

Format

The review should generally be between 800 and 1 200 words, and should include as little bibliographic data as possible. When necessary, use page references for quotations in the text of the review and provide complete bibliographic details of the source. The review should begin with a heading that includes all the bibliographic data. The elements of the heading should be arranged in the order presented in the following example:

The early mission in South Africa/Die vroeë sending in Suid-Afrika, 1799-1819. By Karel Schoeman. Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2005, 272 pp., map, chronology, bibl., index. ISBN: 1-9198525-42-8.

Do not indent the first line of the first paragraph, but indent the first line of all successive paragraphs. Use double spacing for the entire review. Add your name and institutional affiliation at the end of the review. Accuracy of content, grammar, spelling, and citations rests with the reviewer, and we encourage you to check these before submission. Reviews may be transmitted electronically as a Word file attachment to an email to the review editor. If you have additional questions, please contact the Book Review Editors.

Book Reviews

The Golden Republic

(Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 2016, 302 pp., ISBN: 978-1-4853-0568-2)

TV Bulpin

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Thomas Bulpin's works are classics in the genre, and it's great that Protea Boekhuis has decided to reprint these books, as the originals are getting difficult to locate and is getting very expensive. For the researcher it's a boon, as the current format is more user friendly, and one doesn't have to worry or fret about mishandling an expensive book! The problem with reprints is that publishers feel the need to reimagine them, and sadly some of the spirit of

the original gets lost, but not here. The book is lovingly reproduced with all its illustrations. Bulpin's writing style is one that's been admired by many, as it is very accessible to the public, and is a great introduction on the subject. Bulpin's books are still highly prized by tour operators as it condenses the facts into easily understood and relatable narratives.

The first edition was published in 1953, in an altogether different era for history writing, still basking in the afterglow of rising Afrikaner nationalism. This era did however deliver some credible and objective historical works not tainted by emotions or political motives. This book is in this category. It is written mostly objectively, and gives voice to all players on the historical stage. In his narrative and writing style, Bulpin does however get sentimental in describing people and events. To add to the romantic air of the book he spices it up with little tales of humorous incidents and gives way to some hyperbole in describing great events and battles. His description of the early diggings in the Transvaal reads like a tourist brochure for some Wild West theme park, and dwells on the characters of the area. These colourful and fanciful stories can be forgiven, as it adds to the flow of the book and to the spirit in which it was written. This book was written as an introduction to history for John Q. Public, and not as an academic work, a primer if you will for those that wish to inform themselves of the bare facts.

In the old struggle to keep readers interested in history and to keep history relevant, it's a fine work to hand to the amateur historian, or the curious reader that wishes to know a bit more. It does give an accurate outline of a most difficult period of South African history. It serves as a good framework and foundation even for the academic and scholar.

The period of the book's narrative has a wide span, from an introduction of the pre-history to 1883, and such a wide span can be difficult to convey and discuss in terms that are accessible and reader-friendly. Bulpin does however succeed in a logical and linear way to create a timeline of the events that unfolded in the Transvaal up to 1883. He does however over simplify some facts and events to keep up the racing pace of the book, but this is in keeping with the spirit of this publication.

The early history of the Transvaal is a difficult subject to write about, as many documents and sources are either lost, incomplete, reworked as secondary sources or coloured by emotions or agendas. The history of the first inhabitants have only in recent years been properly and objectively studied

and written about. Bulpin does grant the reader a short introduction on the subject matter. He does mention the lot of the African inhabitants after the formation of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, but does not go into details. His chief focus after Chapter 5 is the Voortrekkers, and the Africans are mentioned sometimes only in passing.

Bulpin's treatment in Chapter 9 of MW Pretorius is fairly objective, but is still coloured by some long-held prejudices like his inability to govern and the old claim that he was to blame for all the troubles of in the Transvaal in 1863. His treatment from Chapter 14 of TF Burgers is more objective, but he does grow a bit too sentimentally attached to Burgers by the end of Chapter 15. His objective and positive treatment of Burgers is unique for the time, as Burgers' reputation had not been properly rehabilitated for his actions during the Annexation of 1877. He and SP Engelbrecht broke new ground in objectively putting Burgers' actions into context. Bulpin also broke some new ground in writing on MW Pretorius, a person largely forgotten or ignored up to this time, and it appears still ignored. TF Burgers and SJP Kruger and their political actions and personal lives have been written about in many books, but Bulpin was the first to give voice to MW Pretorius.

This book is also one of a very few written of the period before SJP Kruger and his actions overshadowed the Transvaal's history. This publication fills a void partially for the student of history on the early Transvaal, a subject that still remains only partially written about or studied.

All in all, the book is well written as an introduction and as a romantic imagining of the subject, but cannot be called a strictly objective or academic source. On the subject, it is sadly one of the few publications, but hopefully it accomplishes what is hinted at: To serve as a framework for further academic study and publication.

*Swanesang: Die einde van die kompanjietyd aan die Kaap,
1771-1795*

(Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis , 2016, 599 pp., ISBN 978-1-4853-0098-4)

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