

A particular strength of this work is the attention afforded to the politics of display, ceremonial, imagery and performance, whether in the discussion of Horace Vernet's grandiose commissions and the repurposing of the palace of Versailles as a public art gallery, or in the minutely-detailed examination of the economics and aesthetics of popular printmaking and iconography. Popular theatre, entertainments and print also provide revealing insights; from vaudeville songs through cut-out paper soldiers to fairground tests of strength, images of Algeria turn out to have been surprisingly widespread across popular culture. Other particular themes stand out as providing original and important insights: masculinity and male citizenship, indeed gender more generally, both in evocations of political legitimacy and in concerns about 'moral hygiene'; contesting constructions of social and economic virtue and value; celebrations of recovered national virility and victory alongside denunciations of colonial violence—and the fear that the brutalising effects of war in Africa might one day be turned on workers in the streets of France, as would indeed happen in the June Days of 1848. The large number of clearly reproduced and varied illustrations, essential to much of the discussion, together with the tables (in particular the meticulous presentation of data on more than 19,000 cases of assisted emigration, pp. 292–300), are integral to the argument and add greatly to the pleasure of reading it. The range and depth of sources used, including a large number of departmental as well as national archives and an enormous variety of published primary materials, are astonishingly impressive.

The reader might be left wondering about the degree to which one of Sessions's key arguments—that post-revolutionary contests over political culture had a directly causal role in the Algerian conquest—is fully proven. Perhaps what really emerges is more *how* culture, politics, and empire were entwined than *why*, at this particular moment in France and North Africa, a particularly 'contestatory politics' embedded in both official and popular cultures drove France and French people into Algeria, and kept them there. However this might be viewed, the argument is undoubtedly important; this book makes a very major contribution to broader imperial as well as to nineteenth-century French history, and it deserves to be very widely read and discussed.

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*Getrennt und doch verbunden: Grenzstädte zwischen Österreich und Russland, 1772–1918*, by Paulus Adelsgruber, Laurie Cohen and Bórris Kuzmany (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2011; pp. 316. €35).

The past twenty years have seen a massive upsurge in historical literature on borderlands. The reasons for this are manifold: the rise of transnational history (leaving behind the national model, or at least enhancing its possibilities by investigating and transcending its narrow boundaries); on a European level, the proliferation of cross-border regions within the framework of the EU—an institutional attempt to stabilise nation states by stabilising their frontiers; the fascinating paradoxes of borderlands as places of continuity and discontinuity, remote from the centre but also closely policed; the postulation of the end of

national frontiers as a consequence of globalisation processes; and, not least, the constant interest in the potential for violence and conflict implicit in border disputes, bearing out the idea that violence never goes out of fashion as an academic subject.

Based on an impressive range of sources (drawing on archival holdings from the Ukraine, Austria, Russia, Poland, USA, UK, Germany and France), this joint-authored volume is an in-depth study of three pairs of towns on either side of the frontier dividing the Habsburg and Tsarist Empires following the late-eighteenth-century Partitions of Poland: Brod–Radzivilov, Podwołoczysk–Voločisk and Husiatyn–Gusjatin. The book is an anatomy of this imperial border and displays a fascination for archival detail and thorough approach to sources that is reminiscent of *L'École des Annales*. The analogy is not coincidental: the authors' approach to their topic is explicitly microhistorical—history done at a capillary level, casting light on relationships and exchanges that get blurred out in traditional histories. The authors set out to answer a number of questions: how did monarchs and bureaucrats actually draw the frontier line between the two empires? How was the border organised and administered? In what ways was the imperial centre present in this border region? What effects did the economic, infrastructure and religious policies of the two empires have on the border population?

The book opens with an overview of the six border towns, providing comprehensive statistical information regarding demography, ethnic and religious divisions and the changes which they underwent during the century-and-a-half of the border's existence. This very specific data is linked into broader trends of state centralisation and frontier definition which had marked European history since the early modern period. This development, as the authors point out, presupposed inner borders gradually giving way to external borders, a transition from border zones to strictly demarcated frontier lines and a newly defined relationship between centre and periphery.

The second section of the book examines the effect of the border on local, trans-imperial trade, and gives particular coverage to infrastructure development (the introduction of railways and telegraph services). In so doing, it shows how a frontier line can divide but also put new life into hitherto sleepy towns, turning them into bustling commercial centres. The railways in particular 'brought the world to provincial towns', changed their social make-up (through the formation of a working class employed by the railway companies), and brought affluence to some places while allowing others (outside the railway network) to atrophy into insignificance. In their description of the authorities' struggle against smuggling, the authors also provide an illustration of the workings of borderland anti-Semitism. Statistical evidence is produced showing that the Jewish population, although constantly suspected of smuggling and other nefarious activities, were by no means over-represented among the miscreants: the proportion of smugglers from any one ethnic or religious group was commensurate with population percentages. Moreover, as the authors emphasise, ethnic or religious barriers meant nothing when it came to business.

Religion constitutes the main focus of the third thematic section of the book, which explores imperial policies towards the main religious groups, the tug-of-war between the dominant religions espoused by the central authorities (Catholic in the Habsburg case, Greek Orthodox in the Russian), and the way

in which ethnic and religious in-betweeners such as the Uniate (Greek Catholic) Ukrainians fared, depending on which side of the border they happened to live and the system of power relations into which they were integrated. Thus, unlike the Tsarist Empire, where efforts were made to absorb the Uniates back into the Russian Orthodox Church, the Habsburg authorities actively fostered Uniatism as a counter-weight against the local nobility (in its great majority Catholic and Polish).

The book concludes with a chapter on war and occupation along the borderland studied here. The outbreak of the First World War once more showed the borderland's ambivalent, idiosyncratic character in relation to the respective imperial heartlands. Nothing like an *Augusterlebnis* (beginning-of-war enthusiasm) occurred in the six border towns under examination. The wartime injunction to assert unambiguously one's identity and loyalty, the endemic accusations of treason, the closing of the border and its transformation into a frontline only antagonised the border population—who were dependent on cross-border trade, and came in some cases from a mixed family background and had relatives as well as economic interests across the border.

As the authors of the present volume point out in the introduction, their book is not intended as an 'histoire totale' of this border region, but rather as an exploration of the function of the frontier in the life of the six border towns: the advantages and disadvantages of partition, the winners and losers of the new system, the great vitality of the place despite tight regulation and the commonality of fate despite the formal division. This is a thoroughly researched study, not only of how a borderland functions but also of how empires interact with one another and how that interaction shapes the lives of ordinary people. As such, the book represents a significant contribution to the historical literature on borderlands.

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*John Bright: Statesman, Orator, Agitator*, by Bill Cash (London: I.B.Tauris, 2012; pp. xxx + 328. £25).

John Bright is probably the least studied of the 'great Victorians'. Unlike his close colleague Richard Cobden—who has attracted a substantial amount of scholarly attention in recent years—Bright has inspired only four major studies since 1946, including the one reviewed here. For Bill Cash, such comparative neglect is unjustifiable and almost incomprehensible in view of Bright's contribution to the making of mid-Victorian Britain, and indeed of modern democratic politics. He was undoubtedly a celebrity in his day, the sort of politician watched closely by Abraham Lincoln, Karl Marx and William Gladstone in order to divine the mood of the nation. Indeed, the book opens with a thought-provoking discussion of Karl Marx's attitude to Bright. Their differences are presented as aspects of a 'clash of titans' (p. xxvii), but this is true only in a metaphorical sense. For the two never really 'clashed', as they had no opportunity to do so: Bright was no intellectual and Marx was not active in British politics. However, it is true that the models of social and political development that they stood for were radically alternative: while Marx was