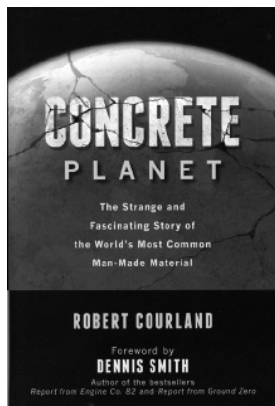


The Bear: History of a Fallen King, by Michel Pastoureaux, translated by George Holoch (343 pages, October 2011), correlates the decline of the European brown bear in medieval art and myth with the triumph of Christianity over paganism. Venerated in ancient times by Germanic, Celtic, and Slavic tribes as the king of beasts, the bear's reputation as an invincible demonic force was targeted by Christian kings and prelates for destruction—often quite literally, as in the great German bear massacres organized by Charlemagne in the late 8th century. Pastoureaux shows how by the 12th century Christianity had adopted the lion as an alternative symbol, eventually dethroning and emasculating the bear into muzzled circus animals and children's toys. \$29.95. Belknap Press of Harvard University. 978-0-674-04782-2.

Concrete Planet, by Robert Courland (396 pages, November 2011), surveys the history



of concrete, the world's most common man-made substance, composed of a mix of rocks, sand, cement, and water. The Romans set the gold standard in concrete construction, creating structures that have lasted

nearly 2,000 years. The Pantheon in Rome, completed in 126 CE, remains the largest unreinforced concrete dome in the world. After the Roman Empire collapsed, the formula for making concrete was lost and not rediscovered for some 1,300 years. Improvements in cement led to occasional architectural ex-

periments with concrete in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, but it wasn't until the 1890s, when concrete began to be routinely reinforced by iron and steel bars, that construction took off. Unfortunately, as Courland points out, rebar is extremely prone to oxidation, which gradually causes the surrounding concrete to deteriorate and requires expensive restoration. Much of 20th-century American infrastructure—bridges, roads, buildings, dams—is crumbling because of this corrosion, giving these projects a life span of 100 years or less. Only in the past two decades have engineers begun testing and using non-ferrous rebar. \$26.00. Prometheus, 978-1-61614-481-4.

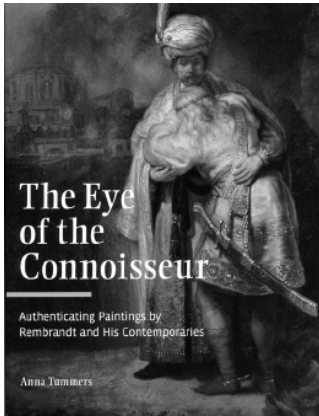
Explorers of the Nile: The Triumph and Tragedy of a Great Victorian Adventure, by Tim

Jeal (510 pages, November 2011), recounts the search for the source of the White Nile between 1856 and 1876 by seven intrepid British explorers—Richard Burton, John Hanning Speke, James Augustus Grant, Samuel Baker, Florence von Sass, David Livingstone, and Henry Morton Stanley. Much more than a long-needed update to Alan Moorehead's *The White Nile* (1960), Jeal's vivid narrative examines the consequences of their discoveries on the peoples and politics of Uganda and the Sudan, extending all the way to the secession of South Sudan in 2011. In particular, he includes much new information on the enigmatic Speke, gleaned from excised portions of his book and other first-hand sources. \$32.50. Yale University. 978-0-300-14935-7.

The Eye of the Connoisseur: Authenticating Paintings by Rembrandt and His Contemporaries, by Anna Tummers (349 pages, November 2011), examines the art of connoisseurship, or the ability to identify instinctively the artist who painted a picture. In a post-

modern world, the context of a painting or sculpture has become more important than

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its authorship, and the art of the connoisseur has dwindled in value, making miscataloging and museum deaccessions more frequent.

Tummers tries to reverse this trend by focusing on the methodology of art connoisseurs in the field of Dutch and Flemish 17th-century paintings and the criteria they use in making attributions. She also deals with distinctions between originals and copies, shared authorship between master and pupils, stylistic irregularities, and the intangible assessment of quality. Well-documented and richly illustrated, this volume addresses a neglected aspect of art history. \$60.00. J. Paul Getty Museum. 978-1-60606-084-1

Hedy's Folly, by Richard Rhodes (261 pages, November 2011), tells the story of Austrian-American actress Hedy Lamarr and her collaboration with pianist and composer George Antheil that led to their 1942 patent for a frequency-hopping, radio-directed torpedo that resists jamming efforts. Lamarr contributed the concept (based on conversations she overheard in the 1930s by German and Austrian weapons experts) and Antheil the mechanism, which was partially based on a player-piano apparatus. The technology was rejected by the U.S. Navy during the war, because it sounded too bulky to the Navy brass, and the patent expired in 1959. However, Rhodes notes that Lamarr's frequency-hopping, spread-spectrum concept was reworked several times between 1945 and 1978 by U.S. defense agencies, leading to a reevaluation of her skills as an inventor. \$26.95. Doubleday. 978-0-385-53438-3.

On the Ground: An Illustrated Anecdotal History of the Sixties Underground Press in the U.S., edited by Sean Stewart (203 pages, November 2011), brings together abundant samples of artwork from alternative newspapers from 1967 to 1974, supplemented by interviews with 25 people who produced, illustrated, and distributed them—including Al Goldstein, Paul Krassner, Bill Ayers, Trina Robbins, and Spain Rodriguez. The collection captures the excitement, commitment, and anarchy of the era. \$20.00. PM Press. 978-1-60486-455-7.

Steam: An Enduring Legacy: The Railroad Photographs of Joel Jensen, with essays John Gruber and Scott Lothes (160 pages, October 2011), showcases 150 photographs of steam locomotives taken since the late 1980s by Joel Jensen, who manages to make each black-and-white image look timeless. Often shot against spectacular Western vistas, Jensen's photos chronicle the raw power of the steam engine and the rugged engineers and mechanics who keep them running. \$50.00. W. W. Norton. 978-0-393-08248-7.

Texas, New Mexico, and the Compromise of 1850, by Mark J. Stegmaier (434 pages, revised ed., January 2012), is a detailed examination of one of the most important boundary disputes in U.S. history. First published in 1996 by Kent State University Press, the book identifies the Texas–New Mexico boundary as the most serious sectional crisis prior to the Civil War, though often eclipsed by other aspects of the compromise bill, such as the revamped fugitive slave law and California statehood. Stegmaier contrasts the attitudes of Presidents Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore to the crisis, which involved sending U.S. troops to the New Mexico Territory to thwart a potential invasion by Texans, and surveys the roles played by William Seward, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Stephen A. Douglas, and Henry S. Foote. \$34.95. Texas Tech University. 978-0-89672-697-0. **ZZ**