

relief throughout Lancashire, Healey is also at pains to point out that such assistance was residual, so that while it was genuinely needs-based (not contingent on moral or religious behavior), it was also “aggressively means-tested and a recourse of last resort” (p. 172). While these conclusions are hardly surprising, Healey’s ability to demonstrate their validity through a mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis, and his use of the petitions to bring the voices of the poor to the fore will be much appreciated by historians in this field.

His engagement with the relevant historiography may be less appreciated, as his sometimes dismissive or careless treatment of the work of other historians in the field, and his claims for the novelty of his work can occasionally miss the mark. While his painstaking work with the pauper petitions does give air to many new voices of the poor, he ignores decades of innovative work on a wide range of sources by historians like Steve Hindle, Tim Hitchcock, Marjorie Macintosh, Keith Snell, Tom Sokoll, and many others, when he claims that “These documents ... are the only sources which come close to allowing paupers something like their own voice, and they are the only ones which give *narratives* of poverty” (pp. 171–72). Healey is similarly dismissive of the work of demographers and social historians who have relied on family reconstitution, but it is notable that his own conclusions match theirs almost exactly; why does he choose to tear down their methodology, rather than to build on their conclusions? Healey sarcastically comments that “studies of the Poor Law which highlight the way it tended to support the old are missing the obvious point that poor relief was generally targeted at the bodily infirm” (p. 179). But this claim badly misrepresents the actual nature of the extensive body of work on lifecycle poverty, especially that of Lynn Botelho, Margaret Pelling, Richard Smith, and Pat Thane, which, in fact, focuses precisely on the point that it was generally the functional and cultural rather than the chronological nature of old age that gave rise to parish and charitable support for the elderly. Reading this literature with more care might have allowed him to see the nuanced arguments of historians of old age, and to catch basic errors in his engagement with this field. (For example, I have many tables in my study of eighteenth-century old age that give the proportion of poor relief that went to old paupers, but the table that Healey cites for comparative purposes actually does *not* give that information; it is hardly surprising that this misused data contrasts with his findings!) These points of criticism aside, this is a valuable and engaging book overall, with a careful reconstruction of the economic history of the poor of Lancashire during a critical period in the development of England’s social welfare system.

SUSANNAH OTTAWAY, *Carleton College*

Bordeaux et les Etats-Unis 1776–1815 Politique et stratégies négociantes dans la genèse d’un réseau commercial. By Silvia Marzagalli. Genève: Librairie Droz, 2015. Pp. 11, 559, \$60.78 paperback; \$48.62 pdf.
doi: 10.1017/S0022050716001054

Silvia Marzagalli’s *Bordeaux et les Etats-Unis* is a book that crosses boundaries. It brings together an unlikely transatlantic and trans-imperial pair, Bordeaux and the United States, and in so doing ranges across the Old Regime and Revolutionary periods

while combining quantitative data about trade with a qualitative look at the fabric of commercial life. The result is a work that situates the strategies of individual merchants within larger geopolitical and economic constraints.

If *Bordeaux et les Etats-Unis* has a single argument, it is about the power of war to shape commercial relationships. Marzagalli argues for war as the “principal motor of change” (p. 422) and *Bordeaux et les Etats-Unis* divides Franco-American commerce into three distinct epochs accordingly. The first period, the American Revolutionary War (1776 to 1783), witnessed an unprecedented increase in Franco-American trade as the American colonies turned to France for the manufactured products they had previously received from Great Britain. With the end of the war came an overall downturn in Franco-American trade and a shifting balance of trade as American ships began to supply France with badly needed grain. With the outbreak of European war in 1793 and the Haitian Revolution, the commercial picture changed once more. American neutrality enabled the renewal of Franco-American trade and the Haitian Revolution created a diaspora of former colonists in the United States, who had ties to France. The hierarchy of French ports engaged in trade with the United States also shifted after 1793: Bordeaux emerged on top.

The book is split into two sections: The first (Chapters 1–5) analyzes the shifting circumstances from the years 1776 to 1815, which created the three distinct periods of Franco-American trade. The second section (Chapters 6–10) examines the strategies and practices of French and American merchants during the period (1793–1815) of Bordeaux’s triumph. Throughout *Bordeaux et les Etats-Unis*, Marzagalli writes against a historiography that has cast France as a passive commercial actor.

Chapter 1 establishes the basic chronology and examines questions of political economy. Marzagalli argues that while France wanted to promote trade in theory, Old Regime institutions like the tobacco monopoly of the Ferme Générale hampered merchants trying to forge transatlantic links. Chapter 2 moves through the periods of war and peace and argues that the Revolutionary War created temporary opportunities for trade that then disappeared with the war’s end. Trade slackened during the 1780s, but some merchants established durable transatlantic links, which would come into play when war spurred a new era of trade in 1793. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the new era of Franco-American commerce that started with the outbreak of European war and Bordeaux’s role in it. Marzagalli argues that the Revolutionary state encouraged trade by importing grain, and the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution meant that the commercial ties Bordeaux merchants once had with Saint-Domingue were now transferred, via the emigration of colonists, to the United States. But transatlantic trade was not equally important to both sides. Marzagalli argues that trade with the United States meant far more for France than it did for the United States (p. 128). Chapter 5 sums up the change-over-time thesis in the first part of the book.

In Chapter 6, Marzagalli wades into the debate about impersonal information versus networks and reputations, arguing that merchants mixed both kinds of information (reputation and prices) in individual letters. Chapter 7 asks (and answers) a basic question: How do merchants establish relationships in an unknown location? Marzagalli systematically analyzes the different means merchants had of developing trust, but ultimately argues that merchants tended to trade with co-nationals, even in a transatlantic situation (p. 293). In Chapter 8, Marzagalli uses notarial records to argue that Bordeaux merchants took advantage of American neutrality during the European wars

to clandestinely ship goods across the ocean, thereby keeping their wares safe from British seizure. Chapter 9 further examines the way in which co-nationals preferred to interact with one another: American shippers tended to work with American commission agents in Bordeaux. But the wider Bordeaux economy still benefitted indirectly from the American presence, as Bordeaux merchants could grant loans and insurance contracts to American shippers (pp. 344–46). The final chapter revisits the idea that the transatlantic trade was disproportionately important to Bordeaux—enabling the French port to endure through the Revolution and the period of European wars—whereas it was only one of many possible trading arenas available to merchants from the United States.

An exhaustive, at times redundant, analysis of the commercial relationship between Bordeaux and the United States, Marzagalli's book is best suited for a specialist audience. Anyone interested in port cities, transatlantic trade, merchant networks, the early U.S. republic in the wider world or early modern French economic history will find it a useful read. The book is too narrow in focus for undergraduates or even graduate exam reading lists. But for those working on a related subject it is not to be missed.

ANNE RUDERMAN, *Yale University*

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

The Pox of Liberty: How the Constitution Left Americans Rich, Free, and Prone to Infection. By Werner Troesken. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015. Pp. vii, 237. \$40.00, cloth.
doi: 10.1017/S002205071600111X

Should vaccinations be required by law? Why are quarantine decisions made by state governors? What role should the federal government play in public health provision? While these are questions of current importance, they are also issues that the United States has been struggling with since the Revolution. At the heart of these issues lies a set of legal judgements, rooted in the U.S. Constitution, about when and how the state can intervene in order to improve public health.

In *The Pox of Liberty*, Werner Troesken sets out to study the complex impact of the U.S. Constitution on health in U.S. history. This is an ambitious book and a useful contribution to work in this area. By focusing on how the Constitution and the legal system influence public health, both directly and through economic growth, *The Pox of Liberty* illuminates a neglected aspect of public health history. While the author is trained as an economist, he has taken a narrative approach in this book which makes it approachable for a broad audience. This book is likely to be of particular interest to demographers, historians, and economists who would like to gain a better understanding of the way that legal factors influenced public health in the U.S. history.

One of the central messages of this book is that the United States was often less healthy than comparable European countries “not *despite* its being rich and free, but *because* it was rich and free” (p. 5). Put another way, Troesken argues that many of the laws that allowed the United States to become wealthy, and that promoted