down to the First World War are misplaced and that the impact of internal disturbances in the form of Arab Nationalisms was very limited, such groupings being very much in their infancy. The concomitant of this argument is brought out in the second chapter, where emphasis is placed upon the events of the First World War, which acted as a disruptive external factor causing the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire. The second, and by far the longest, part of the book is concerned with the period of rule by mandate. The first four chapters consider those countries placed under British rule, Mesopotamia/Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan. The remaining two chapters in this part evaluate French rule over Syria and Lebanon. Palestine emerges as Fieldhouse's main concern, being the subject of two chapters, the first being specifically dedicated to evaluating the origins of the mandate and the role played in this process by Zionism. The final section contains a single chapter entitled 'Conclusions', where the successes and failures of British and French rule by mandate are placed in comparative perspective and an attempt is made to relate the forms of rule imposed in this period to the development of post-mandate forms of governance.

Fieldhouse describes this book as a 'by-product' of his earlier (2002) work on Wallace Lyon. However, *Western imperialism in the Middle East*, as a book which engages with the broader themes discussed above, can also be usefully read and considered in the context of the number of influential studies of imperialism produced by Fieldhouse. Particularly noteworthy in the context of the interaction of imperialism, as a globalizing force, and the colonial periphery, is his broad study, *The West and the Third World* (1999). Fieldhouse's most recent work, then, lends itself well as an introduction to, and synthesis of, a very broad literature on the Middle Eastern mandates. Especially valuable for those new to this subject is the bibliography, usefully subdivided by the focus of each chapter. However, for those new to the topic, this book is not the most easy to read, dealing as it does in great depth with diplomatic minutiae. It is also, on occasion, somewhat confusing, as the way in which the book is structured means certain key events are often repeated at different points throughout the text. These, however, are minor points. Fieldhouse has produced an excellent book, one of appeal to both specialists and a more general audience alike.

From silver to cocaine: Latin American commodity chains and the building of the world economy, 1500–2000

By Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal, and Zephyr Frank, eds., Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006. Pp. 384. 22 illustrations. ISBN 0-8223-3753-3, 0-8223-3766-5 (pb).

Reviewed by Jeremy Adelman
Princeton University, USA
E-mail: adelman@princeton.edu

DOI: 10.1017/S1740022807002367

This volume assembles a collection of essays about some of Latin America's export staples, from the very first colonial commodities, like silver and tobacco, to more recent 'industrial' products like henequen and cocaine. A few are missing, like gold, grains and cattle products, and twentieth-century staples like oil and copper get passed over. But otherwise this book is very comprehensive and illuminating about the patterns of Latin American ties to the world market.

What unites the various case studies (silver, indigo, cochineal, tobacco, coffee, sugar, cacao, bananas, nitrates and guano, rubber, henequen, and cocaine) is the application of a heuristic device called 'commodity chains'. An explicit alternative to 'dependency' approaches, which for all their merits carried too much normative baggage and sought to explain too many variations in development, the commodity chain approach is more of a 'middle range' concept which brings into focus the links that connect local production of exportables with local consumption, with a strong emphasis on the intermediating processes of commercialization and marketing. The advantages of the approach are several: it does not reduce the experience of participating in the market place to either supply or demand forces, to production or consumption – but seeks to pull both sides together relationally. Second, it suggests ways in which local factors enjoy or are denied some autonomy to control patterns of developments. Third, it does not drive a wedge between economic and non-economic variables, so that conditions of production can be seen in broader social contexts, and the flux of world consumption can be seen as the effects of general cultural shifts in tastes and technologies. The approach is meant to be 'flexible' (p. 14). But in so doing, it also gives up some harder explanatory claims that dependency

and neo-classical approaches avow. The result is a book that is impressively sweeping. But some readers may wonder whether the stories provide insight into the conditions for sustained development in Latin America.

Two themes do stand out very clearly. First, Latin American economies grew more complex around their commodities, but without losing some of their underlying characteristics. From the start, with sugar, tobacco and especially silver, we can chart the ways in which exports yielded to local transformations through the various linkages thrown up by exports. But so too were the mediating processes which provided the links to world consumption – Iberian merchant capital, state regulators, and rival trading houses – expanding and thickening the links between consumers and producers. By the late nineteenth century, circuits of exchange had become remarkably complex and ductile, and often unmoored from the original state agents that sired the export sectors (especially at the local level in the creation of factor markets for labour and land). But at the same time, the basic personality of the commercial systems of these commodities remained strikingly continuous. It was really only with the late-nineteenth-century case studies of the industrial commodities (rubber, bananas, henequen, and cocaine) that we see multi-national corporations swallowing the linkages within their operations. What this suggests is that the late nineteenth century represented a major shift in the organization of the chains themselves.

The second theme is that most exports were not the bulwarks of sustained development. This is not necessarily a new insight. But it is striking to recall, especially in light of some naïve claims about globalization. Of the twelve case studies explored in this book, only one commodity, coffee, had the linkages that could be captured by local agents in sufficient degree to spawn regional development on a sustained basis. The examples from dyestuffs and cacao are equivocal on this matter. Otherwise, readers are treated to (1) booms and busts (nitrates, rubber, henequen), (2) commodities whose very nature disposed them more to fiscal bonanzas (silver, tobacco, guano) than capital growth in the region, or (3) enclaves (sugar, bananas, cocaine). The inability to get sustained development was only partly due to external constraints; often local factors were decisive. But the general pattern is fairly clear – even if this book shies away from generalized conclusions.

Historians interested in classical themes from a fresh perspective will find this volume very suggestive. It will re-open discussions about Latin America and the world economy over the *longue durée*. It also reveals to historians of the world economy the divergent patterns of local and regional growth without condemning them to a static place as 'underdeveloped' 'peripheries' of decisive and determining action occurring elsewhere.

The ambiguities of history: the problem of ethnocentrism in historical writing

By Finn Fuglestad, Oslo: Oslo Academic Press, 2005. Pp. 151. ISBN 82-7477-204-0.

David M. Fahey
Miami University (Ohio), USA
E-mail: faheydm@gmail.com

DOI: 10.1017/S1740022807002379

The Norwegian historian Finn Fuglestad condemns what he calls 'Westernized' African and other non-Western history. He complains that many historians of the non-West have accepted uncritically the Western definition of history that requires 'purposive-movement' instead of developing a new theory of history derived from their own research. He offers as an analogy of what should have been done – how historians of women developed gender theory, something that mainstream historians could not ignore in their own specializations.

Fuglestad was trained in Britain as an Africanist and wrote his first monograph about colonial Niger. It is not surprising that he devotes much of his latest book to Black (non-Muslim) Africa. This review, in contrast, foregrounds those parts of his argument most relevant to the readers of this journal. The gospel preached from Oslo has not converted this reviewer, but it is thought provoking and should be better known. Although the book was published in 2005, few libraries appear to have acquired it, so the review attempts a fair summary.

In the mid-1960s, when a specialization in African history had barely emerged, the British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper dismissed pre-colonial Africa as not worth scholarly study. He sneered that the African past consisted of nothing more memorable than 'the unrewarding gyrations of