

transmission of knowledge about and across the seas. Others, notably the eminent economic historian Michael North, have most to say about trade, but several chapters do not pay sufficient attention to the role of trade in making trans-oceanic connections. Some contributors, at a time when 'blue history' concerned with environmental aspects of maritime history is becoming fashionable (and rightly so), emphasize ecological dimensions in an age of climate change and depletion of maritime resources. Despite its omissions large and small and its poor presentation, this book provides a handy guide to where we are now in the attempt to reshape maritime history. Actually, it is not one manifesto but a series of manifestoes, opening the way for plenty of debate about the subject matter of maritime history.

A history of global consumption, 1500–1800

By Ina Baghdiantz McCabe. New York: Routledge, 2015. Pp. x + 301. 7 illustrations. Hardback £105.00, ISBN: 978-0-415-50791-2; paperback £26.99, ISBN: 978-0-415-50792-9.

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Ina Baghdiantz McCabe's *A history of global consumption, 1500–1800* is a cogent synthesis of scholarship in the field and constitutes both a useful resource for undergraduate students and a valuable contribution to the burgeoning body of literature on the history of consumption. It is not the first volume promising to examine this subject through a global lens – Peter Stearns' *Consumerism in world history: the global transformation of*

desire and *The Oxford handbook of the history of consumption* are two notable examples – but McCabe's approach diverges from both in fruitful ways. Whereas Stearns argued that consumerism was essentially a Western phenomenon that only subsequently spread to other parts of the world, McCabe offers a more complicated, and more compelling, narrative of the development and evolution of consumer politics, tastes, and habits. The *Oxford handbook*, like so many edited volumes with a 'global' approach to almost any historical subject, presents an assemblage of discrete, geographically variegated pieces that ultimately do not speak directly to each other. *A history of global consumption* has less segmentation by good and region, and knits together some of the most dramatic transformations in the history of global consumption into a single narrative that is, on the whole, a cohesive and engaging read.

The introduction presents key debates in the field, including disagreements over the social origins of consumerism and the question of Western exceptionalism in the rise of consumption. The narrative is then organized chronologically into seven chapters that span the early modern period. Each chapter concludes with a set of study questions and thorough citations, which enhance the book's value as a tool for educators.

The first chapter draws attention to the rising prominence of merchants from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. Members of this emergent elite not only transported goods around the world but also accumulated wealth and developed a penchant for collecting exotic goods as signifiers of their social status and political influence. This section effectively outlines important innovations in legal and banking systems that developed to facilitate, and at times to limit, such accumulation and display.

Chapters 2 and 3 address the impact on global consumption of European encounters with the environment, resources, and native

peoples of the Americas. There is a succinct summary of the spread of sugar plantations from Ottoman North Africa to Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and British colonies in the western hemisphere, and a discussion of how this commodity was intimately tied to the transatlantic slave trade, global silver circulation, and consumption habits within circles of merchants and nobles. McCabe introduces the concept of the triangular trade, and notes the importance of American crops such as cassava and maize in supporting population growth in Africa and Europe. These chapters also treat the uses of tobacco and chocolate in Amerindian cultures, and the ideas and practices associated with the consumption of these goods as they spread into Europe and China. On the one hand, the chapters are among the more compellingly 'global' of the volume. On the other, European desires and consumption practices receive by far the most sustained attention. Though this reflects a general imbalance in the literature, a wave of recent and forthcoming scholarship is turning attention to consumption in places such as West Africa, and will require historians to rethink their narratives about the global nature of consumption in the modern and early modern worlds.

The fourth chapter is an authoritative examination of the transformation of 'exotic' goods into domestic products in Europe, and includes fantastic detail on the spread of coffee consumption and the development of fashion in France. Chapter 5 is the least cohesive chapter. After tracing the rise and fall of tulipmania, the text rapidly skips through sections on seventeenth-century Dutch home interiors, paintings, clothing, linens, the birth of fashion marketing in France, dolls, and fashion trends in late Ming and early Qing China. A unifying theme is not clearly delineated or analysed in sufficient depth to bind these within the same frame.

Chapter 6 turns to the economic and political consequences of runaway consumption.

McCabe provides brief accounts of the Mississippi and South Sea bubbles, each resulting from financing schemes intended to fund French and British government debts, respectively. Thinkers of the eighteenth century expressed concerns over the bullion bleeding from national coffers to pay for the import of luxury goods, and advocated the internalization of the production of exotic items, where possible. The ideas of Kenneth Pomeranz and his critics regarding the Great Divergence also receive ample space in these pages. The book concludes on a solid note with a chapter that focuses on the moral and political implications of consumption in the Age of Revolutions, from the spread of French fashion throughout Europe to the boycotts of British goods and support of homespun in North America.

In some places, McCabe attempts to do too much, and does not allow sufficient space to illuminate connections between various goods and broader processes. The result is an abundance of interesting detail, but an occasional degeneration into a loose organizational structure that relies more on subheadings than narrative to move things along. A major missed opportunity was the chance to follow through on the promise laid out in the introduction, to 'balance the over-representation of Europe by including groups never discussed such as Native Americans' (p. 1). But of course, Native Americans are often discussed, and shifting patterns of consumption, be they of livestock, horses, land, slaves, or arms, have been central in some of the most innovative scholarship in recent years on the native peoples of North America. Unfortunately, Native Americans feature but rarely in this account, primarily as a contrast to European habits and styles when they do make an appearance, and disappear entirely quite early in the book.

A history of global consumption will nevertheless serve its purpose as a clear and wide-ranging survey of the formation and impacts of consumption practices and tastes around the

world. McCabe's synthetic treatment of dispersed regions, and her effective integration of major theories and debates into the body of the text itself, make this a handy teaching resource and an excellent overview of some of the most influential developments in consumer tastes and habits throughout the early modern period.

Sugar and the making of international trade law

By Michael Fakhri. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. *Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law*. Pp. xvii + 250. Hardback £67.00, ISBN: 978-1-107-04052-6; paperback £22.99, ISBN: 978-1-316-63347-2.

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In *Sugar and the making of international trade law* Michael Fakhri provides a history of economic ideas and an 'institutional account' of international sugar trade policy from the 1900s to the 1970s. He excavates the pre-history of multilateral trade institutions and economic globalization using three case studies: the 1902 Brussels Convention, the 1937 International Sugar Agreement (ISA), and the 1977 ISA. He asserts that each of these deserves a prominent place in the history of global trade policy and the shifting meanings of the phrase 'free trade'. Fakhri persuasively argues that certain market interventions have long been seen as fully compatible with free trade. His other major contribution is to centre agricultural commodities as part of the intellectual history of globalization.

In the first section, Fakhri reviews the context and outcomes of the Brussels

Convention of 1902, which he suggests was 'the earliest modern international trade treaty that established a multilateral institution' (p. 21). The Convention promoted free trade and originated at the behest of British colonial cane-sugar planters facing competition from subsidized European beet sugar. The treaty, in effect for a decade, allowed countries to impose countervailing duties against countries subsidizing sugar production – duties which were seen as a means to achieve freer trade, Fakhri points out. For a variety of reasons, West Indian planters did not benefit from the regime, and the cumulative effect of freer trade was to reconsolidate British imperial power.

In the middle section, Fakhri highlights the under-studied economic theorizing at the League of Nations in the 1920s and 1930s. Though trade policy was never their primary focus, League officials articulated a coherent set of ideas about international trade. They convened three world economic conferences and helped institutionalize the idea that economic problems could be addressed through international coordination, carried out by technical experts rather than politicians. In an era when protective tariffs were common, League officials advocated lower tariffs, coupled with international market coordination, referred to as rationalization schemes. The League provided a forum for commodity producers to negotiate these schemes. Cuba – one of the world's largest sugar producers at the time – led efforts at the League to create an international sugar rationalization agreement, culminating in the 1931 Chadbourne Plan and the 1937 ISA. Fakhri describes these as 'early experiments in transnational governance' (p. 73). The emphasis on Cuban diplomacy at the League is particularly innovative. Since US investors controlled a significant portion of their sugar-dominated economy, Cuba's sugar policy was a means to achieve domestic objectives. Through the