

Reviews

Jah Kingdom: Rastafarians, Tanzania, and Pan-Africanism in the Age of Decolonization, by Monique A. Bedasse. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017. 270 pages. \$90.00, cloth. \$32.95 paper. \$19.95, electronic.

In an original attempt to offer a historical account that goes beyond the widespread understanding of Rastafarianism as a cultural expression, Monique Bedasse has produced an authentic history of transnational social movements operating within Africa and the African Diaspora. She explores and intertwines different accounts of global blackness that encompass the social, political, and what she terms “interior histories” of Rastafarianism in Ethiopia, England, Ghana, Jamaica, Tanzania, and the United States of America.

Bedasse explores in tandem how Jamaican Rastafarians sought to actualize their ideological goals of physical repatriation to Africa (Zion), meanwhile cultivating a transnational network of Rastafarians, black musicians, “scholars, politicians, lay people, and activists” (p. 2). She elucidates on the varied dimensions of religion, gender, race, Pan-Africanism, anti-colonialism, and socialism as they related to the Rastafarian movement and its goals and aspirations. Teachers of such topics should take interest, and might particularly enjoy the biographical content for students new to the subject—this book reads like a who’s who in Pan-Africanism, including Emperor Haile Selassie, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, C. L. R. James, Michael Manley, Walter Rodney, and Jacob Caruthers.

Bedasse achieves all of the above by deploying a variety of innovative and staple research methodologies while “trodding” Diaspora—a term that is used to frame the entire book. Bedasse borrows “trodding” from the Rastafarian lexicon to conceptualize the dynamic movements of Rastafarians in various black circuits and their understanding of Africa as Zion, representing both a physical and spiritual primordial center of black life worldwide. Her unique approach to primary documents produced by Rastafarian subjects, interlocutors, and oral histories as sacred is refreshing. The text’s critical engagement of the Rastafarian network of evidence—oral and written—as well as the use of anti-establishment language distinct to the Rastafarian subversion of Babylon is evidence of this

approach. Complimented to these methods are multi-national archival sources as well as life histories of Rastafarian men and women who repatriated to Tanzania, particularly Kisembo Karudi, Ras Bupe Karudi, Ras Joshua Mkhululi, Julius Nyerere, and Michael Manley.

Chapter one situates Jamaica as where the story of Rastafarianism begins—with an “anticolonial discourse and set of practices” against global capitalism, but also a spiritual awakening or consciousness. The formation and historical development of various Rasta organizations and sects like the Universal Rastafari Improvement Association (URIA), Nyabinghi, and the Twelve Tribes of Israel emerged on the backdrop of Afro-Jamaican religions like Revivalism, Myalism, and Pocomania, as well as socio-cultural and political movements like Garveyism and Ethiopianism. Bedasse includes astute analyses of the peculiar dichotomous conceptualization of gender within the Rastafarian movement, arguing that critique of European oppression of African women, in particular, led Rastafarians to frame what they perceived to be protective strategies. These policies, however, controlled Rastafarian women’s voices, bodies, and engendered male domination of the movement.

Chapter two continues in Tanzania, focusing on the appeal of Tanzania and President Nyerere’s persona, long-standing global connections to various black intellectuals, and political policy of self-reliance and self-determination, which he termed *ujamaa na kujitegemea* (p. 58). Tanzania and Nyerere thus appealed to repatriates and political refugees following the removal of Haile Selassie in Ethiopia and the diminution in stature of Kwame Nkrumah following a 1966 coup d’état in Ghana.

Chapter three is the glue that holds the entire book together due to its focus on the intellectual, ideological, and interpersonal connections between Jamaica and Tanzania. It focuses on the internal evolution of Rastafarianism within the Jamaican state, particularly Rastafarianism’s philosophical influence on Manley, whose appropriation of Rastafarian symbols helped strengthen bonds between Jamaica and Tanzania. *Jah Kingdom* offers biographical sketches of Manley, Beverley Manley, Rodney, and Robert Nesta Marley, elucidating on how their social relationships affected interdependence between the individuals, which reflected at the international level.

Building on these bonds, chapters four and five document the actual process of Rastafarian travel and repatriation to Tanzania. Bedasse uses the “trodding” life histories of Ras Daniel Heartman, Ras Bupe Karudi, Ras Ato Kidani, and Ras Mkhululi to illuminate tensions between a romantic vision of repatriation and stark realities of post-independence African states still working to overcome the vestiges of colonialism and an unequal world economic system. Bedasse also highlights Great Britain, particularly London as a conduit and stopover for Rastafarians on their way to the Promised Land. The thrust of Bedasse’s analyses here is the repatriates’ complex navigation of the paradox in their acquisition of citizenship in Tanzania and their Pan-African belief in a stateless Africa. She explores not only the acceptance of Jamaican Rastafarians to Tanzania, but also the frictions within and without the community. These engagements include the gendered analyses of the tensions between Ras Bupe Karudi and his wife Kisembo

Karudi, conflicts of authenticity between Jamaican Rastafarians and Tanzanian Rastafarians, access to land, and “the daily struggle to conquer disease, acquire material resources, and adapt to local realities” (p. 167).

Chapter six uses the unlikely relationship between Ras Karudi and the avowed non-religious Marxist, C. L. R. James, which shows James supporting the Rastafarians in Tanzania to illuminate the historical importance of repatriation to Africa as a Pan-African agenda. The book closes with an epilogue that encapsulates the significance of the Rastafarian movement to Pan-Africanism, its contributions in various professional fields in Tanzania, and how the presence of repatriates helped shaped Tanzania’s vision of its future.

Jah Kingdom discusses the anthropocentrism of Rastafarian philosophies, while briefly alluding to spiritual dimensions—particularly, spiritual repatriation to Africa. An engagement with how Jamaican Rastafarians who did not physically return to Africa, but lived Africa in a metaphysical sense would have added to the rich textured analyses in this book. The absence of this, however, does not diminish the quality of *Jah Kingdom* and its contributions to scholars and students of African Decolonization and African Diasporic histories. Bedasse has written a unique history of Rastafarianism, making a significant contribution to our current understanding of its emergence from Ethiopianism as a result of the distinctive historical contingencies.

Santa Clara University

Harry Odamtten

Why the Vote Wasn't Enough for Selma, by Karlyn Forner. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017. 376 pages. \$99.95, cloth. \$27.95, paper. \$27.95, electronic.

Popular and scholarly discourses of African American history situate the city of Selma, Alabama as a triumphant pit stop within African Americans’ collective struggle for voting rights during the Civil Rights Movement. Yet, *Why the Vote Wasn't Enough for Selma* by Karlyn Forner expands Selma’s historical narrative outside the celebratory legacy of the Selma to Montgomery March to spotlight the destitute political and economic reality of the city’s black residents before and after they received the right to vote. Forner’s one-hundred-year examination of the famed Alabama city argues that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 failed to remedy generations of economic injustice due to the persistent lack of federal, state, and local investment in the city’s black communities. Forner’s local study of Selma “as a place, rather than a moment in time” (p. 4) presents a well-researched and accessible contribution to the “long civil rights movement” school of thought that helps explain the perpetual economic exploitation African Americans living in Selma experienced despite gaining increased—albeit limited—access to political rights throughout the twentieth century.

To underscore her position that scholarly attention to the campaign for voting rights overshadows African Americans’ “parallel demands” for economic justice

(p. 4), Forner uses a variety of sources, including newspaper articles, census reports, and farm documents, to trace the ways in which Selma's white elites systemically prevented blacks from realizing the full economic and political benefits of American citizenship for decades. After Dallas County Democrats successfully disenfranchised their African American neighbors in 1901, white leaders sustained their wealth and power through the violent enforcement of discriminatory racial customs and the exploitation of black labor (p. 20). In spite of these obstacles, African Americans still managed to develop a tenuous sliver of economic independence for themselves and their communities. For example, a slew of black professionals took advantage of Selma's neglected consumer base, opening medical practices, grocery stores, public schools, and churches that welcomed African American patronage throughout the early twentieth century (p. 29). However, these valiant efforts proved inconsequential when met with fierce and oftentimes violent resistance from the local white power structure. Additionally, Selma's white politicians and business leaders consistently funneled federal money and high-wage jobs away from the city's poverty-stricken black constituency, which Forner contends stymied any potential for the accumulation of substantial wealth among Selma's African American community (p. 72). Furthermore, the implementation of New Deal policies marked a transition within Selma's agricultural economy from cotton to cattle, which in turn rendered African American labor as inconsequential to white landowners.

By the 1970s, a combination of high unemployment, low wages, globalization, and deindustrialization left African Americans with a "36 percent median income of white families" and little prospects for social mobility (p. 189). The introduction of Reaganomic policies roughly a decade later slashed the federal budget to the detriment of social programs and cemented the economic demise of Selma's African American residents (p. 200). As such, the "good freedom," which Forner describes as "political representation, economic opportunity and independence, quality education, and hope for a better life," eluded many black Selma natives' eager grasp with or without the vote (p. 250).

Overall, Forner's expansive chronology and critical perspective makes *Why the Vote Wasn't Enough for Selma* well suited for undergraduate students of U.S. or African American history, as well as for general educational history courses. Brief "Interlude" sections that precede the main chapters offer succinct historical context, further boosting the monograph's pedagogical appeal. Graduate class discussions might benefit from Forner's evolutionary contextualization of African American's continuous battle for economic opportunity and justice in Selma. Specifically, Forner's periodization captures the continuity of white oppression and black resistance alongside the national and regional economic transformations that unfolded across a century within the United States. Moreover, Forner's findings of white elites cultivating a racially insular system of wealth while leaving scraps for the black townsfolk could help illuminate the historical process of progress and decline to students, as well as present a less congratulatory assessment of American race relations in the post-Civil Rights era. Even so, Forner's prodigious analysis possessed some loose connections and embarked on detours like the production of foodstuffs and the closing of Craig Air Force

Base, which seemed tangential to the author's main purpose of answering why the vote did little to improve the quality of life for many African Americans residing in Selma. Nevertheless, Forner's work applies a unique and insightful mixture of narrative and content to a much studied topic, making it an invaluable educational tool for scholars, teachers, and college students.

California State University, Long Beach

Brianna P. Nelloms

The Place of Stone: Dighton Rock and the Erasure of America's Indigenous Past, by Douglas Hunter. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017. 344 pages. \$34.95, cloth. \$24.95, electronic.

Dighton Rock is a large boulder, housed in an octagonal structure on prominent display in a museum in Freetown State Park, along the Taunton River, in Massachusetts. Covered in petroglyphs, it has been the subject of debate, myth, and speculation regarding its origins and meaning for over three centuries. First described in European colonial accounts in the seventeenth century, the rock's markings have been inaccurately ascribed to numerous groups, including Phoenicians, the Lost Tribes of Israel, Norsemen, and Portuguese explorers—and, less frequently, accurately attributed to indigenous peoples. In this fascinating chronicle of Dighton Rock and the myriad ways it has been conceptualized, Douglas Hunter offers a window onto the process through which the history and cultural artifacts of native peoples have been misrepresented, repurposed, and at times erased from larger narratives of the American past. It is, as Hunter puts it, “a mirror that reflects the prejudices and ignorance of everyone who has preferred not to see what is actually here” (p. 4). Thus, Hunter's study is more about western understandings of the rock—and their devastating implications for native peoples—than indigenous interpretations.

A tremendous amount has been written about Dighton Rock, making it one of the most discussed archaeological artifacts. From the outset, in European records about the rock and its enigmatic markings, indigenous interpretations and provenance were overlooked, ignored, or dismissed. Hunter carefully reviews the drawings and writings of early chroniclers who attempted to decipher the puzzle of the rock (sometimes in more detail than would suit an undergraduate reader), ultimately finding in their documentation and analyses the basis for the construction of an Anglo-Norse Gothicism that celebrated the migration of Northern Europeans and their culture across the Atlantic. As they migrated and settled throughout North America, colonial and nineteenth-century Americans encountered not only living Indians, but abundant evidence of an ancient people whose monumental structures—massive earthen mounds—dotted the eastern half of the continent. In their efforts to establish clear justification for their occupation, many of these newcomers subscribed to theories that attributed the mounds to a “lost race,” a people possessed of superior qualities who were destroyed by the ancestors of contemporary indigenous peoples. Many amateur archaeologists

contributed to such interpretations, claiming, for example, that skeletal remains of Mound Builders appeared to “resemble the Germans” (p. 127). These views were not without repercussions: embracing the idea of ancient, transatlantic, multiple migrations to and throughout the Americas served to disenfranchise contemporary Native Americans. In the case of Dighton Rock, some of the more remarkable post-contact interpretations led to it nearly becoming part of a Leif Eriksson memorial and, latterly, to it being claimed as evidence for an early Portuguese presence in the area. In short, immigrant European Americans asserted their right to belonging through dispossessing indigenous peoples of their past.

Ultimately, the forty-ton rock’s removal from its original location in a tidal river to a museum full of Portuguese memorabilia serves as an apt illustration of the process, repeated in many places and with many groups, of European colonizers and their descendants failing to recognize the connection of Indian peoples to the lands they inhabited, as well as an ongoing tendency to discount the cultural artifacts, legacies, and presence of pre-contact and contemporary Native Americans. Hunter writes, “For more than 300 years, Dighton Rock has attracted a variety of explanations through which power has been narrated as well as actively exercised” (p. 235).

This book would be appropriate for upper-division undergraduate and graduate courses in early United States History and American Indian Studies, as well as in upper-division interdisciplinary courses, such as ones dealing with memory and commemoration. An instructor might usefully mine the early chapters for material on colonial perceptions of and representations of indigenous people. Further, Hunter’s work fits squarely within emerging bodies of scholarship dealing with the histories of antiquities, contested monuments, critiques of the fields of archaeology and natural history, and the construction of American identity. He offers much of interest to readers wishing to engage with questions of who and what it means and has meant to be an American, as well as the fraught nation-building project of constructing American history. With compelling subject matter, polished prose, and judicious analysis, *The Place of Stone* merits a place on syllabi and in university libraries.

California State University, Long Beach

Patricia Cleary

The New Middle Kingdom: China and the Early American Romance of Free Trade, by Kendall A. Johnson. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017. 371 pages. \$64.95, cloth.

In this stunningly refreshing literary study of American perceptions of China during the antebellum period, Kendall Johnson has delivered an indispensable critique, which will appeal widely to both historians and scholars of American studies. Not a mere Saturday weekend panegyric, Johnson’s incisive analysis aims to accentuate just how important China and its attending trade were to the national identity and mission of America. In fact, in such a crowded field,

offering yet another rendition about American distinctiveness might seem a temerarious attempt. Readers who are familiar with the Frontier Thesis, where Frederick Jackson Turner postulated how the American frontier was essential in the development of the American democratic spirit, will be intrigued by Johnson's innovative reading. In another important study of American exceptionalism, *Regeneration through Violence* (1973), Richard Slotkin hypothesized that it is the very frontier, which uprooted the man from his traditional moorings, a process which was necessarily violent, to create a new American who in the memorable words of D. H. Lawrence, is "hard, isolate, stoic and a killer." The strength of Johnson's study is its ability to turn these familiar scholarly tropes on their heads.

As Johnson elaborates, famous Americans whose names signaled "old money"—including the Astors, Delanos, and Cabots, to name a few—all had their "competencies" created apropos of opium in the *Romance* of China trade (p. 14). They had nothing to do with the popular hypotheses of both Slotkin and Turner. None of them had experiences mirroring frontiersmen Hugh Glass; neither did anyone have any heroic staredown at proverbial Maguas. Perhaps the biggest danger were from fevers or literally from boredom on Lintin Island (p. 123). Moreover, as another prominent historian of the period, Jacques Downs, had documented, conspicuous consumption and the popularization of chinoiserie had their origins in this same group of merchant princes. Elsewhere, Gordon Chang has illustrated how American First Ladies including the likes of Julia Grant and Helen Taft were worrying over their "Chinese" inspired inauguration attires. If having an Indian manservant, Abdul Karim, was for Queen Victoria the height of British imperialism, the American nabobs had their Chinese cooks and palatial estates to boot (p. 232). Suffice to say, China trade only served to whet the imperialistic appetites of U.S. diplomats such as Caleb Cushing, who claimed that the Treaty of Wanghia secured for America the right to "absolute and unqualified" extraterritoriality in China (p. 172). Hence, it stands to reason that more could be said about the complicated motivations of Bostonian merchant princes, American missionaries, and even U.S. national destiny "to be the new Middle kingdom of commerce," which are so ably captured by Johnson (p. 8).

Indeed, the issue of imperialism is at the forefront of Johnson's concern. The galling hypocrisy of Cushing in categorizing China as beyond the pale of Christendom's civilizing rays is carefully drawn (p. 182). The intellectual justifications and rationalizing established by Cushing were repeated in Commodore Perry's gunboat diplomacy to Japan a decade later. As Johnson succinctly explained, the same circular logic that pervaded Cushing's thinking resurfaced in Perry's formulae for opening Japan. "In order to gain recognition as a sovereign state with rights that the United States will in turn respect, she needs to submit to the conditions that Perry demands," Johnson explains, "To refuse to trade prevents establishing peaceful relations and is a step towards armed conflict" (p. 219). Even the seemingly benign Burlingame Treaty (1868) was revealed to be yet another instance of White Man's Burden (p. 253).

One of the gems in this book is Johnson's intimate study of Harriett Low's sojourn in Macao in 1829. It is worth quoting at length the milieu in which this American lady found herself: "These expatriates cultivated a microcosm of high

society that Nan Hodges characterizes as a ‘hothouse of gossip and jealousy.’ They hosted tea parties, dinners, and dances and adhered to the manners of civilized life: leaving calling cards and taking evening strolls as Chinese servants tended to their households” (p. 98). One can compare this favorably with Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s *The Age of Homespun* (2001), with its central theme of an uneasy coexistence or hybridity. Johnson utilizes the same perspective throughout the Harriett Low chapter with great sensitivity and an unusual eye to detail. The supreme irony of Harriett’s anguish with Americans who had lost their money in the rough and tumble of opium trade versus the misfortune brought on by the scourge of opium on the Chinese is one good example (p. 102). The disdain Harriett had for the toiling Chinese laborers while on the deck of an opium clipper is another (p. 123). The moral myopia created by Harriett was the only way she could rationalize her privileged social position, which was made possible only because of the opium trade (p. 125).

In a sensitive and nuanced review of Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s *Silencing the Past* (1995), Mark Gilderhus admiringly wrote, “good history always engages in an ongoing debate over the human experience.” The same can be said of Johnson’s study, which will become a cornerstone of American Studies for all interested scholars of this period.

Singapore University of Technology and Design

Pang Yang Huei

Creators, Conquerors, and Citizens: A History of Ancient Greece, by Robin Waterfield. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 511 pages. \$34.95, cloth. \$23.99, electronic.

Robin Waterfield is perhaps best known as a mainstay of the college curriculum on the ancient world through his Oxford series of translations, especially collections from Plutarch’s *Lives*. In his new general history of Hellenic antiquity, he presents his project’s purpose as “to provide an accessible, engaging, and up-to-date history of the ancient Greeks” (p. ix), with the explicit goal of incorporating recent advancements in scholarship on, specifically, archaeology, environmental history, and source criticism. Waterfield endeavors to wind his narrative around the tension between the Greeks as a unified culture and their fiercely protective attitude towards individual sovereignty, or more simply, the “one-many” issue (p. x). Additionally, he covers the Hellenistic era in roughly equivalent depth to the Archaic and Classical periods, addressing perhaps the single greatest weakness of the crop of Greek history textbooks on the market.

In these aims Waterfield generally succeeds, although not without eccentricities. In the early chapters, particularly, we see a frequent use of archaeological and demographic data to support the historical narrative, and the text dedicates space to discussions and definitions of complex concepts such as “ethnicity” (p. 31) and “the state” (p. 35). Economic information is sprinkled throughout, and the book contains a welcome chapter on the Greek economy. While Waterfield almost never

cites modern scholarship directly, the Recommended Reading (pp. 474-495) is thorough and quite up to date. His coverage of the Hellenistic era receives 120 pages in six chapters, more by far than classroom standards such as Pomeroy et al. (2011) or Sealey (1976), and in more depth than Morris and Powell (2010). Considering the target of providing a more expansive and universal Greek history, Waterfield's choice to begin at the Archaic period—relegating the early Minoan and Mycenaean Greeks, as well as the Dark Age, Homer, and colonization, to one of two introductory chapters—is intriguing. Separate introductions to the “Environmental Background” (pp. 1-11) and “Historical Background” (pp. 13-22) lead to “The Emergence of the Greeks” with Chapter 1.

The book is split into three parts—“Act I: The Archaic Period (750-480): The Formation of the States,” “Act II: The Classical Period (479-323): A Tale, Mainly of Two Cities,” and “Act III: The Hellenistic Period (323-30): Greeks, Macedonians, and Romans.” On one hand, Waterfield includes engaging solo chapters on pan-Hellenic topics such as women and family life, the economy, and the democratic revolutions, and another chapter dedicated purely to the Greeks on Sicily, but the “one-many” distinction is seldom at the forefront. Throughout, Waterfield covers Athens and Sparta in noticeably more detail than other states, excavating their political minutiae even deep in the Hellenistic period, when the narrative does not demand it. The best coverage of Greek pluralism bookends the history, in Waterfield's discussion of city creation during the Archaic age and the development of Alexander's far-flung successor kingdoms.

From an aesthetic perspective, the binding, cover art, font, and internal presentation suggest a general popular history of Greece rather than a work designed purely for the classroom, and the feel of the book follows that popular history mold. Word choice and narrative voice often verges on casual, with regular use of the first-person, as well as some oddities of tone (usually to enhance dense political history) and occasional Anglicisms, e.g., “batmen” in a military context (p. 201). None of these elements disrupt the historical value of the text, although they may sporadically distract students from perfect understanding of specific points.

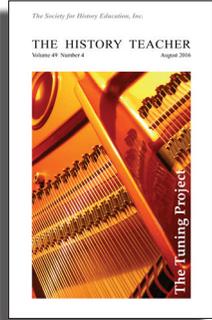
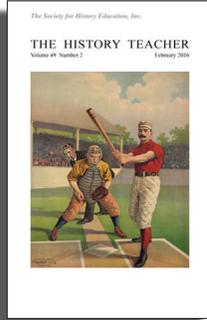
In comparison to modern ancient history textbooks or classroom texts of other kinds, this book has relatively fewer images, as well as an absence of extended selections from primary sources, either as reading exercises or as color for the narrative. Waterfield consistently quotes from ancient documents, but never at more than a sentence's length, and additional context about authors or genres would be helpful for students. Among the front matter is an exceedingly thorough chronology, as well as an appealing set of detailed maps, which are helpfully cross-referenced in the index.

As an experience, Waterfield's book is a pleasure to read: his prose is lively, entertaining, humane, and well researched, and contains a wealth of detail for both the student and educator. This work could provide a valuable central text for a college-level Greek history course, in tandem with supplemental primary sources in translation.



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by THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORY EDUCATION
at California State University, Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90840-1601 • U.S.A.
562-985-2573 • fax: 562-985-5431
info@thehistoryteacher.org

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