary-style paragraphs of a chapter’s central ideas.

Several sections within this book deserve extra praise. The aforementioned example concept of “Landscape and Iconography” by Whelan is joined by the author’s companion pieces on “Conceptualizing Heritage” and “Performance, Spectacle and Power” – three vibrant concept chapters that give clarity to geographers working on place and meaning, often “at the boundaries between cultural and historical geography” (p. 9).

Another section, “Beyond the Border,” contains three persuasive concept chapters by Nally that address “big picture themes” for academic historical geographers (p. 10). While the

concept topics of “Globalization,” “Governmentality,” and “Nature-Culture” might typically be viewed through a twenty-first century lens outside of historical geography, Nally does admirable work to stress the historical (and historical geographical) relations of these important ideas.

An additional strong suit in this work is the final section of the book which focuses on the production of knowledge within academic historical geography. Strohmayr’s “Historical Geographical Traditions,” Morrissey’s “Illustrative Geographies,” and Morrissey’s “Evidence and Representation” collectively address “the conditions of possibility for historical geographical scholarship to emerge” (p. 11). These concluding chapters form an important step-back view of the meaning of “historical geography” that is valuable for new student and experienced researcher alike.

One strength of the four authors is their diverse academic background, with a variety of academic training in North America and Europe. The authors currently hold academic positions in Ireland and the United Kingdom, which serves well to represent the very strong academic tradition of historical geography in the non-U.S. English-speaking world. Additionally, the inclusion of four separate authors did not hamper the overall quality of the book through stylistic differences in writing or voice.

While innovative scholarship in historical geography (not to mention scholarship in historical GIS) is increasing, this work is not necessarily comparable to one particular research monograph within some portion of historical geography. Instead, this book works within a framework between textbook and encyclopedia. It is tempting to assume this text would be compared by students to the well-known work *The Dictionary of Human Geography* by Gregory and Johnston (2009), but the breadth and length of concept chapters in *Key Concepts in Historical Geography* is far greater than a dictionary. The best comparisons are the additional *Key Concepts* texts focusing on geography offered by SAGE Publishing.

No summary work can perfectly describe a discipline, and at times in *Key Concepts in Historical Geography* there exists an opportunity – paradoxically – for both “more” and “less” information in particular chapters. Furthermore, greater contextualizing of additional major works across even more subfields of human geography could be useful for positioning different aspects of historical geography. But these objections are slight, and likely borne out of the format. This scholarly, detailed overview is a commendable work.

In the introduction, the authors note that “an overarching methodological concern... is to ask geographic questions of the historical evidence that seeks to situate meaning in context” (p. 2). Any student or professional within historical geography would agree that this work similarly situates meaning in context for the wide-ranging field of historical geography. Both the format and intellectual approach to *Key Concepts in Historical Geography* are quite successful, and this book is a necessary volume for any current or future scholar of historical geography.

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*Observation Points: The Visual Poetic of National Parks*. THOMAS PATIN, ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. Pp. ix+296, maps, photos, diagrams, index. \$27.50 paperback. ISBN 978-0-8166-5146-7.

As a collection, *Observation Points* travels a wide and satisfying intellectual path. Across thirteen chapters, editor Thomas Patin pins together themes and contributors from a variety of disciplines including art history, political science, English and literature, geography,

and communication studies that examine how visual rhetoric in and about American national parks have been employed as “discursive apparatuses that have produced, limited, and shaped discourses on nature, including human nature, and have justified particular social policies and cultural preferences as natural and necessary” (p. xiii). Patin draws on the scholarship of W.J.T. Mitchell and asks us to interrogate visual rhetoric in national parks so as to reveal the deliberate and mediated nature of landscape design, display, and presentation. National park material and practices are thereby implicated as agents of social power that naturalize nationalistic, environmental, political, and imperial “culturally specific concepts or social arrangements” (p. xv).

Observation Points is bound through the lens of national parks and monuments – and that is part of its genius. The landscapes and material culture presented are all familiar territory and represent the grandest examples of America’s “best idea.” Two essays focus on Yellowstone National Park. Others discuss Zion, Grand Canyon, and Chaco Canyon. Three of the thirteen essays are located in the Black Hills of South Dakota and examine Mt. Rushmore. The omission of less-known parks, including parks and monuments in locations east of the Mississippi River could be a point of criticism. However, as a whole the book is theoretically rich and the variety of mediums explored – including national park landscapes, architecture, film, visitor publications, and landscape paintings associated with national parks and monuments – provides the reader with a framework for extending this analysis to other public landscapes.

The book is loosely organized and following an introductory essay on virtual rhetoric by Patin, the reader is treated to a multiplicity of perspectives. Some of the more satisfying essays are those that address the built environment. Robert Bednar shows how national park managers designed landscape devices – scenic overlooks, visitor center displays, road and boundary signs – to control the vistas, experiences, and meaning imbedded in the landscape. In doing so, these landscapes become the “medium through which the national parks present themselves as natural landscapes” (p. 3). Peter Peters examined how national park roads were redesigned in the 1950s and 1960s to control the onslaught of modernizing American tourists. Road design was standardized so visitors could experience the park through their windshield – thereby imbedding a certain sense of independence and adventure in what was ultimately a highly-controlled circulation system. Patin’s essay on the “ruins” of Chaco Culture National Historical Park provides an enlightening discussion on the museological rhetoric of presentation and reveals why the ruins are continually stabilized and reinforced – just as visitors’ preconceptions and mythologies of Chaco civilization are similarly stabilized and reinforced.

Several of essays explore the legacy of visual rhetoric present in imagery from and about the national parks. Geographer Gareth John implicates Thomas Moran’s sweeping and detailed landscapes of Yellowstone and the photographs of William Henry Jackson as being “formative of what Yellowstone would become and, in part, how it would be understood thereafter” (p. 141). These grand images were utilized by boosters and provided examples of the sublime, powerful, and nationalistic qualities of a post-Civil War America connected by a transcontinental railroad. Teresa Bergman analyzed the effect of patriotic rhetoric presented three orientation films shown at Mount Rushmore National Memorial. She suggests that each of these films naturalize cultural trends in the monument. Themes of heroic endeavors and American exceptionalism run through the first and third film and are representative of early Cold War and Reagan-era sentiment. The second film is subdued in tone and content; Bergman ties this to the doubts and confusion of the Vietnam era. Mark Neumann treats the reader to an interesting discussion on how popular spectacles at the Grand Canyon – most notably attempts to jump the Canyon in cars, skateboards, and motorcycles – served as performances that at once resisted and also reinforced pre-defined rhetoric surrounding Grand Canyon.

Though only one of the book contributors is a geographer, historical geographers will find much worth in *Observation Points*. Patin and company provide a strong and usable theoretical lens to examine landscape creation and function. It is an approachable volume well-suited for upper division and graduate courses. Furthermore, it is a useful guide for students of public lands, American studies, and landscape.

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*Globes: 400 Years of Exploration, Navigation, and Power*. SYLVIA SUMIRA. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014. Pp. 224, maps, color photos. \$45.00 cloth. ISBN 978-0-2261-3900-5.

Sylvia Sumira's illustrated book of the history of (mostly Western) globes will delight both academic geographers and map enthusiasts, with page after page of glossy images drawn largely from the British Library maps collection. But beyond the beautiful pictures and close-ups of cartographic detail, this book is also an excellent jumping-off point for thinking about the materiality of geographic representations of space and how geographic history operates as public history. To do this, the author illuminates the materiality of globes, their role in developing and reflecting technologies of navigation, and how they changed as material expressions of power over time.

Foremost, Sumira explores globes as physical objects, and offers readers a rich vocabulary for describing their physicality. The unfamiliar words, compiled in a glossary, include the language of craftsmanship as well as globe-reading, and compel us to imagine the extent to which people's sense of geographical location and located-ness was once accompanied by analog instruments of calculation. For instance, the majority of the globes that the author presents in the period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries were made in pairs: the *terrestrial* globe, with which we remain familiar today, had a—now long lost—counterpart in the *celestial* globe, for which the user "must imagine the earth at the centre of the sphere and the viewer beyond the heavens, looking down at the universe" (p. 17). These coupled spheres situated the viewer not only in the place where she stood on Earth, but also among the heavens, which were long considered a much more central part of people's everyday experiences. These paired globes were as common in the standard mounted variety as they were in the many "pocket globes" shown throughout the book, in which the case was lined with images of the constellations, in their various forms.

Yet the details of globe production and use over time are not mere 'factoids,' but a source of insight into the work that globes have done in the world over time. As the author points out, for much of its history the "globe which turned in a stand and rotated about its own axis did not represent the rotation of the earth; rather, it allowed computations to be made relating to time and seasonal change. The user could discover, for example, when the sun rises at a particular time of the year, at a given latitude, which was important in daily life" (p. 20).

The author also tells us a great deal about the history of globe production. Most globes are made by first printing a series of *gores*—citrus peel-shaped pieces of paper with map images printed on them—which are mounted on a sphere made of paper, cardboard, wood and/or plaster. This technology of printing and mounting arose with the printing press and was improved with various advances in engraving, from wood block to copper plate intaglio to color lithography, that occurred in the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. While we generally think about the printing press advancing the mass production of books and book literacy, the ability to print maps and globes similarly had a tremendous effect on geographical literacy.

In addition to the vocabulary of the globe as object, *Globes* offers a discussion of the marks and lines central to understanding navigation. An example of these is *rhumb lines* or *loxodromes*, first found on Mercator's 1541 globe, in which they emanate from 32 points on the globe, these are "lines of constant bearing by which sailors could navigate to their destination. Each rhumb line cuts all meridians at the same angle, so on a globe it gently spirals toward the poles" (p. 54). The vocabulary for thinking about the Earth in these terms helps the uninitiated reader begin to imagine what elements of wayfinding were important to a sailor and how he thought about the physical shape of the planet as he moved across it. The inverse of this is that Sumira also guides us through detailed changes in how globes represent space, as different European explorers' voyages made the maps of the contours of landforms more accurate, and their names became etched – both figuratively and literally – into the contours of the globe.

This leads us to power – the final word of this book's title. The subtle but widely distributed changes in globe printing provide an excellent place to begin a discussion among students of geography about the role of the map in systems of imperialism and conquest. These include the funding of explorer missions by monarchs and corporations; the changes in technologies for printing the gores that make up the skin of the globes; the distribution of globes by printing companies; and the change in status of these objects in maintaining empire -- from an object of political prestige to an object of classroom learning. In each of these ways, the globes in this book demonstrate the small ways in which cultures of representation change, and change us with them.

In turn, seeing the evolution of these objects might help us understand what role the navigational tools of our own time play in our everyday lives. While globes were designed to be useful, their purpose as objects of beauty and status cannot be underestimated. Like the one-time set of Worldbooks or even the humble bookshelf, globes have long been a prized symbol of learned people and their literal worldliness. Thus, being able to see the material change over time in how people conceived of the spaces of planet Earth may give the reader some ability to analyze – or at least see the complexity – of a world reigned over by digital maps, and new kinds of empire.

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*How to Read the American West: A Field Guide*. WILLIAM WYCKOFF. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014. Pp. xvi+422, color maps, color figures, chronology, further readings, index. \$44.95 paperback. ISBN: 978-0-295-99351-5.

Having spent many summers of my youth in Colorado's San Juan mountains, published my own research on the proliferation of exurbia in the state's Front Range, and made additional travels to Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and various cities within the region, I have become quite familiar with the American West's landscapes. Thus, it was with great anticipation that I received William Wyckoff's *How to Read the American West: A Field Guide* and I will not hide my fandom of this book. I initially believed that the term "field guide" in the title would be more metaphoric in its use. It is, and it is not. Take your favorite wildlife guide for birds or mammals and turn it into a how-to book about reading the cultural and natural landscapes of a particular region, and that is what Wyckoff has accomplished here. The text is clear, descriptive, and appropriately analytical for a wide audience, thus making it equally useful in the classroom. The full color pictures are gorgeous. Wyckoff's scholarly experience, along with his skills behind both the keyboard and the lens, is on display here.

Despite the compliments owed to the book's meat-and-potatoes investigation of the West, the first major chapter, "Navigating Western Landscapes" perhaps steals the show as a how-to about reading the cultural landscape. Though the chapter is logically directed towards the book's American West focus, you could apply this guide to nearly any region of North America with few tweaks. It is a primer for human geography that deftly uses both traditional and more modern (read: critical) analytical methods, referencing the works of scholars ranging from Carl Sauer, Wilbur Zelinsky, and Donald Meinig, to Don Mitchell, Steven Pile, and Nigel Thrift.

Also in the front matter is a spot-on foreword by environmental historian William Cronon, who also serves as editor of the Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books series at the University of Washington Press, within which this book is published. Cronon of course praises Wyckoff's efforts while also displaying his own love of landscape assessment. In doing so he reminds us that scholars and non-scholars of all types and abilities appreciate the very same places and landscapes that we do as geographers. Wyckoff follows through on this promise with the book's focus: a topic-by-topic exploration of half of the United States, one which only a scholar native to the region could accomplish with such precision.

*How to Read the American West* is divided into eight sections, I suppose you could call them chapters, covering themes ranging from "Nature's Fundament" to "Landscapes of Extraction" to "Playgrounds." Essays start each section and provide a greater historical and national-scale context to the theme being explored. With a bit of expansion, these essays alone would be worthy of their own guide on the geographies of the American West.

The centerpiece of the book, however, is the collection of 100 topical profiles – on topics such as sagebrush, bypassed highways, farmworker settlements, and Spanish colonial revival architecture – covered within each of the eight sections and ranging from two to six pages. Within these topics reside weighty empirical evidence, specific case studies of places, and a lion's share of Wyckoff's photography. Flipping pages from one topic to another is easy, and even encouraged by Wyckoff, Cronon, and myself.

There are two potential criticisms one could have with this book. Firstly, its breadth prevents it from having a unifying message or theme, other than the cultural, environmental, and economic diversity of this region, which is a perfectly valid focus considering the book's goal. But Wyckoff leaves us without any concluding statement that wraps up and binds the pressing topics that this book presents. (Drought and agricultural labor are just two.) Consequently, there is no discussion of how geographers or others with the ability to read the landscape can help bring about a better sense of environmental and social justice in this region, that in many ways is coming to a tipping point.

Second is this book's definition of where the American West exists. It is unfortunate that the portion of the eastern Great Plains in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, are not included in this analysis. It would not require many additional case studies, but would treat the Plains in a more holistic way. It would have required more travel and photography for Wyckoff. But, as we all know, spatial phenomena of any type – cultural or natural – have little regard for political boundaries. For example, seeing the Permian Basin oil field in New Mexico stop suddenly at that state's border with Texas (p. 155) is odd at best and misleading at worst. However, having covered this question before in my own classroom – Where are the Great Plains? – I appreciate that trying to explain that eastern line of division can become a fool's errand. (The 20-inch isohyet? 100 degrees West? 98 degrees West?) For a book of this type that maintains a streamlined organization which allows the empirical information to take flight, getting bogged down in such a rhetorical debate would likely be worse than excluding the eastern plains. *C'est la vie.*

As for purpose, and to conclude, this book is clearly directed toward a general audience. However this would also make the perfect textbook to accompany a series of academic articles in a class about the American West. In fact, this book, in addition to my affinity for the region, makes me want to teach a course on the region. Any book that can do that certainly belongs on the shelf of any scholar, amateur or professional, with interests in the western half of this country.

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*Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840-1880*. SIBEL ZANDI-SAYEK. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. Pp. x+273, illustrations, maps, index. \$27.50 paper. ISBN 978-0-8166-6602-7.

This book is an exciting addition to the literature on the modernization of world cities. It investigates Izmir by privileging the space and spatial relationships of this multicultural port. To achieve such a privileging is no easy task, but Zandi-Sayek convincingly exposes the highly complex processes of urban change and development that were at work in Izmir during an era when cities around the world were engaged in similar modernization projects.

Situated in western Anatolia on the Mediterranean Sea, Izmir had long been a key trading city. After the Crimean War (1853-1856), a combination of Ottoman decline and competitive European advances effectively brought the Ottoman empire into the Western system of nation-states. Izmir, suddenly at the center of these global dynamics, witnessed a doubling of its multiethnic, multinational population and its volume of trade. As a focal point of rapid change, Izmir lends itself well to an exploration of how local and state responses to new pressures played out in the city's physical spaces.

The overarching story presented here confirms that the Ottoman government tactically standardized what had been a pluralistic and permeable set of laws and practices in order to integrate more fully with the emerging order of nation-states and the global economy. Yet the details reveal how the fluid identity politics and negotiated power of a multitude of interests were inherently part and parcel of the city itself. The process of modernization was manifest in Izmir's real estate, streets, waterfront, and architecture. By fixing each chapter directly to this built environment, Zandi-Sayek is able to demonstrate how the city's form both reflected and shaped Ottoman society and politics.

Chapters are arranged topically and might be read as a series of independent studies rather than a single narrative that builds from one moment to another. But what Zandi-Sayek gives up in chronological flow she gains in spatial framing and thematic continuity. She is also able, then, to emphasize the fluid and contingent nature of historical change. Additionally, the large number of maps and photos of the city help the reader to visualize the spatial dynamics of nineteenth-century Izmir.

Each chapter focuses on one characteristic of the city to reveal the tangled set of local, national, and international circumstances that influenced the everyday identities and practices of various stakeholders. Broader tensions between belonging and exclusion, the public good and private rights, secular and religious authority, as well as institutionalized power and fluctuating allegiances, constitute some of the major themes that run through the book.

Chapter one deftly locates questions of citizenship within the physical world of real estate. Using sources like court cases, legislation, consular reports, and newspapers, Zandi-Sayek examines property ownership, land use, and taxation to assess how the city was modernized.

She highlights the mixed judicial system (where older Islamic courts operated alongside newer secular ones and foreign consular courts) to demonstrate ways that those with vested interests (including Ottoman subjects, foreigners, and bureaucrats) used property as a means to negotiate their rights, privileges, and responsibilities. Since identities remained ill-defined and malleable at this juncture, the author is able to connect the ambiguous parameters of national sovereignty and citizenship to Izmir's evolving urban form.

Chapter two encompasses the same four-decade temporal range but maps Izmir at a larger scale to focus on the streets that made up the city's main corridors and public spaces. Here Zandi-Sayek provides a corporeal sense of Izmir's sights, sounds, smells, and dangers. The rapid increase in population and commercial activity at midcentury prompted greater scrutiny of city streets. Flooding, disease, sewage, street lights, crime, and traffic flow were urgent problems that focused attention on the need to improve municipal infrastructure and management. As the author intends, this multifaceted account transcends a simple dichotomizing of tradition and modernity or Islamic and Western practices (p. 111). Instead, she follows a sinuous path through ethnic, religious, and economic divisions to reveal how public spaces created and reflected political interests as increasingly rationalized governing bodies were established.

The building of a modern waterfront, which was not universally perceived as a desirable endeavor, is the main subject of the third chapter. In all stages of the Quay Project, competing perceptions over what constituted the public good animated a succession of compromises as this prime section of the city was re-spatialized. Delineating the various groups involved—foreign companies, the Ministry of Public Works, local merchants, and property owners—and the concerns of each, which ranged from taxation and property rights to public health and monetary gain, exposes the politics of place and place-making as these competing interests shaped the structure and priorities of urban reform.

The fourth chapter centers on the Catholic Church's 1842 Corpus Christi procession through Izmir. Here the author elucidates how pageantry and ritual mobilized ordinary citizens and elite decision makers to accommodate diverse needs, even if only temporarily. By analyzing the route of the procession in relation to key landmarks as well as the spatial choreography of participants and spectators, Zandi-Sayek shows the extraordinary diligence planners paid to social and political hierarchies. Importantly, she makes plain that such public spectacles were "space contingent" (p. 153), meaning that one's understanding and remembrance of such events cannot be divorced from the physical locations in which they were experienced.

By keeping the evolving form of the city at the forefront of the discussion, *Ottoman Izmir* demonstrates the mutually constitutive nature of physical space and everyday life—whether the latter is framed in terms of legal plurality, political contention, or social accommodation. Zandi-Sayek's methodological strategy also successfully positions Izmir for comparison to other modernizing cities. In thinking about other sites also experiencing uneven processes of global integration where such comparison would prove useful, the port cities of China and Japan immediately come to mind.

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