

and vivid detail. The sense throughout the volumes is of a serious scholar studying serious subjects: temperate, controlled, courteous, although not without an occasional twinkle in the eye. Bebbington and his editor have opted to leave the essays largely as first published: this makes sense given that some of were written for journals that are otherwise hidden behind paywalls or even published in print alone. Yet this comes at a cost. Anyone who chooses to read several essays in succession may find the formula remorseless: subjects are introduced and defined, used to exemplify the key criteria of crucicentrism, conversionism, biblicism and activism, and then examined against broader cultural currents. The approach will be familiar to anyone who has read Bebbington before, and while it showcases his skill in crafting case studies, the cultural backdrop ('enlightenment', 'romanticism', 'modernism') is often highly impressionistic: a two-dimensional backdrop to the main action.

To cavil at this, however, is to miss the point: these volumes will be an excellent starting point for new scholars seeking crisp, authoritative introductions to a variety of subjects.

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Heathen, religion and race in American history. By Kathryn Gin Lum. Pp. xii + 349 incl. 27 ills. London–Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022. £28.95. 978 0 674 97677 1

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This monograph offers a timely and compelling interpretation of the relationship between religion and race in modern American history, admirably demonstrating the value of studying historical concepts that shape and express Christian and non-Christian worldviews. Predominantly focusing on the period from the eighteenth century to the present, it sees the 'heathen' as an 'elastic category' (p. 9) that white Christians in the United States have used to distinguish themselves from non-white non-Christians on a global scale. Rather than replacing perceptions of religious difference, racial hierarchies developed in symbiosis with them as Protestants deployed the 'heathen' to describe non-Christian peoples, thereby asserting spiritual and physical superiority that 'reverberates in American racism' (p. 14). The conversion of the 'heathen' was 'an essential part of the ongoing racialization of colonized peoples' (p. 46).

Engravings and woodcuts (pp. 83, 88–9) suggest that Anglo-Protestant missionaries portrayed Hawaiian and African landscapes as sites of physical and spiritual cultivation that could manifest efforts to civilise and Christianise indigenous 'heathen' peoples. In scriptural exegeses, tracts and missionary journals, the 'heathen' increasingly signalled the notion that religion could determine physical characteristics and behaviour, helping to forge attitudes towards race and reaffirming assumptions about gender, as well as expressing unease about deficiency, moral contamination and 'bodily deviance' (p. 100) that further validated Anglo-Protestant identity (p. 130). Illustrations that accompanied satirical poetry and newspapers conspired with the idea of the 'heathen' to link Chinese

immigration and labour with non-Christian invasion and degeneracy, reflecting 'the religious logic underlying exclusion' (p. 170). Even when white Christians ostensibly extolled inclusivity, the admittance of 'heathen' peoples, whether into the body politic or into heaven, was ultimately predicated on their capacity to meet Christian standards of moral virtue, deference, passivity and spirituality (p. 194). The essential binary distinctions between Christianity and the 'heathen' that collated diverse non-Christian peoples as potential beneficiaries of evangelism remain embedded in the digital tools and social media used to conduct missionary fundraising and proselytisation. Lum also sees ongoing efforts to bring technological innovation to the 'developing world' as evidence that even secular models of 'technological humanitarianism' remain indebted to the religious notion of 'the heathen world' and 'Euro-Americans' attempts to save it' (pp. 247–8). This is itself seen as a symptom of wider paternalistic impulses in the United States, which is argued to privilege individualism, prosperity and agency by stressing the homogeneity, poverty and passivity of 'the Other' (p. 278).

Historical efforts to reject, subvert or reappropriate the 'heathen' label sometimes disrupted and destabilised these familiar patterns. Black abolitionist ministers deployed it to condemn enslavement, expose the hypocrisy and racism of white American Christians, and situate African peoples within unfolding sacred history amidst anticipation of providential deliverance (pp. 130–44). While some Chinese converts used the term to contemplate their spiritual transformation and reaffirm their allegiance to Christianity, others renounced the faith and embraced the 'heathen' label as part of their own identity (pp. 172–4). Meanwhile, a Japanese Buddhist and an Indian theosophist partially rehabilitated the idea of the 'heathen' to claim a tradition of toleration and convey a sophisticated spirituality that seemed lacking, although coveted, in the materialistic West (pp. 209–10). Likewise, a Native American writer not only repudiated the term, but also rhetorically associated it with missionaries themselves in a vociferous act of resistance against White Christian oppression and an assertion of indigenous attunement to the natural world (pp. 215–19).

This monograph illuminates these strategies with sensitivity to the enduring institutional and cultural legacies of the 'heathen' across Christian and non-Christian societies, even as the term sometimes appears to have been more reflective than formative of underlying ideas, operating alongside related concepts. Circular definitions of 'heathen' and 'pagan' in the writing of the historian Hannah Adams (1755–1831) reflect the 'clumping' (p. 68) of non-Christian peoples into a monolithic group against which Christianity could be asserted. The implication of this is that the comparative history of religion, the category of 'world religions', and modern scholarship more generally, might owe more to Christian hegemony and its homogenisation of non-Christian peoples than has been appreciated (p. 71). Yet, the 'heathen' was not always so straightforwardly interchangeable with other labels for non-Christianity in Protestant writing. Lum shows that perceptions of essential religious and racial differences continued to depend on a field of distinct, yet interconnected religious ideas, including 'pagan', 'paganism', 'polytheism' and, crucially, 'idolatry', as well as 'ethnic', among many others. Some evidence invites further consideration of instances in which Christians deliberately omitted 'heathen', used different terms in its

place, or deployed it strategically together with related concepts. The term 'heathen' expressed the convergence of religion and race in Christian thought succinctly and coherently, but its relative potency depended on changing theological perspectives, geographical contexts and historical circumstances.

This raises a deeper historical problem, namely the origins of the discipline itself and its methodological privileging of change over time. Lum views history as complicit in the religious-imperial strategies of which the 'heathen' is emblematic, as white Protestant Americans measured linear change and movement as staples of their own progress, while relegating 'heathen' peoples to a condition of stagnation, without a history. Suggesting that these assumptions remain subtly, even unconsciously, embedded within historical practice, this book attends to both continuity and change. This robust strategy illuminates persistent assumptions and subtle shifts in religious culture over time. The 'heathen' emerges as an essential, recurring 'barometer of the abnormal' (p. 18) that Protestants reiterated and adapted to extol religious and racial superiority, confront their own spiritual insecurities, and affirm a teleological view of historical change as a hegemonic marker of modernity. Yet, the multifarious meanings and functions of the 'heathen' across Christian and non-Christian frameworks also show us that narratives of change need not necessarily perpetuate Western notions of linearity, progress and modernity, just as narratives of continuity cannot entirely escape them. Exposing several enduring and evolving qualities of the 'heathen', with a perceptive eye fixed upon precedents for present dilemmas, Kathryn Lum productively repurposes the disciplinary norms it rightly critiques, conscious that all history bears the indelible, if imperceptible, marks of the structures and processes that it seeks to interrogate.

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The letters of Johann Ernst Bergmann, Ebenezer, Georgia, 1786–1824. Religion, community and the new republic. By Russell C. Kleckley (in collaboration with Jürgen Gröschl). (Early American History Series, 12.) Pp. xiv + 521. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2022. €149. 978 90 04 44902 2; 1877 0216
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Russell Kleckley's book is a splendid volume that historians in multiple fields will find useful. The account's central figure is Johann Ernst Bergmann, a German Lutheran pastor who served his congregation in Ebenezer, Georgia, for nearly four decades. During this time, Bergmann wrote sixty letters, primarily to his European sponsors, the leaders of the August Hermann Franke's Orphan House in Halle, Germany. Prior to Kleckley's project, Bergmann's correspondence had never been translated into English and collected in a single volume. The organisation of the material is exceptionally clear. After setting the background for the study in the introduction, each of the eleven chapters has a short introduction followed by Bergmann's correspondence. Thanks to thorough footnotes and index, it is relatively easy to connect statements in each chapter's introduction with the letters that follow. First and foremost, Bergmann's letters address his concerns about the temporal and spiritual condition of his Lutheran congregation in Ebenezer, Georgia. His flock was comprised of the descendants of Germans who were expelled from Salzburg for refusing to convert