slave trading areas in West Africa, it fails to provide an adequate explanation as to why adjacent areas of the same geographical region did not share cowries as currency. The area of modern Ghana, where the eastern maritime area fell within the cowrie zone while the western seaboard and Asante remained outside it, even during a period when the British controlled parts of both the western and eastern coasts, is an example. It is surprising that a book dealing with the importance of the cowrie shell as a major currency for purchasing slaves gives so little attention to the statistical representation of this given that it is full of statistical tables. Only one of the seventeen tables in the book relates to cowries and the slave trade.

The question of the instability of the value of cowrie currency is not fully addressed either. The main factor, the lack of central political regulation of cowrie currency liquidity, receives little attention. That the cowrie currency zone encompassed many polities none of whose political authorities could control the inflow and circulation of the currency should have been addressed as a key aspect of the political economy of cowrie money. Although the indifference of European cowrie shell importers to their pouring of billions of them into the circulation zones without considering the implications of such imports for the monetary value of the cowrie is dealt with, what was not was the issue of the extent to which the primary interest of the importers in the cowrie, as essentially a trading commodity rather than currency, influenced its demand and supply mechanism.

In spite of these criticisms, the book is a brilliantly written piece of work in the area of monetary economic history. I strongly recommend it to mainstream economists, economic historians, slavery and cultural historians as well as experts in cultural studies and even tourism.

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Central European Medieval Texts follow the highly regarded tradition of the Oxford Medieval Texts and the new edition of the Gesta principum Polonorum (‘Gesta’) is typical of the excellent editions produced by the Central European University. This volume presents the Latin text and its English translation with full critical notes and a comprehensive introduction of one of the most important and interesting sources for the history of Poland and Central Europe. Until now there has been no full English translation of this work, which was written by an unknown author in the early twelfth century. Publication of the Gesta is in itself an
important milestone as it brings this narrative, which is fundamental to the research of Polish history, to a wider international audience.

Three manuscripts of the Gesta have survived to the present day. The first edition was published in Gdańsk in 1749, by the historian Gottfried Lengnich (1689-1774) and a number of further editions appeared in the nineteenth century. The editors of this volume of Central European Medieval Texts based their edition of the Latin text on the 1952 critical edition published by Karol Maleczynski in the *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1952). In some instances the editors departed from Maleczynski’s edition in order to improve the transliteration of the Latin text and enhance the accuracy of the English translation; improvements which add to the value of this volume as a printed source. The publishers should be also commended for bringing to the English speaking community the results of Polish research. In particular the critical edition of the Gesta translated by Roman Grodecki and annotated and edited by Marian Plezia (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imieniem Ossolińskich, 1975) has been consulted.

The Gesta is the oldest extant narrative source from and about Poland, and therefore is one of the most important sources to the history of early medieval Poland. Its value to research into Polish history is comparable to that of ‘the Gesta Normannorum Ducum’ for the history of Normandy and England. The authorship of the *Gesta principum Polonorum* is unknown, however, since the sixteenth century it has been attributed to a French monk. This tradition originated with Bishop Marcin Kromer (the author of *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum libri XXX*, published in 1555), who named the Gesta’s author ‘Gallus’ in a note appended to one of its manuscripts. The identity of Gallus was and is a subject of a scholarly debate. There are various theories as to his origins. However, most historians agree, on the basis of an analysis of the Gesta’s contents, its language, and narrative style, that the author of the Gesta was a monk associated with the Monastery of Saint Gilles in Provence who arrived in Poland via Hungary (as his knowledge of Hungarian history suggests).

Nothing is known about the sources used by Gallus and therefore it is assumed that he relied on the oral traditions of the Polish ruling elites to tell the story of the deeds of the Princes of the Poles. The Gesta relates the history of Poland up to the reign of Bolesław III also known as Bolesław the Wrymouth, and Bolesław is the protagonist of the Gesta. Bolesław III is presented as a tireless, wise leader and a pugnacious commander. Gallus relates the deeds of his hero in a style abundant in metaphors, epithets and alliterations.

The Gesta consists of three books, each of them preceded by a dedication and panegyric poem, usually inspired by Biblical themes or the classics such as Virgil, Horace and Ovid. The first book presents the ancestry of Bolesław III, the second book relates his youth and the third book narrates his deeds after 1113. The third book dwells especially on Bolesław’s crusade against the Pomeranians and Prussians and his victories over the Bohemians, and as Andrzej F. Grabski demonstrated in his study on the ‘The Crusading Character of Writings of Anonymous
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Gallus,’ evidently reflects the crusading ideology of the leading families of Poland who adapted for their own purposes the idea of crusade.

In addition to having a striking literary quality, the Gesta is a fundamental narrative source that established a chronology of Polish history focused on the lives of the rulers of the realm, though no precise dates are preserved in the entire text. Thus its importance cannot be overestimated. The Gesta became, as the oldest source to relate the sequence of events of early Polish history, the source for later authors and historians such as Vincentius Kadubek (about 1150-1223), Jan Długosz (1415-1480) and Marcin Kromer (1512 - 1589).

A great benefit of this new edition is the quality and clarity of its introduction and commentary appended to the text. These provide information highly useful to the new reader of Polish history in particular, as the editors delineate the role of the Gesta as a historical source and its profound influence on the writing of Polish history, discuss the issues related to the identity of Anonymous Gallus, and present the fate of the extant manuscripts of the Gesta. Throughout the introduction and texts notes the editors draw extensively upon the key Polish and German research, which analysed various aspects of the Gesta over the past decades. The volume is the well presented in a meticulously prepared format with the facing-page English translation of the Latin text. This new edition includes a selected bibliography, indices of proper and geographical names.

It is a splendid work of scholarship, which presents enormous new resources for the consideration of students and scholars of Medieval Central Europe.

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My early memories of Anzac Day in the 1970s were of an all male event, of little consequence to the wider public. Tanja Luckins, however, in her book The Gates of Memory reminds us of the central place that women had in mourning soldiers of the Great War. This book carefully complements a growing number of academic texts examining the wider impacts of war on the home front. It provides a useful counterpoint to scholars of World War I in so much as it reveals new contexts/background for recruitment, war propaganda and the role of different media. Luckins takes us on a personalised journey through her discoveries of memory and loss, and we can see how she herself makes memories through use of a wide variety of sources.

The ‘Gates of Memory’ refers to the wharf gates at Woolloomooloo in Sydney, the site where thousands of men left Australia for the war, and in