

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Andrew Lees. *The City: A World History*. Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 160. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 978-0199859542.**

*The City: A World History* endeavors to deliver a concise introduction to the global history of urban development. Covering topics ranging from the emergence of the first cities in the Middle East to the development of large-scale and arguably flawed urban agglomerations of the late twentieth century in places such as China, the United States, and Africa, Andrew Lees' small yet ambitious book seeks to bestow both an insightful and fresh narrative of the environmental form and meaning of cities within history. In the context of much being written on cities, civilizations, and their evolution in the past, Lees splits *The City: A World History* into eight tidily-composed sections. These chapters cover themes that include: the origins and locations of the world's first cities, the rise of Athens, Rome, and Alexandria, the decline and expansion of cities between 300 and 1500 CE, the materialization of capital, culture, colonization, and revolution during the era 1500–1800 CE, urban growth under the forces of industrial revolution, colonial cities (of the nineteenth and early-twentieth century), the destruction and reconstruction of cities in the early and middle decades of the twentieth century, and urban decline and growth after 1950.

For instructors teaching city/urban history to students new to higher education, *The City: A World History* offers a good starting point as a core text. With brief sections that include a Chronology, Further Reading, and Websites, the accessible book offers a solid foundation point to engage learners in the complexity of city history and provoke discourse amongst learners as to the factors that have, at particular points in the past, shaped cities into distinct environmental forms. While other books such as Peter Hall's *Cities in Civilization* offer more detailed data, their depth of information might cause more pedagogical problems for undergraduates than solutions. For undergraduates new to urban history, there are far worse starting points than the relatively short, inexpensive, and well-written chapters in *The City: A World History*.

For its size—160 pages—and its price, *The City: A World History* packs a respectable punch. The book helps fill a void for teachers who desire a more stripped down, contemporary version of large-sized classic texts such as Lewis Mumford's *The City in History*. With its emphasis on global issues, *The City: A World History* strives to embrace those parts of the world commonly overlooked by authors in light of their focus solely on “developed” cities and nations. Accordingly, Lees includes all major continents of the world as well as notable theorists or social critics such as Jane Jacobs and Mike Davis. Of course, given the complexity of the urban form and cultural forces that have shaped city environments and life within them, it is always possible to find fault with books such as *The City: A World History*. For example, Lees' chapter on “Colonial Cities 1800-1914” lacks attention to the effects of American colonization of the Philippines. As Lees points out (p. 82), the Philippine capital city of Manila was affected by Spanish colonial forces by the early twentieth century. However, the book

fails to explain that Manila was also a city restructured thanks to Daniel Burnham and his 1905 City Beautiful plan.

Crucially as well, *The City: A World History* has no concluding chapter. This is a major omission: not only could the threads raised in the previous chapters be woven coherently together to highlight major themes, but, for instance, some explanation as to the preservation of historic environments and urban heritage management could give food for thought to readers considering a career in fields tied to urban governance, tourism, and heritage. With the majority of the world's inhabitants now living in urban situations, how we understand *and* care for the past will have great resonance not only on how we identify ourselves as a member of nations and the world at large, but how in that milieu we view the uniqueness of the world's past and culture in different geographies.

Chinese University of Hong King

Ian Morley

**Sunny Y. Auyang. *The Dragon and the Eagle: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese and Roman Empires*. M.E. Sharpe, 2014. Pp. 256. Paper, \$52.95; ISBN 978-0765643704.**

This book by Sunny Y. Auyang—a retired MIT physicist—is an ambitious new synthesis covering the early antecedents and the ultimate demise of the two great ancient contemporary empires, China (771 BCE–316 CE) and Rome (509 BCE–476 CE). Its geographic coverage is broad, covering the early stages of each region's development, the growth of empire, and the trading network that loosely connected the two together, the Silk Road. The book is written for a broad audience, rather than for historical specialists, and as such has a personal and direct voice helping its stated mission of providing a parallel narrative for Roman and Chinese history.

Especially with the rise of World History courses (rather than the Western Civilization courses which they have largely replaced in the academy), the similarities between the two empires have fascinated historians, but also sociologists, archeologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and even ... quantum physicists. Fortunately, Auyang has a penchant for taking difficult scientific concepts and explaining them in everyday language. Her earlier work, *How Is Quantum Field Theory Possible?* (1995), helped hone her style. She writes without condescension or over-simplification, and applying this technique to historical inquiry is admirable in and of itself.

But, a comparative analysis of China and Rome would be useless without substance, and on this front the book excels. Demonstrating a thorough understanding of both primary and secondary sources (translating most of the Chinese sources herself), Auyang weaves a convincing narrative of the relative strengths and weaknesses of both empires: Both were agrarian with land the dominant form of wealth, and in both trade flourished. Moreover, the extended patriarchal family was the basic and defining

social unit. Both China and Rome had centralized monarchies, with the kings exercising authoritarian control. Both empires relied upon independent farmers and worked hard to prevent a hereditary aristocracy. Yet, despite the grand similarities, the “flavors” of China and Rome—what Auyang calls a “cultural gene”—are considerably different from one another.

The book describes these differences in great detail. How was land allotted? How large was a farm? What was the role of the father in Rome (*paterfamilias*) and in China (*fu*)? Slavery was a fact of life in both empires but was far more ubiquitous in Rome. Why was this so? Both empires achieved significant literary advances, including the writing of history. How do the writings of Tacitus and Sima Qian compare? Is the conception of history different? All of these questions, and many more, are the purview of Auyang’s inquiry.

The book also includes many supplementary features that teachers of history would find to be useful and attractive. There are individual timelines for China and Rome and another placing the two empires in a larger global context. The book includes chronological listings of the Chinese and Roman emperors and eighteen maps covering wars, expansion, political divisions, and population distribution. There is also a convenient pronunciation index for Chinese words written in Pinyin. Perhaps more exciting is Auyang’s willingness to incorporate non-traditional methods (at least for the historical profession) to illuminate political and economic structures, including the use of fractals.

Yet in all of this, the crux of the book is not a desire to edify the reader to the minutia of the past. Auyang herself admits, “Historical writing invariably reflects the historian’s own culture.” Why are we currently experiencing this fascination with Rome and China? Perhaps, the book suggests, the world once again has seen the rise of a new Roman empire in the United States. After the Han Dynasty fell, China endured, while Rome’s fall was terminal. Will history once again repeat itself?

Auyang begins her book with two strikingly similar passages, one from Marcus Aurelius and the other from Luo Guanzhong. To paraphrase, time is like a river, and even heroes get flushed away. It is a fitting beginning to a welcome and enlightening addition to the oeuvre that is World History.

Metropolitan State University of Denver

Matthew Maher

**Jason K. Duncan.** *John F. Kennedy: The Spirit of Cold War Liberalism.* Routledge, 2014. Pp. 243. Paper, \$39.95; ISBN 978-0415895637.

A fine addition to the Routledge Historical American series, Jason Duncan’s survey of President John F. Kennedy’s life and times is an enjoyable and instructive book, ideal for undergraduates or the casual reader. A brief, introductory bibliography is supplemented by a collection of documents, including presidential speeches on racial

controversies, the Cuban Missile Crisis, transcripts of television interviews, and JFK's inaugural address, among others. Delightfully sprinkled throughout the text are the best quotes of the Kennedy era. For the history instructor, however, Duncan's book is most helpful because of his focus on the historical context of the Cold War and American liberalism's response to that seemingly interminable struggle.

Duncan emphasizes the successes of Cold War liberalism represented by the American victory in the Second World War, the Marshall Plan, the international monetary agreements to finance the postwar world, and the Truman Doctrine's containment policy. Kennedy sought to extend these successes while serving at the height of Cold War tensions with crises in Cuba, Berlin, Laos, Vietnam, and an ever-threatening nuclear arms race. Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union for the "hearts and minds" of mankind resonate in these pages.

Duncan is very good at pointing out the contradictions inherent in JFK's traditional liberalism. Kennedy supported Richard Nixon over a more liberal and Democratic Helen Gahagan Douglass for Congress in 1948, ran to Nixon's right in the 1960 election, and he and his family maintained a friendship with Republican Senator Joe McCarthy, anathema for Cold War liberals.

The triumphs of Cold War liberalism emerged in uneasy tension with U.S. interventions in countries ranging from Central America to Iran in order to maintain governments sympathetic to American interests. JFK understood how the latter tended to undermine the former, thus his skepticism about French Algeria, the United States in Vietnam, and overt support of the Bay of Pigs invasion. President Kennedy knew that U.S. neo-colonialism would be exploited by the Soviet Union in the bi-polar contest for the "soul of mankind." Duncan makes the argument that Kennedy's alliance for Progress and the Peace Corps were meant, in part, to allay the fears of those across the globe suspicious of American power.

Duncan skillfully places the American Civil Rights Movement in its proper Cold War context (as he does with NASA and the commitment to put an American on the moon). Kennedy recognized the moral responsibility the nation bore towards African Americans, yet he shied away from taking the lead on this issue, always hoping to sidetrack Civil Rights leaders from "freedom rides" toward less visible and less controversial actions.

Duncan notes how the inflammatory pictures of Bull Connor's police brutality in Birmingham, Alabama, made the President "sick." Once fully committed to Civil Rights, President Kennedy urged Secretary of State Dean Rusk to testify how the Soviet Union's propaganda would skillfully use the images of Birmingham to portray the United States "as profoundly racist." Kennedy's "American University speech" asked rhetorically if the United States was the "land of the free except for Negroes?" Kennedy's emerging and overt support for Civil Rights was driven, in part, by his sympathy for African Americans; yet behind this compassion lay the Cold War competition with the Soviet Union where racial and class distinctions, at least in the USSR's propaganda, had been eliminated.

Duncan follows the lead of most historians by relying on the discredited Warren Report that drains political meaning from JFK's assassination and renders his murder as, essentially, bad luck instead of the Cold War's most infamous murder. This is a pity as the author is especially good at placing events in a Cold War context. Duncan does, however, recognize that the turbulence of the 1960s began with JFK's assassination as his successor committed the nation to the Vietnam War, followed by a breakdown of the anti-communist consensus, a dramatic decline in trust in the U.S. government, and, indeed, open hostility toward American institutions by an exploding youth culture, culminating in the Watergate debacle and the resignation of President Nixon.

Finally, Duncan credits President Kennedy with infusing American Cold War liberalism with youthful energy and democratic idealism. JFK sought to consolidate the United States' leadership of the western world while competing with the Soviet Union and Red China for the soul of mankind.

Georgia Highlands College

Steven R. Blankenship

**David H. Bennett.** *Bill Clinton: Building a Bridge to the New Millennium.* Routledge, 2014. P. 232. Paper, \$39.95; ISBN 978-0415894685.

*Bill Clinton: Building a Bridge to the New Millennium* is David H. Bennett's recent contribution to the Routledge Historical Americans series. In this short biography of President Bill Clinton, Professor Bennett seems to have written with the upper-division history or political science major in mind. It is brief, well organized, and written very clearly in accessible language.

After a brief (29 pages) overview of Clinton's early years, Bennett deals with Clinton's political races for attorney general and governor of Arkansas in the 1980s. From that second chapter on, the book is organized into discrete chapters on domestic agenda, foreign challenges, the politics of impeachment, and a chapter on his life after the presidency. Throughout the above mentioned territory, Bennett stressed Clinton's "Third Way" or "New Democrat" theme to emphasize that Clinton was a moderate Democrat through and through, or certainly at least since the founding of the Democratic Leadership Council in 1985.

Throughout the work Bennett is critical of Clinton's opponents on the left in his own party and insists that Clinton's moderate approach to domestic issues was the only way the Democratic Party could regain the presidency:

But it was the belief in these "ossified little boxes" that made it possible for Clinton's critics to miss the important new direction he was suggesting his party must take if it was to ever retake the White House. This was his "third way" vision. This was the New Democrat message that he offered

in the speeches at Georgetown, in the campaign to follow, and into the White House. (41)

As Clinton was the first Democratic president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt to achieve two terms in office, one might conclude that he was correct in his assumption that the “third way” was indeed the key to success. In fact, after a dip in presidential approval rating to the mid 30% range in his first year, Clinton consistently had ratings in the high 50% range, reaching his top mark of 73% in the Gallup Poll of December 1998, the month he was impeached.

Bennett’s treatment of Clinton’s foreign policy is, as is the rest of the work, sympathetic. Undergraduates reading this book will probably be surprised that Osama bin Laden was on the White House hit list for at least the last six years of the Clinton presidency. Bennett mentions several incidents in which intelligence operatives had posited bin Laden for a cruise missile strike but, extremely frustrating at the time, could not pull the trigger because of either inadequate technology or fear of collateral damage to innocent civilians. In the next decade the technology of drones would be, for better or worse, far faster and more effective for targeting and surprising terrorist leaders.

Perhaps not surprising, the chapter on impeachment is less positive reading. Clinton, despite a sympathetic author, still comes off as having incredibly poor judgment, reckless disregard for consequences, and a complete lack of honesty manifested in his continual denials. However, Clinton is not the only character sullied by the Lewinsky matter. Thanks to the publisher of *Hustler* magazine, Larry Flynt, more unfaithfulness was revealed. In a short time, after Flynt offered a reward for information from any women who had engaged in affairs with government officials, Flynt received over 2,000 calls. Among those exposed were pro-impeachment personages including Bob Livingston, the Speaker of the House, who was forced to resign. Other casualties of what Flynt termed his “hypocrisy policy” included political figures Newt Gingrich, Henry Hyde, Bob Barr, and New Mexico’s Pete Domenici, who had earned a 100 percent rating from the Christian Coalition for his support of “family values.” Sadly, it turned out there was hypocrisy all around.

Throughout this sordid event, Bill Clinton retained very high job performance marks from the American people. Polls showed that a large majority of voters considered Clinton a dishonest person, but a good president. This did not seem to matter to the Republicans in the House who impeached him, only to see Clinton acquitted in the Senate as that body came far short of the sixty-seven votes needed for conviction.

Bennett’s work on Clinton is highly recommended for use in undergraduate history classes. It is a very teachable book, even including the mistakes. Bennett mistakenly informs the reader that Richard Nixon was impeached in August 1974 (21).

As we know, he resigned and was not impeached. Certainly this gaffe could provide for a teachable moment about books, politics, and the accuracy of history texts.

Seminole State College

Dan Gilmartin

**A.M. Glazer and Patience Thomson, eds. *Crystal Clear: The Autobiographies of Sir Lawrence & Lady Bragg*. Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 448. Cloth, \$50.92; ISBN 978-0198744306.**

Australian-born physicist William Lawrence Bragg was but twenty-five years of age when, in 1915, he and his father received the Nobel Prize for their pioneering work in X-ray crystallography. They demonstrated that the action of an X-ray upon a crystal produced diffraction which, in turn, could be interpreted to construct patterns of atomic arrangement. The Braggs' research led to the development of three-dimensional models for proteins and viruses and was key to the discovery of DNA's double helix structure.

Historians of science have written numerous papers and monographs on X-ray crystallography. The Oxford University Press catalog offers several selections. Of those, an excellent, celebratory overview of the team's discovery process is found in John Jenkin's work *William and Lawrence Bragg, Father and Son: The Most Extraordinary Collaboration in Science*. And Graeme Hunter penned an exceptional, detailed biography—*The Life and Science of William Lawrence Bragg*. *Crystal Clear*, Oxford's latest addition to its Bragg collection, is an autobiographical piece. Edited by respected crystallographer Mike Glazier and by Sir Lawrence's daughter, Patience Thomson, *Crystal Clear* contains the autobiographies of both William Lawrence Bragg and his wife of fifty years, Alice Hopkinson Bragg.

With reason, historians tend to distrust biographies. Balance is rare, deification and vilification common. Autobiographies and memoirs tend to be worse—propaganda and apologetics. That one of the editors of *Crystal Clear* is the daughter of William Lawrence and Alice Bragg sounds even more the alarms of possible bias. And those bells are not silenced by Ms. Thomson's glowing description of her parents entitled, "Meet my Mother" and "Meet my Father." Hers are beautiful parents, driven by their love for one another and by a refined sense of character.

And yet, *Crystal Clear: The Autobiographies of Sir Lawrence & Lady Bragg* is a charming book and one that has value. Its stories, and even the style in which they are written, provide a more holistic picture of Lawrence Bragg's life. This is not the work to consult for a detailed history of his experiments and his scientific vision. But it is the work to consult for the story of Lawrence and Lady Bragg beyond the laboratory.

The most revealing testimony offered by the book is inadvertent, not calculated. Though Alice's autobiography reveals that she is extremely proud of her husband, there

is a quiet, mild, but detectable, rebuke in the tenor of her words when she writes of the drive that characterized his nature. He was always rushing off, pausing in a new flat only long enough to straighten his tie and organize his thoughts before taking on the next task at hand. Further, Sir Lawrence's autobiographical section seems to confirm this observation. William Lawrence Bragg dictated his autobiography in the 1960s. The language is clipped, the story incomplete, ending with a partial accounting of the events of 1951, though Sir Lawrence did not pass until 1971. Reading the abrupt conclusion, one cannot resist the images conjured by Alice's words. It is easy to imagine the great physicist finding his interest engaged elsewhere, suddenly ending the dictation session, and turning his full attention to another enterprise.

Written independently, rather than collaboratively, the two autobiographies offer additional insight into the shared life of Sir Lawrence and Lady Bragg. Even though the language of the works and most of the stories told differ, the autobiographies reinforce one another. Both Alice and Lawrence wrote of their love of travel and the joy they derived from attending dinners and functions with their friends. Both expressed, as well, irritation with Ernest Rutherford.

As the trained academic would expect, *Crystal Clear: The Autobiographies of Sir Lawrence & Lady Bragg*, presents its central characters in a most-positive manner. And, without doubt, bias was present in its authorship. But it is a delightful book. In his autobiography, William Lawrence Bragg noted that he was recording his story for current relatives and future descendants. Readers of *Crystal Clear* will be happy that Sir. Lawrence's daughter, Patience, made the decision to share her parents' autobiographies with the public.

Lubbock Christian University

Kregg M. Fehr

**Clifton Conrad and Marybeth Gasman. *Educating a Diverse Nation: Lessons from Minority-Serving Institutions*. Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. 320. Cloth, \$35.00; ISBN 978-0674736801.**

Concerned that ethnic minority students are not being adequately served by many colleges and universities across the country, professors Clifton Conrad and Marybeth Gasman conducted a three-year national study of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). Their book is meant to share what they learned about how MSIs are "enhancing" the education of "underserved" students (10). Based on their research of 12 MSIs, ranging from tribal colleges for Native Americans, Hispanic-serving institutions, historically black colleges, and Asian-American and Pacific Islander serving institutions, the authors argue that the MSIs they studied are effective because they all seek to make the college experience "meaningful" to students and are "committed" to providing extensive support services for students (23–25).

While each of the MSIs under study addresses the needs of minority students in different ways, Conrad and Gasman provide in fascinating detail the programs at each MSI that have been developed for minority students. Several of the MSIs, for example, integrated into their programs components that addressed the ethnic backgrounds of students. For example, at Salish Kootenai College on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana, a curriculum has been developed where students have opportunities to talk with tribal leaders about the purpose of college. Reinforcing that message, the STEM program intentionally demonstrates how math and science are relevant for the real needs of Native Americans. Meanwhile, at California State University at Sacramento, the ethnic studies faculty created a specific project for Asian-American students called the Full Circle Project. In the project, first-year students enroll in ethnic studies seminars that involve students in the local community with the purpose of linking learning to local community needs.

Many of the colleges, in addition, work hard to create a family-like atmosphere for their students. This was particularly true of the three historically black colleges under study, Morehouse College, Norfolk State University, and Paul Quinn College. At Paul Quinn College, for instance, their "we over me" ethos permeates the atmosphere (180) while at Morehouse College the ethos of "brotherhood" is promoted through their intensive mentoring program (156). For Pacific Island students, the College of the Marshall Islands creates a family atmosphere by involving faculty and staff in the First Year Residential Program. The MSIs under study also instituted programs meant to support minority students throughout their college experience. The Navigation program at North Seattle Community College (an Asian-American serving institution), for example, pro-actively helps students gain access to the various resources available to them on campus. At El Paso Community College, a Hispanic serving institution, counselors meet individually with new students during orientation to explain their course placement and discuss what they will need to do to be successful in college.

While the book is rich with interesting approaches to addressing the needs of minority students, the research methodology raises questions about the effectiveness of the programs under study. Much of the data for the study is qualitative, based on the authors' observations during their campus visits, and interviews conducted with students, faculty, staff, and students. Very little quantitative data is provided. For example, a 55% graduation rate and an enrollment of 42 students in STEM programs is the only quantitative data provided to demonstrate the success of Salish Kootenai College, with little direct correlation of these numbers to the programs under discussion. At California State University at Sacramento, meanwhile, the only quantitative data provided is that students in the Full Circle Project were retained at a 10% higher rate than students not enrolled in that program. In addition, the interviews often appear very selective in terms of how they are presented. The authors, for instance, praise the Early College High School developed by El Paso Community

College for creating a “pathway” for students. They support their argument, however, with just two interviews (118).

Except for the programs designed to specifically address the ethnic culture of minority students, such as those developed at Salish Kootenai College mentioned above, one is also often left wondering the extent to which the programs discussed by the authors were unique to MSIs. Many of the programs discussed by the authors are intended to meet the needs of first generation college students, or students needing developmental courses. These needs are not unique to minority students, and programs to address these needs have been implemented by colleges and universities across the country, many of which may not be categorized as MSIs, but nonetheless have programs that are successful. Moreover, many of the programs discussed, such as community-based learning, are encouraged by the AAC&U. This raises a key question: What are the unique elements of the programs developed by MSIs?

All that being said, readers interested in learning about programs that address the needs of first generation students, students requiring developmental courses, and minority students, will find in this book much to consider.

Medaille College

Daniel Kotzin

**Leonard Cassuto. *The Graduate School Mess: What Caused It and How We Can Fix It*. Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. 320. Cloth, \$29.95; ISBN 978-0674728981.**

*The Graduate School Mess* underscores how much of academia resembles a cult. Most of us go into graduate school as unique, creative individuals who share a love of learning and an enthusiasm for our disciplines. We believe that, by going into academia, we are escaping the culture of mindless conformity that exists in the “real world.” We become true believers. We take monastic vows of poverty in exchange for the understanding that our toils will be rewarded by a life of intellectual freedom, creative thought, and personal autonomy. We study at the hands of arbitrary masters who we come to revere and emulate. By the end of graduate school, however, we have lost our original enthusiasm and joy for learning. Unwittingly, we realize that in order to become ordained into the priesthood, we must shed our individuality and become part of a like-minded community of professionals, subordinating ourselves “to a set of norms established by disciplinary leaders” (165). Rather than valuing individual creativity, these gatekeepers force us to speak a common esoteric language and desire the same things (namely publication in a select few journals and jobs in a select few universities). We claim to love big original ideas, but our training teaches us primarily how “to enter existing dialogues” (164). While we give pretense to being unique—and we honor unorthodox thinkers in our teaching and research—we ourselves become socialized into a culture of rigid professional conformity to the point where we cannot

even imagine life beyond the narrow boundaries of academia as satisfying. We begin to feel sorry for the unbelievers who lose faith and drop out (even if they are bound for successful, well-paying jobs outside the academy). By the end of our indoctrination, we believe that anything less than a career as a professor at a research university will be a sign of underachievement and even failure. By that standard, Lawrence Cassuto reminds us in his brilliant and timely book, most of us will fail.

The currency of higher education is prestige and, as every academic knows, research positions are more prestigious than teaching positions. This was certainly what I learned in graduate school at UCLA in the 1990s. Our prospects seemed surprisingly good according to a widely circulated chart at the time that showed demand for professors would soon exceed the supply of Ph.Ds. I remember Gary Nash telling us all we were entering graduate school at a very "propitious moment." We expected that we were bound for research positions such as those of our advisors.

Of course, it did not work out that way, as every history Ph.D. well knows. While many professors retired since the 1990s, their positions were not filled with full-time replacements. The economics of the academy shifted: Underfunded universities now took advantage of the glut of unemployed Ph.Ds. whom they hired as contingent labor. The dream died. *The Graduate School Mess* urges us to confront that harsh reality and redesign graduate school to make it more student-centered, democratic, practical, and accountable to both students and the larger public.

The main problem with graduate school, according to Cassuto, is poor teaching as well as a culture of self-deception, denial, and narcissism. Professors and administrators have been complicit in allowing graduate students to believe they are bound for coveted research positions with small teaching loads and support from graduate students. Graduate programs must disabuse students from such fictions, discourage them from overspecialization, and instead train students for a wider range of employment opportunities in academia and beyond: teaching at community colleges, working for non-profits, or finding employment beyond the groves of academe in the private sector. Until that happens, too many Ph.Ds. will remain "underemployed and unhappy" (8).

The bias towards "knowledge producers," rather than teachers, and the privileging of "research culture" over broad, liberal education, has deep roots in American higher education, but it reached its fullest expression during the postwar education boom. Although focused primarily on research in the STEM fields, the dramatic Cold War expansion of higher education extended to all disciplines essentially "the same deal: teach less and publish more" (40). It was during this postwar boom that "professor" became synonymous with "researcher." For those lucky enough to obtain graduate degrees during this brief Golden Age, the model worked. But then the boom ended. The number of Ph.Ds. exceeded the number of jobs by the late 1970s and the academy—especially the humanities—had entered into a long depression that continues to this day.

Rather than downsize in response to decreasing demand, Cassuto's solution is to "broaden the profile of the graduate student we seek" and admit students who want to become teachers, public servants, museum curators, and intellectual entrepreneurs (52). He advocates redesigning everything, from admissions to degree offerings to advising to dissertation requirements and even the definition of "scholarship" itself. All of this would be animated by a "new ethic for higher education" (16) which fundamentally involves better teaching and more "caring for humans" (13). Such reform involves making American graduate programs more student-centered and moving away from the model that narcissistically focuses on what is good for a shrinking number of tenured professors at elite research universities. In the bargain, Cassuto also believes that the training of a new professorate steeped in a broader, more accessible culture of teaching, public service, and liberal education will help the humanities reconnect with the larger public who have lost faith in the academy. Cassuto does not reject specialized scholarship as meaningless, but he urges university professors to become more accessible and relevant—to return to the public square from their specialized enclaves.

Many of his basic arguments are familiar, but Cassuto has pulled the pieces together into as powerful argument that the academy must confront. It would seem unlikely that anything will change soon, especially when the incentives of higher education do not encourage such change—particularly when it involves elevating student-centered teaching and learning above narrow scholarship. Will an ossified professorate that guards its privileges and traffics in prestige take a gamble on a new model for graduate education? I am pessimistic. But Cassuto should be praised for trying to put this mess into perspective and give us some ideas for how professors can pick up the pieces and build something more useful.

Columbia Basin College

David Arnold

**Barbara Alpern Engel and Janet Martin. *Russia in World History*. Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 156. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 978-0199947898.**

The New Oxford World History series offers readers "an informed, lively, and up-to-date history of the world and its people," emphasizing "connectedness and interactions of all kinds" and highlighting "global interactions and the intersection of the global and the local." As a book in this series, Engel and Martin's *Russia in World History* aims to accomplish what other short Russian histories have not. While the book may succeed in some places, this reader did not find it as radical a departure as the authors (and series) hope.

The book's chapters are organized chronologically, starting with the country's formation around 1000 CE. Five of the book's eight chapters cover pre-revolutionary Russia, and the final three take us from the mid-1800s to the present. Chapter titles are

decidedly academic: For example, the Peter the Great era is titled "The Petrine Revolution (1685-1725)."

Engel and Martin have published previously on various aspects of Russian history, and the book reflects their comfort with a wide range of Russian history. The information is accurate, but only occasionally fulfills the series goal of doing something really new. While the author of each section is unclear, the author's academic specialties suggest one wrote the earlier chapters and one the later. The earlier ones are more dryly academic, stuffed with detail that at times becomes difficult to digest. Chapter One's first sentence, for example, is over 50 words long, leaving a reader dizzy with mention of Kievan Rus, Slavs, Finns, Baltic tribes, Vikings, Christianity, and Byzantium! Not the most inviting opening.

Starting with Peter the Great, the authors offer a more thoughtfully distilled narrative that is better designed for readers of multiple backgrounds. There are some particularly good quick moments: a wonderfully concise section on 1850-60 reforms, for instance, and a quite effective and brief overview of 1917. A particularly nice touch is a lovely little bit of social history in an extended caption accompanying a portrait of the wives of one of the Decembrist coup leaders. In fact, the illustrations with captions are all informative and interesting. Other nice design features include chronologies, explanatory notes, further reading lists, and websites with documents and photographs at the end of the book.

A frustrating aspect of *Russia in World History* is the often quite brief references to single examples without enough historical context to make them really illuminating. It is a challenge to explain the big picture and have some vivid examples in a short history covering so much time, but this book offers mainly gestures in that direction. For example, there is a tantalizing brief mention of and quote from American teen Kim Chernin who attended the 1957 World Youth Festival without any further explanation of significance.

For general readability, I prefer Geoffrey Hosking's *Russian History* (2012); part of Oxford's A Very Short Introduction series. It also comes in at under 200 pages, is an authoritative effort by a long time Russian scholar, and tends to provide a broad historical framework with convincing quick detail.

Thayer Academy, Massachusetts

Daniel Levinson

# **TEACHING HISTORY: A JOURNAL OF METHODS**

**Founded in 1975  
First Issue Published in 1976**

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