

Ho's otherwise deft description of these genealogies, however, suggests a few questions left unresolved. He works with several written versions from different time periods, characterizing them as "hybrid texts." Yet precisely what he means by this remains unarticulated, and he leaves the genres involved underdefined and unhistoricized. He admits that before the late nineteenth century most of the sources about and by Hadramis were part of the 'Alawī Way, self-consciously giving 'Alawī Sayyids privileged narrative positions. Perhaps reflecting these sources, Ho's narrative paints most contestation over idealized representations of Hadrami Sayyids as arising during this latter period and from non-Sayyid Hadramis or marginalized Sayyids born outside of Hadramawt. But might there be ways to read the texts that he identifies as an 'Alawī cannon that problematizes the sense of a relatively unified Hadrami Sayyid diaspora in earlier centuries? This possibility Ho leaves underdeveloped.

Despite these unresolved questions, Ho's account of genealogy and mobility remains compelling. He draws attention to a genealogy of indigenous and non-European mappings of what we now identify as the Indian Ocean and its littorals. He illustrates how certain of the 'Alawī Sayyids, through their articulations of genealogy, moved and theorized about a social space of Hadrami migration in this region. In so doing, he suggests that it is through such mappings that one might look for histories and social mechanisms of certain types and instances of mobility that have long interested scholars of this region and time period.

———Daniel Andrew Birchok, University of Michigan

Deborah Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

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Scholars of money often take for granted its instrumentality. Deborah Valenze argues that this is a mistake, for it overlooks the historical contingency and variability in money's uses, meanings, and discourses. In this book, Valenze examines money in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, demonstrating how and when money took its "modern" social and moral form. By doing so, she opens up theoretical questions about the relationship of money to mobility and constraint, the potential of money to create hierarchy and limit freedom even while it affords new relationships and movements, and the role of money as a moral and social measure of self in everyday life. The abstracting power and the unstable meanings of money, Valenze contends, shaped early modern British culture in sometimes contradictory ways.

This book concerns money's "social life" during England's financial revolution. Rather than narrowly studying the state or financial institutions, Valenze

turns to alternative sources in order to examine money's social dimensions as it was exchanged, accumulated, and reflected upon by a range of actors. The author offers chapters on topics including tropes and metaphors of money, anxieties about money in the diaries of businessmen and the writings of a workhouse operator, vagrancy laws, and Atlantic passage and wife sale. In each case, she shows how people worked out their social and moral relations through monetary exchange and discourse. Each chapter is illuminating, but it remains unclear to me why particular cases were chosen over others or whether the chapters add up to more than the sum of their parts. In addition to a lucid introductory chapter on monetary theory and history, the book offers an especially insightful discussion of cash rewards for the apprehension of vagrants, showing how poor people's individual and categorical worth was measured by money. Throughout, Valenze nicely sustains attention to gender and the contradictory ways that money both limited and afforded opportunities for women.

During this early modern period, Valenze contends, money became a measure of self and of others; moreover, the instability of money's social and moral meanings facilitated a distinctive willingness on the part of diverse actors to attach monetary value to human beings. Despite some analytical vagueness in her treatment of money variously as a measure, a price, a commodity, a symbol, and a more encompassing value, Valenze convincingly illustrates the expansive ways that her subjects figured the ontological relationship between people and marketable objects. Valenze calls for moving beyond money's "economic" dimensions to its "social life," referencing Karl Polanyi and anthropological research on "primitive" money. While this attention to the "embeddedness" of money effectively moves beyond market- or state-centric analyses, it leaves unanswered the question of what constitutes the analytical and historical categories of the "economic" and the "social" in the first place.

This book will appeal primarily to historians, though the author's interdisciplinary approach to the social life of money extends its potential reach to a broader readership interested in social theories of exchange and value.

———Jessica R. Cattelino, University of Chicago

Lester K. Little, ed., *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541–750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 380 pp.

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With the rise of HIV and other "emerging diseases" having global reach over the past twenty years, interest in historic plague has flourished. The Justinianic plague in and around the Roman empire from A.D. 541 to 750, however, has received far less attention than the Black Death of 1348 and its recurrent