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also has a modernity story" (174), Psomiades turns to the mythic goddess plot of H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1886–87) and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), which not only counters "the realist marriage plot whose other it claims to be," but "also announces itself as the origin of that plot and thus its explanation" (179).

I've emphasized here the position(s) of the primarily female protagonists in the novels Psomiades so incisively analyzes in part because Victorian social theorists, all male, "defined modernity around a change in women's status" (30). This is not news, of course; in fact, it's an insight that lies at the heart of much of the feminist theory and criticism on which her project builds, which she generously cites and respectfully critiques. Given its amply achieved ambitions, this book will no doubt be as generative for this generation of Victorianists as Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (1987) and Mary Poovey's *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (1988) were for mine. In its dual engagement with that more distant Victorian past as well as a more recent feminist one, *Primitive Marriage* charts an exciting path forward.

MARY JEAN CORBETT
Miami University

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Female Football Spectators in Britain 1863–1939: A Historical Analysis, by Robert Lewis; pp. viii + 135. New York: Routledge, 2023, £135.00, £39.99 paper, £35.99 ebook.

Robert Lewis's original and fascinating study of early female football spectators needs to be set in its context. Soccer, now the most important global spectator sport, reaching perhaps four billion fans, began in Britain. In 1874, fewer than fifty clubs existed, and crowds were small. Even the English Football Association cup final only attracted about two thousand spectators. By 1913, however, the cup final drew 121,919 to the Crystal Palace venue, and soccer had become a vitally important British societal leisure phenomenon. Scholars have often adopted a gendered approach, in which crowds have generally been assumed to have been composed almost entirely of men, enjoying male stadium space. There has been a paucity of serious studies of women's attendance, backgrounds, attitudes, and behavior, and female fans attending soccer at *any* period are still largely marginalized in academic research. Stacey Pope's study of modern female fans, *The Feminization of Sports Fandom: A Sociological Study* (2017) has been a rare exception.

In this first detailed study of the women in the crowds at this early period, *Female Football Spectators in Britain 1863–1939: A Historical Analysis* sets out "to address the lack of historical research into the phenomenon of female football fans" (119). The book had a long genesis. After completing a doctorate on Lancashire's soccer crowds from 1879 to 1914, Lewis worked as a librarian while continuing to publish further crowd-focused scholarly articles and chapters, which, *inter alia*, revealed the first firm evidence of women's and girls' presence at male soccer matches. He had submitted a book proposal to Routledge which broadened out the topic to cover Britain with six well-developed draft chapters, more largely focused on the Victorian period, though there is some coverage

of the period up to 1939, when his premature death caused a halt to his work. One of the editors of the Routledge Soccer Histories series, Dilwyn Porter, has worked hard to convert existing material into this relatively short book.

In chapter 1, Lewis shows that there was a female market for soccer as a spectator sport within the public sphere. While stadia were male-dominated spaces, and women and girls were always a small minority in overall attendance, they were normally present at games, even when women's attendance was restricted, as in other leisure activities, by disposable income, lack of free time, work, family and parental responsibilities, and other life-cycle restrictions. Women were, he eventually argues, "transgressive, authentic and not invisible." Most reports referred to women, possibly more middle-class, in the seated, covered grandstands, an area where some clubs initially allowed women free entry, but there were others who stood on the increasingly crowded terraces. Some were clearly working class. In 1889, for example, at a match between Fleetwood Rangers and Blackpool, where fishermen attended with their wives, "there were fully 100 women with babies in their arms. They were too excited to sit down" (*Football Field* qtd. in Lewis 112).

The major source of empirical evidence on which he draws is the local and sporting press, especially the ever-growing British Newspaper Library collection, along with published photographs of crowds. English newspapers dominate, especially from Lancashire, with few Scottish or Welsh papers, and only two Irish ones, but he shows an awareness of the biases of his coverage. Soccer material was written by male reporters, making many references indirect. Chapter 2 explores the evidence for attendance, country by country, over time and space. Lewis finds no firm evidence that there were increased numbers of women attending in the interwar years, something challenging the work of Eric Dunning and other Leicester University sociologists who had suggested that it was increased female presence that civilized the interwar crowds. Lewis also notes occasional examples from the 1880s right through to the interwar period of distinctly inappropriate hooligan-type female behavior.

The book sometimes draws on other sociological and cultural studies insights. Chapter 3 provides a background to recent debates within the sociology of football fandom that focused on fan typologies and "authenticity" (60). Some modern fans showed an apparent lack of authenticity. They were not viewed as "real" fans, and just treated games as entertainment (11). Lewis shows that these debates were to be found in earlier periods. He argues that while some women and girls were less committed, others were displaying their own types of "authentic" and passionate fandom, suggesting a genuine love of the game. Chapter 4 shows examples of these behaviors, including the adoption of club colors, away travel, attendance in bad weather, knowledgeable discussion of games, partisanship, and links to supporters' clubs. Chapter 5 on women spectators and the crowd includes a fascinating section on the beginnings of football reporting from "the Lothian lasses," the *nom de plume* of a female footballing family who reported for the local Lancashire press in the 1890s (103). Their material revealed the writers' detailed knowledge of the game, local clubs and players, their skills and techniques, and fan rivalries and bantering. He also picks up on recent work on *flânerie*, suggestively linking it to female football spectators at male professional football matches in England from roughly 1863 to 1914, which paralleled female attendance at city music halls, cinemas, or department stores.

Until recent decades, scholars have usually associated soccer with masculinity, and although scholarly interest in the history of women *playing* the game has quickened, women have been virtually invisible as spectators in many soccer histories. Lewis adds to existing findings about the impact of social changes in women's lives by revealing that some women and girls were showing an interest in soccer spectatorship. Clearly, had Lewis lived, the final book might well have widened his source coverage to provide more geographically spread material, had more to say about the wider socio-cultural issues surrounding women and sporting involvement, and addressed further research questions. Even so, this initial study of female soccer attendance in this early period, especially of female fandom and *flânerie*, is highly suggestive, and will force future work to analyze the Victorian football crowd in more nuanced detail.

MIKE HUGGINS
University of Cumbria

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Women and the British Army, 1815–1880, by Lynn MacKay; pp. ix + 313. Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2023, \$130.00.

"No one can be any length of time among military people, without hearing the remark, 'soldiers' wives are a bad lot—quite unfit for anyone to have anything to do with,'" commented *Sharpe's London Magazine* (1845–70) in an 1870 article entitled "A Few Words About the British Soldier's Wife." Believing that "the only thing that can make life comfortable and bright is some little place she can call 'home,'" the writer advocates ameliorating the "domestic comfort" of the soldier's wife. The writer's best intentions notwithstanding, the article reveals a deep-seated prejudice. It perpetuates the stereotype of the soldier's wife of the time as a passive victim easily contaminated by the dire circumstances of army life: "if all domestic comfort is placed out of her reach, can anyone feel the least wonder that . . . [she] becomes a curse to her husband and children—a disgrace to the regiment to which she belongs?" (*Sharpe's London Magazine* [Mar. 1870], 137).

As Lynn MacKay observes, between 1815 and 1854, "pejorative stories about soldiers' wives appeared regularly in newspapers" (1). Redressing negative stereotypes of soldiers' wives, MacKay's *Women and The British Army, 1815–1880* presents a fresh, compelling narrative of these mainly plebeian women, one that foregrounds women's agency in navigating through the difficult circumstances of military life and in dealing with the official regulations of the army. This is achieved in six well-structured, contextualized chapters which illuminate the lives of women who became involved with the British army as sweethearts, daughters, wives, widows, and prostitutes in the mid-Victorian era, while challenging middle- and upper-class assumptions against them. Despite the popular disrepute of soldiers' wives, MacKay argues that "the women whom soldiers married were, for the most part, respectable" (1). Her book serves as an excellent complement to Myna Trustram's pioneering study *Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian Army* (1984). Tracing the lives of women in relation to the British army through the lens of a "humble"

REVIEWERS

HUGO BOWLES (hugo.bowles@buckingham.ac.uk) honorary professorial research fellow at the University of Buckingham, is author of *Dickens and the Stenographic Mind* (2019) and cofounder of the ongoing Dickens Code project, which uses crowdsourced research to investigate Dickens's undeciphered shorthand. He is also currently editing *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* for the Oxford Editions of Charles Dickens.

MARY JEAN CORBETT (corbetmj@miamioh.edu) is University Distinguished Professor at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. She is the author most recently of *Behind the Times: Virginia Woolf in Late-Victorian Contexts* (2020) and *Family Likeness: Sex, Marriage, and Incest from Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf* (2008), both from Cornell University Press.

NICHOLAS DALY is Chair of Modern English and American Literature at University College Dublin. His most recent monograph is *Ruritania: A Cultural History* (2020). He is currently working on the 3-volume *Cambridge History of the Literature of London* with Thomas Keymer, as well as a combined edition of J. M. Falkner's *The Lost Stradivarius* (1895) and *Moonfleet* (1898) for Oxford World's Classics.

JAMES EPSTEIN (James.A.Epstein@Vanderbilt.edu) is Professor Emeritus in the History Department at Vanderbilt University. His latest book, co-authored with David Karr, is *British Jacobin Politics, Desires, and Aftermaths: Seditious Hearts* (2021).

SIMON GOLDHILL (sdg1001@cam.ac.uk) is Professor of Greek at the University of Cambridge. His book *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction and the Proclamation of Modernity* (2011) won the Robert Lowry Patten Award; he has also published *A Very Queer Family Indeed: Sex, Religion and the Bensons in Victorian Britain* (2016), and, most recently, *Queer Cambridge: An Alternative History* (2025).

TAI-CHUN HO (hotaichun@dragon.nchu.edu.tw) is Associate Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan. He is the author of *The Crimean War in Victorian Poetry* (2021) and a number of articles on nineteenth-century war poetry. He is currently working on "the soldier's return" verse in the long nineteenth century and on Thomas Hardy's *The Trumpet-Major* (1880).

MIKE HUGGINS (mike.huggins@cumbria.ac.uk) is Emeritus Professor of Cultural History at Cumbria University. He is the author of *Horse Racing and British Society in the Long Eighteenth Century* (2018), coeditor of *Match-fixing and Sport* (2020) and has published many other works on British sport and leisure.

GEORGINA LARAGY (laragy@tcd.ie) is Dublin Cemeteries Trust Assistant Professor in History, School of Histories and Humanities, Trinity College Dublin. Most recent publications include O. Purdue & G. Laragy, *Poverty, Children and the Poor Law in Industrial Belfast, 1880–1918* (2024) with another book entitled *Suicide in Ireland, 1823–1918: A Social and Cultural Study* being prepared for publication.

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