

instance, given Hibbert's recognition of the importance of the empire to the Tory program, this reader was surprised that there was but a passing mention to Disraeli's seminal speech on imperialism, that is, the Crystal Palace speech in 1872, during which he differentiated sharply between his vision of colonies in "constant and continuous relations with the Home Government" and the Liberals' seemingly more parsimonious attachment to colonial self-government.¹ As played out during his premiership in the latter 1870s, Disraeli's typically opportunistic and muscular approach to imperial threats inspired Gladstone to denounce "Beaconsfieldism," in pejorative reference to the title recently bestowed upon Dizzy by their admiring monarch, and contributed to the Liberal victory in the General Election of 1880, just months prior to Disraeli's death.

Such omissions are numerous and are therefore vexing. Thus, like so many of the evenings Disraeli spent at the country homes of friends, this profile of one of the most important figures of the Victorian era is a fine, if light, entertainment.

Marquette University

Timothy G. McMahon

Famine and Death in Occupied Greece, 1941–1944. By Violetta Hionidou. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xvii, 261. \$99.00.)

Interdisciplinary research is often praised but seldom practiced. In this work, the author shows how the right combination of multiple methods, tools, and disciplinary perspectives can yield new insights. She provides nothing less than a social, demographic, economic, historical, political, and epidemiological account of the Greek famine during this country's occupation by Axis powers between 1941 and 1944.

It is estimated that the Greek famine killed close to 5 percent of the population. This was a famine that affected a relatively "developed" European country at a time when such phenomena were considered to be things of the past. Hence, a study of the Greek famine does not just entail the reconstruction of a historical event, but also sheds light on the paradox of a famine that took place in a setting where famines were no longer part of the menu of natural calamities.

Violetta Hionidou skillfully exploits spatial and temporal variation within Greece to highlight the factors that contributed to the famine. She relies on creative comparisons, for example, between German-occupied Hios and Italian-occupied Syros, to study the effects of various levels of state intervention. She

1. Quoted in *The British Empire*, edited by Jane Samson (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2001), 184.

reconstructs the historical context and examines several putative factors of the famine, including the British blockade and the food requisitions by the occupation armies; she probes the role of local markets, and especially black markets. Hionidou also provides a detailed examination of relief operations—what modern scholars call humanitarian aid. Further, she analyzes population movements and migration, as well as the causes of mortality (which, she finds, were predominantly the result of starvation rather than epidemics). All this is done in a way that highlights the actual human experience of the famine.

In the process, Hionidou debunks several persistent myths. She shows that peasant resistance to taxation was not an act of political resistance, but rather one of economic expediency; that agricultural production did not collapse during the occupation, but in fact was even raised in some places; that the famine took place throughout the occupation period, at different times in different places, as opposed to just the winter of 1941–1942 as previously believed; that requisitions by occupation authorities were not as pervasive or centrally organized as thought, and usually took the form of disorganized plundering by soldiers.

From a methodological perspective, the author demonstrates the importance of not generalizing from the single case of Athens to that of the rest of the country, as experiences did vary widely; the need to evaluate critically written sources, as oral ones often contradict them, thus calling for evidentiary triangulation; and the obligation to challenge official accounts of both the Right and the Left, as well as newspaper accounts of the time, as they pack in considerable bias.

In short, this rich, yet analytically sharp, book will be essential reading not just for the students of Greek history and the Second World War, but also for researchers interested in the intersection of processes of military occupation, civil war, and famine.

Yale University

Stathis N. Kalyvas

Spirituality, Gender and the Self in Renaissance Italy: Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula (1474–1540). By Querciolo Mazzonis. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007. Pp. xvii, 247. \$35.95.)

This clearly argued study introduces to readers of English the north Italian “living saint” Angela Merici and her foundation in the 1530s of the Company of St. Ursula. In the seventeenth century and after, the Ursulines flourished in Europe as teachers of girls, and in Quebec, one branch pioneered missionary schooling for