

complex arguments for works of art as not merely reactive to circumstances and taste, but primarily as agents in the development of cultural practice. For example, Matthew Pratt's conception for the *The American School* (1765, The Metropolitan Museum of Art) may explicate an academic method in traditional British practice, but is certainly not so straightforward. Even Pratt, the underdog of Lovell's book—a one-notable-work-wonder—knew that the portraitist's job was to “describe a truth that is simultaneously recognizable and invented” (p. 48).

What Pratt conveyed once in his lifetime, John Singleton Copley expressed over and over again, fueled by self-knowledge and, despite his legendary complaints, profound understanding of the cultural project to which he contributed. While Lovell makes it clear that her book intends neither chronological narrative nor monographic treatment, she has spent many years studying Copley with intensity. Three chapters devolve from his genius: the first about a woman and a dress (principally Mary Turner Sargent and her blue gown); the second about a man and his money (Joshua Henshaw); and the third about a family, that of Sir William Pepperell. In these three chapters, Lovell gives enhanced meaning to the tried and true dual functionality of portraiture: for the present and for posterity.

A chapter on drawing—a new and welcome study of John Smibert's *The Bermuda Group* (1729, Yale University Art Gallery)—and on Newport furniture close and round out a book primarily about painting. With these final chapters, Lovell suggests that despite her intensive readings of colonial society through its finest primary source documents—the works of art—uncovering the “continuities and disjunctions between parent culture and (rebellious) progeny is a project only just begun” (p. 270).

*The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

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*Old Dominion, Industrial Commonwealth: Coal, Politics, and Economy in Antebellum America.* By SEAN PATRICK ADAMS. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004. xiv, 305p. Figures, maps, tables, notes, essay on sources, index. \$45.)

Historians have recently compared Pennsylvania and Virginia to test questions of regional divergence in the early republic and antebellum periods. Sean Adams adds to and extends this trend with his richly detailed, highly contextualized, tautly written, and closely reasoned study of governmental policy affecting the coal trade in the two states from the 1780s through the Civil War. Noting that both states sat on massive reserves of coal and that Virginia's coal-mining industry began with a significant head start, Adams argues that Pennsylvania's colliers eventually dominated the United States coal trade not because of superior entrepreneurial energy, but through a distributive political

system that, despite its flaws, encouraged the industry, while Virginia's eastern planter-dominated polity stifled it. Beginning with chapters examining the trade's origins in each state, Adams looks at policy differences in three areas crucial to the industry's success—internal improvement (Pennsylvania funded statewide improvements, Virginia only from the piedmont to the tidewater); state geological surveys (Pennsylvania's surveys highlighted coal and covered most of the state, while Virginia's emphasized mineral fertilizer and left its western areas unexplored); and incorporation (Pennsylvania blended special and general incorporation policies, while Virginia left much chartering to local western courts). In each case, Virginia piedmont and tidewater planters stymied the allocation of state resources towards western development in general and the coal trade in particular, while Pennsylvania legislators—however haphazardly—found ways to marshal them in that direction. The book concludes with the establishment of West Virginia and the forging of new legislative regimes towards coal in all three states (Pennsylvania's regime dominated by large corporations, Virginia's marked by continued indifference, and West Virginia's starved by a lack of capital). In sum, Adams argues (*à la* Douglass North) that state, private, and informal economic institutions mattered as much as individual initiative, and he posits a model for Pennsylvania that goes beyond the hoary but persistent republican-commonwealth/liberal-laissez-faire debate: namely, that open and pragmatic political competition among Pennsylvania's many regions and interests provided for compromises that allowed for the mobilization of state resources to foster economic growth.

As with any successful study, this one answers some questions and provokes others. Adams demonstrates that tidewater elites vetoed pro-coal policies, but we need to know more about why tidewater elites did not engage in such new kinds of economic activity while Pennsylvania's eastern population embraced them. Adams rightly points out that the difference was not slavery *per se* (Virginia miners used slaves). Did it have to do with the financial restraints and social underpinnings of the plantation complex (one of the few fruitful areas Adams left unexplored)? As for Pennsylvania, while this study upends the notion that geography is destiny, to what extent did Philadelphia's competition with New York and Baltimore motivate Philadelphians to embrace pro-coal policies? Or is the key in the two areas' comparative demand for energy? Adams's work shows how studies of public policy (and coal) can be fascinating and relevant, and one hopes that rather than this being the last word on the subject, it serves as a call for further investigation.

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