

deserve. Most historians working on east central and eastern European cities and urban communities are far from orientaling their subject, but rather aim to carve out differences and alternative functionalities of cities in the eastern European imperial peripheries. However, Murphy's fascinating and refreshing study opens new perspectives and may trigger a debate on the topic.

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Clemens Wischermann, Aline Steinbrecher and Philip Howell (eds.), *Animal History in the Modern City: Exploring Liminality*. London: Bloomsbury, 2019. xi + 245pp. 26 figures. 4 tables. Index. £85 hbk. £73.44 eBook. £73.44 ePDF.
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The drought has turned to a flood. Where little was thought or written about animals in urban history before the turn of the millennium, now we have a rush of edited collections and companion volumes about the juxtaposition of species in cities ancient and modern. There were at least five published in 2018, with several more to come in 2019, including the volume under review. As inevitably happens, particularly with conference proceedings, some of these collections are uneven in style and lacking in clear purpose, but not so *Animal History in the Modern City*. This important new book sets out to explore the liminality of animals in urban history and the editors' introduction provides a strong conceptual basis for achieving this objective.

In the literature, there are many interpretations of the liminal. The starting point in this book is the theoretical platform established in the twentieth century by anthropologists such as Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner and more recently Bjørn Thomassen. This is developed in the introduction through a subtle and nuanced development of a number of strands that are capable of testing empirically. If challenged, I would probably have said that liminality is about the in-between spaces where animals can survive and sometimes even prosper in human environments. But I was persuaded by this book that the idea can be opened out much further into ways of representing and understanding urban modernity. We are told that it is a mistake to identify the liminal with the marginal; rather, liminality is at the core of the modern project. While liminality can be seen as another way of thinking through the hybridity of actor networks or assemblages of objects, the authors want us to go further and pay attention to the co-production of species and the social differentiation that follows, arguing that the mechanisms of domination, oppression and exploitation lead to transformations that have commonalities for underprivileged humans *and* animals.

The theoretical superstructure of the introductory chapter is inspirational in many ways and helps the reader to imagine new conceptual coinages, such as hum-an-imals or limin-animals. The potential danger for ambitious editors is that their contributors may not want to deliver on such a prospectus. But there are a sufficient number of chapters in this collection that are fully on message to carry the argument through from beginning to end. As Wischermann and

colleagues assert, 'animals, plants, fungi, and microbes...have started to appear alongside humans...with legibly biographical and political rights' (p. 10). This is not just in urban history but by now across the humanities and social sciences. What is different in this book is the authors' collective determination to make this happen through detailed case-studies that stress liminality.

One way of classifying the contributions in a book of this sort might be the degree to which the animals under discussion were under human control, along a spectrum from domestic pets to rats and cockroaches. Interestingly, here there is little about wildness, the closest being Nadir Weber's discussion of hunting in seventeenth-century Paris. The distinctions we can make are more between, on the one hand, those animals whose very existence depended upon a production regime, such as Annette Leiderer's butcher dogs, who disappeared when modern slaughterhouses were introduced, Aline Steinbrecher's performing dogs and the zoo animals of Wiebke Reinert and Mieke Roscher. And on the other hand, there are animals that exist in less stable equilibrium with humans: the stray dogs of Victorian London described by Philip Howell or Dolly Jørgensen's bats. For me, the two most interesting chapters were a little out of kilter with the rest and took methodological risks. Andrew Wells explores the ontological status of dead animals and the nuisances they caused, coming up with the challenging notion of zombie liminality. Éric Baratay's chapter is written from the viewpoint of a giraffe, an epistemological novelty that he carries off sensitively and successfully.

It may seem that I am buying the full prospectus of this collection but there are a few wrinkles. I cannot go all the way, for instance, with Baratay's epigram that 'all history is animal history of one kind or another'. Nor do I understand why in their introduction the editors, while expressing pleasure in the multidisciplinary nature of human-animal studies, repeatedly appeal to anthropology as an intellectual context. In my view, this is unnecessary when the main body of the book, with the clear exception of Zehle's chapter on boy 'leopards' in Sierra Leone, is admirably broad church in its disciplinary mix.

This is a book with an introductory chapter and 12 case-studies. Only 2 of the 13 authors are based in the Anglophone world and the preponderance are from Germany and Switzerland. As a result, there is a refreshingly different slant on the literature cited. The book shows good production values, with full footnotes and reference lists in each chapter, an extensive index, and 26 figures. Now we need more collections of this quality, maybe with different theoretical perspectives, to do justice to the excitement of the emerging human-animal theme in urban history.

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Malcolm Dick and Elaine Mitchell (eds.), *Gardens and Green Spaces in the West Midlands since 1700*. Hatfield: West Midlands Publications, 2018. xvi + 212pp. 21 plates. 67 figures. £16.99 pbk.
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For those wishing to explore gardening in a variety of different socio-economic contexts and to extend debate beyond the career plantings of famous designers