

but they faced enormous challenges in trying to gain profits – problems in raising capital and obtaining labour, the lack of infrastructure overseas, commercial rivalries (both among French firms and with foreign competitors), and the reluctance of the French state, for a long part of the colonial era, to commit vast resources to distant domains with occasionally dubious potential. For some, colonialism was a true vocation and commercial *raison d'être*, while others opportunistically took advantage of access to the raw materials and markets provided overseas. The end of empire did not spell the ruin of these interests; indeed, many French companies and investors proved very savvy in being able to restructure their activities, redirect their energies, and sometimes simply retain their interests in newly independent states (behaviour that, of course, gave rise to charges of neo-colonialism).

Though this dense volume may overwhelm readers with detail (enlivened by good illustrations), and few will have a need or desire to read the collection from start to finish, the case studies and 'micro-histories' relativize the role not only of the economic stakes in empire but also of imperial activities in metropolitan business strategies. They also show the benefits of a discussion of colonialism that moves away from overarching theories to specific examples, and from focus on great entities such as the state and capitalism (in a systemic sense) to attempts to trace and decipher the complex arterial and capillary networks that established themselves in the colonies. This work valuably relates the colonial period to the wider narrative, before and after the empire, of French economic history.

Britain, the empire, and the world at the Great Exhibition of 1851

Edited by Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg
Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. Pp xviii + 219. 14 b/w illustrations. Hardback £55.00, ISBN 978-0-7546-6241-9.

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London's 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of All Nations, more familiarly known as the Crystal Palace Exhibition, has come to embody Victorianism

considered both as a cultural and as an ideological system. From the building's construction and design through to the contents of its multiple naves, the whole show brimmed with confidence, faith in progress, and commitment to empire. Over the years, much has been written about the Crystal Palace Exhibition and this collection of essays is a pretty fair representation of many of the central questions that scholars are asking about this event.

The book opens with a brief introduction by Jeffrey A. Auerbach, which insists that 'Crystal Palace displays were the product not of the organisers' totalizing vision, but of negotiation and compromise between British organizers and potential exhibitors around the globe' (p. xiii). The result, Auerbach writes, 'was a truly global and not just a British event' (p. xviii). The essays that follow more or less stick with this theme. Paul Young, Kylie Message, and Ewan Johnston interrogate the exhibition for the light that it sheds on Victorian-era globalization as well as on shifting race and class relationships brought about by industrialization and imperial expansion.

The remaining essays explore the world on display at the exhibition. Louise Purbrick writes insightfully about how exhibits of Irish lace, linen, and art reflected deep divisions about Ireland's national status: 'nationhood was either premised upon the modernizing efforts of industry and could be achieved at some easily deferred moment in the future, or it had existed when Irish land was productive and it could reclaimed' (p. 75). Ewan Johnston and Peter Hoffenberg write expansively about New Zealand's and Australia's displays, noting how exhibits 'addressed, although not always reconciled, the often conflicting sources of ethnic political, social, regional, and religious identity' (p. 120).

Contributors to this volume do not limit their focus to displays from the British Empire. David Fisher connects nineteenth-century Russia's desire to modernize and be respected by the West with Russian efforts today to host a full-scale, universal-class world expo. Modernization is also the theme of essays by John R. Davis and Debbie Challis about German and Greek exhibits at the Crystal Palace Exhibition. Where German exhibits stressed technology and technology transfer, the Greek exhibit – the first major representation of Greece as an independent nation-state – pegged its modern identity to its classical past (a strategy that continued to unfold at subsequent exhibitions in the reconstructed Crystal Palace in Sydenham). Ambiguity also characterized the representations from Turkey and

China, as Francesca Vanke makes clear in her contribution to this volume. Because of England's strong pro-Ottoman foreign policy, Turkey received relatively positive notice at the exhibition whereas China seemed barely to exist in the eyes of the organizers. The exhibition, it seems, not only reflected dominant attitudes but served to shape them.

Taken on its own terms, this book is an impressive addition to the scholarship on the Crystal Palace and Victorian England. But there are some missing pieces. With the exception of Challis' treatment of Hiram Powers' *Greek Slave*, there is scant attention paid to the United States and its technologies-R-us representations. Of course, one can find examinations of US exhibits elsewhere, but those exhibits made clear that the shape of the industrial world was changing and that Britain already had a rival with its own ideas about globalization and about which nation should direct the world's future.

Another missing piece is a conclusion that revisits the main themes addressed by the essays. As it stands, the book has the feeling of an unfinished symphony. Among the issues that might have been addressed by way of conclusion are these: historiography (how the essays in this volume reposition scholars to ask new and better questions about the Crystal Palace); imperial relations (how the exhibition spurred the creation of series of colonial exhibitions in both England and its colonies around the world); museums (how the Crystal Palace stimulated the growth of museums of art, science, and industry, both as agents of globalization and as breakwaters against the tsunami-like effects of industrialization). Finally, when all is said and done about this and the dozens of other universal exhibitions during the Victorian era, there is the matter of the human beings who dedicated no small amount of time and effort to organizing these events. True, other studies have looked at the work of Prince Albert, Henry Cole, and Joseph Paxton, but not within the framework of globalization so nicely constructed by the editors of this book. One can certainly concede that the exhibition was not the result of a 'totalising vision' on the part of its organizers, but one should not therefore conclude that these men were lacking vision, especially when it came to building cultural infrastructure that would sustain both British nationalism and imperialism.

In sum, this is a volume that merits notice from scholars working in multiple fields, ranging from the arts to public diplomacy. One can always find fault with any collection of essays, but this collection presents scholarship that is solid and innovative.

My hunch is that, because of the price, the book is not likely to find a wide audience. So my hope is that the publisher can, perhaps through e-books, find a way to make these essays available to an increasingly global audience of scholars (and students) who are studying world expos and thinking about these events as staging grounds for globalization.

The making of a tropical disease: a short history of malaria

By Randall M. Packard. *The Johns Hopkins biographies of disease*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007. Pp. xvii + 296. 2 halftones, 19 line drawings. Hardback £16.50, ISBN 978-0-8018-8712-3.

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In the triangle of diseases that confound modern medicine, malaria coexists with tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Not only are these three especially cruel in their impact on the mortality and morbidity of the poor, each in its own way is capable of eluding medical remedies, through mutations, resistances, and other slippery responses to disease control. Prepared for a series, *The Johns Hopkins Biographies of Disease*, the intended readership of Randall Packard's book is not a specialized one and, while numerous books consider the quest for scientific mastery, his 'short history of malaria' demonstrates that malaria and poverty are mutually reinforcing. How malaria parasites are transmitted and develop through their life cycle, requiring the participation of both humans and anopheles mosquitoes, is clearly introduced here, but science attends rather than constitutes the narrative, which is more concerned with explaining why human costs have been imposed and persist than in tracking epidemics.

And yet, epidemics must be a springboard for a social history of disease. Any student of global history in the twentieth century will be familiar with upsurges of epidemic conditions in and just after times of war. Malaria may have reached its greatest extent just after the First World War, reaching the Arctic Circle in Russia. The conduct of the Second World War, especially in the malarial tropics and sup-tropics, called for a mobilization of malaria