

space on the ships that carried the Jesuits to their field as formative in regard to forging a peculiar notion of masculinity. Allyson Poska deploys a case study of the Spanish port at La Coruña to show how the growing Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century transformed European women's work.

The volume is a splendid compilation of concise case studies on gender and Reformation or on the fusion of women's and gender history with global history. These very fruitful approaches make an entertaining read, recommendable to students and specialists alike.

Vitus Huber, *University of Oxford*
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Interpreting Early Modern Europe. C. Scott Dixon and Beat Kümin, eds.
New York: Routledge, 2020. xii + 514 pp. \$155.

With almost annual regularity, a new crop of handbooks and guides hits the market. Most attempt to provide coverage of major topics, disciplines, or chronological periods, often in the form of surveys but sometimes as collections of interpretive and historiographic essays. *Interpreting Early Modern Europe* clearly fits the latter category, emphasizing historiography—and “its own long narrative of development”—by examining “the different ways in which historians have shaped the study of the early modern period” (2–3). For such compilations, the choice of topics and, for that matter, authors makes all the difference between a rather staid collection of warmed-over histories or, as we have in this case, a lively, intellectually stimulating set of ruminations on major themes. Choices had to be made, and the editors settled on, as their “working principle,” a focus on those subjects where a “critical mass of historical and historiographical substance” exists (9).

The editors freely admit that the selection could have included other topics. Yet they excluded some because, in their opinion, they had not reached that scholarly threshold. While everyone could probably name their own favorite missing piece, it seemed a bit odd not to have commissioned a treatment of environmental history considering how deeply embedded in the historical mainstream the Little Ice Age, deforestation, erosion, and flooding have become or, for that matter, one on medicine, considering how much has been written, for instance, about plague and in the social history of medicine.

One cannot quibble in a like manner, however, about the authorial lineup; many contributors are themselves responsible for the current shape of important fields in the discipline of history. Likewise attractive is their international representation: from the United States, Great Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe. In their excellent introduction, the editors elucidate the general guidelines given to contributors whom they strongly urged to remember the title: “interpreting” early modern Europe. All the essays, albeit in varying degrees, present interpretive narratives, assess the state of

play, and review the historiography. No contribution merely dishes up a standard story; many offer strikingly imaginative rethinkings of the subject at hand. The essays include intersituated excerpts (and, at the end, appendixes) from primary or secondary material, plus useful and up-to-date bibliographies. Although generally well chosen, these insertions did little to enhance the strength or utility of the articles; the texts proved fully informative without them.

The titles of a few contributions promised rather more than they delivered. The discussion of “Material Cultures” very capably reviews the vast literature on consumerism, yet has only very little to say about the more recent methodological work on materiality, while that on “War and the Military Revolution” almost exclusively, and thoroughly, treats the latter while slighting more recent work that emphasizes experiencing, remembering, and commemorating war. Other essays substantively and convincingly shift interpretive frameworks: among these one might mention Dagmar Freist’s simulating discussion of “Expansion, Space, and People,” Charles H. Parker’s subtle treatment of “Identities and Encounters,” or Beat Kümin’s sharply conceived concluding essay on “Turns and Perspectives.” Some brave contributors take on seemingly impossible topics like “Reformations,” “The State,” and “French Revolution,” and yet produce essays that are models of clear-thinking concision and reflective of great historical acumen.

Considering the total length of the work—seventeen essays stretching over almost five hundred pages—a prospective reader might wonder how best to approach it. Do you take a deep breath, wade in, and read cover to cover, or pick and choose as needed? The obvious answer: it depends. The first choice requires time and *Sitzfleisch*. Yet, in the end, readers will find themselves struck by the ways in which a larger, more original picture of early modern Europe, as a whole, has emerged. All readers will not come away with the same impression, of course, but all will have gained what the editors and authors intended: an interpretation of early modern Europe and not merely seventeen separate visions of that world. Unfortunately, the press’s decision to use a rather small typeface, tight margins, and narrow leading does not make the physical task of reading any easier, but it is worth the discomfort. Illustrations are small and often indistinct. The hardcover (clearly designed to sit on library shelves) is expensive, heavy, and, frankly, ugly; the paperback is accessibly priced and more attractive.

Mary Lindemann, *University of Miami*
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La Fin du Moyen Âge. Joël Blanchard.
Paris: Perrin, 2020. 342 pp. + color pls. €24.

Joël Blanchard’s mastery of the history of France in the final years of the medieval era is broad and detailed. The author of biographies of the sainted King Louis IX (1226–70)