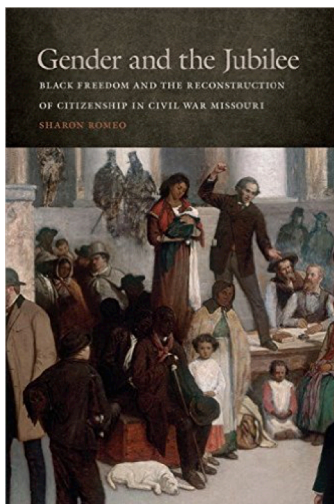


Book Reviews (cont.)

book, Vowell provides an entertaining glance at a figure whose relevance is compelling particularly in 2017. As the centennial year for the United States entering World War I, readers are reminded of General Pershing's desire to see Lafayette's grave upon entering Paris. This moment provides an interesting platform to reflect on the life and legacy of a figure who risked his life of wealth and privilege to shiver in Valley Forge, stand with Washington at Yorktown, and become the namesake to countless locations across the Continental United States.



Sharon Romeo. *Gender and the Jubilee: Black Freedom and the Reconstruction of Citizenship in Civil War Missouri*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2016. 256 pp. ISBN 978-0-8203-4801-8. \$59.95.

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In *Gender and the Jubilee*, Sharon Romeo explores how enslaved women in Civil War Missouri claimed their place in the national polity as both citizens and patriots prior to the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. By asserting their right to protection by the federal government, African American women reclaimed ownership of their bodies and undermined the system of slavery. In this readable and engaging book, Romeo examines how African American women accessed the military justice system to adopt civic identities denied to them under Missouri law. Drawing extensively from provost marshal's records, Union Army records, Civil War pension files, and other military correspondence, Romeo demonstrates that black women in Missouri used the military court system and federal laws such as the 1861 and 1862 Confiscation Acts to charge whites with a variety of offenses and petition for their own freedom. *Gender and the Jubilee* contributes to scholarship on the "legal legacy of the Civil War," (9) and demonstrates the ways in which black women conceptualized citizenship and emancipation prior to the claims freedwomen made in Freedman's Bureau courts.

Romeo begins with a discussion of civil court cases brought by African Americans in antebellum St. Louis. Under the Union occupation of St. Louis, these and other suits effectively "politicized the Missouri household," as enslaved people utilized their rights under marital law to chal-

lenge the institution of slavery (29). Despite the legal opportunities afforded to enslaved people by reporting disloyal activity of slave owners, St. Louis remained a city highly stratified by race and a dangerous place for black men and women, who struggled to claim their right to public space despite the constant threat of arrest by civil authorities.

Beginning in 1861, fugitive men and women escaped from slavery and joined the Union Army. Some military officials turned escaped slaves away, especially women and children who may have had difficulty keeping up with troops. However, others welcomed refugees who offered to perform the labor that soldiers preferred to avoid, such as laundry. Because of the Second Confiscation Act of 1862, black women and men could be emancipated as "contraband of war" in exchange for intelligence of disloyalty. Groups of runaways assembled wherever provost marshals were stationed, offering statements of their masters' treason. Military officials accepted slave testimony against slave owners. This, Romeo argues, signified a major departure from the Missouri civil court system and represented a major blow to the gender and racial hierarchy of Missouri slave society. In addition, enslaved women's testimony against slave owners was "a critical construction of enslaved women's civic existence" (56).

Enslaved women's relationships with their male family members also contributed to their

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definition of citizenship and civic identity. Some women joined the army with their husbands, traveling with and performing labor for the troops. When wives joined the military alongside their husbands, it was often an act of survival, as slave owners retaliated against men in the service by selling their families or doling out harsh physical punishments. Union Army officials listened to women's complaints, as they understood that "slave enlistment depended on an end to the abuse" (62). Enslaved women redefined their relationship with the nation-state in moral terms – as soldiers' kin, they deserved "inclusion in the military justice system" (69).

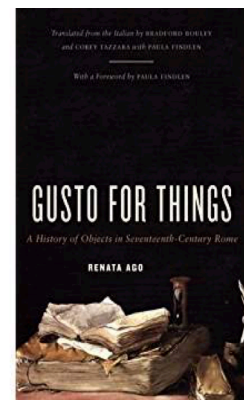
In 1864 and 1865, African American women, both slave and free, utilized the military justice system to charge whites with crimes such as assault, rape, kidnapping, and unfair labor practices. Provost marshals wanted to root out Confederate sympathizers. As African American women reported the disloyalty of their employers or other white citizens, they also demanded the right to be treated with physical and verbal respect, custody of their children, or payment of wages. Unable to claim their rights in Missouri's civil court system, African American women's use of the military courts to assert their citizenship posed a significant challenge to the privileges of

whiteness, as white elite members of society were subject to arrest and imprisonment based on black women's testimony.

Marriage was one way women could claim the rights of citizenship, and, Romeo argued, the "right to a widow's pension" was "central to the civic identity emancipated widows attempted to construct" (102). However, freedwomen faced difficulties accessing pensions due to the legacy of marriage under slavery. For example, Pension Bureau agents researched the sexual histories of widows who claimed pensions, and thus could nullify slave marriages "based on state-imposed definitions of sexual responsibility" (106). Additionally, Pension Bureau officials relied on testimony from white owners, neighbors, and community members, who often had conflicting viewpoints about the legitimacy of slave unions. Thus, while African American women used marriage as an arena to make claims upon the state, ultimately, state agents possessed the power to define legal marriage.

Romeo argues that by occupying space in military camps testifying in military courts, reporting the disloyalty of white citizens, and claiming benefits as family members of soldiers, black women "claimed gender as part of the process of emancipation" (121). Overall, Romeo presents clear analysis and a multitude of historical examples, showcasing enslaved and freedwomen's words wherever possible. Romeo clearly demonstrates the legal

challenges black women made to the institution of slavery and society in Missouri. However, although Romeo's chapter on the legacy of slave marriage hints at the conflicts inherent in constructing marriages and families post-emancipation – including, for example, the role of African American churches in adjudicating marital disputes – she does not delve too deeply into how the gendered and family dynamics *within* African American communities interacted with the Civil War era legal system. Ultimately, *Gender and the Jubilee* offers an engaging, accessible, and significant contribution to the history of citizenship and emancipation, revealing how black women utilized the legal system to undermine slavery and construct their civic identities.



Renata Ago. Trans. Bradford Bouley and Corey Tazzara with Paula Findlen. *Gusto for Things: A History of Objects in Seventeenth-Century Rome*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Xxxvi + 314 pp. ISBN 13-978-0-226-01057-1. \$63.00.

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