

about the growth of leisure towns. This theme is also taken up by Rose McCormack whose evidence for the pastimes and sporting activities of leisured women in Bath and Tunbridge Wells overturns the view that respectable women only took up sporting activity in the late nineteenth century. Gender history is another area which Borsay himself acknowledges was a major omission from *The English Urban Renaissance*.

A study of the *Sherborne Mercury* by Jonathan Barry and George Tatham addresses the themes of commercial and cultural development as the twin drivers of this important provincial newspaper which balanced regional interests with national and international news sourced largely from London. Apart from this chapter and Adrian Green's passing reference to the contrast between the housing of the political and social elites in provincial towns and those in London, there is little mention of the capital. Similarly, chapters on the development of Scottish and Irish towns omit Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin and Belfast. Whilst understandable, this does give an unbalanced picture. Borsay himself acknowledges this in his own chapter. Writing about the omission of London from the original book, he attributes this largely to London's researchers tending to ignore developments beyond the capital. However, there is also an unfortunate tendency for provincial researchers to avoid 'the infernal wen'. More positively, the collection does provide comparison with urban development elsewhere. In addition to the chapters dealing with Scottish and Irish towns, there is also an interesting comparison of the flowering of English provincial towns with Amsterdam's earlier seventeenth-century regeneration and a particularly illuminating discussion of the relevance of Borsay's ideas to Hungary's urbanization in the nineteenth century. The final chapter covers the contrasting ideas informing the planned but unbuilt city of Azilia in North America.

The weaknesses of the book are common to such collections. Each paper leaves you wanting more; a feeling reinforced by the minimal discussion of the commonality and contrasts between the various regions considered. The great strength of the book is in largely moving away from the constraints of labelling towns to look at the process of urbanization more broadly. It should also achieve the other aim of the editors: the stimulation of further research in the topics raised. Overall, the book provides an extremely useful guide both to the historiography of the English provincial town of the period and to the development of urban studies since Borsay's original publication. The introduction and Borsay's own essay alone are compelling reasons to read the book.

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Joseph Ben Prestel, *Emotional Cities Debates on Urban Change in Berlin and Cairo 1860–1910*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xvii + 222pp. 3 maps. 7 figures. Bibliography. £65.00 hbk.
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The recent fashion for 'histories of the emotions' meant that it was probably inevitable that urban historians would turn their attentions to this emerging sub-discipline. Joseph Ben Prestel offers us an interesting comparative history of

debates about urban change and progress in Berlin and Cairo, two cities that are rarely compared directly. Although from very different cultural and historical contexts, both cities were undergoing rapid transformation during the late nineteenth century, embracing modern technologies, planning and new forms of special organization – and often in uneven and contradictory ways. The author's aim is to escape from teleological assumptions about the nature of western modernization and urban hierarchies that place European cities in an inherently more advanced stage. In this sense, the book builds on a number of recent works that emphasize how modern technologies transformed Cairo, with electrical and communication technologies making new districts of Cairo as 'modern' as those of Europe.

In some respects, the structure of the book follows a traditional model of comparisons around cultural and emotional responses to urban phenomena. Love, eroticism and prostitution form the early part of the book, drawing on some well-known accounts, but also the author's own lively and engaging research. This is followed by a discussion of debates around physical exercise and wider discourses of the body in the context of modern urban life. With the analysis we have valuable discussions of how urban space helps construct these preoccupations and discourses, with special reference to those urban spaces that are distinctively modern features of the city, such as the new suburbs that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. Here, there are some interesting moves between traditional technical histories, such as debates about building regulations, to broader meta-narratives about urban change and the insecurities associated with modern lifestyles.

The broad argument here is that the contentious debates about urban change in both places are remarkably similar and follow comparable patterns, even if some of the details are different and have slightly different chronologies. This should, however, not be surprising when one considers the long history of Cairo's story of modernization, one that can be dated to the period of Mohammed Ali. Nor should we be surprised that European discourses become influential when one thinks of the deliberately 'Europeanizing' tendencies encouraged by subsequent Egyptian rulers. The author is also keen to emphasize that many of these emotions and discourses reflect very distinctive middle-class concerns. Again, given the importance of Italian architects, French retailers, Greek tradesmen and British financiers in Egypt during the period, this is hardly surprising. After 1881, there was a further foreign influx, especially after Cromer's 'race against bankruptcy' eventually brought growth and prosperity, as well as many new foreign entrepreneurs, to Egypt. This was a very cosmopolitan era, when European influence was at its zenith.

As a comparative urban history, this is undoubtedly an interesting and engaging account. However, some of Prestel's contentions are questionable at best. This is, sadly, a reflection more of the methodological issues associated with 'histories of the emotions' and the way historians in this tradition tend to use sources, rather than the author's own undoubted ability. Sweeping generalizations about general emotional trends tend to follow from engagement with a relatively small set of historical texts or opinions. The idea that urban change intensified discourses about the ability of individuals to order and control their emotions may be partly true, but as self-control is a central feature of religious guidance in many traditions, it is not clear how urban modernization may have shaped this independently of the religious revivalism of the nineteenth century. Indeed, there is surprisingly little

about religion and the city within this book, a fact that is somewhat surprising when one thinks of the extensive Christian missionary activity of the period and the contemporary modernization debates within Islam. The generalization about Cairo becoming a 'more emotional' and less rational space is also very difficult to sustain when one thinks of the aggressive colonial urban interventions after 1881, building on the extensive replanning of urban space that began in the 1860s. Indeed, short-term emotional outrage at prostitution, poverty and begging can, paradoxically, be read as an example of the city becoming more rational in special governance, with public figures becoming more sensitive to the city's ills as the march of modernization forced social issues into sharper focus. There are also some very odd readings of Cairo's urban history. For example, we see assertions that during the British period the state was absent from 'the city's future development' and there was little regard for urban planning (p. 116). This position is very difficult to sustain, given the state's role in general public improvements and its encouragement of urban expansion in the years up to 1914. Moreover, the new districts of Zamalek, Garden City, Maadi and Heliopolis were all meticulously planned settlements, constrained by complex building regulations and informed by the latest European town planning ideas.

Overall, then, the book reflects many weaknesses of similar 'histories of the emotions'. Without a clear methodology to categorize, map and explain public emotions, we are often left with selective readings and subjective interpretations. We end up with histories that focus on the individual manifestations of emotional symptoms, rather than the underlying causes of those symptoms or an evaluation of what is really happening in the city. While emotions can themselves have a role to play in causation, the processes that produce emotions must be properly understood if their power and impact is to be appreciated. Without this, we are lost in a world of comparative subjective assertions, rather than rigorous comparative history. As a piece of research, this is an interesting and readable history of specific public debate in two cities. For this reason, it will repay the urban historian's attention, but its interpretations must be treated with caution. The book's weaknesses are its willingness to make broad assumptions and generalizations based on limited evidence and its faith in a historical sub-discipline whose epistemological and methodological foundation is built largely on sand.

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Sumanta Banerjee, *Memoirs of Roads: Calcutta from Colonial Urbanization to Global Modernization*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016. x + 175pp. 5 maps. £24.12 hbk.

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Memoirs of Roads describes streets as registers of historical processes that shape the social and mental world of city dwellers in Calcutta. The book draws upon Marshall Berman's influential work *All that Is Solid Melts into Air* (1982) to describe arterial streets where city dwellers gather, wander and gaze, and through these activities inscribe meanings. The book stands apart from existing scholarship on cities in its detailed analysis of urbanization as an ongoing process, constantly