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Reviews of books

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Richard T. LeGates and Frederick Stout (eds), *The City Reader*, 2nd edn. London: Routledge, 2000. xviii + 608pp. 32 plates. £18.99 pbk.
Malcolm Miles, Tim Hall and Iain Bordern (eds), *The City Cultures Reader*. London: Routledge, 2000. xii + 339pp. £60.00 hbk.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802211116

Following a favourable reception on its original publication in 1996, *The City Reader* now appears in its second edition. In compiling the book, the editors have sought to bring together a collection of 'essential readings and enduring writings' (p. xv). Whilst what is deemed to be essential is to some extent a matter of personal preference, there is evidence that the editors have taken note of review comments and recommendations when considering additional reading for inclusion in this edition. The volume provides an interdisciplinary approach to the understanding and interpretation of cities and urban societies in the selection of historical and contemporary readings. Although there is a heavy (if understandable) concentration on American cities and writers, the book sets out to provide an international perspective, featuring contributions by writers from ten different countries.

The second edition has been expanded to contain 55 readings and the inclusion of 32 plates. Kingsley Davis, 'The urbanisation of the human population' serves as a prologue to the volume which is subsequently divided into eight sections: (1) the evolution of cities, (2) urban culture and society, (3) urban space, (4) urban politics, governance and economics, (5) urban planning history and visions, (6) urban planning theory and practice, (7) perspectives on urban design, (8) the future of the city. Editorial introductions and bibliographical recommendations are provided for individual readings.

Many familiar classics are retained from the first edition; Engels' study of Manchester, Olmsted's work on Victorian public parks along with established accounts of the evolution of urban theory and planning representing British, American and continental traditions. Those with an interest in contemporary urban studies are equally well served, indeed no less than seventeen of the readings are from the 1990s. However, the omission of Oscar Lewis' 'The culture of poverty' seems somewhat surprising given its continuing influence.

Many of the additional readings in this edition reflect the current interest in cultural theory. Stout's contribution traces the reading of the city through the medium of social realism in art, photography and film, whilst the interplay

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between culture, space, power and exclusion is a theme present in the selections from Edward Soja, David Harvey, Mike Davis and Sharon Zukin. The issues of urban governance and the politics of partnership is addressed by Margit Mayer, whilst the planning literature reflects the current preoccupation with sustainability. Historical pieces such as Camillo Sittes' 'The art of building cities' (1889), and 'period classics' such as Kevin Lynch's 'The image of the city' dating from 1960 and Sherry Arnstein's influential 1969 article 'A ladder of citizen participation', are worthy of inclusion not only as stand-alone pieces, but also because of the way they serve to inform the more contemporary material on urban space and urban governance respectively.

'Political economy, symbolic economy. . . . and the endless negotiation of cultural meanings' (p. 81) are the central themes of *The City Cultures Reader.* Whilst owing much in style and structure to Stout's and LeGates' book, a fact acknowledged in the introduction, this collection treads an almost exclusively contemporary path aiming primarily to record and reflect current debate. The three editors approach the study of the city from the disciplines of art and design, human geography and architectural history and theory respectively, adopting an interdisciplinary approach with the aim to 'introduce writing that may be unfamiliar to people outside the discipline in which it is produced' (p. 7).

The book consists of 60 readings, divided into three parts each subdivided into four sections. Part one, shaping urban culture, includes sections on forms and spaces of the city, cultures and urban politics and economics, the culture industries, and culture and technologies. The second part on living urban culture is divided into sections on everyday life, memory, imagination and identity, representations of the city, cultures and ecology. The final part on negotiating urban cultures addresses the issues of social justice, culture of resistance and transgression, utopia and dystopia, and possible futures. Each section has an editorial introduction establishing themes and providing historical background and contextual reading. The problems of classification are acknowledged by the editors who encourage the reader to cross-reference or alternatively to regard the structure of the book as an attempt to present these readings of the city as a progression from 'the received to the interpreted to the envisioned' (p. 6).

The earliest reading, Adorno's and Horkheimer's 'The culture industry: enlightenment as mass deception' dates from 1944. There are also essential selections from such pioneers of urban cultural theory as Jacobs, Barthes and LeFebvre. However, the bulk of the contributions, 47 of the 60 readings, date from the 1980s and 1990s, included in which are examples of work by David Harvey, Saskia Sassen, Raphael Samuel, Jeremy Seabrook, Nigel Thrift and Sally Zukin, to give a flavour of the different disciplines represented.

Through the examination of current debates in regard to globalization, sustainable development, the new social and cultural entrepreneurialism, and visions of utopia and dystopia, the volume presents the contemporary city in its many guises: as place and space, market and governance, structures and institutions. However, it is through the selection of readings concerning the symbolic uses of space that the editors succeed in establishing the dominant theme of the book that runs throughout, to present the city as 'event'.

Both books succeed in their aims, of presenting essential readings in a coherent and highly readable manner and are ideal companion pieces. *The City Reader,*

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offers more to the historian, whilst *The City Cultures Reader* succeeds in putting urban issues at the cutting edge of contemporary social scientific thinking. With renewed interest in urban affairs now being shown by politicians and policy-makers, these books have much to offer not only to academics, teachers and students, but also to practitioners in the urban professions.

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John Martin and Dennis Romano (eds), *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. xiii + 538pp. 48 figures. $45.00.
John E. Law, *Venice and the Veneto in the Early Renaissance*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000 (Variorum Collected Studies, 672). xviii + 352pp. £57.50.
Jutta Gisela Spurling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999. xxi + 417pp. 33 illustrations. 14 tables. £49.00, $70.00 hbk; £17.00, $24.00 pbk.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802221112

In one of the sparkling contributions to *Venice Reconsidered*, the eminent French historian Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan remarks that Venice was 'a city perpetually under construction', and that 'whoever writes the history of Venice seems condemned to write the history of its myths'. These two observations could stand duty as epigraphs to all three of these new books on Venice. For not only was Venice a great trading city, a maritime power and the capital of a regional state, with the balance between the interests and demands of trade, sea and land changing over time and affecting the city in different ways; but it also fabricated its own myth, of its origins, its history and its constitution. The site was perfect in its impregnability, the constitution was stable in its balance of components, the social order was functionally harmonious: these allowed Venice to achieve and maintain peace, order and independence. For several decades, historians have been dismantling this myth, both to reveal what lay beneath it, and to show how it was constructed and in whose interests. All of these books draw on and contribute to this understanding of the myth of Venice.

Venice Reconsidered presents fifteen essays on various aspects of Venetian social, political and cultural history. The volume is edited in exemplary fashion, with not only an introduction drawing threads together and relating them to the historiography, but also short commentaries on each chapter. With the risk of not mentioning some impressive papers, the essays may be divided into two main groups. One group focuses on the 'city under construction'. Crouzet-Pavan emphasizes this at the physical level, showing how the buildings of Venice were not 'an invariable given', but 'something painfully constructed' in a constant battle against the waters of the lagoon. Fortini Brown uses treatises and inventories to look inside the houses of patricians, using the patriciate's sense of difference (a mercantile, not landed, elite, in a republic with some acknowledgement of the claims of equality) to explain the particular pattern of upper-class consumption. Rösch continues this theme of construction in his revisionist study of the *Serrata* of 1297 which allegedly closed and defined the Venetian

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ruling class: he shows that closure was not achieved at one stroke in 1297, but slowly over the course of the following decades, and was not even perceived until the fifteenth century. Chojnacki takes up the same theme, of the construction of the ruling class, in his study of the redefinition of patrician identity from the 1490s to the 1530s: the criterion for nobility in Venice, he shows, was then changed from inherited eligibility for office to certified noble marriage and parentage. Fluidity of class definition is also observed by Grubb for the non-noble elite of 'citizens': he skilfully redraws the usual contours of this group, and looks at the ways that a commoner elite was defined in the sixteenth century.

A second group addresses more directly the myth of Venice or the countervailing anti-myth which developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In a rather speculative piece, Pincus hypothesizes the involvement of one doge (Andrea Dandolo) in the design of four dogal tombs, including his own, which 'refocused and reshaped' the inherited image of the doge as a 'near-divine' figure associated with Christ. Feldman shows how the Fenice opera house contributed, through a changed repertoire, to maintaining the myth of Venetian freedom and impregnability after the collapse of the republic in 1797. Mackenny's study of the 'unsolved mystery' of the Spanish conspiracy in Venice in 1615, shows how Venice was itself implicated in the spread of the anti-myth of a secretive and oppressive state, as it deliberately muddied the waters of this plot, 'rejoicing in its own secretiveness'. Povolo examines the presence of both myth and anti-myth in the nineteenth-century historiography of Venice.

These essays are of high quality, and few disappoint. The balance of the collection is towards the period from the later fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The preceding and succeeding periods are more thinly covered: respectively environment, *Serrata* and tombs, and women, opera and historiography. If a criticism has to be made it would be that some of these themes might have been carried forwards or backwards into other periods. This is especially to be regretted perhaps with the theme of women: Ambrosini gives a good survey of women's experience in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but women are marginal in most of the other chapters.

The richness of Venice as an object of historical enquiry means that one volume, even of over 500 pages, cannot cover all its facets: as Martin and Romano observe, 'there are simply too many Venices, too many unknown dimensions'. One dimension largely absent from *Venice Reconsidered* is the Venetian territory on the Italian mainland, an expanding regional state, comprising several major cities, numerous small towns and many villages. John Law's book of collected articles therefore fills this gap in a most timely fashion. Sixteen chapters, previously published between 1971 and 1993, focus mainly on two of the early fifteenth-century additions to that mainland state, Verona and Friuli. His chief concern is with how Venice governed its mainland territories in the fifteenth century: What title did it have? What were the Venetian priorities in government? How easy was it to implement decisions? What was the balance between local autonomy and central control? How did Venice balance the interests of Venetian patricians (for land and offices) against those of local groups such as peasant communities and urban elites? Law's answers to such questions stress the uncertainties, difficulties and inconsistencies of Venetian rule. Like the authors of *Venice Reconsidered*, Law has sought to puncture aspects of Venetian

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mythography, of older or newer coinage. Against the myth of Venetian stability, he exposes the instability of Venetian mainland territories, looking behind the public statements of trust and loyalty to find security problems and resistance to Venetian rule. Against the myth that the Veronese people had surrendered willingly to Venice as a liberator, he argues that surrender was under duress and was soon converted into subordination. Against the claim made in the 1960s that Venice deliberately created government by aristocracy in its subject cities, as part of a broader policy of intervention and control, he demonstrates the falsity of this claim as regards Verona, where the oligarchy was a buttress against Venetian control, and where Venice intervened in only an ad hoc fashion.

If women are marginal to most of the chapters in *Venice Reconsidered* and *Venice and the Veneto*, they are placed firmly at the centre of Venetian history by Spurling. Here again we encounter the myth of Venice. Spurling brings out clearly the part played in political discourse and ceremony by notions of virginity: the metaphor of the republic's 'inviolate body' arose in discussions of the city's independence and sovereignty; the nunnery of S. Maria delle Virgini was closely involved in the myth of Venice as an independent state, and it was visited by the doge in annual procession. Into this context of cultural emphasis on virginity, Spurling places the nuns of Venice: 'multiple metaphorical connections linked the untouchability of the nuns' sacred enclosures to the legitimacy of patrician rule, the sovereignty of the republic and the immaculacy of the city'. The connections between nuns and civic ideology are just one aspect of an integrated thesis that seeks wide-ranging explanation for two phenomena of sixteenth-century Venice: the rise in the number of nuns (such that, by the late sixteenth century, she estimates, over half of patrician women were living in convents), and the growth of state supervision of nunneries. Contemporaries and historians have explained the rising numbers of nuns by dowry inflation: fathers could no longer afford to endow all their daughters, so some were given no choice but the nunnery ('forced monachization'). Spurling rejects this as an argument that blames some women, the 'lucky daughters', for denying marriage for their 'unlucky sisters'. Spurling points the finger instead at strategies of resource management among the patriciate: given that contemporaries blamed women for dowry inflation, forced monachization is presented as the last stage in the progressive exclusion by men of women from a share in family property. This clears the way for Spurling's more developed argument, which draws on the anthropology of Lévi-Strauss to argue that the endogamous, up-marrying expectations of fathers created a malfunction in the system of reciprocal exchange of women through the marriage market and a consequent 'sacrifice' of those women who were thus excluded from marriage.

Patrician flesh and blood 'sacrificed' in this way had to be kept pure: hence the concern, treated in the second half of the book, with enforcing and policing *clausura* of nuns, especially following the Council of Trent. In a city where a nunnery had once been likened to a brothel, a combination of a new state magistracy and more rigorous church inspection intervened to cut nuns' contacts with the outside world, to eliminate waste and to criminalize transgressions. This is an ambitious and stimulating study, which attempts to challenge existing arguments, but in one respect at least – the number of patrician women in nunneries – the reader would do well to read the small print for Table 1 on p. 27, especially in the light of Grubb's comments, in *Venice Reconsidered*, on commoner

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families with noble surnames, and to consider the effect of a lower figure on Spurling's argument.

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Rosemary O'Day, *The Professions in Early Modern England 1450–1800: Servants of the Commonweal*. London: Longman, 2000. xi + 334pp. Glossary. Bibliography. £19.99.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802231119

The importance of the professions is at last gaining full recognition. In a moment of enthusiasm, one twentieth-century sociologist identified a long-term trend towards 'the professionalization of everybody'. That has not yet happened. Nonetheless, there has been a distinctive consolidation, over a long span of time, of a range of specialist service occupations, which are defined as the 'professions'. Rosemary O'Day's synthesis of their emergence in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England is thus a highly welcome contribution to the field.

How, in Tudor and Stuart England, did ambitious young men (in the era of all-male professions) establish themselves as reputable service providers? They needed specialist knowledge and skills. They needed good judgement and, with luck and cultivation, perhaps a powerful patron. And, above all, they needed the trust and confidence of their clients. An ethos of service to the 'commonweal' was quietly engendered. Individuals might backslide from the highest standards of behaviour and, of course, some did. Yet the important thing was the development of an ethos of service that established what the public had a right to expect and the professions a duty to supply.

Central to O'Day's analysis is the role of the clergy, the lawyers and the doctors – in that order. Above all, it was the Protestant ministry that was challenged, after the Reformation, to redefine itself within the new Church of England. Before the 1530s, the number of 'clerics' was large and the boundaries of the clerical estate ill-defined. Not only were there thousands of monks, nuns, canons and parish priests but there were also many unbeneficed assistants and fluctuating totals of clerks, administrators, lawyers, doctors, teachers, scholars and others in holy orders. After the turmoil of the mid-sixteenth century, however, the number of clergy dropped sharply (from perhaps 35,000 in 1500, to nearer 15,000 by 1603). As that happened, the new Protestant ministry focused increasingly upon its 'core' socio-spiritual mission, including the cure of souls and the provision of pastoral care. Other tasks, formerly also undertaken by men in holy orders, were over time increasingly hived off into their own separate professions.

With that came the belief that a clergyman should have a genuine 'calling' to his work and a relevant training. By the mid-seventeenth century, the Anglican ministry was gradually becoming an all-graduate profession – something for which the sprawling teaching profession is still striving in the early twenty-first century. The Presbyterian divine Richard Baxter (1615–91) explained the new importance of academic qualifications, fearing that his 'want of canonical honours and degrees was like to make me contemptible with the most, and consequently hinder the success of my endeavours'.

Urban historians will find much of interest in O'Day's account of the making

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of professional careers. Most towns had a full complement of clergymen, lawyers and doctors, all jostling for position and status. These men played key roles in the development of an urban as well as a professional ethos; and they also sustained a network of communications across the country, as they kept in touch with one another and with London, the hub of all the professions. Theirs was a world of learning, of scholarly disputation, and hard graft in practice, as well as often a world of edgy competition, squabbles and anxiety.

High office, moreover, was no guarantee of a quiet life. In 1691, for example, the Bishop of Bath and Wells found himself immersed in quarrels – with his Dean and Chapter, with various local clergymen, with an eminent local physician and with his own Archdeacon, who refused to acknowledge the Bishop's authority. It was a complicated and combative scene, worthy of Trollope himself. The very personal nature of authority, even within an established ecclesiastical hierarchy, meant that such disputes had to be taken very seriously. And their public nature meant too that their ramifications stretched well beyond the cathedral close.

Professional rivalries within and between the different professions thus featured alongside their collective power and prestige. The prizes were worth a struggle. The professions alone did not create the new urban world; nor *vice versa*. But their fortunes were mutually linked. The clergymen of Barchester, the lawyers at London's Inns of Court and the provincial Assizes, the doctors in the mushrooming town hospitals – by the eighteenth century, these were classic townsmen all.

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Christopher R. Friedrichs, *Urban Politics in Early Modern Europe*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. xiv + 87pp. £11.99.
Henry Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. x + 281pp. Bibliography. £15.99.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802241115

Both works under discussion here draw similar conclusions about the changing position of the urban elite during the early modern period, despite their different emphases (political and social). In particular, they stress the encroachment of the centralizing state and the increasing identification of the elite with central government.

Following his *The Early Modern City, 1450–1750* (1995), Christopher Friedrichs has concentrated on early modern urban politics for his contribution to Routledge's 'Historical Connections' series. The central focus of the book is a comparative approach to conflict and its resolution in early modern urban communities. Thus Friedrichs' discussion concentrates not just on the political structures and mundane day-to-day running of municipal government, but also the tensions and conflicts inherent in urban communities regarding issues of authority and privilege. As a result, he succeeds in demonstrating the essential dynamism and contested nature of urban politics in the early modern period.

Strikingly, the scene is set with contrast between an orderly meeting of the Cologne city council on a typical day in 1545, and a municipal coup in La

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Rochelle in 1614. Friedrichs uses this starting point to emphasize the underlying fragility of municipal authority as well as its exclusivity. He deliberately applies 'elitist' and 'pluralist' theories of modern urban government, whilst outlining the specifics of the operation of its early modern counterpart. In particular, he highlights four of the most pressing issues facing municipal councils: the regulation of the local economy, religion (especially with the advent of the Reformation), their own accountability and urban autonomy. Chapter 4 on 'Forms of political action' provides a particularly lively discussion of the processes involved in urban protest, including petitioning, consultation and negotiation. This is followed up by four case studies (Marseille, Utrecht, La Rochelle and Frankfurt) in which accountability and external intervention are common themes. Using further examples, Friedrichs demonstrates that both sides were aware of the rules of the game, tried to avoid extremes, and most overthrown regimes were quickly restored. Finally, he stresses the basic continuity of this pattern until well into the eighteenth century.

However, Friedrichs also identifies the main element of change – beginning early in the period and with the most profound effect on urban politics – the administrative centralization of the state. This brought about a decline in urban autonomy as the elites recognized the advantages of co-operation with the state, although he perhaps overstates the degree to which increased royal allegiance constituted a 'new' element (p. 69). Thus, a large standing army replaced local militias, national issues came more to the fore, and the authorities stepped in faster at the first sign of trouble. Friedrichs describes these changes as 'subtle' but sure.

This is a useful little book which provides a mine of information and ideas for students. Drawing on recent works in the field, it makes good use of examples to illustrate its points (though in places it cries out for more of them), and at its best makes an absorbing read. One of the few disappointments is the 'Epilogue', which is too brief and lacks the life and colour of some of the earlier chapters and could have been made into a much more effective summary. There is also a useful and up-to-date 'Suggestions for further reading'.

Henry Kamen's *Early Modern European Society* is a substantial reworking of his *European Society, 1500–1700* (1984). It has all the strengths of the original: fluently written with good use of comparative examples. Much of the material is the same, though there is less emphasis on economic factors and there are new sections, notably that on 'Gender roles', as well as more subtle modifications/ modernizations of subheadings and terms. For the urban historian, it is notable that the section on 'The middle elite' (formerly 'The bourgeoisie') is one of the least revised, though its introductory section and later conclusions have been expanded. It is striking, too, that the 'Select bibliography' for this chapter has hardly changed in the intervening years. Nevertheless, urban historians will find much for them in many of the other chapters, especially 'Solidarities and resistance' and 'Social discipline and marginality'. Above all, the book remains one of the best introductions for students to the early modern period, a role which its revised format has only served to enhance.

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Craig Spence, *London in the 1690s. A Social Atlas*. London: Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, 2000. xi + 200pp. 77 figures. 30 tables. Bibliography. £19.95.
Henry Horwitz and Jessica Cooke (eds), *London and Middlesex Exchequer Equity Pleadings, 1685–6 and 1784–5: A Calendar*. London Record Society, 2000. xix + 162pp. No price given.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802251111

The *Atlas of London* is the culmination of a process that began some 35 years ago with the work of David Glass on the 1695 Marriage Duty assessments, progressed with a Ph.D. thesis by James Alexander in 1989 and is now completed by Craig Spence, assisted by an ESRC grant, the Centre for Metropolitan History and a great deal of computer-aided cartography. The broad social position of some 65,000 households or about 300,000 persons – some three-fifths of all of London's population of the 1690s and a larger proportion for those north of the Thames – have been located. It is a remarkable achievement; this atlas must form a cornerstone of all subsequent work on the social and occupational geography of London for a good time before and after the 1690s. A short review can do little more than outline the nature of the atlas. The source is remarkably rich – far richer, for instance, than the assessed taxes of the 1790s. The material permits Spence to draw maps for the built-up area of London showing topics as varied as household density, wealthy lodgers as a percentage of all households, shops and markets assessed for tax, servants as a percentage of the adult population, the percentage of households headed by women or by aristocrats, to mention but a few. For the City the maps range from showing a large number of occupations as percentages of all stated occupations to the distribution of private coach ownership by social status. Unfortunately the returns for London south of the Thames have not survived.

First, the question of reliability raises itself. The taxes appear to have been raised rather rigorously; the largest systematic underestimation is with stock values – meaning money, investment, raw materials and stock in trade. The evidence from other sources suggests that these were underestimated to a considerable degree and should therefore be treated with care, though Spence hopes that there is a degree of consistency in the underestimation and certainly the maps and tables of stockholding are consistent with the other evidence. Second, there is the question of how an atlas should be constructed. Selection is unavoidable and Spence has been very sensible here. The 77 maps and 30 tables that he has constructed from his database cover most of the questions that one can think of. It is not practical to reproduce too many local variants of 'Rates of multiple occupancy and mean rent values by street within the parish of St. Paul Shadwell'. There is also the question of how much prose to have between the maps. Rather over half the book is prose, describing not only the tax but also discussing the maps that are produced. Like tables, maps may speak for themselves, but it is certainly helpful to have the author's commentary on them. Every decision has its costs; in this case the major cost of the chosen format is that there has not been much room for larger-scale interpretation. The conclusion is little over four pages; many other conclusions are scattered across the pages of the book. The geography of London in the 1690s was highly complex. There are many questions that one would like to ask and one hopes that these will soon be addressed.

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London and Middlesex Exchequer Equity Pleadings is a very different sort of book. As the editors explain in their introduction, the central courts of equity – Chancery, Exchequer and the shorter-lived Requests – 'have been notorious for their inaccessibility'. Historians have long known that they provide one of the major untapped sources of English history and lament this inaccessibility. An attempt some time ago by the Centre for Metropolitan History to obtain a grant to calendar some of the Chancery records that applied to London was turned down. Horwitz has been working for some time on the Court of Exchequer's proceedings in equity, and can rightfully claim to be an expert on the material. In view of the immensity of the source the aim of this volume is limited to highlighting the material: in the authors' words, 'to illustrate the potential reward of searches in Exchequer equity records of the history of London and the metropolis by calendaring a limited selection of the pleadings in equity (bills, answers, and related documents) consisting of every London and Middlesex suit filed for two years of the Court's operation as a general court of equity' – 1685–86 (151 suits) and 1784–85 (194 suits). The introduction then describes the legal process, tells the reader how to follow up the judgement (the calendar only lists pleadings) and also categorizes the subject matter. For each of the two sets of years there are also two sets of indices, one by name and one by subjects of pleading. As one has come to expect with the London Record Society, the presentation is impeccable. These are technical documents, for following up. The authors themselves mention some of the more striking cases: for 1685 a list of debts allegedly owned by Middlesex water customers, accounts between a Cambridgeshire gentleman and a merchant tailor of Hatton Gardens with respect of dealings in malt; for 1785 a set of accounts of a friendly society of London porters, lists of musical compositions including works by Bach (probably Johann Christian) in two copyright disputes. Not that the musical works or the business accounts are listed here – one has to go to the PRO to find them – but one has the references. It this encourages historians to dare to tread through the quagmire of the Exchequer records, even if they do not progress onwards to Chancery, the authors will have achieved their aim.

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Ronald Rees, *King Copper: South Wales and the Copper Trade 1584–1895*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000. viii + 179pp. 22 plates. Bibliography. £14.99.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802261118

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries South Wales was the world centre of copper smelting. The industry was established in the late sixteenth century by German experts working under royal patronage. Progress was stuttering for much of the seventeenth century but from the 1690s local gentry entrepreneurs and merchant capitalists from Bristol oversaw a major expansion of the trade. Cornish ore could be shipped across the Bristol Channel to the mouths of the Tawe or Nedd valleys where coal outcropped. In time the headlong growth of smelting outstripped the supply of locally available ores, so that by the middle of the nineteenth century a specialized shipping fleet brought Cuban and Chilean

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ores to Swansea Bay. In the 1860s, when the industry was at its height, more than half the world's copper was smelted within fifteen miles of Swansea.

The impact of the copper industry on human settlement in the area was profound. Swansea, which had promoted itself as a fashionable resort in the mid-eighteenth century, rapidly took on a new identity as a manufacturing centre. Further up the Tawe valley industrial villages gathered around the different works. Many featured blocks of moulded copper slag as a building material and some were adventurously designed. John Morris, proprietor of the Forest works, for example, housed families in a castellated apartment block. Later, in the 1790s, he sponsored the building of an entire planned community: Morriston.

This and many other aspects of the copper industry are dealt with in Rees' engagingly written book. The focus of the book is, however, far narrower than its title suggests. Rees is really concerned with the environmental consequences of copper smelting and the public controversies it provoked in the course of the nineteenth century. To be brief, copper smelting was an environmental calamity. It gave off great clouds of toxic smoke, heavy with sulphurous acid gas and tinged with arsenic. The smoke was slow to disperse in the steep-sided river valleys where the works were concentrated and it settled over the surrounding rural districts with deadly effects. Vegetation withered; livestock grew sickly and perished. The central chapters of this book relate the ensuing struggle between the coppermasters and their farming neighbours, centring on a series of lawsuits heard between the 1830s and the 1890s. The landowners and farmers who sued the copper companies for damages were – in varying degrees – unsuccessful. The companies insisted that smelting was an established custom of the district; that falling agricultural yields were attributable to the farmer's incompetence, not to their smoke; even that copper smoke had a bracingly antiseptic effect, providing a *cordon sanitaire* against typhus and other diseases.

Rees presents this as a 'town versus country' conflict, but the nature of urban society in Swansea or Neath is never really explored. Rees has read the literature on copper very assiduously, but his bibliography features nothing on urban society in Victorian Britain, nor on environmental history. We are left to wonder how urban opinion was marshalled behind the copper industry, or what role the coppermasters played in the formation of a local urban elite. The battle over smoke is fought out in a social and political vacuum. The changing institutional framework of urban government or public health administration is never touched upon. Only belatedly, in connection with a series of disputes in the 1890s, is the attitude of the industry's workforce brought to the fore, and then all too briefly.

This volume offers those interested in the politics of environmental degradation in the Victorian era a good deal of interesting material, but such readers will have to draw their own parallels and provide their own interpretative framework.

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Stanley Williamson, *Gresford. The Anatomy of a Disaster.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999. xviii + 243pp. 10 plates. 4 appendices. Bibliography. £11.95.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802271114

In the catalogue of lives claimed by the mining of coal in Wales, the losses sustained in the Gresford Colliery Disaster of 1934 were second in total only to those sustained in the Senghennydd tragedy of 1913 in south Wales. In terms of its impact on public sentiment, particularly outside Wales, Gresford induced a response the scale of which was not to be repeated (or exceeded) until Aberfan in 1966.

Expectations had grown both inside and outside the industry by the 1930s that pit safety regulations were superior to any previous regime, certainly compared with those at the time of Senghennydd. Yet, as the Commission of Inquiry discovered, and as Williamson highlights, there was a great deal of difference between theory and practice, particularly in a coalfield as small, technically backward and difficult to mine as that of north Wales and at a pit as deficiently managed as the Gresford Colliery.

The destruction of the Westminster and Wrexham Collieries company papers, Gresford's owners, at nationalization in 1947 has necessarily compelled the author to focus his account on the Commission evidence and infer from the testimony the issues that made a disaster inevitable. He has ably supplemented his account by reference to local histories and the reminiscences of contemporaries and he has placed the disaster fairly in the broader context of the historical development of the coalfield. The Gresford colliery was not particularly old but it had the misfortune of opening prior to the Coal Mines Act of 1911 which set new standards as to mine ventilation. It was the failure of company and management to ensure proper, efficient ventilation to all parts of the pit – the coalfield had a reputation for fire damp – that led to the explosions in the Dennis Section and the deaths of 256 men. There were clearly pressures on the mine manager, a decent enough former collier, to keep up production and avoid any disruption for safety matters. Whereas in the south Wales mine managers were regularly challenged on safety by the workforce and a relatively strong union movement, this was not the case in north Wales. Williamson shows that a combination of old Victorian practices and a measure of collusion between workers and management allowed the dangers to arise. The old 'pillar and stall' method had been perpetuated in the section affected, and the continuation of the charter master system of employing miners enforced a degree of deference among the men that undermined unionizing activities. In addition, the lack of supervision over the shot firers, the manipulation of the overtime system by the (poorly paid) workers and their disregard of safety regulations all contributed to a culture of complacency. The mines inspectorate was well aware of many of these faults but lacked the initiative to correct them.

The Commission itself was controversial since it was headed by the Chief Inspector of Mines himself and therefore many deemed it compromised. It failed to agree a united report in 1937 and left the local community frustrated, particularly as criminal proceedings against the Company also largely failed. Even so, much damning evidence had been elicited, largely through the incisive advocacy of Sir Stafford Cripps for the North Wales Miners Association, an

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heroic figure in Williamson's eyes. The author concludes, rather sketchily, by relating the remaining history of the Gresford colliery, but he tends to overlook the recent accounts by Roger Laidlaw and others, of the enduring legacy of the disaster, a local community anxious never to forget the sacrifice of its menfolk.

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Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heynigen and Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town. The Making of a City*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1998. 283pp. ZAR 225

Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heynigen and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1999. 255pp. ZAR 225.

DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802281110

'We are very aware that the experience of Cape Town, and a sense of its history, have varied enormously for different people', observe the authors of this two-volume history of South Africa's so-called 'Mother City'. Citing the writer, John Matshikeza, who sees Table Mountain as standing 'like a huge, indifferent moderator between . . . conflicting worlds . . . Its face . . . turned towards the open sea, with paradise – the playground of lush white houses, the business district and the Waterfront – dribbling down its chest. [But] the back of the mountain is like the dark side of the moon [where townships like] Manenberg and Guguletu huddle silently', they accept that interpretations of the city's past have turned as much on the writer's identity as when the opinion was formed. While most observers have combined physical descriptions of the city with comments on the nature of its inhabitants, write the three authors, 'we believe that the answer is to seek the relationship between the two. People make places, but places also make people . . . This history [of Cape Town] is then, first and foremost, about people, about varied human experience. But it attempts to trace the changing and enduring interactions between people and place over time. It is about perceptions as well as reality, the poor as well as the powerful'.

So far, so platitudinous. What, in fact, do these two books actually achieve? The period covered runs from roughly the first half of the seventeenth century until almost the end of the 1990s, each volume divided chronologically into five chapters. Chapter headings include 'More the name than the reality', 1620–62; 'From Cabo to Kaapstad', 1662–1795; 'The British town', 1840–70; 'Challenge to the imperial order', 1899–1919; 'The age of social engineering', 1948–76; and 'Reclaiming the city. Cape Town since 1976'. Both volumes burst with well-chosen illustrations. Many of them, particularly those in volume one, will be new to most readers. By contrast, the text is much less successful. The strongest sections by far are those dealing with the Victorian era, presumably because they draw on an excellent monograph by one of the authors, that is, Bickford-Smith's *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town* (1995). Elsewhere the coverage of issues is markedly uneven. To a certain degree, this is acknowledged by the authors. But they attribute the problem to gaps having 'inevitably' remained in the literature despite the 'plethora' of academic studies generated by the long-running Cape Town History Project. What they cannot bring themselves

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to recognize is that the reason why some topics have been quite disproportionately discussed and others given short shrift is the faddish nature of much of the research conducted over the course of the project itself. Perception(s) predominate to the extent that the city's economic dynamics, themselves profoundly 'social' if the point needs making, virtually disappear.

This is a great pity, not least because methodological and historiographical help lay so close to hand in the form of inspired works by South African scholars themselves, notably the geographer, A.J. Christopher (*South Africa* (1982); *The Atlas of Apartheid* (1994)) and the historian, Charles van Onselen (*New Babylon, New Nineveh. Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886–1914* (1982; 2nd edn 2001). Models of historical scholarship and contemporary analysis, both of the books cited above explain as well as describe the particular by locating themselves in national and international contexts. As it is this latter aspect which the two volumes under review sketch most cursorily, they suffer by comparison. Beyond a few passing remarks, little attempt is made to situate early Cape Town in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds of Portuguese, Dutch and English sea-borne empires. Seminal articles and papers by Stanley Trapido on this subject and related topics seem not to have made any lasting impression. Nor has any discernable use been made of work on the global history of dockworkers, especially of the sort initiated by the *International Review of Social History*. Although wide-ranging perspectives such as these might have helped illuminate the shadowy working lives of Cape Town's own black dockers, for example, they are never utilized. Recent developments in the ways in which urban elites can be conceptualized are similarly passed over in silence. No comparisons are drawn with comparable cities within or without, before, during or after the British Empire. The much-acclaimed World Cities Series edited by R.J. Johnston and P. Knox is ignored. Evelyn Waugh famously disliked Cape Town, a 'hideous city' which he instinctively likened to Glasgow. Given the present uneven state of the respective historiographies of these two cities, it is a comparison from which putative historians of Cape Town would profit enormously. They might learn a trick or two about urban history, whether from Michael Pacione's sophisticated socio-spatial study of Glasgow (1995), or the superb collection of essays on the 'Second City of Empire' edited by Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver (1996).

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Robert J. Morris and Richard H. Trainor (eds), *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000. xiv + 254pp. 4 figures. 5 tables. Bibliography. £49.50.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802291117

The key to the theme of this collection of papers from the Urban History Group conference at Leeds in 1998 lies in the word 'governance' and not 'government' being in the title. It is not just about the elected municipal councils often regarded as the city or town governors of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain. Its focus is wider, encompassing also a range of bodies that influenced public policy in urban areas like the tangle of boards, voluntary institutions,

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central government and its outposts and, as the editors state, 'the organisations of professional and business life'. Its concern is not only with what went on in councils but also with the interactions between the various bodies involved in the governing of localities as well as the political, social and economic groups that constituted the civil society in which they operated and shaped the power they possessed.

Although Sydney Low used the word 'governance' to describe the 'system' or 'method' of government in his 1904 book *The Governance of England*, and the ex-Prime Minister Harold Wilson revived the term in his 1976 book *The Governance of Britain*, meaning 'how Britain is governed', the latest version of the word comes from a current fashion of political science. It is used for analysis of developments that have eroded the role of elected councils and brought more to the fore a set of bodies that influence public policy in local areas. Indeed public policies are seen as made not by bodies endowed with legitimate responsibilities but in a bargaining process between various bodies which compose policy networks or communities.

Champions of the word 'governance' fall into two categories: scholars who see it as a helpful analytical approach, and political propagandists who seek to replace representative government by group or populist-based arrangements. One wonders why urban historians should feel the need to adopt the labels used by political scientists. The phenomena they are put on have long been known to urban historians and, as the editors of this volume point out, 'partnerships and networks, varied patterns of service delivery, diminishing returns to government and ungovernability can all be identified in this collection'.

The danger of focusing more on the labelling than on the subject matter is illustrated most vividly in chapter 11 on smoke abatement in Stockport 1844–56. It seems more concerned to elaborate on the amorphous notion of 'non-decision making' than to explain why Stockport lagged behind in introducing smoke abatement measures. Adopting the jargon of a political-science fashion obfuscates. There was no 'non-decision'. Some people and groups decided to oppose smoke abatement and made use of various opportunities to block the lobby that advocated it. The authors asserts that 'Stockport Council was involved in active non-decision-making': but the matter came before the council many times and was voted down. Many council decisions were taken not to have smoke abatement; they were challenged, votes in council decided them, and parties and pressure groups heavily contested the issue in public. This case study is a good example of local decision-making and not of 'non-decision-making'.

The other studies in this volume are well written and informative. They illuminate the rich diversity of local decision-making about public policy from the mid-eighteenth century to the 1990s, bringing in comparisons with France, Canada and India. Urban historians will need this volume for the excellent synthesizing chapter by Robert Morris; the continuities between the nineteenth century and recent trends, as displayed in Mike Goldsmith and John Garrard's chapter; a masterly chapter by Rik Trainor on the alleged decline of the calibre of elected representatives, apparently going on since the 1850s; chapters on health – showing the once great role of local government in health, both public and personal; policing, burials; tackling, or rather not tackling, industrial pollution; industrial conciliation; the roles of civic bureaucrats; central-local relations – although some authors conflate the House of Commons with the executive; and

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the significance of urban rituals. Education, often the most bitterly fought issue, is the glaring omission.

The footnotes are especially valuable guides to the rich literature on how our towns and cities were governed, indicating that urban history is a discipline full of vitality. It does not need to take up the fads of political science. Rather political scientists need the realistic and subtle sensitivities of urban historians. Bachrach is called Bacharach in pages 176 and 178; Rallings lost his final 's' on page 25, while Sturges Bourne gained one on page 126; and there is a strange 'I' on page 22.

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Martin Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy, Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol*. Royal Historical Society. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999. xii + 274pp. 5 illustrations. 4 figures. 30 tables. Bibliography. £40.00.
David Large, *The Municipal Government of Bristol 1851–1901*. Bristol: Bristol Record Society Publications Vol. 50, 1999. 184pp. Tables. £17.00
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802301111

Martin Gorsky's *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol* is an extremely scholarly examination of the changing nature and scale of charitable activity in Bristol from the late eighteenth century. As the title suggests, this is a study of 'patterns' of philanthropy and there is little in-depth discussion of particular charities; though George Muller's mission to fund and build orphan homes with a capacity of over 2,000 is considered as an example of the move towards an institutional response to social problems. The introductory chapter provides an authoritative discussion of the relevant historical literature and an analysis of the etymology and use of the terms philanthropy and charity. The principal focus of the book is the decline of endowed charity and the increasing popularity of subscription charities.

In exploring these related trends, Gorsky provides an interesting analysis of Bristol's urban elite and the ways in which the power and identity of the wealthy middle class were enmeshed in the practice of philanthropy. He notes that whilst the income from endowed charities remained relatively high from the 1790s to the 1830s, throughout the same period the number of new endowments declined and fewer gifts were made to the church for the care of the poor. The marginalization of the parish is examined with reference to its intrinsic weaknesses, its association with party politics and the fact that it was increasingly regarded as an administrative anachronism.

The other major trend which Gorsky argues took place in the first decades of the nineteenth century was the way in which early benevolent associations shed the 'mutualist aspects of their identity and rhetoric' (p. 128). This separation of charity and mutuality gave rise to a more hierarchical model of charity based on patronage, such as hospital subscription schemes. Thus, Friendly Societies continued to express the ideals of mutuality, but in isolation from middle-class voluntary organizations.

The period 1820 to 1860 is described by Gorsky as a time when the trend to non-partisan associations was reversed and a highly politicized, sectarian atmosphere developed with regard to specific campaigns, particularly relating to

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education, anti-slavery and temperance. In this period and in the remaining decades of the nineteenth century, new charitable activity tended to be associated with particular congregations or with specific social problems.

Gorsky's analysis is underpinned by an extensive database of voluntary societies and institutions in Bristol and he is able to provide a useful overview of the range and type of philanthropic activity and of the gender and occupational status of committee members. What is missing is any real sense of the individuals involved in such work. This is a history in which the historical actors remain anonymous and the network of associations and friendships within the Bristol elite is not explored. The discursive formation of social problems receives little attention, though Gorsky mentions the influence of Mary Carpenter in defining and responding to the problem of juvenile delinquency.

The chapter on women and philanthropy is a little disappointing. Gorsky notes that only a few small societies were controlled by women and argues that 'within the totality of voluntarism the power and influence of women remained circumscribed' (p. 164). This may be true, but it fails to indicate the considerable influence of women in areas such as child welfare, emigration, housing reform and female education, or to consider their place within the urban elite.

Gorsky's study is an important contribution to the literature on philanthropy and urban politics. The author demonstrates a considerable knowledge of the economic and social context and he explicitly addresses questions regarding the identity, motivation and power of the urban middle class. His analysis of philanthropy is one in which the classes are on opposite sides, the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Thus, while individual members of the working class might make donations to charity, they are not regarded as philanthropists. The role of the working class in philanthropy is an extremely interesting one and further research may suggest it is less one-sided than is suggested here. Nonetheless, Gorsky provides a fascinating account of class dynamics and he challenges the view that the recipients of charitable assistance embraced middle-class ideals. A number of examples suggest that 'the dominant response of the poor to charity was ambivalence guided by maximization of individual utility' (p. 195).

David Large's study of the municipal government of Bristol in the period 1851 to 1901 is published by the Bristol Record Society (BRS) and is a welcome addition to the series. An earlier volume by G. Bush examined Bristol's municipal government in the period 1820 to 1851, but the study of local politics and administration in the second half of the nineteenth century has been long neglected. Large himself has previously written on public health and the Poor Law and he has done much to develop the history of Bristol.

This present volume is based on a study of local government records, local press reports and relevant sections of Parliamentary Papers. Using these sources Large provides a good empirical study of the development of local government in the second half of the nineteenth century. He examines the size and composition of the electorate, the administrative structure of the Council, the characteristics of councillors and aldermen and the growth in the number of Council employees. In addition there are case studies of the work of various committees concerned with law and order, public health, the control of disease and the treatment of mental illness. A future volume by the same author is planned, which will examine the docks, the management of the urban environment, leisure and education.

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The principal objective of the BRS series is to make primary sources more accessible to local historians. Although Large's analysis of local politics and administration is informed by wider historical approaches, with one or two exceptions, it does not explicitly address the secondary literature on politics, crime, mental illness or public health. Within these self-imposed constraints the book provides an interesting account of the politics and personalities of local government in Bristol and as such it should appeal to more than a local readership, since it provides a sound basis for comparison with other towns.

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Liam Kennedy, Paul S. Ell, E.M. Crawford & L.A. Clarkson, *Mapping the Great Irish Famine: A Survey of the Famine Decades*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999. 220pp. 46 figures. 106 maps. 18 tables. 7 illustrations. £19.95 pbk.

DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802311118

The sesquicentennial of the Great Irish Famine has generated an impressive amount of new research as well as a rather unproductive public controversy about the ultimate responsibility for the Famine. Scholarship and polemic have characterized successive generations' attempts to unravel the complexity of the Famine, an event whose consequences are difficult to understand for two reasons. The first is the problem of isolating the effects of the Famine from changes which were already under way and the second is its distinctive regional aspects. The latter requires a basic understanding of Irish geography and a relatively straightforward 'general knowledge' test of this at the outset of a two-term module on Irish economic history has convinced this reviewer that for many undergraduates the UK's nearest neighbour remains *terra incognita*. For this reason, if for no other, this volume is particularly useful but what gives it added value is that the maps are accompanied by carefully balanced commentaries.

There are six sections. The introduction offers a quick guide to the debate about whether the Famine represented a turning point, or discontinuity, in Irish history and explains the basis on which the maps have been prepared: 32 counties, 320+ baronies and 163 poor-law unions. Wherever possible the maps are drawn to the smallest practicable unit. What is not discussed are the technical problems which required to be resolved in order to convert the database of Irish historical statistics covering the years 1821 to 1971 into material suitable for graphing and mapping. Although not strictly essential to achieving the aims of the volume, which are to survey the impact of the Famine in the short and medium terms and to illustrate its regional effects, it would have been interesting to know whether their resolution had a wider applicability to other historical data. The following four sections discuss 'the unpeopling of Ireland', 'sex, marriage and families', 'the condition of the people' and 'toil in country and town'. Entirely appropriately, and in contrast to the controversies of the 150th anniversary, the human experience is not neglected for the longest section is devoted to 'the condition of the people'. This covers the economy of the potato eaters, diet, housing, literacy, the decline of the Gaelic language, disease and poor relief.

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Although the great majority of the text inevitably deals with rural Ireland, the database covers urban and industrial Ireland and the authors take care to contrast urban and rural developments. Industrial workers, for example, were not immune to the effects of the Famine and faced a contraction in demand whilst the urban and rural middle classes were burdened by higher local taxation and exposed to famine-related diseases. Ireland's peculiar (and prolonged) path to urbanization is also evident: substantial population growth occurred only in and close to the eastern cities of Belfast and Dublin, but Ireland also became more urbanized because some of the small towns lost population more slowly than the surrounding countryside. Between 1841 and 1851 only one county (Dublin) gained population principally because of the growth of the city; even the pulling power of Belfast did not prevent county Antrim from experiencing population loss. Other rural/urban comparisons relate to the gender imbalance (with an excess of females in the more industrialized, urbanized east), to the lower male age at marriage in Dublin and Belfast (a reflection of better economic opportunities), to diet (in the towns the poor had access to cheap cuts of meat and consumption was relatively high), to housing (first-class housing was associated much more with towns than the countryside), to literacy (rates were higher in the hinterlands of Belfast, Dublin, Waterford and Cork, though not in Galway where the interesting suggestion is made that Gaelic culture and language were a barrier to literacy), to wages (the counties of the eastern seaboard constituted a high wage area with Dublin wages highest) and, of course, to employment. Nevertheless, the maps emphasize the extent to which nineteenth-century Ireland remained a non-industrial economy.

Lest this sounds like a study which merely surveys a range of socio-economic indicators, it should be emphasized that a consistent effort is made to distinguish between changes which can be attributed to the Famine and those which occurred independently, and the conclusion pulls together an impressively wide range of evidence by debating a question posed by Kevin O'Rourke, 'Did the Great Famine matter?' At £19.95 for the paperback edition this excellent work of reference represents one of the publishing bargains of the year.

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Victor Bailey, *This Rash Act: Suicide Across the Life Cycle in the Victorian City*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. £55.00.
Donald Thomas, *The Victorian Underworld*. London: John Murray, 1998. 346pp. 60 plates. $26.95 hbk.
John E. Zucchi, *The Slaves of the Little Harp: Italian Child Musicians in Nineteenth Century Paris, London, and New York*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, new edn, 1999. 208pp. £14.95 pbk.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802321114

These three books deal with various elements of the urban experience in the nineteenth century: crime, poverty, street-life and death. All three use anecdote and narrative to impart to the reader a sense of the lived experience of the poor, ordinary and those deemed anti-social. They do this with varying degrees of success. Donald Thomas's *Victorian Underworld* is one that is filled with the

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entertaining but familiar parade of Dickensian characters; thieves, beggars and cheats, fairground freaks, prize-fighters and prostitutes. Thomas's vision of the 'underworld' has moved on little from that of Kellow Chesney's 1970 publication of the same name, or Donald Low's 1982 book on the Regency underworld, *Thieves' Kitchen*. What all the books of this ilk have in common is their failure to untangle the semantic journey undertaken by commentators of crime in the nineteenth century. They have brought lock, stock and barrel into the mythology embroidered and perpetuated by a complex mix of nineteenth-century media and politics. Like his predecessors, Thomas does not fully explore the meaning of the key concept with which he is dealing, the 'underworld', nor does he refer in any meaningful way to any historical or sociological approaches to the subcultures he is describing. Divided into sections on Crime and Retribution (essentially policing and punishment), Thomas's style is a pick and mix approach. Essentially the book is based upon a narrow group of well-known printed primary sources: Henry Mayhew (*et al.*), *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851–62); 'Walter', *My Secret Life* (*c*. 1888); Henry Mayhew and John Binney, *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life* (1862), and various texts edited by George Dilnot, particularly *The Trial of Jim the Penman* (1930) and *The Trial of the Detectives* (1928). Whilst using a narrow source base is not a crime, *The Victorian Underworld* exemplifies a certain sort of inertia in history publishing. To be fair Thomas's work is aimed at the popular history market, perhaps indicating that the time has come for historians to think more seriously about bridging the gap between scholarly research and peoples' history.

Equally as entertaining as *The Victorian Underworld*, but inestimably more reliable, is John Zucchi's *The Little Slaves of the Harp*, first published in 1990, and recently reprinted in a new edition. This explores the world of migrant child musicians in the nineteenth century. Children from the impoverished towns and villages of northern and southern Italy started appearing in major European cities after the Napoleonic Wars. The communities from which they originated were often remote areas which had suffered and failed to recover from a series of social and economic dislocations in the previous century. Many of the musicians came from the Apennines, such as the villages near Parma, where according to Zucchi, 'emigration offered the best possibilities to meet the cash needs of the peasant' (p. 22). In considerable detail, Zucchi covers the process and motivations behind emigration, following the child organists (from the north) and harpists (from the south) on their journeys to Paris, London and ultimately to New York. The main emphasis of Zucchi's work is the campaigns initiated in those cities to control street musicians. In the case of Italian child musicians this was strongly shaped in all three countries by concerns about street children, criminality and child labour. For example in New York there was concern that the children were being inveigled into a form of white slave trade, Congress passing in 1874 An Act to Protect Persons of Foreign Birth Against Forcible Constraint, or Involuntary Servitude (p. 138). In London the plight of the Italian organ boys was highlighted in a campaign against the noise made by the musicians, resulting in complaints to *The Times* in 1843, from 'One who Loves Not hurdy-gurdies' (p. 83). In Paris the main concern was that of control, with attempts to deport the child aliens prompting the Italian Government to legislation controlling the employment of children in itinerant trades by 1873. By the 1890s, according to Zucchi, child musicians had virtually disappeared from the trade (p. 169). *The Little Slaves of the*

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Harp is well researched and well written. Illuminating what at first sight might seem a peripheral issue, Zucchi has shown how concern and conflict over the child musicians had a wide impact in the middle of the nineteenth century, reflecting the increasing concern and intervention into the lives of the poor by the Western state at this time.

Perhaps more apparent is the significance and meaning of Victorian suicide, written about in Victor Bailey's study of the coroners' files of Hull in *This Rash Act: Suicide Across the Life Cycle in the Victorian City*. Bailey's heavily empirical approach is at times somewhat mechanistic. On one level it is written very clearly, there is a strong strand of narrative and the stories that Bailey tells us are engrossing snapshots of human tragedy. Bailey parades before us a pantheon of the sad, bitter, sick, lonely, bereaved and plain pathetic. Examining suicide, as Bailey points out, allows us to explore the human condition, the material and mental world of past generations. The problem with *This Rash Act* is stylistic; this is a dense book and Bailey has problems in putting together his marriage of quantitative and qualitative material. Having said this, if we ignore the stylistic inconsistencies, I would argue that this is a very good book indeed. As Bailey shows in a chapter on the historiography/sociology of suicide, what has been written has tended to be dominated by debate over the sources used to investigate suicide. Thus the conflict between sociological approaches, such as that of Durkheim and Jack Douglas has shaped historians' attitudes to the study of suicide. Since more recent thinking has dismissed any empirical notion of suicide as a 'social fact', the study of suicide as a cultural construction has meant that suicide rates, coroners' inquisitions, and newspaper reports are only thought to have value as indicators of social meaning. Bailey, on the other hand, has tried to blend the hermeneutics of socially constructed texts with a prosopographical approach, seeking to set individual case studies and stories in the broader context of the life cycle. Thus a substantial part of the book is given over to an examination of suicide across the life cycle from Early-Life Transitions, to The Prime of Life, to Early Old Age, to Late Old Age. Bailey seeks for us to understand suicide as one possible aspect of the life-course. Moreover, he is at pains to link this understanding to the vagaries of urban industrial settings, perhaps finally returning to a Durkheimian position after all. Indeed, as these texts suggest, the dislocation of the urban experience continues to be a faithful theme for social historians, a factor that all three have in common. Thus the city is the ultimate point of reference for these texts, shaping and structuring the meaning of social life and death.

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Edward K. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department, 1900–1945*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. 385pp. No price stated.
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Edward K. Escobar documents the highly complex and changing historical relationship between the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the city's Mexican American population between the years 1900 and 1945. Eschewing

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ahistorical analyses of the hostility between the two, Escobar argues that 'the relationship between the two groups changed from one in which neither side had any particular view of the other, to one in which both sides viewed each other with suspicion and hostility' (p. 6), culminating in the well known 'zoot-suit' riots of the summer of 1943 and, in its wake, the creation of a Mexican American political identity.

Drawing on a large body of archival sources and newspaper accounts, the author constructs an impressive and nuanced historical account of how the mutual enmity between the LAPD and the Mexican American community, which created the context for the riots, came to be. Beginning in early twentieth-century Los Angeles, the time in which the city 'began the process of evolving from a violent frontier cow town into a modern metropolitan center' (p. 21), Escobar shows how Mexicans, the second largest segment of the city's foreign-born population by 1910, struggled to eke out an existence in the midst of a city run by a fiercely anti-labour government and business oligarchy. Mexicans also faced the added burden of severe racial discrimination in areas like housing and employment, where only the most menial jobs were made available to them. As a result, many became active in labour unions (p. 31). According to Escobar, though during this time the LAPD paid no special attention to Mexican crime, its role as an organization white elites relied upon to suppress labour union activity brought it into constant conflict with Mexican workers as well as political activists. Escobar also shows that during the Depression era, an arm of the LAPD called the 'red squad' was responsible for anti-labour bringing it into contact with Mexican garment and agricultural workers. As well, the LAPD was instrumental in the 'deportation sweeps' of the Mexican community during this era. The mistrust these LAPD practices generated were punctuated by a number of developments: the LAPD's move toward a police-professionalism model advocating more aggressive policing, the selective and biased use of race-based crime statistics and the emergence of a theory of 'Mexican criminality'. The 1930s also gave rise to a 'Mexican American' generation, consisting mostly of the American-born children of Mexican immigrants. Characterized by 'a more aggressive political orientation' (p. 156), this generation actively sought to combat police misconduct in the Mexican American community and injustices in sensational criminal cases involving Mexican American defendants. The demographic and cultural changes of the Second World War era, particularly the rise of a highly visible zoot-suit youth subculture (distinguished by its outlandish clothes and anti-social behaviour) created what Escobar calls 'zoot suit hysteria' among white elites, media, and police. All were (erroneously) convinced the zoot suiters were part of a huge Mexican American youth crime wave. This was most exemplified in the hyperbole surrounding the 'Sleepy Lagoon Trial' of seventeen Mexican American youths for murder. This hysteria, in turn, created the context for the 1943 riots in which groups of US servicemen systematically attacked Mexican American youths with both tacit and overt police support. Escobar attempts to show how the Mexican American response to the riot, spearheaded by groups like the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee (SLDC) and the Coordinating Council For Latin American Youth (CCLAY), was indicative of the creation of a new politically oriented and articulated Mexican American identity. Due to the efforts of these groups in the face of riots, suggests Escobar, 'white Americans came to see Mexican Americans as a minority group' (p. 288) forcing

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white elites to address their concerns – a development which changed Mexican Americans' racial identity.

While Escobar's idea of the emergence of a 'political identity' is compelling, it would benefit from further elucidation of how it both differs and intersects with other ways in and through which identities are constructed. In addition, Escobar's claim that whites' recognition of Mexican American oppression shaped Mexican American identity, though interesting, needs to be developed further. It is also unclear whether, as Escobar suggests, the political activism of the 1930s was new, or, by contrast, whether it was in some sense continuous with earlier labour radicalism and labour activism. Lastly, it is evident that there were divergent visions within this politically active generation. Escobar notes that one strategy of the middle-class and accommodationalist CCLAY was to argue that 'anti-American discrimination had nothing to do with race; rather . . . it resulted from ''Anglo'' Americans not realising that Mexicans were also white'. The SLDC, by contrast, was generally deemed more radical, and, incidentally, more tied to everyday Mexican Americans. The CCLAY's gesture to whiteness as an emancipatory strategy perhaps suggests that what emerged in the riot's aftermath was not a singular political identity, but a multiplicity of them.

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Douglas Monroy, *Rebirth: Mexican Los Angeles from the Great Migration to the Great Depression*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. ix + 332pp. 24 plates. 1 map. $45.00, hbk, $17.95 pbk; £35.00, £14.95 pbk.
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Douglas Monroy's superb study, *Rebirth: Mexican Los Angeles from the Great Migration to the Great Depression* is the latest in a series of books on the history of Mexicans in that city. Monroy follows in the footsteps of Albert Camarillo, George Sanchez, Lizabeth Haas, Ricardo Romo, Antonio José Ríos-Bustemonte and Pedro Castillo in covering the history of the city with the largest Mexican population outside of Mexico City. Monroy offers a snapshot of Mexican immigrants prior to their Americanization. He chooses to focus on '*Mexico de afuera*', which roughly translates to 'Mexico outside Mexico'. In doing so his study differs from that of George Sanchez and others who have looked at the pressures on the immigrant population undergoing the Americanization process. By contrast, Monroy shows how Mexicans maintained and recreated their cultural heritage in Los Angeles in opposition to the Anglo conquest and assimilation pressures. In his conclusion he notes that those who most successfully resisted eschewed radical politics. They embraced a conservative ethnic mindset, maintaining their deference to religious and local community leaders. He argues those most critical of the American lifestyle following the conquest of 1848 were more likely to become involved in unions and other labour organizations. These institutions quickly moulded the activists into Americans concerned with progress, change and social equality. Monroy offers no grand conclusion about the process of Mexican history in the United States, but instead offers two trajectories. On the one hand, there was assimilation through political activism leading to social and economic progress, especially during the Second World War

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with the rise of the GI Generation. On the other hand, the forced deportations of the 1930s suggest another trajectory: a return to Mexico, to traditions, to the past. 'We can conclude only that some things were lost when the commodification of life replaced the affective bonds of non-industrial culture, and that some things were gained when notions of individual autonomy, particularly for women and children, challenged, often in a commercialized manner, the confinements of traditional culture' (p. 268). That Monroy is able to convey the motivations behind both impulses without casting blame or criticizing either direction taken is a testament to his skills as a scholar.

Monroy covers the Anglo creation of the myth of the Mexican illegal immigrant from the early 1900s. This was intimately involved in the so-called 'Spanish' myth, the idea that Los Angeles and southern California's history and culture was connected to Spain and the Spanish explorers and settlers and not to Mexico. Monroy thus starts with a description of one of the ubiquitous 'fiestas' celebrating *faux* Spanish culture put on by business interests in Los Angeles, promoting the area for tourism and settlement. The presence of Mexicans as low wage labourers made the 'Fiesta Days' possible. The isolation and marginalization of the agricultural and low wage urban workers produced *barrios*, or communities that evidenced more concern for Mexico than for the economic and political processes that impoverished the Mexicans. Monroy covers the cultural manifestations that made daily lives of poor people more enjoyable: the ethnic food, dance, music, celebrations and religion. His descriptions of Mexican theatre, boxing, and the Mexican continuing love for baseball are especially rich. Cultural chauvinism was expressed in pride in Mexico and the rejection of things American as a sign of rebellion against mistreatment. The actress Dolores del Rio was quoted as saying 'Never will I become an American citizen. Never!' (p. 39).

Monroy covers the creation of agri-business, through irrigation and railroad construction, the search for workers and the push factors of poverty, starvation and violence that forced Mexicans to take jobs in the United States. Whites ascribed racial features to Mexicans that made them 'suitable' for low wage agriculture work. 'As workers, the Mexicans are stronger physically than the Japanese, more tractable and more easily managed' said one study of immigrant workers (p. 103). Experts and others used IQ tests to confirm the supposed inferiority of Mexicans and to confirm their station as menial workers. These prejudices led white middle-class reformers to launch Americanization campaigns and in the 1930s repatriation drives. Meanwhile, screen stars like Lupe Velez and Dolores del Rio brought images of independent women into Mexican homes and encouraged daughters to reject traditional patriarchal authority and seek independent lifestyles, creating generational frictions and confirming the desire of parents to return to Mexico. Yet at the same time, the technological conveniences of stoves, washing machines, electricity and plumbing encouraged them to stay.

Monroy's in-depth analysis of Mexican political activism, both influenced by the Mexican Revolution and the American labour movement, adds much needed diversity to typical treatments of such organizations as the Industrial Workers of the World and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Monroy's study is thus of value to immigration, labour and social historians.

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José Luis Oyón (ed.), *Vida obrera en la Barcelona de entreguerres*. Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporà de Barcelona, 1998. 286pp. No price stated.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802351113

This book is based on a number of talks given in the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona. In the introduction Oyón explains that its aim is to discuss the impact of the reordering of urban space in the restructuring of working-class lifestyles and culture within the neighbourhood and community in Barcelona. There are three basic types of chapter. The first set of chapters focuses on the process of urban growth itself. The second group attempts to relate this process to working-class and popular culture and politics, while a third type centres on projects for urban reconstruction.

It is, I think, within the first batch that the bulk of the more innovative work is to be found. The city of Barcelona grew massively in the inter-war period from 587, 000 inhabitants in 1910 to one million by 1930. The articles by Mercè Tatjer Mir, Oyón and Carme García Soler, Carles Santacana i Torres, and Carme Miralles and Oyón, analyse in some depth the impact of urban development on older working-class neighbourhoods, in general more centrally located, and newly constructed neighbourhoods on what rapidly became the periphery. Barcelona was in European terms densely populated. And to an important degree workers clustered in tightly packed communities around the place of work. Yet some change was underfoot. In a precisely argued chapter, which benefits from both painstaking research and excellent cartography, Miralles and Oyón explain how the fall in the real cost of tram fares from the years of the First World War did lead to a slow decentralization of the working-class neighbourhood, with some more highly skilled workers in particular choosing to live at a considerable distance from the factory gates.

Santacana i Torres also brings in political and ideological considerations. On the new periphery, faced with a serious infrastructural deficit, in the Second Republic (1932–36) workers began to agitate for improvements. This was capitalized on by a strong anarcho-syndicalist movement, which not only organized rent strikes but which was also able to rally some of these workers behind its insurrectionary activities. This had ethno-cultural implications. The peripheral neighbourhoods had witnessed very heavy immigration from other parts of Spain. And from the 1920s large numbers of southern Andalusian and Murcian workers had poured into Barcelona. It was their participation which encouraged the stereotypical image in middle-class Barcelona of the uneducated Murcian immersed in crime, vice and anarchist agitation.

These chapters raise a number of interesting questions. In comparative terms, did the fact that workers remained for so long located in tightly knit communities have political and ideological implications? Does it help us to explain the continuing centrality of class to political discourse through to the 1930s? At the same time, did the rise of the new periphery, combined with the drift away from the place of work, lead to shifts in political allegiance? It has been argued that in the 1930s it was the 'poorer working class' (amongst whom non-Catalans formed an important percentage) who had benefited little from the social reforms and new machinery for collective bargaining, who were more attracted to anarchism. On the other hand, white-collar and skilled workers tended to affiliate to more

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'moderate' Catalanist and Marxist parties and unions. It is on the base of work of the type described above, with its use of sources such as company archives and electoral registers (when combined with data on unions, voting patterns along with more qualitative sources) that more precise analyses of these questions can be undertaken.

The chapters more exclusively focused on the cultural and political implications are not in general of such a high standard. Pere Gabriel provides us with a good introduction to some of these issues. He undertakes an overview of working-class and popular cultural associations within the neighbourhoods (co-operatives, mutual aid societies, etc.), and points to the importance of the Paralelo avenue, located near the port and the mecca of popular entertainment, in creating a sense of a unified city above the neighbourhood. Yet the other chapters do not really follow this up. Both Mercedes Vilanova and Anna Monjo indicate the importance of oral history in analysing labour in the 1930s. Monjo in particular gives us an excellent summary of her work on working-class attitudes to the anarchist union leadership. Yet neither chapter is sufficiently connected to the major themes of urban restructuring and the neighbourhood.

The chapters on urban regeneration programmes are probably the most disappointing. Eduard Masjuan undertakes an interesting analysis of anarchist thinking on the city. The remaining authors, Francesc Roca (taylorization), Vicent Casals Costa (extension of green spaces) and Josep Maria Rovira (Le Corbusier and the Macià project) have produced scholarly articles in their own right. Yet far more attention should have been paid to how their work relates to the key issues outlined above.

Overall, then, the book is rather uneven, but there are some excellent chapters and it does provide food for thought on the linkages between urban restructuring, working-class culture, politics and ideology.

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Helga Schultz and Alan Nothnagle (eds), *Grenze der Hoffnung. Geschichte und Perspektiven der Grenzregion an der Oder*. 2nd revised edition. Berlin: Arno Spitz Verlag, 1999. 289pp. DM 58.

DOI: 10.1017/S096392680236111X

The distribution of the German nation has never corresponded terribly well to the various incarnation of its state borders. Historically this was particularly the case in the east where, in the first half of the twentieth century, the interaction between Germans and Poles took on a formative significance. During the Cold War, so long as the German–Polish interface 'played second fiddle' to a unity between the GDR and Poland dictated by the Soviet Union, and so long as it was an issue the FRG addressed through the very measured channels of *Ostpolitik*, here was a 'dog' which could not really 'bark'. But Reunification happened over ten years ago and the construction of a new kind of German–Polish borderland is well under way. This set of essays is a welcome investigation of recent developments along the banks of the Oder. It reflects the work being co-ordinated by the Institute for Transformation Studies located at Frankfurt/Oder.

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There is plenty to hold the interest here. Wegener's foreword examines some of the characteristics of a borderland before a useful introduction puts the whole undertaking in context. Today's Oder region is easily characterized as a place with only slender roots in history. After the Second World War, Germans were ousted from the Polish side of the border; they were replaced by new Poles from the east. On both sides of the river, refugees huddled together with little in common. A sense of uprootedness is underlined by a number of contributions. Schultz highlights the destruction that was wreaked around the Oder in 1945. Old cities were declared fortifications by the desperate National Socialist regime and destroyed as a consequence. They were replaced by a soulless, modernist sprawl. As Poland tried to rebuild after the war, well-established landed estates were broken up. Nothnagle's essay examines regional German–Polish relations as they developed after 1945. There was a substantial contrast between the line of communist propaganda, which preached fraternity between peoples, and the reality of relations stamped with paranoia. How specifically economic contacts developed locally until 1990 is discussed by Rutowska. She maintains that against all odds, common economic interests did develop across the border.

A group of essays deals with the present Euro-region of Viadrina. Stefan Krätke analyses the different aspects of the Oder's region's current peripheral position and compares it to other parts of Europe. Complexity of process emerges as the watchword. The Oder marks the border of the EU and is also a site of transition from economic prowess to comparative weakness. The changes that are happening on either side of the river are equally extensive, however, and they give Krätke grounds for optimism. Borderlands, after all, are not just zones of conflict. They are transit sites, can become attractive trading centres, are centres for mutual contact and can show the sort of differentials in wage structures that attract employers. Something of an antidote to both this positive note and the idea that history holds only a second order importance even here, is provided by the contributions which probe attitudes. Lisiecki has collected information about 1,008 Poles and Germans living in Slubice and Frankfurt/ Oder. The evidence shows how mental divisions can transcend even the most wholesale of material upheavals. Of his samples, 60–65 per cent still believe reconciliation between the two nationalities is hard or impossible. Less than 3 per cent can conceive of having one of the other nationality as a family member.

The Oder region, then, is a new borderland comprising a territory absorbed by an established, wealthy EU state and one falling to an aspiring EU member. Naturally the experiences of transition show their differences, but commonalities too. Despite everything, we find once again there is no such thing as a land without History. All of this makes for a fascinating study which is rich in ideas and insight. This team of scholars is interpreting an unfolding story to fine effect.

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Deborah S. Davis (ed.), *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. xiii + 366pp. 35 figures. 21 tables. Bibliography. £13.50, $22.
DOI: 10.1017/S0963926802371116

How might the current economic reform in China alter personal attachments and social relationships? Is China condemned to undergo the same impersonalization and ceaseless pursuit of material gains that the 'West' experienced? Will this new sociability 'ultimately generate the actions capable of weakening or toppling an authoritarian state' (p. 21), and create a 'western'-styled democracy, perhaps even Ernest Gellner's civil society? This volume of essays, first presented at the conference 'Consumers and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Urban China' held at Yale University in 1997 provides an interdisciplinary answer to these value-laden questions.

Inspired by Arjun Appadurai, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens, Jurgen Habermas and other theoreticians, the authors meticulously offer a range of possibilities while agreeing that the 'new consumerism . . . have weakened the hegemonic sureties (of the regime)'. David Fraser deconstructed Shanghai housing advertisements, and found developers selling not merely real estate but also privacy and havens, presumably from state domination. Deborah Davis and Julia Sensenbrenner surveyed parental purchases for children in Shanghai's department stores for clues to the rejection of Maoist egalitarian ideal. The cultural and political meanings behind the decision to wear western bridal gowns among Xian's Hui residents are explored by Maris Gillette. Studying Nanjing's food market, Ann Veeck found that, as the state vacated control, the resulting 'near perfect' competitive market promoted impersonal social relationships. The totalitarian regime thus seems to be in retreat. From housing to food, consumers were no longer dependent upon the state's distributive system. Alternative access to goods and services enhanced the autonomy of Chinese urbanites.

Other authors in the collection found more nuances in this potential triumph of the private over the state-dominated public. Lu Hanlong argues that the state remains in control, appropriating the ideal of 'relative comfort' ('xiaokang') while infusing the ancient concept with new meanings and quantitative targets. Kathleen Erwin's analysis of sex and advice hotlines led her to conclude that new telecommunications do not necessarily result in greater individual freedom. Where absolute state control might have faltered, 'traditional' values and solutions filled the void. Likewise, studies on the increasingly popular practice of sending greeting cards (Mary Erbaugh) and explosive growth of fast foods such as McDonalds (Yunxiang Yan), while familiar to outside observers, nevertheless might convey different social and political meanings. On the other hand, market forces did compromise, if not corrupt, the state's control. In four fascinating studies on Shanghai's dance halls (James Farrer), Shenzhen's bowling alleys (Gan Wang), Xiamen's smoking habits (David Wank), and consumption of public monuments and spaces in Nanjing (Richard Kraus), we saw how workers, private entrepreneurs, local cadres and urban residents negotiated with state policies.

The reason why the prognoses differ stems, in part, from the varying assumptions and methodologies employed by the authors. While some took the Maoist

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regime of the 1960s and 1970s as the yardstick of absolute state control, others remind us of the local networks, black markets and back doors. To the extent that these weapons of the weak (or well connected) helped to circumvent state control then and now, such practices also blurred the stark contrast drawn between the 'old' statist and the 'new' market-oriented regime.

To the Chinese Communist Party, the theoretical and policy dilemmas are equally ambivalent. As the coastal cities and urban consumers went on their spending spree, the rest of the country fell behind. Harnessing the discontent of the rural poor and urban unemployed could give the regime a popular cause against the nouveaux riches. Instead of succumbing to the consumer revolution, the regime is leaving no stone unturned in foraging a state-directed civil society by resurrecting traditional moral values, including even Irving Babbitt's new humanism.

Travelling through the affluent coastal Chinese cities recently reminds me of the difficulties in applying idealized western concepts. As I admired the traffic jams created by Buicks, Mercedes, Toyotas and Volkswagons (surely signs of personal freedom and choice, given the American love affair with the automobile), taxi drivers (among the best informed in the country) observed that the state was encouraging such consumerism to absorb some of the wealth created by privatization. Has the regime entered a more liberal phase which, instead of heavy-handed indoctrination, it manipulated through policies, advertisements, and public relations to maintain its rule? What is the meaning of 'control' or 'weakening' in this context?

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