lations, compare DNA structures from different strains of rice, and make use of historical linguistics, in a truly interdisciplinary collection that includes the work of historians, anthropologists, agricultural scientists, historians of science, and area studies scholars. Southeast Asia and West Africa receive the most attention, but other essays also focus on China, the Punjab, Bengal, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Japan. While most of the essays concentrate on the last century-and-a-half, some of the contributors trace developments across a longer trajectory, and a few are devoted to the early modern period. The editors have grouped the essays into three thematic parts, “Purity and Promiscuity,” “Environmental Matters,” and “Power and Control.” The first part is more strictly concerned with agriculture because it focuses on the challenges and contingencies involved in trying to impose uniformity on a crop with many varieties and the potential for cross-fertilization. If the other two parts seem to deal with more self-explanatory topics, it is worth noting that rice cultivation both requires considerable manipulation of the natural environment and harnesses significant amounts of power, in more than one sense of the term.

Readers might reach different conclusions about all of the evidence and arguments assembled in this impressive collection. The editors pay special attention to the two long-term historiographic debates over agricultural involution in Asia and over black rice in the Atlantic World. These debates demonstrate that scholars studying different parts of the world have pursued such different questions and reached such different conclusions about rice cultivation that it is challenging to make the work fit together. On the other hand, many of the authors share skepticism about efforts to make rice more uniform, and the book as a whole does much to problematize the consequences of the Green Revolution. In the end, this collection of global histories still manages to present rich evidence that argues for local complexities and variations.

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The study of pastoralism frequently forces historians to consult work in anthropology, ethnography, archaeology, geography, ecology, and sociology. Such sources ask very different types of questions, however, and they often lack historical reference. The Ecology of Pastoralism offers a welcome perspective on
this subject. Through contributions from nine different scholars representing multiple disciplines, it exhibits extensive global and thematic coverage. The work is aimed at a broad scholarly audience, and it treats historical as well as contemporary cases. It makes a valuable contribution to the literature on pastoralism.

The book’s eleven chapters aim to elucidate the relationship between pastoral systems and their physical and cultural environment. The first chapter, which serves as an introduction to the work, provides a useful overview of the historiography of pastoralism. It also argues convincingly for the utility of pastoral studies in developing and evaluating social theories and methods. The second chapter continues in this vein. Through a comparison of American and Russian work on Central Asian pastoral groups, it presents a critical assessment of the methodology of pastoral studies.

Building on this foundation, subsequent chapters use specific examples of past and present pastoral systems to challenge the subject’s traditional typologies. Through localized case studies in Eurasia, Africa, and North America, these chapters expose common themes as well as important distinctions with respect to space and time. They explore connections between pastoralism and agriculture, the role of the environment and the climate, varieties of mobile and sedentary systems, the politics of sedentarization, types of livestock, innovation and change with time, environmental impact and sustainability, tribal rituals, and social configuration. In addition, they problematize the dichotomies of pastoralism versus agriculture, core and periphery, and “the desert and the sown.” Instead, they locate pastoral systems on a complex continuum of land use.

Agricultural historians will find certain chapters to be more relevant to their investigations than others. Chapters Eight and Nine present the most historically oriented studies. In the former, Lawrence Kuznar presents a detailed history of pastoral land use among the Navajo. In the latter, Mark Shutes examines the transformation of the Irish dairy industry over the past two hundred years. Other contributions, most of which deal with ancient or contemporary pastoral systems in Central Asia, may be less useful, but they remain engaging and well researched.

Given this book’s geographical, chronological, and disciplinary scope, its organization and flow are impressive. While each chapter can be read and understood in isolation, the book’s main topics and themes build on one another from one chapter to the next. Taken as a whole, this work successfully shows that the characteristics of a given pastoral group are socially and environmen-
tally influenced. It also provides a worthy model for future directions in the study of pastoralism. *The Ecology of Pastoralism* provides a useful resource for agricultural historians and anyone investigating pastoral systems.

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Even as real live pigs have disappeared from our everyday lives, the animal has enjoyed a surge of interest from scientists, historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, and other academics. Out of this new research, popular historian Mark Essig has compiled an eclectic story of the origins, domestication, life, and fate of swine. *Lesser Beasts: A Snout-to-Tail History of the Humble Pig* turns out to be less scholarly and less comprehensive than most historians would probably like, but it is often interesting and informative nonetheless.

In eighteen short chapters the book looks at a range of subjects from pig physiology to mythology to the National Pork Board’s “other white meat” campaign. It goes straight to the facts without much of the fluff or gratuitous personal observations that fill many popular histories. The book also remains very focused on the story of pigs themselves, rather than pigs as a lens on wider historical events and issues. The coverage, however, is selective: it provides a roughly chronological arrangement of some of the topics that have received the most scholarly attention, rather than aiming for a full account of the porcine past. There is a lot in the early chapters on Jewish and Egyptian pig taboos, Roman recipes, Christian animal symbolism, and medieval pig trials. The later half focuses mainly on pig breeding and pork production in England and America. By contrast, the swine of East and Southeast Asia—that is, most of the pigs in the world—receive little or no attention. The final chapters examine the costs of modern swine concentrated animal feed operations to the environment and animal welfare, ending with a balanced plea for more responsible and humane animal operations.

Essig is upfront that his is a work of synthesis, not independent research. Agricultural and environmental historians will quickly recognize some of the authors this book has relied on most heavily, including Virginia Anderson, William Cronon, Catherine McNeur, and the author of this review. For the most part, these writers and others are acknowledged only in brief endnotes, using