the question that the author proposes about the relationship among culture, history, institutions, and economic trajectories.

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For more than two decades now, the history of crime and punishment has been an enormously flourishing branch within the broader history of early modern Europe. Susanne Pohl-Zucker’s book represents a striking example of this genre. Based on her dissertation (University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, 1997), the book’s central ideas were further developed during her assistant professorship at Cornell University, and finally during her time working as a freelance historian in Mainz from 2004 onwards. The book examines the process of “making manslaughter” in the sense of defining and negotiating an offense that could be considered a crime, a misdemeanor, or neither if the underlying incident were interpreted as an accident or justified self-defense. Strongly attuned to the cultural history of crime, the book analyzes the flexible practices by which early modern authorities, communities, and the directly affected parties reacted to acts of violence leading to the death of at least one participant. With very good reason, Pohl-Zucker interprets manslaughter as a juridical category that in legal and popular thinking almost always referred to male behavior and was strongly connected to concepts of male honor.

The book focuses on a well-selected number of case studies from the Duchy of Württemberg and the imperial city (formally until 1648) of Zurich as two realms that were shaped by strongly differing constitutional laws. The book does not follow a comparative approach, however. The two regions of investigation are rather meant to illustrate the fascinating variety of legal procedures and institutions and the diverse dynamics of legal practices in the early modern Holy Roman Empire. The time frame of the book addresses four centuries traditionally attributed to two historical periods: medieval and early modern. The author, however, correctly recognizes that assuming a decisive break near
1500 makes little sense for analyzing the ways in which legal authorities constructed cases of manslaughter in legal practice. That holds true in particular for Zurich, where traditional practices of private or legally negotiated compensation were widely used until the end of the seventeenth century because of a merely rudimentary reception of Roman law and because of criminal law reforms such as the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* (1532) and the imperial *Policeyordnungen*.

In a lengthy introduction that, to a certain extent, also serves as a conclusion, Pohl-Zucker lucidly summarizes the state of research into crime and punishment in the early modern period and introduces the core research concepts in the historiography of crime for her study, including legal culture, social discipline (applied by neighbors rather than authorities), and *Policey* (referring to rules of civic behavior and the means and institutions to implement these in early modern societies). Drawing upon recent research, Pohl-Zucker discusses influential interventions, such as the notion that sanctions were negotiated, not simply imposed by legal authorities. She also underscores the relevance of judges’ consultation with law faculties or experts in legal practice (*Aktenversendung*).

The book is organized into five chapters, the first three focusing on legal and extrajudicial procedures in dealing with manslaughter in the Duchy of Württemberg, and the last two focusing on the imperial city of Zurich. Pohl-Zucker convincingly demonstrates that the variety of procedural forms were determined not only by legal authorities but also by the parties involved, including plaintiffs, but most notably the accused and their supporters. In contrast to older research, Pohl-Zucker’s book reveals that the extrajudicial resolution of violent conflicts was not hindered, but rather was promoted by early modern authorities, who understood that the arm of justice was short and, indeed, understaffed (49). On the other hand, other affected parties, most notably relatives of the victim, were ready to go to court to pursue their own interests, and they tended to choose the most rewarding procedure or, in some instances, several measures at the same time; for example, extrajudicially negotiated material compensation as well as civil or criminal legal actions. Thus, the early modern plurality of legal norms was reflected by the plurality of procedures for dealing with manslaughter. In terms of sanctions, the *poena extraordinaria* was the rule and not the exception.

One of the main reasons for this striking fact was the widespread and strategic use of formal petitions, which demonstrate that early modern subjects often knew how to argue persuasively in favor of mitigating a sanction. Petitioners might stress, for example, that they had been provoked by or had not intended to severely harm their opponent, that they were a useful member of society, or that an imposed sanction damaged innocent people such as family members. Another structural factor leading to moderate sanctions (or none
at all) was the territorial fragmentation of the Holy Roman Empire, which offered opportunities for seeking asylum in neighboring territories (119).

Some of Pohl-Zucker’s interpretations are more convincing than others, and one might wish for a discussion of notions of justice in the sense of equity and fairness (Gerechtigkeit), which must have played an important role for those harmed by as well as for those accused of manslaughter. Nonetheless, this book represents a very fine study of the various ways in which violent conflicts were settled in the early modern period. To Pohl-Zucker’s final argument that there was no process of civilization with regard to interpersonal violence between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, one might add that there has hardly been any such civilizing process since that period of time.

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How and for what purposes do states use law to preserve their preferred account of the major historical events that have shaped the polity? In this fascinating and detailed account of West and East European memory laws, historian Nikolay Koposov offers an account of the practice of state-enforced accounts of history across Europe. Koposov’s comparative analysis of law from a historian’s perspective goes beyond the lawyer’s usual inquiry about the origins of legislation. The book examines the role played by memory laws in the politics of history. Koposov sets out to show that current legislation in Western Europe (including supranational European Union law) and its Eastern counterpart (spanning Russia, Ukraine, and beyond to states that have acceded to the European Union, such as the Czech Republic and Hungary) is designed to secure contrasting narratives about the nation state. In the case of Putin’s Russia, Koposov argues that memory laws are deployed to preserve the memory of Stalin’s regime by criminalizing the dissemination of “knowingly false information” (10) about the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Domestic law enshrines the “Great Patriotic War” (247)