THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA, 1814–1815: DIPLOMACY, POLITICAL CULTURE, AND SOCIABILITY*

Der Wiener Kongress: Die Neugestaltung Europas, 1814/15. By Heinz Duchhardt. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2013. Pp. 128. ISBN 978-3-406-653-81-0. £7.00.

Der Wiener Kongress – eine kirchenpolitische Zäsur? Ed. Heinz Duchhardt and Johannes Wischmeyer. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2013. Pp. 313. ISBN 978-3-525-10123-0. £46.00.

Der Wiener Kongress, 1814/15. By Wolf D. Gruner. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2014. Pp. 261. ISBN 978-3-15-019252-8. £6.00.

The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon. By Mark Jarrett. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014. Pp. xvi + 522. ISBN 978-1-78453-056-3. £15.99.

Le congrès de Vienne: une refondation de l’Europe 1814–1815. By Thierry Lentz. Paris: Perrin, 2013. Pp. 385. ISBN 978-2-262-03305-7. £19.00.

Le congrès de Vienne (1814–1815): carnet mondain et éphémérides. By Robert Ouvrard. Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2014. Pp. 570. ISBN 978-2-36942-070-5. £20.00

Der Wiener Kongress. By Reinhard Stauber. Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2014. Pp. 285. ISBN 978-3-8252-4095-0. £15.00.

Mächtepolitik und Friedenssicherung: Zur politischen Kultur Europas im Zeichen des Wiener Kongresses. Ed. Reinhard Stauber, Florian Kerschbaumer, and Marion Koschier. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2014. Pp. 208. ISBN 978-3-643-50502-6. £23.00

The Congress of Vienna: power and politics after Napoleon. By Brian Vick. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2014. Pp. 436. ISBN 978-0-674-72971-1. £29.95.

Rites of peace: the fall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna. By Adam Zamoyski. London: Harper Perennial, 2008. Pp. xviii + 634. ISBN 978-0-00-720306-2. £12.99.

* I would like to thank R. J. W. Evans, Colin Heywood, David Laven, Matthew Rendall, and John Young for their comments and assistance. I would also like to thank the Austrian Cultural Centre (London) and the participants in the one-day conference ‘The Congress of Vienna – reconsidered’ held on 4 Sept. 2015.
On 29 November 1814, the Austrian Emperor Francis, the Russian Tsar Alexander, and the Prussian King Frederick Wilhelm, along with 6,000 others, attended a concert in Vienna’s Redouten Hall; Beethoven personally conducted three of his works: the Seventh symphony, the bombastic ‘Wellington’s victory’, and a newly written cantata entitled ‘The glorious moment’. In this cantata, the figure of ‘Vienna’ sings the following words:

Oh heaven, what delight!
What spectacle greets my gaze!
All that the earth holds in high honour
Has assembled within my walls!
My heart throbs! My tongue stammers!
I am Europe – no longer one city.

For eight months, it seemed Europe – and even the wider world, to some extent – was centred on Vienna. Monarchs, ministers, diplomats, representatives, dignitaries, cultural luminaries, society figures (along with many others) attended opulent celebrations and public spectacles. Amidst this social whirlwind, numerous committee meetings and informal negotiations about the future shape of Europe were being conducted. At the end, under pressure from Napoleon’s unexpected escape from Elba, the consolidated final act (encompassing a number of separate treaties) was signed on 9 June 1815. Nine days later, the duke of Wellington, who had left Vienna to lead the Allied forces in present-day Belgium, defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.

The recent bicentenary with its conferences and slew of books provides an opportunity to reflect on the state of the historiography and some possible future directions. Traditionally, there have been two historiographical strands on the Congress of Vienna. First, there has been diplomatic history detailing the territorial settlements and other related topics following the defeat of Napoleon. The political machinations of Metternich, Castlereagh,
Talleyrand, Hardenberg, Humboldt, Nesselrode, and Tsar Alexander normally form the basis of such an account. A seminal work on covering this period has been Paul W. Schroeder’s The transformation of European politics, 1763–1848, which postulated a ‘fundamental change...in governing rules, norms, and practices of international politics...[moving towards] nineteenth-century concert and political equilibrium’. Schroeder identifies the time leading up to and around the time of the Congress as the crucial turning point when, as allies, the main decision-makers were developing and learning a new grammar for diplomacy based on mutual restraints, negotiation, and co-operation. Schroeder’s specific thesis about the transformation of politics around 1814–15 has been much investigated and discussed – no doubt his provocative analyses will continue to attract scholarly attention. A fruitful avenue, for example, could be the individual and collective learning processes behind the evolution of new norms and rules. The second historiographical strand often uses a similar cast of characters but expands the range and provides a different, more populist perspective. Here, the festivities and celebrations surrounding the Congress – the salons, personalities, love affairs, entanglements, extravagant celebrations, and the like – take centre stage. Works in this strand often mention the diplomatic intricacies in passing or as background to the vivid social life of the Congress. In general there is little crossover between the two strands.

2 Paul Schroeder, The transformation of European politics, 1763–1848 (Oxford, 1996), p. v.
3 Some examples of Schroeder’s work providing the basis of further discussion are the various articles in forums at American Historical Review, 97 (1992), pp. 683–735, and International History Review, 16 (1994), pp. 663–754. Peter Krüger and Paul Schröder, eds., The transformation of European politics, 1763–1848: episode or model in modern history? (Münster, 2002); Wolfram Pyta, ed., Das europäische Mächtekonzert: Friedens- und Sicherheitspolitik vom Wiener Kongress 1815 bis zum Krimkrieg 1853 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2009); and, above all, Matthias Schulze, Normen und Praxis: Das europäische Konzert der Grossmächte als Sicherheitsrat, 1815–1860 (Munich, 2009).
4 See the interesting general observations in Wolfram Pyta, ‘Kulturgeschichtliche Annäherungen an das europäische Mächtekonzert’, in idem, ed., Das europäische Mächtekonzert, pp. 1–24, and for an overview of the process without in-depth discussion of individuals or the collective, see Schulze, Normen und Praxis, pp. 35–72. Recent biographies of some of the main protagonists have not directly engaged with this thesis of a ‘learning process’ from the end of the Napoleonic wars through to the post-war settlements. There are suggestive comments in Wolfram Siemann, Metternich: Strategie und Visionär: Eine Biographie (Munich, 2016), pp. 435–7. Alan Sked in his recent study of Metternich vigorously opposes Schroeder’s interpretations. See Alan Sked, Metternich and Austria: an evaluation (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 54–63. In relation to Metternich, James Sofka places the stress on Kant, the late Enlightenment, and Metternich’s education for his conception of ‘political equilibrium’. James Sofka, ‘Metternich’s theory of european order: a political agenda for “perpetual peace”’, Review of Politics, 60 (1998), pp. 115–49. This stress on formative development in the ancien régime is also highlighted more generally in Sven Externbrink, ‘Kulturtransfer: Internationale Beziehungen und die “Generation Metternich” zwischen Französischer Revolution, Restauration und Revolution von 1848’, in Pyta, ed., Das europäische Mächtekonzert, pp. 59–78. Recent biographies of significant figures include John Bew, Castlereagh: enlightenment, war and tyranny (London, 2011); and Lothar Gall, Wilhelm von Humboldt: Ein Preuss von Welt (Berlin, 2011).
In recent years, however, there have been increasing attempts to bridge the two worlds and re-conceptualize our understanding of the Congress and how it functioned. Diplomatic history, in general, seems to be moving away from Schroeder’s focus on ‘systemic analysis’; what he describes as ‘the structure, grammar, and rules of a common language…the rules and understandings underlying the practice of international politics’. Many recent publications on the Congress, while ostensibly about diplomacy and power politics, incorporate the wider worlds of personal networks, public opinion, the press, everyday life, social events (their representation, their role in mediation, and their subtle effect on opinions), gender perspectives, ‘emotion’, and general mentalités – for example, the rise of a ‘culture of peace’ and a ‘security culture’. These factors are no longer portrayed as mere background, but as important influences on political decision-making. Yet the relationship is often obscure and difficult to trace, certainly in comparison to more obvious power political considerations such as the number of ‘souls’, specific borders, and the geo-political balance. For example, was it important that the monarchs went to a Beethoven concert together? What symbolism was there at the concert and how did it affect people, if it all? Then, after the concert in the fashionable salons – apart from the conversation, love affairs, and amateur theatrics – did the salons also function as a forum and meeting place for politics? If so, how and with what consequences? To a large extent, investigations into this nexus between civil society and politics can only ever be tentative, suggestive, and provisional since direct links are difficult to document. Nevertheless, outlining

5 Schroeder also uses the term ‘the game of international politics’. Schroeder, The transformation of European politics, p. x. See the suggestive comments about international politics as ‘distinctive “codes”, rhetorics, and sets of rules…plus social insertion’, in Jürgen Osterhammel, The transformation of the world: a global history of the nineteenth century (Princeton, NJ, 2014), pp. 393–4. See also Katherine Aaslestad and Karen Hagemann, ‘1806 and is aftermath: revisiting the period of the Napoleonic wars in German Central European historiography’, Central European History, 39 (2006), p. 555.

6 See, amongst many examples, the essays in Patrick Finney, ed., Palgrave advances in international history (Basingstoke, 2005); Peter Jackson, ‘Pierre Bourdieu, the “cultural turn” and the practice of international history’, Review of International Studies, 34 (2008), pp. 55–81; and more specifically Pyta, ‘Kulturgeschichtliche Annäherungen an das europäische Mächtekonzert’, pp. 1–24. Some recent books taking a cultural approach to diplomatic history are Martin Heyer and Johannes Paulmann, eds., The mechanics of internationalism: culture, society, and politics from the 1840s to the First World War (Oxford, 2001); Markus Mösslang and Torsten Riette, eds., The diplomats’ world: a cultural history of diplomacy, 1815–1914 (Oxford, 2008); and Jennifer Mori, The culture of diplomacy: Britain in Europe, c. 1750–1830 (Manchester, 2010). For a ‘culture of peace’, see Schulze, Normen und Praxis, pp. 4–20, and, most recently, idem, ‘The construction of a culture of peace in post-Napoleonic Europe: peace through equilibrium, law and new forms of communicative interaction’, Journal of Modern European History, 13 (2015), pp. 464–74. For ‘security culture’ and emotion, see Beatrice de Graaf, ‘Bringing sense and sensibility to the continent: Vienna 1815 revisited’, Journal of Modern European History, 13 (2015), pp. 447–57. For the links between emotion, patriotism, and nationalism, see Glenda Sluga, ‘Passions, patriotism and nationalism, and Germaine de Stael’, Nations and Nationalism, 15 (2009), pp. 299–318. For an overall framework focusing on France, see William Reddy, The navigation of feeling: a framework for the history of emotions (Cambridge, 2001).
potential connections and demonstrating how they worked, or could have worked, illuminates an aspect of politics that has often been neglected or ignored, especially in diplomatic history. The interplay between international politics and civil society (especially, wider frames of thinking and sociability) runs throughout this review article.

It is structured into three parts. The first section sets out a spectrum of approaches to the Congress from traditional diplomatic history (Jarrett) at one end, to the chronicling of social life at the other (Ouvrard). Some contrasting examples mixing the two (Zamoyski; Vick) will also be discussed. The second section provides an overview of general works on the Congress intended both for students and general readership (Lentz; Stauber; Duchhardt; Gruner). The final section covers the two edited collections: one on religion (Duchhardt and Wischmeyer) and the other on political culture in a very broad sense (Stauber, Kerschbaumer, and Koschier).

‘What is the Congress of Vienna?’ wrote the Prussian thinker, civil servant, and diplomat Wilhelm von Humboldt in a memorandum drafted on the eve of the Congress. He answered his own question: ‘It can only be explained historically. The French Revolution and Napoleon had changed nearly the entire landscape of politics in Europe.’ Not only was the map of Europe redrawn after decades of war, but powerful movements such as constitutionalism, nascent political participation, growing industrialization, increased literacy, expanded public sphere, renewed social networks, centralized bureaucracy, romanticism, mass immigration, imperialism (amongst others) were fundamentally changing politics and society.

II

Mark Jarrett’s book on the Congress and subsequent diplomatic developments has been widely praised – and rightly so. It is clearly written and presents an admirable overview of international politics from the eclipse of Napoleon to the end of the Congress System in 1823. To a large extent, Jarrett agrees with Schroeder’s thesis and describes the Congress System, especially the regular summit conferences, as ‘an audacious experiment. It was the first time in history that statesmen attempted to establish institutional mechanisms to superintend relations between sovereign states with the aim of maintaining world peace and stability’ (p. 353). By January 1823, however, the Congress System

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7 Quoted in Charles Webster, The Congress of Vienna (London, 1963; orig. 1919), p. 176.
8 For example, C. A. Bayly uses the title ‘the modern world in genesis’ for the period from the early to mid-nineteenth century. C. A. Bayly, The birth of the modern world, 1780–1914: global connections and comparisons (Oxford, 2004). See also Paul Johnson, The birth of the modern: world society, 1815–1850 (London, 1991). Jürgen Osterhammel in his recent book utilizes Reinhart Koselleck’s concept of ‘Sattelzeit’ (saddle period) for the time of transition to modernity, roughly 1750–1850 (or sometimes 1770–1830). Osterhammel, The transformation of the world, pp. 58–63.
was fraying to the extent that the new British foreign secretary George Canning (who had replaced his rival and one of the principal architects of the system, Lord Castlereagh) could proudly write: ‘Every nation for itself, and God for us all’ (p. 344). Jarrett frames his work around an overarching question; namely, whether the Congress System, which was based on international law and maintenance of the status quo, could have accommodated the demands associated with gradual increased democratization. While he poses this question, Jarrett leaves it essentially unanswered.

The Congress of Vienna forms a small, though significant, component of Jarrett’s compelling narrative – it constitutes about a quarter of the book. This section provides a good example of Jarrett’s logical, systematic approach. He begins with a short overview of the Congress’s intentions, emphasizing it as a legitimizing tool and as an appeal to international public law (p. 69). This is followed with considerable background information on the various main players and their common experiences – aristocratic roots, the French Revolution, liberal Enlightenment, and survival in the Napoleonic years (pp. 74–84). He then deals with various topics in turn – diplomatic aims, procedural questions, social life (two pages), the Polish question, German Confederation, Italy, Switzerland, and others. Each is afforded a succinct, lucid section outlining the essential issues, viewpoints, and events. Indeed, Jarrett’s format evokes a detailed lawyer’s brief (Jarrett has been a practising lawyer) or a civil servant’s summary – presenting the necessary information in a concise, logical manner, then providing a considered, balanced, not overly personal viewpoint. Jarrett’s final assessment of the Vienna settlement is largely positive, in line with the prevailing interpretations of Kissinger and Schroeder.9 According to Jarrett, most states generally achieved their aims, while as a whole stability was restored and the map of Europe greatly simplified (pp. 154–7).

To a large extent, the remainder of the book is about the genesis, apogee, and fall of the Congress System – from the Quadruple Alliance through the various Congresses at Aachen/Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), Troppau/Opava (1820), Laibach/Ljubljana (1821), and Verona (1822). Here, Jarrett could have commented on the division between the two periods. First, there was the settlement of the post-Napoleonic world encompassing the First Treaty of Paris, the Congress of Vienna, and the Second Treaty of Paris. Second, there were the subsequent developments, which built on the ideas of allied co-operation and conference diplomacy, forming an evolving, reactive response to various challenges to the 1814–15 settlements. Here, the issues were different and involved questions such as military intervention, censorship, surveillance, domestic reform,

9 Henry Kissinger, A world restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the problems of peace, 1812–1822 (London, 2000; orig. 1957), pp. 172–4; idem, ‘The Congress of Vienna: a reappraisal’, World Politics, 8 (1956), pp. 264–80 (where he is more forceful in his arguments); and Schroeder, The transformation of European politics, pp. 575–82.
and unilateral state action. Metternich and Tsar Alexander, in particular, no
longer entertained grand designs and became increasingly preoccupied with
maintaining the status quo. Some elaboration from Jarrett on his central ques-
tion about the Congress System coping with mild elements of democratic
change would have been welcome here.10

Adam Zamoyski’s new book, Phantom terror, rather than emphasizing the
international, co-operative aspects of the Congress System (like Jarrett and
Schroeder), investigates the fear of revolution, so evident in post-1815
Europe. He postulates that this fear, while often genuine, also provided a ‘con-
venient paradigm for the government’ (p. 75) in order to increase control,
power, and surveillance. Thus, the book focuses on spies, informers, excessive
bureaucracy, the secret police, and the repressive military. Zamoyski takes a criti-
cal view both of the fear and its use by governments: ‘Beginning in the early
1790s...virtually every...state in Europe consistently misled and repressed
those they governed, invoking a threat which failed to substantiate’ (p. 499).
This led to a damaging legacy of permanent conflict and an ‘unnecessary
repression of moderate liberal tendencies’ (p. 499). The illusory spectre of
the Comité Directeur—a supposed, vast conspiracy for universal revolution
based in Paris—became an idée fixe for many leaders, especially Metternich
and Tsar Alexander, and was used to explain all manner of events.
Zamoyski’s vast knowledge of the period enables him to provide telling
details and vignettes. Similar to his previous works, the book vividly describes
personalities and events on a broad European canvas. There is, however, no
theoretical framework, nor is there much overt interpretation. It is also rather
one-sided, not mentioning the tremendous social, economic, administrative,
constitutional, and demographic changes, nor the continued influence of the
press, civil society, and increasingly widespread education.

Zamoyski’s earlier book, Rites of peace, is more relevant to this review article
and provides an engrossing narrative account of the period around the
Congress of Vienna encompassing war, diplomacy, social life, the major prota-
gonists, and their various love affairs. In the final chapter, Zamoyski challenges

10 Stella Ghervas has addressed the issue of domestic disorder and the effect on interna-
tional peace, stating that ‘establishing the conditions of peace through effective self-rule
of the people and popular representation, economic prosperity, as well as the eradication of
the most glaring social injustices, could be more effective than military interventions against
insurgents’. Stella Ghervas, ‘The long shadow of the Congress of Vienna: from international
peace to domestic disorders’, Journal of Modern European History, 13 (2015), pp. 458–63, at
pp. 462–3. See the suggestive comments in David Laven and Lucy Riall, ‘Restoration govern-
ment and the legacy of Napoleon’, in idem and idem, eds., Napoleon’s legacy: problems of govern-
ment in Restoration Europe (Oxford and New York, NY, 2000), p. 19. Recent work on constitutions
demonstrates one possible direction for addressing questions of democratic participation, legit-
imacy, authority, power, political struggle, and state-building. Markus Prutsch, Making sense of
constitutional monarchism in post-Napoleonic France and Germany (Basingstoke, 2013); and Kelly
Grotke and Markus Prutsch, eds., Constitutionalism, legitimacy and power: nineteenth-century experi-
ences (Oxford, 2014).
the positive assessments of Kissinger and Schroeder, arguing that the Vienna settlement had never really been consummated, had not provided any real legitimacy, and had not led to peace. While Zamoyski concedes some stability, order, progress, and recognition of rights, there were also ‘a particularly stultified form of monarchical government’ (p. 569), denial of political nationalism, rigid hierarchies, and the non-enforcement of rights. So where Jarrett emphasizes the attempt at international co-operation and the generally positive aspects of the Congress System, Zamoyski highlights the ‘inability to take a fresh view of things’ (p. 565), especially rising nationalism. In both his books, Zamoyski portrays the Congress System and its leaders as essentially backward-looking and fearful, whereas Jarrett allows for some flexibility and contingency – a sense of the leaders in a specific context dealing with multiple, complex challenges while trying to maintain the stability and order of the 1814–15 settlements. Zamoyski revels in the social life of the Congress. He writes that: ‘Perhaps the most striking aspect of the great charade known as the Congress of Vienna is the continuous interplay between the serious and the frivolous, an almost parasitical co-existence of activities which might appear to be mutually exclusive’ (p. 385). Yet, like his more recent book, there is no real conceptualizing of the political with the social. Overall, Zamoyski provides a fast-paced, rather old-fashioned, narrative interspersing diplomatic manoeuvring with the myriad of social events and interlinked personal relationships.11

Brian Vick’s book is resolutely academic, theoretically informed, and advances a sophisticated thesis. In the introduction, he sets out his subject matter: ‘Elite women, transconfessional currents of religious revival, the press and public opinion, and liberal and national ideas all played greater roles than usually depicted in the literature on diplomacy or political culture’ (p. 2). For Vick, it is the ‘interplay and interlocking of various dimensions’ (p. 20), which is most fascinating. Vick especially focuses on the importance of ‘influence politics’ (p. 7) – namely, ideas, languages, networks, the public, material culture, display, salons, and the like – on diplomacy and decision-making. Instead of Zamoyski’s traditional approach, which intersperses the social and political in a grand narrative, Vick’s book is thematic in structure, systematically and rigorously investigating a number of wider contexts surrounding the Congress. For example, in his discussion on salons, Vick treats the female (and also male) hosts as political actors and enablers, rather than simply as objects of desire and devotion.12 Thus, Vick goes

11 This traditional mixing of the political and social into an overarching narrative is also used in other recent books, mostly with a general audience in mind. David King, Vienna 1814: how the conquerors of Napoleon made love, war, and peace at the Congress of Vienna (New York, NY, 2008); Anna Ehrlich and Christa Bauer, Der Wiener Kongress: Diplomaten, Intrigen und Skandale (Vienna, 2014); and Eberhard Strauss, Der Wiener Kongress: Das grosse Fest und die Neuordnung Europas (Stuttgart, 2014).
12 Often the roles of women and of salons are discussed together. For example Steven Kale, ‘Women’s intellectual agency in the history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French
beyond the usual canon... not just exploring the writings of second-tier thinkers and pamphleteers to uncover the broader political languages, but also opening up the analysis to the second rank of political actors more generally: diplomats and statesmen, plus the wider society of politically engaged individuals with potential influence on political discourse or political decisions, be they middle-class or noble, women or men. (p. 7)

So, the great figures such as Metternich, Castlereagh, Talleyrand, Tsar Alexander, Nesselrode, Hardenberg, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and others are placed firmly within their general milieu, while forgotten figures such as Franz Jan, who arranged a grand celebration including a performance of Handel’s *Samson* with massive forces, or Therese Barton, who organized a successful and popular Panorama of Paris, are discussed and analysed in depth. Similarly, while Beethoven’s celebrated concerts are covered, so are the works and activities of lesser-known composers such as Adolf Bäuerle, Friedrich August Kanne, Ignaz Moscheles, Joseph Huglmann, and Anton Diabelli (more famous for commissioning Beethoven’s final great work for the piano, the Diabelli Variations). Vick is interested in the development of the market and the presence of the public. Instead of profiling isolated prominent cultural titans, Vick presents ‘poets and composers, painters and publishers... all jostling to claim a share of the celebratory market’ (p. 96).

The links between context and power politics are explained by Vick in the following words: ‘these wider cultural influences provided not just the backdrop or the context but also the very matrix and stimuli by which rulers, statesmen, and the politically aware more generally were molded, and from which they drew ideas and motivation’ (p. 330).13 Tellingly, it is only near the end of the book that Vick deals with the most important diplomatic issue – Russia’s plans for Poland and Prussia’s claim to Saxony. Here, Vick does not follow the traditional route of reconstructing the machinations of the main players through the various memoranda, meetings, and shifting alliances, rather he traces the

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13 Vick is more forthright in a recent article asserting that civil society *did* affect the Congress’s political outcomes. Brian Vick, ‘The Vienna Congress as an event in Austrian history: civil society and politics in the Habsburg Empire at the end of the wars against Napoleon’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 46 (2015), pp. 109–33, at p. 132.
various layers of political culture surrounding the issue (p. 278). For example, he focuses on the language and ideas of national rights, protections, and autonomy, evoking more regionally based, federalist, multi-national notions, which were very different from the later sense of sovereign independence. Another layer he discusses is the role of public opinion, particularly in the salons and the European press. Vick argues that the ideas of provincial, federative nationalism, and the need to appease public opinion were important considerations in the eventual new partitions of Poland and Saxony, alongside the more conventional factors of power politics, geo-political balance, and state interests.

Vick’s book, therefore, is not a traditional account of the Congress. While the main events and personalities are covered, its strength lies in its stimulating and provocative analyses of ideas, material culture, celebrations, music, press, literature, religion, networks, images, and constitutionalism, and other ‘secondary’ topics. It is instructive that Vick is particularly detailed and enlightening on relatively minor diplomatic matters such as the abolition of slavery, joint action against the Barbary Corsair pirates, the Ionian Isles, and the struggle for Jewish rights. Vick’s argues passionately that the ‘second-tier’ actors, issues, and forums best illustrate the general context for decision-making. Throughout his book, there is a sense of the public as a vague but important presence creating a framework for thought, pushing the agenda in certain directions and actively participating in the burgeoning, opening political sphere.

Robert Ouvrard’s book places the reader in the very heart of this public and, in particular, its celebrations. His book is a social chronicle of the Congress, taking the form of a collective diary seen through the eyes of many witnesses. It is a book mostly of quotes, often many pages long, generally following a strict chronological sequence with almost daily updates. There are some explanatory and excursive sections interspersed within the chronicle. This is not a conventional historical book; there is no real narrative, nor any thesis. There is little on the diplomatic negotiations and much that seems irrelevant or trivial. For example, there are descriptions of entourages (pp. 51–2, 137–46), an inventory of the gifts given by the duke of Württemberg when he left Vienna (pp. 260–1) as well as the seating arrangements for the famous sleigh ride of the monarchs (pp. 364–5). An interesting case is the entry for 12 September 1814, which simply reads ‘Arrival of Count Ernst Münster’. Who was Count Münster (p. 112)? In the lengthy biographical index, we find that he was the representative for Hanover, while from the index there are five minor references in the text, but there is no real explanation of his role, background, duties, or social position in Ouvrard’s book. He was in fact an extremely important diplomat and politician who participated in many negotiations during the Congress.

This accumulation of seemingly trivial information does, however, slowly build to convey a sense of the Congress as an event. More than the other

14 For a more systematic treatment in relation to Vienna and the Habsburg monarchy, see ibid., pp. 109–33.
books reviewed, Ouvrard’s approach details Vienna as the setting; its physical environment, geography, weather, cultural life, everyday concerns. The perspective is mainly from the minor officials and participants who have left accounts. The sheer number of social events – major celebrations and soirées almost daily – was overwhelming. For instance, on 18 October 1814 the largest public festival at the Congress was held during the day (for the anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig), then in the evening a magnificent ball at the Metternich palace was staged including various sovereigns and members of the higher nobility (pp. 184–96). From Ouvrard’s book, the Congress emerges as an explosion of pomp, pageantry, dancing, gossiping, and exhausting, continual partying. Ouvrard’s unconventional method also points to major conjunctions of events such as 1 January 1815, when, on a cold and snowy day, the end of hostilities between England and the USA was announced, Beethoven performed one of his last concerts as pianist, and a ball was held at the Imperial Palace where Talleyrand and Tsar Alexander were seen to be in earnest discussion. This was at the height of the Poland–Saxon crisis. Two days later, Talleyrand together with Metternich and Castlereagh signed the secret Triple Alliance, which, though defensive in nature, was clearly aimed against Prussia and Russia. The Congress was truly a whirlwind of political and social events.

From Jarrett’s work to Ouvrard’s, there is a spectrum of approaches from the purely diplomatic to the purely social. To some extent, Jarrett’s book is a summation of diplomatic histories concerning the Congress of Vienna and its aftermath. Less personal and opinionated than Schroeder’s standard work, Jarrett utilizes the considerable published primary sources and historiography to present a balanced, judicious overview. Zamoyski’s book on the Congress takes the form of a traditional, grand narrative mixing the political and the social. Vick, by contrast, theorizes on the possible effects the social (and other general environmental conditions) had on the political, then pursues his thesis in largely thematic chapters. Finally, Ouvrard deals solely with the social dimension, but in an unusual, thought-provoking manner. In general, the direction of the general historiography is to meld the political and social along the lines Vick has sketched.

III

Some of these new approaches, as well as other perspectives, are evident in the series of books released as general introductions to the Congress. Intended for students and the general public, these books published in French (Lentz) and German (Stauber, Duchhardt, and Gruner) have much in common. All emphasize diplomatic and political matters, though discuss (or at least mention) the social side as well. All generally have a positive assessment of the Congress. Yet they also have different approaches, foci, styles, and structures.

Thierry Lentz has published many works on Napoleon and is the director of the Fondation Napoléon, with responsibility for editing the monumental
collection of Napoleon’s correspondence. Lentz’s book on the Congress demonstrates his deep, intimate knowledge of the period and provides an excellent introduction to the field. Overall, he takes a roughly chronological approach with thematic digressions on various matters within the overarching narrative. This allows the reader to see the connections between issues and greatly aids in understanding the complex and evolving geo-political situation. The maps are also extremely helpful in this respect. While the focus is largely on the political and diplomatic decision-making, there is a lengthy section on the social life. Lentz does not theorize on the links, though he acknowledges the importance of informal conversations at numerous soirées. At the outset, Lentz states his aim to write a ‘European history of the Congress’ (p. 8). In general, he strikes a good balance between various issues, individuals, and state affairs, though Talleyrand attracts considerable attention. In his conclusion, he departs from one line of French historiography, which, for patriotic reasons, has been heavily critical of the 1815 settlement. Instead, Lentz portrays the settlement as providing a new political geography that restored equilibrium to Europe (p. 256). He argues that only one superpower emerged in this post-Napoleon world: the United Kingdom (Pax Britannica).¹⁵ The one false note is struck at the end, when Lentz outlines the end of the concert of Europe. Lentz sketches its development through to the outbreak of the First World War, even stating that the concert continued to function through the Balkan crises of 1912 and 1913 (p. 260). Yet the European state system on the eve of the First World War was surely very different from the one emerging out of 1815. Historians have generally dated the end of Vienna system to 1823 (French intervention in Spain plus Castlereagh’s death) or 1856 (the Crimean War). Moreover, the subsequent unifications of Italy and Germany radically changed the map of Europe and the geo-political balance.¹⁶ The situation in the early twentieth

¹⁵ Perhaps that was the case in the wider world but there has been considerable debate about hegemony in the European system. Paul Schroeder has described the immediate post-1815 world as consisting of two hegemons flanking Europe: Britain and Russia. Paul Schroeder, ‘Did the Vienna settlement rest on a balance of power’, American Historical Review, 97 (1992), pp. 683–706. This has led to much discussion, some arguing for the traditional view of a ‘balance of power’. Sked, Metternich and Austria, pp. 54–63; idem, ‘Introduction’, in idem, ed., Europe’s balance of power, 1815–1848 (London, 1979), pp. 1–13; and for British policy, T. G. Otte, ‘A Janus-like power: Great Britain and the European concert, 1814–1815’, in Pyta, ed., Das europäische Mächtekonzert, pp. 125–53. Others portray the European political landscape as nuanced, multi-level, and multi-lateral. Wolf Gruner, ‘Was there a reformed balance of power system or cooperative Great Power hegemony?’, American Historical Review, 97 (1992), pp. 725–32. There are many other nuanced viewpoints; see the discussion at Schulze, Normen und Praxis, pp. 21–4, 48–53. Lentz does not mention these competing viewpoints.

¹⁶ See the discussion in Schulze, Normen und Praxis, pp. 25–9, 642–6. Schulze dates the end of the concert to the rise of power of nation-states, especially the unifications of Italy and Germany, in the 1860s and early 1870s. The historical outlines can be traced in Norman Rich, Great Power diplomacy, 1814–1914 (Boston, MA, 1992); and F. R. Bridge and Roger Bullen, The Great Powers and the European states system, 1814–1914 (Harlow, 2005). See also
century, with two blocs formed by competing alliances, bore little resemblance to the Quadruple Alliance and the series of European conferences in the aftermath of 1815. Elements of the Vienna system may have persisted—such as European conferences (though not regular) to solve diplomatic problems—but the sense of co-operation and mutual restraint had been replaced by increased militarism, an arms race, colonial struggle, and bellicose diplomacy.

Reinhard Stauber’s book has a similar focus on political decision-making, but is more strictly structured into various themes and sections. Stauber covers all the key topics, along with many minor issues, in an exceptionally clear fashion. For example, he examines the various committees and conferences set up to conduct the Congress’s affairs (pp. 61–77) treating each in a concise yet detailed manner. Similarly, the numerous territorial questions covering the whole of Europe along with settlements in Switzerland, Italy, Scandinavia, and Germany are discussed with admirable brevity and clarity. In the section entitled the ‘Festive culture of the Congress’, Stauber provides an extensive overview of the social life but also sketches an interpretation based on the rise of the private sphere (pp. 229–30). In a later section entitled ‘Human rights and the global aspect’, Stauber points to new perspectives on events and decisions by coupling together the free navigation of rivers, the regulation of diplomatic status, and the proclamation against the Atlantic slave trade. Throughout the book, Stauber emphasizes the fragmentary, contingent process of the Congress. Early in the book, he quotes Castlereagh’s words: ‘I found Prince Metternich without fixed plans’ (p. 59). Paradoxically, it was perhaps this pragmatic, tactical, empirical, cautious approach and its lack of overt ideological underpinning—characterized, in particular, by Castlereagh and Metternich—which enabled the new norms of consultation and multi-lateralism to emerge. In his conclusion, Stauber agrees with Schroeder’s argument about the development of a new world political order based on different rules and norms (pp. 246–7). For individual topics and for a general overview, Stauber’s book is a good place to start.

Heinz Duchhardt’s slender volume is densely written, analytical, and occasionally discursive. It has the tone of a senior scholar commenting on various issues and personalities associated with the Congress. Duchhardt’s previous work has been on the balance of power, the concert of Europe, and Baron vom Stein, the Prussian reformer who at the time of the Congress had become an adviser to Tsar Alexander. Near the beginning of the book, he advances the idea of a collective security system taking shape around the Congress. ‘The Congress of Vienna and its subsequent documents as the starting point for a European security system…as a “new Europe”?’ Duchhardt

Richard Elrod, ‘The concert of Europe: a fresh look at an international system’, World Politics, 28 (1976), pp. 159–74; Robert Jervis, ‘From balance to concert: a study of international security cooperation’, World Politics, 38 (1985), pp. 58–79; and Paul Schroeder, ‘The nineteenth-century international system: changes in structure’, World Politics, 39 (1986), pp. 1–26.
muses, then continues, ‘[b]ut it was, in any case, a European security system which 1815 had formed’ (p. 31). Here is another new perspective that points to future research.\(^{17}\) Interestingly, Duchhardt later views the Polish/Saxon question as one of power politics, rather than evidence of Schroeder’s new norms (p. 90). As for the social scene, Duchhardt recognizes it as ‘an integral and eminently important part of the Congress’ (p. 62), though he does not postulate on the nature of any links with ongoing political decision-making. In his conclusion, Duchhardt presents both the positive and negative assessments of the Congress’s achievements, then implies that critics were perhaps expecting too much (p. 120). Rather than an informative textbook, Duchhardt’s work is a vigorous, stimulating, individual read for those already familiar with the period.

Wolf Gruner has written a surprisingly rich book for the Reclam Sachbuch series, known in the German-language world for their compact size. Gruner organizes his book around two main themes: first, explicitly, he wishes to place the Congress in the larger processes of transformation from 1750 to 1830 (roughly Reinhart Koselleck’s ‘Sattelzeit’ or ‘saddle period’—though Koselleck is not specifically mentioned) and second, implicitly, he focuses on developments in Mitteleuropa (Central Europe) to demonstrate the flexibility and effectiveness both of the German Confederation and of the overall Vienna system. Thus, Gruner structures his book starting from wider perspectives towards an increased concentration on Mitteleuropa then an even tighter focus on the negotiations for the German Confederation. The first section on the ‘European transformation process, 1750–1830’ is rather generalized and mentions in passing trade, colonies, the Bürgertum (middle classes), financial resources, agrarian and industrial changes, democracy, cultural movements, political ideas, domestic and foreign policy, and the professionalization of politicians and bureaucrats. Rather than providing such a broad background canvas, it would have been instructive for Gruner to outline exactly where he places the Congress of Vienna within this enormous process of transformation.\(^{18}\) In the next section, Gruner discusses the revolutionary epoch, ‘Europe between 1789 and 1814’, and quotes Friedrich Gentz, the secretary

\(^{17}\) See, for example, comments in Eckhart Conze, ‘Konziertierte Sicherheit: Wahrnehmung und Wirkung des Wiener Kongresses im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert’, Journal of Modern European History, 13 (2015), pp. 443–6; and de Graaf, ‘Bringing sense and sensibility to the continent: Vienna 1815 revisited’, pp. 447–57. There is a research project directed by Beatrice de Graaf (Utrecht) with the title ‘Securing Europe, fighting its enemies: the making of a security culture in Europe and beyond, 1815–1914’. A conference entitled ‘Vienna 1815: the making of a European security culture’ was held in Amsterdam, 5–7 Nov. 2014, and a subsequent publication is forthcoming.

\(^{18}\) A tighter focus could have been to follow Koselleck’s comments on the Sattelzeit and to investigate the political-social language and concepts around 1814–15. Reinhart Koselleck, ‘Einleitung’, in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, eds., Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, v. A–D (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. xv–xviii.
of the Congress, who wrote in 1806 that ‘Europe has fallen through Germany, it must pick itself up through Germany’ (pp. 39–40). Tellingly, Gruner reproduces the quote at the beginning of the section on the ‘Congress of Vienna and the new order of European states’ (p. 71). This forms the heart of Gruner’s book and there is considerable detail on the Polish–Saxon question and the founding of the German Confederation. Some maps here would have helped in following the discussion, which often goes back and forth between memoranda, drafts, and suggestions. Gruner’s assessment on the German Confederation, a subject upon which he has written a number of works, is very positive. He concludes that ‘[the federal structure] opened possibilities for a gradual process of adjustment along evolutionary paths, without straining the international environment surrounding the confederation’ (p. 192). In other words, the loose structure of the Confederation protected the unity of Germany, ensured the security of law, facilitated individuality while also allowing for a gradual convergence of the separate states (p. 192). Gruner’s conclusion returns to the larger view and argues that the Congress performed the function of a catalyst (Katalysatorfunktion) for the process of transformation in Europe, yet the precise means and effects are not outlined. There is a short and useful final section, almost as an appendix to the main text, tracing the historiography on the Congress.

These four books, in their differing ways, all highlight the sheer multitude of tasks facing the participants at the Congress. Near the end of Lentz’s book, he writes that

Little by little, sometimes with great difficulty, the Congress of Vienna attempted to reorganize Europe, its dynasties, its frontiers, the distribution of its peoples, the zones of influences of some, the orbits of others, the practices which facilitate international relations, the legitimacy of governments, the principles of commercial trade on rivers and seas, the abolition of slavery, [and] diplomatic status. (p. 191)

The famous bon mot of Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne, that the ‘Congress dances but does not work’ (Le Congrès danse beaucoup, mais il ne marche pas), while witty, was incorrect.19 The Congress both danced and worked—constantly, intensely, interlinked, and with great effect. Indeed, multitudinous strands, elements, and individuals converged on Vienna, worked and played for nine months, creating a system that formed the basis for subsequent developments.

IV

One of these strands has not received a lot of attention, but is the subject of an edited collection of essays; namely, religion. Vick’s book has an incisive chapter

19 A point made by Ouvrard, Le congrès de Vienne, p. 11; Lentz, Le congrès de Vienne, p. 7; Gruner, Der Wiener Kongress, p. 7; and Duchhardt, Der Wiener Kongress, p. 62.
on religion, including a detailed discussion of Jewish rights in Germany; however, most books on the Congress barely touch on the subject. The essays in the Duchhardt and Wischmeyer volume cover similar issues to Vick’s chapter; namely, the reconstruction of the Catholic church in the German lands, Jewish rights in the German constitution, Cardinal Consalvi – the pope’s emissary – at the Congress (along with others). Within the Duchhardt and Wischmeyer volume, there are significant overlaps and some unevenness, yet it demonstrates again how wide-ranging the Congress was and how its decisions (or omissions) had far-reaching consequences on later developments.

The foreword is short and delineates some of the major themes, but could have set the scene better and also provided a framework for placing the various contributions. Many of the articles address the German Catholic church, for whom the issues of restitution and reorganization were uppermost. Prince Primate Karl Theodor Dalberg, who had accumulated considerable experience under the old Holy Roman Empire and Napoleon’s confederation of the Rhine, was a key figure as the leader of the Catholic church in Germany. Dalberg had lived through Napoleon’s many territorial and legal changes, which had torn apart the complicated web of historical relations within the Holy Roman Empire, including religious rights and property. Dalberg’s emissary to Vienna, Ignaz Heinrich von Wessenberg, described the situation leading into the Congress as ‘the ruin and dissolution of church affairs [in the German states]’ (p. 67). Various plans were mooted – a concordat or a church constitution, among other possibilities – before apparent agreement was reached on a specific clause in the constitution of the German Confederation. At the last minute, Bavaria and Württemburg objected to the clause and it was omitted. Thereafter, church–state relations would be negotiated at the level of each individual German state, though Christian religious equality was guaranteed in the Confederation’s constitution. Dominik Burkard’s long, clearly written exposition of the German Catholic church at the Congress of Vienna covers these issues with admirable clarity and depth. There were a multitude of interested parties – Wessenberg (Dalberg’s representative, who was also conveniently the brother of Metternich’s second, Johann von Wessenberg), Consalvi, representatives of the German bishops, and, of course, all the German states from Austria and Prussia to the smallest members. Wessenberg was generally for unity within the German Catholic church under a primate, while the bishops’ representatives and the smaller German states were protective of their own jurisdictions. Burkard’s overview is supplemented in the volume by other articles with tighter, more specific foci – such as Franz Xaver Bischhof’s article on Wessenberg, Johannes Wischmeyer on the constitution of the German Confederation, and Michael Hundt on the smaller German states. Hundt places the religious question in the wider context – it never formed part of official discussions and was not a priority for the smaller states (p. 160). Duchhardt’s small contribution on Baron
vom Stein similarly notes that religious policy was barely mentioned in his memoranda or diaries.

Two articles survey important questions relating to religion and general moral principles (along with other spheres). Thomas Weller summarizes the extensive literature on the declaration against the Atlantic slave trade issued at the Congress at the instigation of Castlereagh. Despite its relative neglect in the historiography on the Congress, in the field of human rights it constituted an important milestone. For the first time in history, Weller notes, a humanitarian cause was justified on universal principles. According to Weller, the declaration should not be regarded as a marginal theme, relegated behind the traditional focus on the diplomatic negotiations and the formation of the modern state system (pp. 186–7). The issue also illustrates ‘the enormous influence of non-state actors and transnational organizations avant la lettre’ (p. 187). Thus, Weller is in agreement with Vick about the importance of the wider background. For instance, Weller outlines the influence of religious communities in England (especially the evangelical strain in Anglicanism and the Quakers) along with many abolitionist societies. Weller confidently asserts that the abolition movement was mainly motivated for humanitarian reasons, rather than for maintaining a trade advantage (p. 190). The Catholic church sympathized with the movement, once it was appraised of its importance for the British public. Weller makes good use of the correspondence between Consalvi and Cardinal Pacca (his counterpart in Rome) to trace the position of the Catholic church from meetings with Castlereagh in London through to a delicate balancing act in Vienna.

The second article on general moral principles provides an excellent overview of the Jewish communities in Germany and their fight for legal status at the Congress. While Jewish rights were eventually recognized in the constitution of the German Confederation (Article 16·2), enforcement proved difficult and restrictive laws against Jews were reintroduced in many cities and states. Written by Renate Pensel, the article begins with the historical background to Jewish emancipation under French influence, followed by gradual, increased Jewish settlement in numerous towns. The negotiations at the Congress involved the many German states as well as representatives of various free cities (Hamburg, Lübeck, Bremen, and Frankfurt) and their respective Jewish communities – once again, there were many interested parties. At the Congress, Carl August Buchholz, a non-Jew lawyer and prominent emancipationist, represented the Jewish communities of the Hanseatic cities (Hamburg, Lübeck, and Bremen), while the Frankfurt Jews sent their own delegates. Similar to the position of the Catholic church in Germany, the negotiations revolved around the inclusion of a clause in the constitution of the German Confederation. Generally, Austria, Prussia, Hanover, and the Jewish representatives were in favour of Jewish rights as a general principle, while Bavaria, Württemberg,

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20 Vick also covers the slave trade in admirable depth. Vick, *The Congress of Vienna*, pp. 195–212.
and the Hanseatic cities were protective of their sovereignty and autonomy (along with possessing some anti-Jewish sentiments). The eventual wording was a clumsy compromise asserting Jewish emancipation, while leaving the exact implementation to the Confederation’s assembly and the separate federal states. As Penssel (and Vick in his book) makes clear, the clause was not effective in protecting Jewish rights. Lübeck, Bremen, and Frankfurt passed restrictive anti-Jewish regulations, while Mecklenburg reverted to older, less progressive laws. When taken to the Confederation’s assembly, the relevant clause was interpreted as only relating to individual rights, rather than having any institutional or communal implications (a similar interpretation was given to Article 16·1 on religious equality, which Heinrich de Wall looks at in a short contribution). Nevertheless, Penssel argues that the recognition of religious freedom and the general civic status of Jews were forward looking, even if the practical effects were minimal (p. 251).

As a whole, the book lacks coherence. Two articles on the papacy – Robert Regoli on Consalvi at the Congress and Paul Oberholzer on the restoration of the Jesuits in 1815 – provide some background, but no overt interpretation, nor much connection with other articles. Hausberger’s article on Dalberg and negotiations for a concordat during the Napoleonic era also seems rather detached from the main group of articles. An article (or two) on the Protestants in Germany would have provided more balance. The initial conference attempted to provide some commonality between papers by posing the question: was the Congress of Vienna a caesura in European religious history? The consensus among the contributors who addressed the question was that the Congress was an interlude, rather than a caesura – Burkard (for the German Catholic church), Hundt (for the Catholic church in the smaller German states), and Penssel (for the German Jewish communities). Nevertheless, as both Penssel and Weller make clear, the Congress provided important declarations on humanitarian ideals and general moral principles – even if in practice there was little immediate change. Above all, the volume highlights once again the interconnected, all-encompassing nature of the many issues discussed at the Congress, even for such a supposedly minor matter as religion.

The other edited collection is even more disparate in nature. To a large extent, it presents a first attempt at combining and debating various funded research projects surrounding the Congress of Vienna.21 It thus, at least, shows some of the new directions in research. An element that has only been touched upon in the works so far is the economic and financial aspect.

21 The three projects specifically related to the edited collection are Der Wiener Kongress und die Presse – Zeitungen als Medien politischer Kommunikation (Brigitte Mazohl – Innsbruck), Der Wiener Kongress und sein europäisches Friedenssystem (Reinhard Stauber – Klagenfurt), and Die Privatbibliothek Kaiser Franz I von Österreich (Hans Petschar – Austrian National Library).
Andreas Fahrmeier in a sweeping article speculates on the Congress and its effect on trade. He points to three direct factors: changed borders, the anti-slavery declaration, and the internationalization of rivers (pp. 127–8). He also notes the general trends—a gradual liberalization of trade (Napoleon’s continental blockade had clearly failed as a policy), the importance of state finances (especially in relation to the military), and the diverging economies within Europe. While economics may not have been the most important factor, it played a role both in decision-making and as a general background influence (p. 132). Marion Koschier’s article on the Aachen/Aix-la-Chapelle Congress (1818) is more focused—in particular, on the inter-relationship between diplomacy, reparations, and the end to the military occupation of France. Koschier points to a number of factors facilitating the necessary reduction in reparations without provoking any economic shocks; namely, significant preparatory discussions, Wellington’s sympathetic attitude, Alexander Baring’s expert financial advice, and the willing involvement of London’s banks. Koschier’s article supports Fahrmeier’s point that economic factors played a role in international relations, though traditional diplomatic accounts normally focus more on personalities and power politics. Perhaps some reference could have been made to the experiences and memory of economic collapse, so present in the generation that had lived through the bankruptcies (effective or declared) of France (1788, 1797), Austria (1811 and 1816), and Prussia (1807–15).

Two fruitful areas of research covered in Vick’s book are also evident in this collection: ‘influence politics’ and globalization. Florian Kerschbaumer follows the campaign of the colourful British Admiral Sir Sidney Smith to combat the North African Barbary Corsairs and their taking of Christians into captivity. While in Vienna for the Congress, Smith organized social events, lobbied in the salons, wrote memoranda, and created a network of like-minded allies (including the papacy and some Hanseatic towns). Though it was never the subject of major official talks, the publicity around the time of the Congress helped create a general consensus behind some form of action. Shortly afterwards, Great Britain sent Lord Exmouth on a diplomatic mission to North Africa, which led to a combination of agreements and unilateral military action, including the bombing of Algiers. Another aspect of ‘influence politics’ is addressed in Eva Maria Werner’s contribution: Austria’s press and censorship policies. In the years leading up to the Congress, Metternich and Gentz attempted to reduce the widespread popularity of foreign newspapers by pursuing a twin policy of loosened censorship and direct government intervention in press matters. It did not have any particular success, though Werner makes clear the importance placed on press matters and public opinion. Metternich even wrote in 1808 that ‘public opinion was the most powerful of all means; like religion it penetrates the darkest recesses where administrative measures are ineffective; to misunderstand public opinion is as dangerous as to misunderstand moral
principles’. Christian Cwik’s article on the Congress, Austria, and the Americas is a short overview based on the existing literature, tracing the ideological effect of the revolutionary, democratic model on the various colonies in the Americas.

Symbolic politics and celebrations are investigated by Mikael Alm (on Bernadotte’s royal ceremonies as Swedish king) and Karin Schneider (on the Troppau Congress, 1820). Alm points to the fusion of tradition and innovation in three state ceremonies during Bernadotte’s long reign as Swedish king. While generally following the traditional rituals, Bernadotte also reinforced his legitimacy by emphasizing his military achievements as a former marshal of France and his subsequent election as king. Schneider similarly reconstructs the celebrations surrounding the Congress of Troppau. In her analysis of the erected ‘triumph gate’ along with various poems and songs, Schneider argues that the celebrations stressed the meeting of the monarchs and the long period of peace, rather than any assertions of power. Interestingly, it was primarily the local authorities of Troppau (in contact with Vienna) who took charge of the public displays.

Finally, there are some miscellaneous articles in the book such as Rainer Valenta on the private library of the Austrian Emperor Franz, Reinhard Stauber on the various committees at the Congress (covering similar ground to a section in his book), and Fritz Fellner’s 1960 habilitation lecture on the general European-wide situation around 1815. Michael Broers’s article on the period from 1814 to 1848 postulates that the search for the ‘juste milieu’ brought about ‘a political culture based on open debate and parliamentary procedures, themselves, dependent on compromise and toleration’ (p. 45). Using Adolfo Omodeo’s neglected work as inspiration, Broers writes that ‘the years between 1814 and 1848 saw the emergence of a rich, complex and sophisticated political world on which deeper artistic culture could flourish. That these decades could spawn so refined a civilization and contain the violence it had inherited, should be a source of wonder’ (p. 46).

V

The new perspectives will no doubt, over time, provide a wider view of the world around the Congress. Vick’s book points to a myriad of possibilities. His topics include ‘influence politics’, second-tier actors and issues, celebrations, and the

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22 Eva Maria Werner, ‘Von Reform zu Reform – Österreichs Zensur und politische Presse in den Jahren vor dem Wiener Kongress’, in Stauber, Mächtepolitik und Friedenssicherung, p. 75, uses a slightly edited version of the quote. Interestingly, Henry Kissinger also prominently used this quote: Kissinger, A world restored, pp. 16–17.

23 For an example of how this can contribute to our understanding of international politics, see the systematic investigation of meetings between monarchs throughout the nineteenth century. Johannes Paulmann, Pomp und Politik: Monarchenbegegnungen in Europa zwischen Ancien Régime und Erstem Weltkrieg (Paderborn, 2000).
ceremonial, material culture, globalization, prevailing political and social ideas, material culture, printed works, the press, gender, and religion. More work on the financial and economic background factors of the period would also be worthwhile. Indeed, an attempt at a ‘total history’ of the Congress – whether from an individual or a team of researchers – would be an imposing but rewarding task. Undoubtedly, the Congress of Vienna was a great ‘set-piece’ in European history. Yet it was also an important marker for many individual narratives in European history – international relations, human rights, gender, sociability, and a multitude of other aspects. Thus, many historians will view the Congress and its effects within specific historical arcs, such as the anti-slavery declaration in the development of human rights or the free navigation of rivers in the rise of European trade or the development of international law. The evolving historiography hopefully points to a rich and fertile phase for research on the Congress and its time.

As a final recapitulation, we return to Beethoven’s concert of 24 November 1814 where the text of his cantata ends with a stirring claim:

And I see the highest achievement taking place,
And my people will bear witness,
When a disrupted part of the world
Is reconciled again and closes in a ring
And embraces dispersed mankind
In a bond of friendly brothers!
Chorus: World, your moment of glory!

At the time of Beethoven’s concert, the Congress had barely commenced and its outcome was still uncertain, indeed precarious considering the developing stalemate over Poland and Saxony. Nevertheless, when the final act was signed there indeed were considerable achievements – to a large extent, ‘a world [was] restored’ (to use Kissinger’s phrase). There were also small steps taken towards a more humanitarian, interconnected, co-operative system. Of course, there were regrettable missteps – the participation and assent of the Ottoman Empire would have helped stability – but considering the obstacles, circumstances, and manifold issues, the Congress (plus the various alliances and Treaties of Paris) provided a new durable, flexible starting point for a war-torn, divided continent. Castlereagh wrote to Tsar Alexander during the Congress that

\[24\] The work on Napoleonic Europe gives some indications of the many possibilities. See, for example, the everyday experiences of economic changes in Katherine Aaslestad, ‘War without battles: civilian experiences of economic warfare during the Napoleonic era in Hamburg’, in Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann, and Jane Rendall, eds., Soldiers, citizens and civilians: experiences and perceptions of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, 1790–1820 (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 118–36, or state finances and tax policies in Alexander Grab, ‘The politics of finance in Napoleon’s Italy (1802–1814)’, Journal of Modern Italian Studies, 3 (1998), pp. 127–43.
if the Allies Powers act liberally towards each other, and indulgently to other states, they may look forward to crown a glorious war by a solid and lasting peace; and posterity will revere their names, not only for having delivered by their arms, the world from a tyrant and conqueror, but for having restored, by their example, and by their influence, the reign of moderation and justice.25

25 Quoted in Mark Jarrett, ‘No sleepwalkers – the men of 1814/15’, Journal of Modern European History, 13 (2015), pp. 429–38, at p. 438.