like Byrnes, Leff goes so far as to state that he was “as accomplished a bibliographer as he was a historian” (158).

Rejected by the YIVO, Szajkowski resigned from that organization and returned to his life as a zamler, this time in New York. Arrested again, he committed suicide several days later. Thus ends Lisa Moses Leff’s remarkable account of an extraordinary life. It is an astonishing work of history, founded on a group of original documents by means of which she raises fundamental questions about the very nature of the archive as it fluctuates between being a state memoir and a way to preserve a particular history and culture.

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The 1955 documentary Night and Fog opens and closes with color tracking shots of Auschwitz-Birkenau. These shots help inscribe the black-and-white, primarily archival footage of the Nazi camps in concerns of the present. Sylvie Lindeperg has borrowed this framing strategy for her study of the film, from its 1954 conception through its international receptions since, in “Night and Fog”: A Film in History. She frames the book with the life story of historian Olga Wormser (later Wormser-Migot), who proposed the first dissertation about the Nazi concentration camps and played a key role in the film’s conception and production. By returning this largely overlooked figure to the often-told story of Night and Fog, Lindeperg helps us see the film differently, not as a flawed work of history, as so much scholarship treats it, but as a crystallization of historiography in action. Many elements here will be familiar to readers of this journal. Lindeperg, however, explores Night and Fog as a nexus for changing ideas and research about the Nazi camp systems and the study and commemoration of World War II. Thanks to Tom Mes’s translation, this rich study, first published in French in 2007, is now available in English with a foreword by French film critic and historian Jean-Michel Frodon.

Most previous scholarship approaches the film through two dominant lenses: as director Alain Resnais’s artistic oeuvre and/or as the first film about the Holocaust.1 Lindeperg pushes back against both by tracing how Night and Fog began life as Olga Wormser and fellow historian Henri Michel’s project for a didactic film about the Nazi system of concentration camps and the experience of deported members of the French Resistance. From 1941, such deportees were labeled “NN,” for Nacht und Nebel, the Nazi policy to deter future resistance by deporting political prisoners without warning or documentation, as if into night and fog.

The book’s prologue traces Wormser’s young life through September 1944, when the Ministry for Prisoners, Deportees, and Refugees hired her to trace French deportees in

* Translated for the Journal of Modern History by Lydia G. Cochrane.

1 Because Lindeperg’s book first came out in 2007, recent English-language literature has already begun to build on her arguments: Griselda Pollock and Max Silverman, eds., Concentrationary Cinema: Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais’s “Night and Fog” (New York, 2012). Lindeperg’s contribution, which condenses many of the larger book’s findings, opens the volume.
the liberated camps and European archives. She began to understand the contours of a system, unlike POW camps, into which people seemed to disappear and from which few returned. From 1952, she continued this work at the Committee on the History of the Second World War.

This committee, in conjunction with the Réseau du Souvenir (Network of Memory), a group of mostly former political deportees, backed Wormser and Henri Michel’s 1954 exhibition about the deportation and supported their idea of expanding it into a film using photographs and archival footage. Thus begins the first of the book’s two main sections. Its eight chapters follow Night and Fog through preproduction, archival research in France and throughout Europe, shooting at the camps, editing, voice-over, and the creation of its musical score. Lindeperg emphasizes the differing perspectives of the many individuals who worked on the film: Wormser, Michel, director Alain Resnais, former political deportee and poet Jean Cayrol who wrote the voice-over, Chris Marker, and German-Jewish composer Hanns Eisler. The film, in turn, worked on them. Cayrol, for example, could only bear to watch it once before drafting his text. It was always a project in motion, as the filmmakers grappled with representing a system they were still trying to understand. Lindeperg thus hypothesizes that the inclusion of footage that today’s viewers have come to know as images of the deportation, selection, and extermination of Europe’s Jews reflects the filmmakers’ emerging understanding of a difference between concentration and death camps and their process of extermination. They did not articulate this understanding, she argues, because it did not fit into the film’s focus on the development of the concentration camp system within the Nazi regime.

The eight chapters of the second main section follow Night and Fog as it went rockily out into the world. Lindeperg traces this tumult from its encounters with French government censors (the infamous képi affair) and the scandal of its rejection from the 1956 Cannes Film Festival to its integration into school curricula and place in conversations about cinematic aesthetics and debates since the 1970s about the picturability of the Shoah itself. The film, Lindeperg shows, contributed not only to discussions about national guilt and commemoration—especially in West Germany—but also fed Cold War propaganda, for instance, via authorized and unauthorized versions produced in the United States and East Germany.

The book ends with Olga Wormser’s professional and personal highs and lows following Night and Fog’s release. Henri Michel protested producer Argos Films and Resnais’s ownership of the film, but Wormser admired Resnais for transforming the didactic documentary into an aesthetic masterpiece. She defended her dissertation in 1969 only to have former deportees and their children accuse her of falsifying history. The dissertation, twenty years in the making, would become associated with Holocaust denial, and she devoted the rest of her career to fighting against deniers. At the end of her life Wormser-Migot looked back on Night and Fog, alongside her children and grandchildren, as her greatest personal achievement.

Lindeperg dubs her study a “microhistory in movement,” but readers will recognize this as simply good cultural history (xxiv). She has unearthed an impressive range of primary sources—shooting scripts, photographs, committee minutes, letters, diaries, film scraps, press clippings—held in public and private archives, including Olga Wormser-Migot’s private papers. Lindeperg brings all of this into dialogue with fine-grained textual and statistical analysis of the film’s content and form as well as its various international versions. When the analysis ventures beyond the bounds of her own expertise (e.g., the film’s score or certain foreign translations), Lindeperg relies on secondary sources. At times it can be easy to get lost in the details, but the geographic and analytic breadth of this research reveals “microhistory” to be anything but micro and films never single-
authored, stand-alone texts. This is the definitive study of Night and Fog, but historians should also appreciate it as an excellent example of the type of historical work close attention to film makes possible.

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James R. Banker’s magisterial study, Piero della Francesca: Artist and Man, represents a major contribution to the scholarship on this Renaissance painter and mathematician and has a grounded keel and quiet strength that is evocative of the timeless quality of Piero’s paintings themselves. Here, the author carefully traces the contours of the painter’s life in this his third monograph on the world of the celebrated, if enigmatic, Piero della Francesca, considered by many art historians to be of the same stature as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. From his birth in Borgo Sansepolcro in around 1412 through his many travels and commissions to his final passing in 1492, Piero’s biography is enriched by Banker’s use of over one hundred newly discovered primary source documents that help situate this peripatetic painter within his milieu of family, friends, and patrons. Banker organizes Piero’s life into three periods, the first two characterized by developments in his painting in terms of proportion, perspective, and a monumental style; the third focused on the artist’s writings on geometry and Piero’s accepting fewer public commissions and returning to mostly private interests.

Providing a timeline of Piero’s life that includes not only his artistic projects but also his pioneering studies in mathematics and geometry, chapter 1 begins with his youth and early adulthood. Eschewing marriage and having no children, Piero, an eldest son, never assumed the position of paterfamilias for the della Francesca family and was thus freed to pursue a far-ranging career. Chapter 2 shows us a painter on the move; by 1439 he was working as an assistant to Veneziano in Florence, whose influence on Piero’s earlier Baptism of Christ is evident, begun sometime around 1436. In search of commissions, Piero then traveled north to Modena and Ferrara before heading east to Ancona.

Chapter 3 focuses on Piero’s time at the Malatesta court in Rimini beginning in 1446, where he expanded his palate by adding oil paint to the medium of tempera. At this point, architectural elements increasingly figured in his works, and the artist took advantage of his family connection to the Anastagi to build his career (kinsman Jacopo working as advisor to Sigismondo). Banker provides rich historical background on the social mores of the time and gives detailed consideration to the motivations for Piero’s choices of work, including his portraits of Sigismondo and his Saint Jerome and a Penitent.

Chapter 4 tracks the artist to Arezzo and the completion of his fresco cycle of the Legend of the True Cross, which marked the artist’s mature style of the early 1450s. Banker embeds Piero in Arezzo, which had declined from an economically sound university town to a second-tier community dominated by the city of Florence. The author examines Piero’s subject matter and commission (linking both to the Franciscans) as well as his developing style, which Banker attributes to the influence of Piero’s travels to Rome. Chapter 5 focuses on the Misericordia Altarpiece in Sansepolcro that Piero worked on for over a decade in the 1450s and 1460s. Again tethering his narrative to a specific work of art, Banker argues that the Confraternity of Santa Maria della Misericordia dictated not only the subject matter but also the style of presentation, as well as the exact financial stipulations for the commis-