

seventeenth century, took to presenting precious items from all over when negotiating with foreign powers abroad as a way of demonstrating the incomparable reach and range of their global commerce. Dutch trade and diplomacy became intimately linked in this manner, while at the same time acting as a powerful new spur to the study not only of oriental art, textiles, porcelain, and many other artifacts but also of the natural history of remote parts of the globe and, equally, to the study of oriental and other non-European languages. Someone had to translate newly arrived missives written in Arabic, for example, and Scaliger, Erpenius, and the other Arabists of Leiden University were already involved in this work from an early stage.

In the wake of the Dutch naval victory over the Spanish fleet at the Battle of Gibraltar (1607) and the 1610 alliance with Marrakesh, the States General began planning its diplomatic and commercial entry onto the stage of the Ottoman Near East. Expert jewelers and scholars were consulted as to what kinds of gifts would be best received in Constantinople. It was a matter not just of pleasing the sultan and his entourage but also of overcoming French and Venetian opposition to Dutch commercial and political penetration of the Near East. The mission to Constantinople of 1611–12, led by the jurist Cornelis Haga (1578–1634) with the assistance of an expert jeweler, laid the foundation for the Dutch presence and the establishment of its consulates throughout the Ottoman empire. In addition to the highest-quality home artifacts, including crystal vases, damasks, velvets, satins, and silverware, numerous items processed in Holland but reliant on exotic products and knowledge about them from elsewhere—vessels of mother of pearl and shell, an ivory staff, birds of paradise, and a gorgeous parrot in crystal—played an essential part. Not only art historians, then, but also historians of seventeenth-century long-distance commerce and diplomacy, both within Europe and beyond, have abundant reason to be grateful for this fascinating book.

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Exhuming Franco: Spain's Second Transition. By *Sebastiaan Faber*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2021. Pp. viii+276. \$14.95.

In February 1989, an editorial in the Catalan history review *L'Avenç* drew attention to the subdued character of the fiftieth anniversary of General Franco's civil war victory. This was a time when in Spain and beyond many historical events had become a cause for public commemoration: the centenary of Barcelona's Universal Exposition of 1888; the 200th anniversary of the end of Carlos III's reign in 1788; and, across the Pyrenees, the bicentennial of the French Revolution and the vigintennial of the Paris events of May 1968. Remembrance of Franco's triumph, with the occupation of Catalonia by his troops and the beginning of Spain's long dictatorship, had produced much less "noise." Given its deep divisiveness, the civil war could of course hardly be celebrated, but *L'Avenç* wondered whether it was right instead that it be more or less ignored. Despite the publication of memoirs and biographies of key political protagonists and the appearance of civil war-related films and novels since Franco's demise in 1975, the war and its aftermath had received little attention from "serious historians." Two related reasons for this were averred: first, archives of state institutions from the period of the war and dictatorship remained inaccessible in Spain after 1975; and, second, investigation of the war era was viewed as posing a disruptive threat to the consolidation of what politicians presented as a model of nonviolent democratic transition. Although it was acknowledged, crucially, that by 1989 the Spanish state

had undergone profound change in the decade or more since the transition (including substantial administrative decentralization), there nonetheless remained many open wounds, and the editorial argued that the healing process required fuller examination and recognition of past injustices.

The argument published in *L'Avenç* in 1989 was in fact a prefiguring of a broader political and civic critique of the post-Franco settlement that began to gather momentum a decade or so later amid the global politics of retribution and reconciliation in the aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet bloc and the end of apartheid in South Africa. In Spain the civil society campaign was centered particularly on criticism of the juridical absolution of all Francoists, a measure enshrined in the political amnesty granted in 1977. Central to the backlash since the late 1990s against the notion of Spain's transition as a model has therefore been the recuperation of "historical memory," a ubiquitous feature of debates about pluralism, justice, and reparation. From this context emerged the social democratic (PSOE) government's 2006 Law of Historical Memory, which, among other provisions, prohibited political acts in homage to Franco. Such acts were epitomized by those performed by uniformed Falangists at his burial site, the Valley of the Fallen, the controversial basilica constructed by the dictator in the mountains north of Madrid between 1940 and 1959, which became the principal physical symbol of the Caudillo's victory and his regime. Criticism of the monument has intensified in recent years as the public has become aware that the mortal remains of some 30,000 victims of the civil war—from both sides—are concealed there, many gathered by officials during the dictatorship without the permission of families. The civic preoccupation with historical memory to which the 2006 law responded has not always been founded, however, on a healthy understanding of the complexities of the past, including the complicated splintering that was the civil war or the widely felt need for political restraint in the immediate aftermath of Franco's demise. As with all national pasts, "the truth" is no simple matter and, as with all democracies, Spain's is a historical product, molded by adaptability to the threat of counterdemocratic forces.

The government's readiness to respond with its memory law in 2006 confirmed—as *L'Avenç* had recognized in 1989—that the Spanish state was poles apart from the Francoist state. Recently, however, it has become common for commentators to argue that political continuity rather than change marks the period stretching from the Franco years to the democratic present and, further, that the country is in need of "a second transition." This demand—the basis of Sebastiaan Faber's timely, informative, and hugely stimulating book—has gone hand in hand (especially since 2015) with the economic crisis and its deep social effects, along with exposure of political corruption, a significant waning of voter allegiance to the previously most electorally successful post-Franco parties of the left and right, and a backlash against the apparent decline of the nation-state as a primary basis of collective identity. The two-party "system" has fractured, therefore, under both domestic and global pressures, a fragmenting process accompanied by surges in nationalist populism—both Catalan and Spanish, the latter in the shape of the far-right Vox party—and attacks from all sides against "the Establishment."

Structured largely by these key thematic problems—historical, judicial, political, and educational—Faber's book combines a series of invigorating interviews with intellectuals, journalists, and commentators with his own thorough and suggestive contextual introductions. The central dispute explored is between those on one side who see the post-Franco transition as a decidedly positive and durable achievement and critics, on the other, who maintain that the country's current political tribulations and palpable economic injustices are explicable by reference to the transition's failure to challenge Francoist power sufficiently after 1975. This, it is argued, left a baleful ideological and social legacy (noted recently in the excessive formalism of the higher courts of law) that can only be extinguished

by a more profound “second transition,” although—as one of Faber’s interlocutors says (207–9)—beyond vague allusions to ending the monarchy, few precise aims of this “perfected” democracy are made clear.

The book’s point of departure is the removal of the dictator’s coffin from its tomb at the Valley of the Fallen, carried out by the PSOE government in October 2019, following a recommendation by a commission of historians in 2011 and a later decision of the Supreme Court. The emotional impact of this event has been overlaid by the inevitable political “radioactivity” triggered by the exhumation taking place on the eve of general elections in 2019. The elections came in the aftermath of the Catalan autonomous government’s attempt to declare statehood supported ideologically by charges that by not recognizing the Catalans’ independence referendum, Madrid was acting just as the Franco state used to do (even, it would seem, while evicting the dictator from his tomb). Three decades on from the rationalized position held by *L’Avenç* in 1989, there was little public recognition that Spain had changed profoundly in its institutions and ideology since the dictatorship.

There is plenty in Faber’s book that blames Francoism for everything that seems dysfunctional about Spanish democracy, but thankfully also a fair share of critique that advocates analysis of the past and historical education rather than uninformed appeals to the past. Spain is one of many countries facing difficult questions about a conflictive past at the same time as dealing with neoliberalism’s launch of a global assault on fundamental rights. But, as the literary critic Ignacio Echevarría cautions in this context, to dismiss parties such as Vox as a specter from the Francoist past skews and debilitates the tactics of the political Left (67–69) which is often already conflicted enough between strategic thinking and concern for those who suffer the trauma of civil war and antidemocratic rule.

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Beethoven: A Political Artist in Revolutionary Times. By *William Kinderman*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. Pp. x+256. \$35.00 (cloth); \$34.99 (e-book).

The year 2024 marks the 200th anniversary of the first performance of one of the most iconic musical works in the Western tradition, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. The final chapter in William Kinderman’s compact but engrossing book presents a wide-ranging summary of the performance history of the symphony as a political, often politicized work, embracing the use of the recurring theme of the choral finale as the anthem of the European Union, a flash-mob performance in Catalonia, and, most famously, the fall of the Berlin Wall, when Leonard Bernstein changed Schiller’s and Beethoven’s “Freude” to “Freiheit.” Other, more focused narratives are carefully woven into the text, including links with earlier works such as the Fifth Symphony and the opera *Fidelio*, and the relationship between the symphony and the contemporaneous Quartet in A Minor (Op. 132), which emerges as “a dark companion of the sublime Ninth” (202).

Kinderman’s final chapter might well have been placed first in the book, but, in a neat parallel to “An die Freude” in Beethoven’s symphony, it instead forms the expressive climax to a discussion of earlier manifestations of the political in the composer’s output, both self-evident and perceived. The broad topic is a familiar one: a composer who lived in Napoleonic times wrote “heroic” works and expanded the expressive reach of his art form to engage with those times. But Kinderman does not deal in clichés. He deploys an array of