
Brett Christophers puts post-colonial and feminist theories and Foucault’s writings to intelligent use in this carefully documented account of an Anglican mission. The author, a geographer, evinces a special concern with space and human placement on the land, but his methods here are historical. Christophers gives a fair and textured depiction of a missionary whom his contemporaries regarded as exemplary, but whose success was hampered both by logistical and political forces outside his control. Scholars whose focus is missionaries, as well as those interested in Canada’s past, including that of its so-called First Nations, will appreciate this balanced blend of theory and history.

The first challenge John Booth Good encountered in winning the Nlha7kápmx (also called the Thompson) to Christianity was a sparse and mobile population. Living along the Thompson and Frazer Rivers, the Nlha7kápmx moved seasonally to fish, hunt and forage, precluding the missionary’s daily contact with them, but they had requested Good’s presence, an event the author examines with some care. While not dismissing the possibility of a religious motive, Christophers feels that the Nlha7kápmx probably sought an advocate who could effectively defend their claims to land, although Good’s letters and intercessions on their behalf invariably failed. After reaching a peak of influence in the late 1870s, when scores were sometimes baptized at once, the mission rapidly lost adherents.

Christophers argues that Good’s colonialism was not of a piece with the state’s, nor with the random predation of miners and settlers who came to the region seeking their own material gain. Unlike these, Good’s colonial project was not founded on a racial divide. Christophers delves into the theology and church history that motivated Good, whose primary role models were the early Church fathers rather than the Reformationists. Good’s missionary imperialism, like that of the Apostle Paul, envisioned the sameness or oneness of all peoples in a catholic Christendom. Christophers does not thereby excuse Good’s imperialism, but clarifies its scope and humanistic impulse.

Christophers knows the Nlha7kápmx primarily through the ethnographic writings of James Teit (a student of Franz Boas), whose later work in this region spanned some forty years. Teit described the collecting, hunting, and salmon fishing that make comprehensible the population movements that Whites were wont to read as mere shiftlessness. Good’s dream to transform his
followers into farmers was impossible to realize in this relatively dry zone. The church’s insistence that monogamy was a sine qua non for baptism further thwarted his progress. Men measured their wealth in wives, and also felt morally bound to them, especially those with whom they had had children. The Nlha7kápmx resented this policy, and as Teit noted, remembered it with bitterness.

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“In the myddest of our lyvynge / Death compaseth us rounde about.” These lines from a popular medieval hymn, transmitted in eleventh-century St. Gallen, serve as a fitting epigram to Craig Koslofsky’s study on The Reformation of the Dead. In this well-argued, stimulating book, the author traces the fate of the dead in early modern Germany from the eve of the Reformation to the eighteenth century. He approaches “the history of death” (Philippe Ariès) from the social order of the living. Drawing on the anthropology of ritual, Koslofsky explores the art of dying, funeral rites, and the topography of burial places. In a series of fascinating episodes Koslofsky skillfully applies the insight that “liminality” provides an “opportunity” to act (p. 8). In Leipzig in 1536, for instance, various urban groups clashed over what was perceived as a threat to traditional burial practice when Duke George of Saxony mandated that, for the sake of hygiene, the dead were to be interred outside the city walls. This ordinance instigated varied responses and severe resistance. University professors insisted on their right to be buried intramurally. Mendicant monasteries expressed fears of losing control over religious life in the city. The whole dispute occurred in an atmosphere of heightened confessional strife. Burial in places other than the churchyard signified either a dead person’s dishonorable status or allegiance to Reformation ideas (though Duke George was Catholic). A tenuous settlement was reached when the Duke granted privileges to professors and required the payment of extra fees for city burials.

The author embeds the discussion of this and other conflicts over the dead within a careful investigation of what was at stake theologically. He concludes that the Reformation marked a watershed in the history of death rituals. Whereas pre-Reformation believers interceded for the dead by way of prayers and masses—thus forming an imagined community that encompassed both the dead and living—Luther and other Protestants severed the links that tied the living to the deceased by everyday religious practice. According to the reformers, the dead encountered God on their own; intercession on behalf of the dead
souls in purgatory was useless and wasteful. As a result, the dead were increasingly removed from the Christian community. Spatially, cemeteries were placed outside the cities. At somebody’s deathbed, Protestants would conspicuously cease prayer after the person’s death. For Protestant communities funerals thus took on a function different from pre-Reformation gatherings of the same kind: they served the living rather than the dead. “[T]he Protestant Reform transformation transformed the Christian funeral more radically than it affected any other ritual of the traditional Church,” Koslofsky claims (p. 81).

The Protestant uses of the dead follows a trajectory comparable to other social transformations associated with sixteenth-century reform. As in the case of baptism, matrimony, or confession, the theology of the Reformers built upon pre-Reformation debates. Councils pioneered the creation of new cemeteries outside the city’s confines before 1517, mostly because of overcrowding in churchyards and health concerns in times of plague. The lavish display of post-mortem piety in late medieval Europe precipitated criticism of the Church’s financial dealings. Luther’s departure from traditional care for the dead was nevertheless gradual. Once the Reform was established, however, the Reformers created new rituals. Among these, the funeral sermon was the most prominent example, featuring a copious account of the deceased as an exemplar of Protestant morality. In fact, with the emergence of Protestant orthodoxy, burials evolved into a powerful means to exert social control. Ministers denied a Christian funeral to transgressors of Christian discipline. In the seventeenth century, some believers turned away from Lutheran burial customs. Funerals became occasions for staging spectacles of social exclusivity, and nobles more than other social groups chose burial at night without the presence of a priest. When daylight funerals became more widespread again at the end of the eighteenth century, secularization seems to have come full circle. Funeral rites provided comfort for mourning family members while, at the same time, they ceased to involve whole communities.

Ritual has recently emerged as one of the most productive categories of analysis for Reformation historiography. The book under consideration makes an important contribution to a debate owing much to the legacy of Bob Scribner. The Reformation of the Dead excels in cogent, lucid discussions of the anthropology of ritual for the dead (see esp. pp. 104–107). Perceptively, Koslofsky adopts anthropological theory on the dead to the context of Reformation Germany. Yet this tightly argued book also prepares the ground for future historians. Late medieval practice, for instance, comes up only retrospectively, from the vantage point of the Reformation; Catholic responses deserve discussion beyond the theological critique of reformed practice (pp. 48–54); and the transition from Reformation to Baroque funeral rites merits closer scrutiny. Furthermore, in an account that gives much attention to class, gender is strangely absent (cf. pp. 9, 125). Despite these reservations, The Reformation of the Dead is an important book on an important subject matter. With its manifold insights
on the nature of ritual and its role in history, this study is of the greatest inter-
est to scholars and readers in and beyond Reformation studies.

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Şevket Pamuk, A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire. (Cambridge: Cambridge

This volume by Şevket Pamuk of Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, probably best
known for his earlier work entitled The Ottoman Empire and European Capit-
talism, 1820–1913: Trade, Investment and Production (CUP, 1987), is a sig-
nificant addition to the literature on the interface of early modern imperial and
monetary systems. Dealing with the political economy of the Ottoman empire
over its sprawling life-span, the book traces the evolution of the relationship
between the Ottomans and money, from the time that early Ottoman coinage
emerged in the 1320s from under the Byzantine shadow, to the nineteenth-
century integration into the Gold Standard, and the financing of the First World
War. The long span covered is divided for purposes of expositional convenience
into five periods, respectively 1300–1477, 1477–1585, 1585–1690, 1690–
1844, and finally 1844–1918. Interestingly, despite Pamuk’s own background
as a specialist of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is the second and third
periods that are most extensively treated, between chapters 4 and 9. Yet, there
is enough here for those concerned with both the earlier and later periods to be
satisfied that they have not been short-changed by the book’s ambitious title.

It is particularly heartening to note that the book, besides being very wide-
ranging temporally, is also explicitly comparative in its framework, from the
very first page (which incidentally contains one of the rare misprints in evi-
dence, “Leyell” being in fact “Deyell”). These comparisons are not simply
about Europe (the inevitable touchstone for Braudelian Ottomanists of an ear-
lier generation), but also concern China and India, where recent years have seen
a significant debate emerging around the works of historians like Richard von
Glahn, J. F. Richards, and Frank Perlin. One is left somewhat puzzled though
by the author’s reluctance to take into account recent work on the monetary
economy of Safavid, Zand, and Qajar Iran, which is of obvious relevance not
only for comparative purposes, but on account of its close links with the east-
ern provinces of the Ottoman empire.

Of particular interest to comparative historians are chapters 7 to 9, where the
author re-surveys and explicates the debates on inflation, debasement, and the
“price revolution” in the early modern Ottoman domains. Unfortunately, here,
after a useful summary of arguments and a presentation of both the evidence of
Ö. L. Barkan, and his own indices, Pamuk lapses into a rather confused section.
In it he claims that “Ottoman price increases expressed in grams of silver may
thus be due to the rise in the velocity of circulation as argued by Miskimin, Lindert and Goldstone for other countries” (p. 127). This suggests that he has not really integrated the conceptual counter-arguments of Flynn, McCloskey, or the present author (all of whom he does however cite). Equally, both this chapter and appendix III may leave the reader confused about distinctions between transactions and income concepts of the velocity of money.

That said, the book nevertheless leaves us in the author’s debt for his careful work in following up the pioneering researches of Barkan and Halil Sahillioğlu, for his wide-ranging presentation of materials, and integration of monetary questions into larger trends in Ottoman historiography. Access to this work, together with the long-awaited opus of Cemal Kafadar, When Coins Turned into Drops of Dew (…), due from Harvard University Press, will leave the non-specialist far better equipped than I could be a decade ago, when producing a rash comparative and conjunctural analysis of monetary history in early modern South and West Asia.

A short review such as this cannot do justice to the book’s other virtues, which include a quite careful attention to issues of political economy and the social history of money, as well as a rather even-handed approach to regional questions in the vast Ottoman empire (chapters 6 and 11). A paperback edition of this work is clearly in order, to make it speedily available to students and non-specialists.

———Sanjay Subrahmanyam
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