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Oskar Cox Jensen. *Napoleon and British Song, 1797–1822*. War, Culture and Society, 1750–1850. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. 261. $100.00 (cloth).
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Historians who cite song lyrics often regard them as mere words. Oskar Cox Jensen's engaging and scrupulous study, *Napoleon and British Song, 1797–1822*, aims to pull the cotton from our ears. Cox Jensen's quarry is how "politicking was combined with musicking" (3), a phrase that captures the interdisciplinary nature of his approach. Well grounded in a musicological literature foreign to most political historians, he is also sensitive to the political content and context of late Georgian popular culture.

Cox Jensen considers not simply the formal characteristics of songs but also the venues in which they were performed. Not all genres or spaces could serve patriotic ends: "The ode could not convince when sung solo on a street corner, and in the middling theatre, it was furiously contested" (164). Cox Jensen's desire to assess *impact*—audience reception—must sometimes include an element of extrapolation and aesthetic judgment. We know little about the performances of individual songs and generally must study their "likely usage" (10). The musical dimension can be elusive at a more fundamental level, as well. While printed lyrics often announced the familiar melody to which words were set ("To the Tune of 'Hearts of Oak'"), many broadsides specified no particular music. Cox Jensen can sometimes deduce an "implied tune" with which words fit (133). But he reasonably concludes that when lyrics defy the meter and stress of the named song, the result must have been "all but unperformable, and cannot have conveyed a clear message to a casual listener" (83).

Such mismatches may indicate that a particular "song" never escaped singers' lips. That hardly means it fell stillborn from the press: silent words can cast long shadows. Some of the nearly four hundred titles listed in the appendix were surely never set to music. (It is hard to imagine anyone warbling a newspaper's four-line quip about Elba being "ABLE *revers'd*".) Cox Jensen describes the radical weaver Samuel Bamford's "Waterloo" not as a song but as a poem, and this seems the right term for several pieces he lists. Moreover, many songs describing the victories and hardships of war mentioned Napoleon only briefly. The eponymous speaker of Jane Taylor's 1804 "The Beggar Boy" (a poem that Cox Jensen lists but does not discuss) happens to sell copies of "Bonaparte's life" along with his thimbles and nosegays, but mentions the ruler only once. Still, Taylor clearly hoped to signal the irony of an orphan mendicant earning his bread by peddling "histories of all the great men of the earth." Even a passing mention of Napoleon can be thematically significant.

Cox Jensen's research gathers an extraordinary arsenal of popular songs. (He has posted new recordings of sixty-five of them online.) It seems a stretch to contend, on the basis of songs or otherwise, that Napoleon was "better loved and respected by the general populace than Wellington, Pitt, or the Prince Regent" (1). Such a claim requires, at the very least, extensive comparative analysis. Happily, Cox Jensen quickly moves past this assertion, and offers sensitive and illuminating readings of many pieces. Most popular verses were straightforwardly loyalist: they offered easy swipes at an enemy rather than complex meditation on an ambiguous political figure. Songs hailing Bonaparte were unlikely to have been typeset for market; radical verses often survive only in "scraps," or in rumor (65), and may not have mentioned the French leader at all. Many radicals despised Bonaparte, at least while he sat on a throne. To convey the existence of pro-Napoleonic sentiment in wartime plebeian culture, Cox Jensen combs through newspapers, pamphlets, memoirs, and Home Office papers. He turns up tantalizing details: a scrawled message, posted on a wall in County Meath in 1803, that Napoleon "is our Friend" (60); a Luddite letter suggesting that Bonaparte would help "in shaking off the Yoke" of Britain's corrupt government (77). Historians of popular politics will appreciate the light he shines on wartime dissent, though the Bonapartist sentiment he reveals generally comes from non-musical sources.

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Songs sympathetic to Napoleon turn up in significant numbers only after the 1814 and 1815 falls from power. The plight of the captured leader diminished his towering figure to human dimensions; Cox Jensen speculates that Napoleon's "transportation" to St. Helena resonated with listeners whose loved ones had been sent to Botany Bay or grabbed by press gangs. What songs qualify as "pro-Napoleonic" remains a question. Humane sympathy did not necessarily amount to political endorsement. One provincial printer (Joseph Russell of Birmingham) who sold songs about the fallen emperor turns out to have also peddled ballads celebrating loyalist heroes like Nelson. Does this suggest that the fallen Napoleon's appeal was quasi-literary rather than political—that the story of a modern-day Icarus resonated for reasons having little to do with ideology? Cox Jensen observes that a patriotic song could sometimes appear on the same broadside as an anti-war ballad. Such combinations might indicate deliberate "satirical" intent, as he suggests (26), but we should also recall that listeners can be deaf to a song's seemingly obvious political content (see "Born in the U.S.A.").

Cultural historians will find invaluable the book's opening and closing chapters, which consider the composition, publication, marketing, and performance of songs. Cox Jensen clarifies much about early nineteenth-century "song culture." The final chapter focuses on Newcastle, a town of "no definite partisan character" (135). Because Newcastle's corporation harassed street singers, performance was largely restricted to public houses and other indoor venues. During the war, the chief target of sung political dissent was impressment; Napoleon played little role in local songs until his fall. Cox Jensen focuses on one radical publisher who later published a prose tribute to Napoleon, though, apparently, no pro-Napoleonic songs. (The tribute appeared in 1821, leaving one uncertain whether the printer had always been a Bonapartist.) That the publisher maintained a circulating library suggests to Cox Jensen that workers might have memorized songs without needing to purchase broadsides. But he cautions that we cannot be sure to what uses the library was put: this possibility may represent "merely so much potential" (146). As this careful observation suggests, the book manages to convey the fog that surrounds its subject, at the same time that its piercing light reveals a great deal.

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James Davey. *In Nelson's Wake: The Navy and the Napoleonic Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. Pp. 418. $40.00 (cloth).
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James Davey's major reexamination of the Royal Navy's strategic role in the Napoleonic conflicts, 1803–1814 and 1815, *In Nelson's Wake: The Navy and the Napoleonic Wars*, the first for many for decades, is based on a combination of original research and the latest published literature. In 1892, Alfred T. Mahan asserted the decisive impact of sea power on this conflict. Such ideas seemed passé after 1918, however, and for many years the prevailing trend in British historiography on the Napoleonic conflict and national strategy downplayed and even disputed the Royal Navy's contribution to victory. In the era of world wars, hot and cold, it was fashionable to dismiss the contribution of sea power, stressing the role of land forces. The key text of this argument, Sir Michael Howard's *The Continental Commitment* (1972), spoke to a particular period when the British Army on the Rhine was the center of Britain's NATO contribution. As those days are long past, the "Continental Commitment" can now be seen as a short-term anomaly. Since 1989, the emergence of a multipolar world and the critical role of the oceans on global economics have shifted the agenda back towards a maritime perspective. Consequently, there

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