

## Reviews of books

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The volume under review is a new journal published by the University of Valladolid in Spain. The editors present it as an open, plural and interdisciplinary organ of scholarly communication. It is scheduled to be published once a year, following the structure of the first issue, which includes a monographic dossier, another section of miscellaneous articles, and a final one devoted to book reviews and information about Ph.D. and M.A. theses submitted in the Department of Medieval History in Valladolid.

Popular culture is the subject of the thematic dossier in this volume. It opens with a general introduction to the main bibliography on the subject for medieval and early modern Europe. There follows an article by Peter Blickle on the communal origins of a concept central to the formation of the early modern state, 'common wealth' (*Gemeinmutz*), which the Swiss historian finds articulated in municipal documents of towns and villages of the German Empire prior to its appropriation by princes and kings. The other three studies in this section deal with aspects of popular culture in Spain. Learning to read and to write in fifteenth-century Seville is sketched out from a number of notarial documents, which are moreover transcribed. Rafael Narbona offers a well-organized overview of witchcraft, superstition and healing in Valencia, based on sources as varied as the sermons of St Vincent Ferrer, pastoral visitations, contemporary literature and civil lawsuits, the latter an important alternative to the inquisitorial documentation traditionally used in studies of magic. An article on festivals and plays in Castilian rural society closes this section.

The miscellaneous section may be of particular interest to urban historians. Of special relevance is the excellent study of municipal justice in Castilian towns by Juan Antonio Bonachía, which surveys its principles, organization, practice and agents in the context of the expansion of royal jurisdiction at the end of the Middle Ages. Particularly valuable is the wide range of local monographs the author takes into account. Carlos Reglero studies deserted villages in the region of Montes de Torozos in the Duero river valley, and attributes their depopulation less to catastrophic events or seigneurial pressure, than to shifts within broader demographic networks. The final article explores the impact of the Hundred Years' War on the cities of the Loire region (Tours, Orléans, Angers and Blois), especially in regard to fortifications, organization of the urban militia and tax distribution.

Some of the reviews in the final section may also be of interest to urban historians, particularly several recent studies of the *arlarde* (a review of the local

militia) of Valladolid, held in 1503 and apparently an extraordinary source for the social and economic as well as military history of the city.

**María José del Río**

Universidad Autónoma of Madrid

**David Buisseret (ed.)**, *Envisioning the City. Six Studies in Urban Cartography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. xiii + 181pp. £39.95.

The importance and fascination of maps emerge clearly from David Buisseret's collection which offers a valuable approach to urban history in a global setting. The first of the contributions, Nancy Steinhardt's far-reaching consideration of the situation in China, explains why Western concepts of accuracy are inappropriate: 'No map of a Chinese city could escape correspondence to a set of criteria associated with some textual or symbolic purpose. Mapmaking in pre-modern China was not a technical exercise striving toward accuracy but an art among elite arts in which service of state and associated lofty purpose of virtue can supersede truth.' Cartography in China represented traditional values. In contrast, Western cartography was affected by an earlier secularization of knowledge. This can be seen as a weakness inhibiting holistic understandings of life and the environment, and the symbolic meanings that landscapes possess in many non-Western traditions. However, in the case of China, it is clear from this essay that the indigenous sense of space cannot be presented as egalitarian. Indeed, in general, a romanticization of indigenous cartographic imagination may be inappropriate, as it neglects the social configuration of knowledge, access to it and power within such societies.

Naomi Miller considers the city maps contained in the Renaissance editions of Ptolemy's *Geography*, and shows that they were still rooted in the culture of the medieval world. Richard Kagan assesses the reluctance to abandon imaginative presentations of early modern Spanish cities. He emphasizes the impact of the notion of the city as community. This led to presentations in the direction of metaphor and definitions of the meanings of *civitas* via the image of the *urbs*. Kagan notes his dissatisfaction with the existing literature on the development of city views. He sees it as teleological and progressive, the relentless move from portrait to plan, view to map. Instead, Kagan demonstrates both the multifaceted nature of city views and the extent to which their character was shared by the purposes to which they were originally put.

Martha Pollak emphasizes the role of military considerations in historic urban cartography. Asserting the importance of urban fortification and defence, she presents them as the source of the prolific cartographic movement of seventeenth-century Europe and argues that they came to influence the form and perception of the city. Buisseret describes collections of city models and emphasizes the value of the model approach. 'When a large body of people needs to be rapidly acquainted with the outlines of a city, there is no substitute for a model of it, as many tourist centers of our time have come to realize. In short, to portray the city it is often best to model it'. Gerald Danzer offers an account of Daniel Burnham's 1909 *Plan of Chicago* in which it is shown to encapsulate views of the city and of urban life.

This handsome, heavily-illustrated volume invites consideration of the more

recent situation and particularly of the difficulty of presenting cities. In most urban maps cities emerge as the spaces between streets. Differences within the city, for example of wealth, or environmental or housing quality, are ignored. The perceptions that create and reflect senses of urban space, often rival, contested and atavistic, are neglected, in favour of a bland uniform background that is described, and thus explained, in so far as there is any explanation, in terms of roads.

**Jeremy Black**

University of Exeter

**George Sheeran**, *Medieval Yorkshire Towns. People, Buildings and Spaces*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998. ix + 212pp. 97 plates. 15 figures. 13 tables. Bibliography. No price stated.

Over the last thirty years research on urban documentary sources together with archaeological excavation and the study of standing buildings has produced a mass of information on medieval towns, much of it not easily accessible. There is an urgent requirement for synthetic regional or county studies of towns and the title of this publication raises high expectations.

With copious monochrome illustrations, this book can be divided into three unequal sections. The first serves as an introduction and comprises two chapters, 'Constructing and deconstructing the town' and 'People in towns', the latter rapidly and selectively romping through modern theory before describing social and occupational groups in medieval towns. The bulk of the book is occupied by thematic chapters dealing with town plans, liberties and precincts, ecclesiastical buildings, urban castles, administrative buildings (gaols, courthouses, guild-halls), spaces for trade (markets, quays and warehouses), urban houses, public health and suburbs. A short concluding chapter examines how medieval urban forms permeate the modern townscape.

While many interesting points are delineated, such as the factors determining the architectural styles of urban churches or the way in which the setting and architecture of York Guild Hall enhance authority, there are also some curious omissions. To highlight only one instance, churchyards, and the disposal of the dead in general, are not mentioned and this is symptomatic of the confinement of the urban populace to chapter two with only fleeting appearances thereafter. More consideration of archaeological evidence may have helped to fill this void and, in general, this rich source of information is under-utilized.

The opening chapters left this reader confused as to an overarching theme or theoretical standpoint and little attempt is made to link the chapters or provide a conclusive overview of the information presented in the thematic chapters. The volume often reads like the transcript of a series of evening class lectures and this raises the question of the audience for which this book is intended. Occasional lapses into jarring colloquialisms and the minimalist or non-existent referencing of sources suggest that the work is not intended for an academic audience, but what are non-academics to make of a number of vitriolic attacks on other authorities? Surely a lay audience would benefit from an appraisal of the sources of information and definition of key themes and terms. Nowhere is the reader told what date range the term medieval encompasses. Pre-Conquest references

do occur, but they are rare, oddly so given the large amount of relevant data on Anglo-Scandinavian York generated by archaeology.

The author has been poorly served by his editors. Grammar and punctuation are inconsistent in the extreme and typographical errors are legion, even in the bibliography. On page 10 we find a verb 'merchanted' and on page 22 'payed'. Elsewhere a caption reads 'The hall is on the right, and despite looking as if it has been truncated, it has not been' (p. 153) and this reader would like to know the statistical basis of 'such incidents if uncommon, were not all that rare' (p. 48). Would the author and his editors please note that Leland wrote an itinerary in the sixteenth century; Leyland make vans (occurrences too frequent to list).

Although attractively presented, this book seems confused as to its readership and one is left with a great sense of a missed opportunity. Up-to-date synthetic regional studies of medieval towns in, for instance East Anglia, the Cotswolds or even Yorkshire, remain to be written. Such books would make an important contribution to urban studies, especially if documentary and archaeological evidence could be integrated, but is anyone willing to write or commission them?

**Niall Oakey**

Cotswold Archaeological Trust

**Mavis E. Mate**, *Daughters, Wives and Widows after the Black Death: Women in Sussex, 1350–1535*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998. xiii + 221pp. 4 tables, 4 genealogies. Bibliography. £40.00.

Regionally-based studies of medieval English women are in general welcome less for their undeniable local interest than for their contribution towards more detailed understanding of the place of women in the country as a whole, duly acknowledging the existence of clearly distinctive communities. Authors must therefore relate any perceived local particularities to the generally received overview. Mavis Mate displays the overarching legal and economic perspective effectively, and handles social horizons and class and gender well, but seems, despite claiming very rich sources, to have insufficient appropriate Sussex evidence to underpin all the constructions she desires to build upon it.

The bibliography and references cite a wide variety of original source material relating to Sussex, but the text neither prioritizes the usefulness of types of source, nor comments sufficiently on the relative quantities and coverage available, and often explains the context of individual citations inadequately. Too often, indeed, there is failure to substantiate. For example, Mate cites an East Sussex Record Office Sussex Archaeological Society source, and a Public Record Office rentals and surveys reference, for the earnings of Battle Abbey shepherd, James Rukke, and for his arable holding, and a further Sussex Archaeological Society reference for his animal husbandry trespasses and his son's childhood earning capacity, but can offer no evidence for claiming that James's wife, besides rearing her son, preparing meals, fetching water and washing clothes, 'almost certainly' tended the family's cows, milking, helping with calving, and making cheese and butter, 'probably' sheared the family's sheep and milked their ewes, and 'may have' worked for a few days bringing in the demesne harvest, in addition to helping harvest crops on the family land, likely activities but not proven. Speculating on godmothers' potential to promote their god-daughters,

Mate admits that if any Sussex woman did this, the record has not survived. Referring to parish associations of young women and wives found elsewhere, Mate comments 'although there is no direct evidence from Sussex there is no reason why similar organisations should not have existed in at least parts of the area' (p. 169). The general picture is thus alluded to, but Sussex cannot be tied in satisfactorily for lack of evidence.

Sussex towns are considered in the study but again with unconvincing linkage to the national overview. Although acknowledging paucity of direct evidence about Lewes women's role in the economy, Mate pronounces 'there is every reason to believe the situation there was similar to that of other small towns' studied by historians (p. 43). Battle evidence proves insufficient to give more than impressions about the incidence of remarriage. Mate's comment, 'information is frustratingly thin' (p. 42), made about female employment patterns in Lewes, seems equally applicable to several aspects of this study.

Some speculation goes well beyond what the evidence can support. Uncovering activities of its household official William Boys from Battle Abbey sources, Mate ponders whether his wife felt equally at ease in urban and rural society, suggesting she 'may have been' interested in her husband's activities, preferring to live in the town, or 'may have been' alienated by the male exclusiveness of the abbey, preferring to spend more time on their country property: 'it is impossible to say' (p. 171). A lot, in fact, seems impossible to say about women in medieval Sussex, bringing into question the feasibility of attempting to focus so ambitious a study on them.

For readers unfamiliar with Sussex a map would have been more useful than the four genealogies (all incorrectly indexed!) which preface the work.

**Helen Jewell**

University of Liverpool

**David Mills**, *Recycling the Cycle: The City of Chester and its Whitsun Plays*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1998. xiii + 281pp. Bibliography. Index. £40.00.

This book represents an extended commentary upon the full edition of the Chester plays which the author produced with Robert Lumiansky in the 1970s and 1980s, and the culmination of a series of studies which he has made of them over the past three decades. The subject is a superb one, for the plays survive in more texts than any other English medieval festival cycle, and are supported by a relatively large civic archive. The ambition of the book is to provide a contextualization of them, in their social and physical setting, and thus a better interpretation of their nature.

In the former ambition it is only a qualified success, because the medieval and early modern records of Chester are simply not good enough to provide a true social history and therefore key questions such as how the plays arose, and why festive cycles occur in only certain towns, remain unanswered. There may also be a factor of disciplinary tradition involved; that David Mills is an expert in English literature, not social history, and so tends to work from the texts outward to society rather than vice versa. Having said that, his interests and methods yield rich dividends for urban history.

More than any other writer before him, Mills recaptures the relationship between a medieval play cycle and the physical and human city in which it was set, observing the places at which contemporary civic concerns were reflected in the text, at which players would move between the surface of the street and the purpose-built wagons upon which they and their set were moved from station to station, and at which the audience were drawn into the action. He draws attention from the religious content and towards the way in which the cycle – the work of a single, very sophisticated, author – fosters a sense of community and history in general and of local pride in particular. He shows how the Reformation partly altered their message, from one of unchanging tradition, local autonomy and medieval Catholic piety to one of reformed, scriptural religion and conformity to national orthodoxy. He makes a strong but unproven case that by the reign of Elizabeth they had nevertheless become an antiquated curiosity and source of division, and accordingly ceased to be performed; and a demonstrable one that the texts survived because of their appeal to local patriotism. The book includes a fascinating final survey of their place in the cultural politics of modern Chester. It is the best demonstration to date of the results that may be gained by following up Charles Phythian-Adams' demonstration of what a study of the ritual year may reveal of the urban community in early modern England.

**Ronald Hutton**

University of Bristol

**James S. Amelang**, *The Flight of Icarus: Artisan Autobiography in Early Modern Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. 497pp. \$60.00; £35.00.

Historians of early modern Europe are well aware of the importance of journals and diaries kept by ordinary people such as the London turner Nehemiah Wallington; Pierre-Ignace Chavatte, a serge maker of Lille; Ulrich Bräker, 'the poor man of Toggenburg'; or Miquel Parets, the tanner of Barcelona, whose account of the plague of 1651 was published in English by James Amelang in 1991. Such records have often been studied as sources for social history. It is less common to study them in their own right, and still rarer to take a general view of the 'artisan autobiography', as Amelang does here. Only the Dutch historian Rudolf Dekker can rival him as a connoisseur of the field. The appendix to this book, which makes no claim to completeness, is a list of some 200 such texts with notes on the authors. These authors include some Americans, but the regions best represented are Britain (70 texts), France (36), the German-speaking area (33), Spain (24) and Italy (23). The term 'artisan' is defined broadly, and the list includes 28 texts written by women. The main part of the book, combining comparative analysis with a case study of Miquel Parets, studies the popular autobiography or 'personal document', the reasons artisans might have had for writing texts of this kind, the conventions of the genre, the intended and actual readership, and the political significance of these documents.

Amelang, who has already published an excellent book about early modern Barcelona, is well aware of the relevance to urban history of his new study. Although some peasants produced journals of this kind, notably in Denmark, the genre was essentially an urban one. Twenty of the writers listed in the appendix

lived in London at some point, twelve in Florence (one might have expected more) and six in Paris (including the glassmaker Jacques-Louis Ménétra rediscovered by Daniel Roche). As Amelang points out, access to the skills of reading and writing was greater in towns, as well as access to information; some of his examples show very clearly that popular narratives of local events were not always written on the basis of memory alone but might be put together after consulting documents. In towns it was easier to become aware that other people were writing texts of this kind, which shaded into the more traditional genre of the urban chronicle, which often circulated in manuscript and might be lodged in a library which was accessible to the public, artisans included. Going further in this direction, and drawing on his earlier researches on Barcelona, the author suggests that 'artisan first-person writing' did not necessarily mean 'breaking with traditional oral modes of communication'; on the contrary, it was nourished by 'popular associative life', by the overlapping networks of family, guild, confraternity and neighbourhood (pp. 103–7, on neighbourhood in Barcelona, offer an exemplary network analysis of the world of Parets). Amelang also shows that this form of writing was linked to civic culture and citizenship. It was 'a form of involvement in urban affairs', which sometimes, as in the case of the Florentine tailor Sebastiano Arditi, expressed sharp criticisms of those in power. This judicious, perceptive and well-written study ought to be read by everyone concerned with the urban history of early modern Europe.

**Peter Burke**

Emmanuel College, Cambridge

**José Miguel López García (ed.)**, *El impacto de la Corte en Castilla: Madrid y su territorio en la época moderna*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1998. xxiv + 535pp. 12 figures. 23 tables. 7 maps. Bibliography. No price stated.

Few historians would dispute Madrid's importance as an early modern capital, but thanks to the absence of reliable studies, fewer still would be willing to venture firm generalizations about its past. English-language readers in particular have little to turn to apart from David Ringrose's *Madrid and the Spanish Economy* (1983), a groundbreaking work that is beginning to show its age. Studies of Madrid in Spanish, however, are booming, as a growing body of hefty monographs (and an impressive historical atlas) make clear. The volume under review brings together the findings of a team of ten historians working under the aegis of the Equipo Madrid de Estudios Históricos, the centre responsible for much of the more interesting recent research. This survey of the long-term impact of Madrid's designation as capital in the early 1560s represents an ambitious attempt to construct an interpretative framework of the rapid rise and slower decline of a metropolis more often dismissed or denigrated than understood.

The key to such an understanding, according to the authors, resides in two intertwined sets of relations: the capital's unstable control over the surrounding countryside, and the role it played in the broader mutual accommodation between the monarchy and the privileged classes of Castile. Like most cities in the peninsula's central plateau, medieval Madrid assembled a large and fairly prosperous *alfoz*, or jurisdictional hinterland. Royal interference with this crucial source of municipal wealth started early on, when the crown began to transfer



local villages, tithes and rents to both the larger territorial lords and its own service nobility. By the mid-eighteenth century, Madrid retained only 17 of the 45 villages it owned during the Middle Ages; 26 had passed into the hands of lay proprietors, and two others had been assigned to the largest clerical landowner in the area, the royal monastery of El Escorial. The conversion of Madrid into the bureaucratic centre of the monarchy went hand in hand with the dismantling of the city's rural resources; the civic oligarchy, itself a major beneficiary of the crown's largesse, did nothing to oppose this trend, and wound up as little more than a (considerably enriched) appendage of royal power. As the privileged flocked to the court, real and other property was concentrated into even fewer hands. As a result, urban society was highly skewed between a small consortium of wealthy lay and clerical elites, and a large mass of impoverished commoners, many of whom were migrants from the countryside who preferred to take their chances in the capital than in the visibly declining cities of the rest of Castile. The authors go as far as to suggest that the figures from the census of 1757 can be plausibly interpreted to read that a full one-third of the population of Madrid worked as servants. In the centre of Spain, the Golden Age clearly was golden only for the ruling class.

Readers will find much to argue and agree with in this well-written and clearly structured study. Its principal strength is its ability to integrate an impressive amount of new research into a coherent synthetic framework which firmly locates urban history within a larger, Brenner-ite countryside. A wide range of sources has been consulted, many for the first time (for example, some highly eloquent tax documents for the villages under municipal jurisdiction). Its main weakness is perhaps the rigidity of the framework itself. This is history with few surprises in it. The model of extreme social polarization and unrelenting immiseration of the popular classes leaves virtually no role for any middling strata. The lower classes similarly appear largely as victims with little capacity for response, excepting the primitive rebel banditry that makes a brief appearance in the book's final section. In the end, though, the study accomplishes its main purpose: to shift the responsibility for interior Spain's backwardness away from the city of Madrid, whose growth Ringrose memorably chastised as diverting vital resources for parasitic political ends, and towards the crown, nobility and clergy who used the city to serve their own interests. Apart from the question of blame, though, the end of both stories is pretty much the same. The optimistic portrait of Madrid still awaits its painter.

**James S. Amelang**

Autonomous University, Madrid

**James T. Lemon**, *Liberal Dreams and Nature's Limits: Great Cities of North America Since 1600*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996. x + 341pp. 32 figures. Bibliography. No price stated.

Liberal ideas of capitalistic progress in the context of the North American environment resulted in cities which 'are probably too big and complex for the good of everyone' (p. 26) – so says this study of five North American cities (four US and one Canadian) spanning nearly four hundred years. This mainly synthetic work draws upon a prodigious secondary literature and rests upon



several familiar themes of land use, public and private space, population characteristics, technologies, institutional and governmental actions, but adds to these factors the cultural question of Canadian and American similarities and differences as a means of understanding the North American city. In the first quarter of the book James Lemon provides his readers with an overview of economic development of urban North America, distinguishing the functions of urban places within their historical contexts as well as emphasizing the regional nature of such developments. He challenges the notion of continued urban and regional growth under the banner of individualistic liberal capitalism by arguing that North American cities since 1975 have fallen into a state of 'metropolitan stagnation' largely brought about by 'nature's subtle ability (as it were) to slow the growth of population and even the economy in a finite world' (p. 26). Faced with increasing scarcity in the present era one solution to reinvigorating cities and regions rests with collective management. Lemon therefore defends planners, politicians and other 'professionals' engaged in the task of collective management from the attacks launched by the likes of Jane Jacobs. Reconciling liberal dreams of unfettered growth, within the limits of the regional environment is the central problem which North American cities can no longer ignore. The solution must be collective.

In the remainder of his work Lemon offers an ambitious, comparative view of North American urban development which he divides into chapters defined chronologically and by region. Each chapter centres on the story of a particular place at a moment in time (usually the 'shock-city' of the era) and the author maintains his comparative framework for the first part of each chapter. These comparisons are to be commended and are generally successful, but seem rather forced when employed as a mere summary rather than as illustration to his argument. He chooses Philadelphia in 1760 to illustrate a flourishing early colonial American metropolis. Philadelphia succeeded through its ability to draw great numbers of European immigrants into agriculture and manufacturing roles in the context of a carefully controlled system of regional market towns. Its extensive market economy made it the premier city in the American urban hierarchy. Moving ahead a century Lemon selects New York City on the verge of Civil War as his next illustration of urban development. Frenzied regional development yielded systems of transportation, finance, manufacturing and information distribution, which combined with population growth and careful governing to vault New York into a first-rate example of the liberal ethos Americans embraced at mid-century. Chicago of 1910 stands as the Great City at the centre of continental expansion and the primary hub of the rail and water transportation network enabling such expansion. The regional dominance of Chicago, manifested in its skyscrapers and City Beautiful planning, spawned suburban landscapes and satellite industrial cities by the end of the nineteenth century. The civic movement led by the city's urban elite fell apart in the first decade of the new century leaving it open to political and economic instability. In the sixth chapter on Los Angeles of 1950 Lemon shifts his gaze westward to the southern Californian boom brought on by the oil industry, Hollywood's film production and the emergence of the aircraft industry. City planning in Los Angeles begun in the mid-1910s preserved low density sites for future commercial development and emphasized the organization of suburban growth into community subdivisions. The sprawl resulted in a segregated population

dividing race and income groups by geographical separation, a situation encouraged by federal initiatives to make available home ownership and the construction of highways. The author's own city of Toronto rounds out his roster of case studies and in Lemon's (optimistic?) view this is a city that got things right. Toronto avoided the problems associated with US cities such as Los Angeles because of particular economic and cultural factors: its economy boomed as it became the financial capital of Canada (especially since the 1960s) and its tradition of collective and democratic citizen participation held this city together as a metropolitan community. By 1975 Torontonians enjoyed an increasing cosmopolitan diversity in their enviable city, brought about by good government and a high standard of living thereby sparing it the segregation of income and racial groups common to the American urban experience.

Lemon's main accomplishment here has been to draw together the last three decades of scholarship on mostly American cities and apply to it a comparative framework which includes two countries in North America. But what about the third country of North America and its great city of Mexico City? Having set for himself the task of synthesizing social, cultural, comparative, economic and environmental histories into a survey of the effects of liberalism on urban development it obliges the author to at least address 'nature's limits' in all of North America, especially its largest city which is conspicuous by its absence. This book is already vast and ambitious in scope but in an attempt to complete his survey of North America the author might have addressed the history of Mexican city building.

This book will certainly enhance undergraduate courses in urban history. Although Lemon sometimes makes broad cultural claims about differences between Canadian and American institutions and attitudes on rather thin evidence, the real strength of the book rests on its easy style and detailed contents. Lemon balances his treatment of people, ideas, the built environment, politics and culture evenly within the economic framework implicit in his sophisticated regionalist approach to urban history. Rather than adhering to a rigid checklist of factors to be covered in each chapter he allows the contours of each period and place to influence his choice of themes to be examined. As a textbook *Liberal Dreams and Nature's Limits* summarizes important trends in Canadian and American urban development and concludes with the stern warning that future growth will not be sustained without coming to terms with limitations imposed by the natural environment. He adds quite rightly that despite the Canadian and American tendency to regard themselves as 'young nations' the effects of liberal capitalism have been felt on the continent for nearly 400 years.

**Bradley D. Cross**

Indiana University Purdue University at Columbus

**Elaine Forman Crane**, *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports, and Social Change, 1630–1800*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998. x + 333pp. Bibliography. £47.00 hbk; £16.95 pbk.

Like many English towns of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but for different demographic reasons, the New England port towns of Boston,

Newport, Portsmouth and Salem were inhabited by many more women than men, with ratios as high as 127 women for every 100 men. Yet according to Elaine Forman Crane urban women became increasingly 'invisible' over the course of this period, and such women, and the issue of women's rights, did not play an important role during the American Revolution. Crane provides a clearly argued explanation for this paradox: the forces of patriarchy, in the form of European intellectual traditions, market capitalism and the growth of institutions, responded to the threat posed by the numerical superiority of women (and their perceived disorderliness) by closing down opportunities and confining women to the domestic sphere. This, in turn, set the stage for 'the feminization of poverty in contemporary America'.

In the early days of settlement, women had benefited from the unstructured nature of colonial society, with a family-based economy and communal religion which accorded women significant responsibilities, access to ample land, and a weak legal and political system. Early marriage and inheritance practices, for example, were sufficiently flexible to allow married women to enter into business contracts and litigate, and widows to inherit property intact without first meeting the demands of creditors. All this was to change, however. The formalization of the legal system and adoption of English common law principles, combined with the increasing complexity of capitalist business, the separation of home and work, the institutionalization of churches, and the growth of the state, obstructed women's access to capital and silenced their public voice, and thus put them in no position to play a significant role in the revolutionary era.

This, of course, is in stark contrast to the very public presence of women in revolutionary London in the 1640s and even more so in Paris a century and a half later, despite the fact that those cities experienced some of the same intellectual, economic and political forces discussed in this book. Crane explains this by pointing to the fact that 'unlike European women, [urban New England women] had no militant tradition to call upon' (p. 243). New England had no tradition of independent female organizations to compare with the convents and charitable communities of Catholic Europe and pre-Reformation England.

This is an unconvincing argument because, like the book as a whole, it puts too much weight on long-term trends and 'collective memories', and on women (and men) as separated and coherent social groups. Crane is aware of recent work in women's history which has pointed to the limitations of arguments about linear change which presume some early 'golden age', but she none the less persists in confining all her evidence within the strait-jacket of an ever-growing public/private dichotomy which over several centuries served to domesticate women. She presents fascinating evidence of how the formalization of the law and politics in eighteenth-century New England led to women's disappearance from legal and institutional records (making them 'invisible' to the historian), but more attention needs to be paid to the informal ways, many of which were new, in which many women were none the less able to participate publicly in urban society as authors, readers, consumers and members of voluntary societies. We need to know more about the potentially very visible activities of the large number of unmarried women who were not tied down by childcare responsibilities, as well as of the married women whose husbands were unable to exert patriarchal authority due to their absence at sea.

If we are to explain why such women nevertheless failed to play a significant

role in the American Revolution we need to examine the role such towns as a whole played in the emerging conflict, one whose political course and geographical parameters were very different from its European counterparts. Unfortunately, we do not learn enough about these towns in this book, as the dominant narrative of women's decline tends to obscure the distinctive features of the individual ports studied.

**Robert Shoemaker**

University of Sheffield

**Robert B. Shoemaker**, *Gender in English Society 1650–1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* London: Longman, 1998. ix + 334pp. Select bibliography. £14.99 pbk.

This concise and accessible social history of gender roles from 1650 to 1850, written with the needs of both students and the general reader in mind by a scholar with active research and teaching interests in the field, is a welcome addition to the literature on the 'long eighteenth century'. It provides a lucid overview of continuity and change in the respective roles, responsibilities and representation of men and women over the whole period, concentrating as the title suggests on a critical examination of the thesis that the eighteenth century saw the establishment of sexually-segregated 'separate spheres', confining women to an essentially private and domestic role while reserving the public world exclusively for men.

In so doing, the author deftly interweaves his own research with a review of recent secondary literature, combining synthesis with original insight and providing readers with sufficient 'human interest' by way of well-chosen examples and quotations to hold their attention through what is at times an inevitably complex and abstract discussion. He begins by examining contemporary ideas about gender as they were portrayed in a variety of prescriptive texts and literary representations, before moving on to a series of chapters summarizing current research on the actual experiences of English men and women in a variety of contexts. Urban historians will find the chapter on social and cultural life the most immediately relevant to their interests since it contains a brief but perceptive consideration of rural/urban differences, ranging from the alehouse and the assembly room to the Old Bailey. The concluding chapter questions whether the changes identified were sufficiently marked to constitute a revolution in perceptions of gender difference and appropriate gender roles. Although he identifies a significant intensification and internalization of gender differences over time, gender relations were clearly much more complex and fluid in practice than is allowed for by the conventional metaphor of physical separation between distinct public and private worlds.

Of course, in a broad survey such as this there are bound to be occasional simplifications which will rankle with specialists in the field: this is not intended to be a comparable enterprise to Anthony Fletcher's *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500–1800* (1995) and anyone expecting a detailed monograph on those lines would be disappointed. On the other hand, it is genuinely disappointing that some issues seem to have been examined a little more critically than others; an undergraduate reading Shoemaker's summary of Laqueur's

model of changing perceptions of the body, for example, would not be alerted to the fact that it has attracted significant criticism from historians working in earlier periods. The book is also perhaps a victim of its timing in that, although it is promoted as a novel re-examination of the 'prevailing' or 'conventional' view that women had greater economic and political opportunities in pre-industrial England, the last few years have seen a number of similar critical studies.

However, both Shoemaker's periodization and his explicit focus on the 'separate spheres' debate are welcome precisely because they will open up the wealth of exciting new research on gender in early modern society to many potential readers whose interests lie primarily in the Victorian period and whose appreciation of the balance of continuity and change over time has therefore been foreshortened. The author is also to be congratulated for trying to treat *gender* seriously as an issue in an 'entry level' text of this sort: although this is clearly more successful in the earlier than the later chapters, he makes a real effort throughout to focus on both men and women rather than producing a survey of how women's lives were played out in an essentially masculine world. Indeed many urban historians would do well to note his strictures on the inclusion of 'women' as a separate entry in their indexes, while 'men' remain the unanalysed norm (p. 3) even among those who do not add insult to injury by adding '*see also* marriage, prostitution'!

**J.M. Ellis**

University of Nottingham

**Randolph Trumbach**, *Sex and the Gender Revolution: Volume One. Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. xviii + 509pp. 4 plates. 3 maps. 1 figure. 36 tables. Bibliography. £27.95; \$35.00.

This book explores the consequences of the emergence in London around 1700 of a subculture of adult males whose sexual desires were directed exclusively towards other men. These men, known as 'mollies', became readily identifiable by their effeminate speech, dress and mannerisms, fashioning for themselves a distinctive identity which Trumbach terms the 'third gender'.

The repercussions of this 'gender revolution' on the sexual attitudes and behaviour of the majority of eighteenth-century Londoners were profound. Before 1700, it is argued, adult men regularly enjoyed sexual relations with women and adolescent boys. However, the emergence of the effeminate male sodomite brought about a sharp redefinition of men's sexual identities. Men were placed under increasing pressure to prove, from adolescence onwards, that their sexual interests lay exclusively in the opposite sex. Recourse to prostitutes became an important means for young men to prove their heterosexuality. By the second generation of the eighteenth century men ceased to be prosecuted for visiting prostitutes as the authorities feared that in a world without such outlets for male sexual desires sodomy would flourish. While men's sexual relations outside marriage might still incur public reproach at the beginning of the century, in the climate created by the new heterosexual imperative a man's reputation for whoring actually became a guarantee of his sexual worth. Sex became valued less as a prelude to marriage, leading to a rise in illegitimacy.

Women, in contrast, for much of this period did not form heterosexual identities in opposition to a homosexual minority. While Trumbach recognizes the spirited attempts of some women to negotiate the new system of sexual behaviour, the majority of women were victims of the new heterosexuality. The double standard was reinforced, as was the desire in men to have exclusive access to women, often achieved both inside and outside marriage by violence.

Trumbach employs an impressive array of court records, diaries, memoirs and the accounts of charitable institutions such as the Foundling and Lock Hospitals to present a rich and sometimes lurid picture of metropolitan sexual behaviour at all levels of society. The patterns and experiences of prostitution, venereal disease, bastardy, courtship practices, rape, violence and adultery in marriage are analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The result is a book which will be of considerable interest to urban historians as well as students of sexuality and gender. The ways in which broader social, economic and demographic changes influenced sexual relations are explored, most notably in the chapter on illegitimacy which compares patterns across four London parishes. However, while Trumbach views the gender revolution as a distinctly metropolitan phenomenon, he does not attempt to examine its repercussions outside the capital or to explore whether similar developments were occurring in provincial towns. Nor is any analysis made of the media through which the molly stereotype was articulated in London and beyond, leaving obscure the processes by which men learned to define themselves against the sodomitical 'other'.

Indeed, many of Trumbach's conclusions remain somewhat impressionistic. The contention that the majority of Englishmen before 1700 enjoyed sexual relations with both women and boys is poorly supported, relying largely on evidence from fifteenth-century Florence, whose relevance to the English context has yet to be proved, and the writings of the aristocratic libertine John Wilmot, earl of Rochester – an unlikely spokesman for the sexual attitudes of plebeian men. Furthermore, while many eighteenth-century men may have wished to avoid imputations of 'effeminacy', it is by no means clear that they would have automatically associated it with sodomy given the complex range of meanings effeminacy could possess in this period, including luxurious consumption, affectation and foppery and excessive (heterosexual) love for the female sex. Nevertheless, Trumbach's assertion that heterosexuality is culturally constructed and subject to historical change is important and opens up new lines of enquiry, and this book will undoubtedly make a stimulating contribution to the burgeoning debate about eighteenth-century gender relations.

**David Turner**

Brasenose College, Oxford

**Noël Bonneuil**, *Transformation of the French Demographic Landscape, 1806–1906*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. xiv + 218pp. 56 figures. 29 tables. Bibliography. £32.50.

In the thirty-year period before the First World War most European countries experienced a continuous decline in their fertility of more than 10 per cent. As is so often the case France was different. Registering a marked decline in fertility from as early as 1830, it undermined the generally accepted theory that a decline

in fertility was a direct consequence of urban industrial development. The puzzle was why the largely agrarian economy of France should have been the forerunner in fertility decline rather than England, the home of the Industrial Revolution.

French demographic exceptionalism has stimulated considerable interest of both a scholarly and polemical nature. With early works focusing on the disastrous consequences of the decline in fertility, it was not until the creation of the National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) which coincided with an upturn in French demographic growth after the Second World War, that the demographic experience received more rigorous analysis.

One of the first concerns of demographic historians was to correct the deficiencies of the existing data. Paradoxically data for the eighteenth century was more reliable than that for the first half of the nineteenth century when the decline in fertility became more generalized. Whereas under the *ancien régime* responsibility for recording births, marriages and deaths lay with the Church, the French revolutionaries, in transferring it to the state, created the belief that in some way the census was to be used for fiscal purposes. Persistent under-reporting of births and ignorance of the scale of internal migration therefore undermined the credibility of studies based on raw official data. It was not until 1851 that the structure of the population was published by age and by *département* in France.

One of the first attempts to provide a more accurate estimate of the French population in the nineteenth century was that of Van de Walle published in 1974. Confining himself to the female population on account of the tendency of males not to register to escape military service, Van de Walle reconstructed the population by age and marital status based on estimates of fertility, nuptiality, mortality and migration, for most *départements* of France. The study raised a number of interesting questions about the connections between fertility and urbanization or industrialization and whether the timing of the fertility decline was determined by problems of land use, inheritance, language, religious fervour or political affiliation – all of which Van de Walle intended to address in a subsequent volume.

These are not, however, the issues which most concern Noël Bonneuil, the Director of Research at INED, in his *Transformation of the French Demographic Landscape 1806–1906*. At a more fundamental level Bonneuil offers a convincing critique of the methods used by Van de Walle to reconstruct the French female population. For a start Van de Walle excluded the most urbanized *départements* or those whose borders changed in the nineteenth century – nine in total – from his study. This meant that the only migration included was to Paris, which created the assumption that the age structure given in the census was that of a stable population. A further criticism was that Van de Walle ignored age at death, which also led him to impose an artificial migration schedule.

Bonneuil's objective was to combine the notion of the interdependence between regions which gave rise to migration with demographic change in all the *départements* of France. His method was to simulate a closed population by age over eleven five-year periods for the years 1856 to 1906 and then 1806 to 1856, recognizing that the censuses of 1806, 1901 and 1906 were more reliable than others. His simulation, which is both detailed and technical, produces a number of conclusions which, if correct, would alter the accepted view of France's position in the European fertility decline.



According to Bonneuil's estimates the gap between France and the rest of Europe in this respect was much narrower than previously believed. He shows mortality to be higher after 1840 than was estimated by Van de Walle and a smaller and diminishing difference between cities and countryside than was previously thought. Overall he concludes that the national population was more numerous at younger ages, and was submitted to higher mortality and higher fertility.

If France was not so different from the rest of Europe it would not pose such a challenge to the theory that a decline in fertility was directly linked to industrialization and urban development. However, were the rigour of Bonneuil's method to be applied throughout Europe, would these conclusions still hold true?

**Frances M.B. Lynch**

University of Westminster

**Jürgen Reulecke (ed.)**, *Geschichte des Wohnens, vol. 3: 1800–1918 – Das bürgerliche Zeitalter*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1997. 776pp. DM 128.00.

**Gert Kähler (ed.)**, *Geschichte des Wohnens, vol. 4: 1918–1945: Reform, Reaktion, Zerstörung*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1996. 742pp. DM 128.00.

In nearly all European countries we find a large number of books on famous buildings and the development of architecture, but surprisingly few descriptions on changes in housing. This research began in Britain in the 1970s with G. Stedman Jones, St.L. Chapman, H.D. Dyos, R. Roberts, E. Gauldie and A. Sutcliffe. John Burnett presented these ideas in 1978 in his pioneering, comprehensive work *A Social History of Housing 1815–1870*. It is remarkable that Austrian and West German historians turned almost at the same time to similar questions. Peter Feldbauer (Vienna), Lutz Niethammer (Essen) and this reviewer, with his research group in Münster, were the first ones to step into this neglected field. The traditional labour history, the ideas of the 'New Urban History', with the application of quantitative methods, and the quick rising interest into the history of daily life were important initiatives for these new investigations. In contrast to Britain, German historians started very early on with close co-operation with representatives of geography, demography and folklore as well of urban sociology and medical history.

Both of these volumes carefully present the main results of German housing history of the last three decades. The ten authors deal not only with the long-lasting debate on the 'housing question' of the urban 'labouring classes' and the 'cruel habitations' in the countryside and in public institutions, but also with the dwellings of the middle classes and the aristocracy. Other chapters focus on the determinants and cycles of the German housing market, with new statistics (unfortunately only up to the end of the First World War), and the housing politics of the government and communities. Also covered are the influence of social hygiene on the building industry, town planning and the spreading of small land settlement societies. Some articles describe in more general terms how lifestyles changed, for instance the variations of household furnishing, heating, lighting and kitchen techniques, the individual appropriation of rooms and housing as a form of social interaction.

It is inevitable that such collected large overviews from different disciplines contain some unnecessary repetitions on one hand and regrettable omissions and errors on the other. This reviewer recommends therefore as a supplement the volume *Housing Strategies in Europe, 1880–1930* (1992) by Colin G. Pooley which has been overlooked in these volumes. This book, sponsored by the European Science Foundation (Strasbourg), completes for Germany the figures missing from the above and contains useful chronologies of the main stages of housing politics.

**Hans J. Teuteberg**

Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

**Robert Woods and Nicola Shelton**, *An Atlas of Victorian Mortality*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997. 165pp. 47 maps. 51 figures. 5 tables. 2 appendices. Bibliography. Index. £30.00 hbk; £15.00 pbk.

Woods and Shelton are to be thanked and congratulated for all the hard work that has gone into this stimulating and resourceful use of the geographical perspective. The presentation of the highly colourful maps is never a merely descriptive exercise because it is analytically driven by engagement with the 'great debate': on the relationship between economic growth, urbanization, living standards, public health measures (which the authors seem not to realize embraces the critical issue of the regulation and enforcement of housing quality and amenities for the poor) and mortality in the nineteenth century. The maps are accompanied by a battery of inventive associational scatter-plots to demonstrate interpretative points. There is a sequence of chapters for each of the major age-ranges from infancy to old age and for other key areas of debate: (pulmonary) tuberculosis, maternal mortality and gender differentials.

The analysis is at its best in the longest section, chapter 6, on the infectious diseases of early childhood. Here the authors convincingly demonstrate the nature of the 'insult accumulation' borne by urban children, who, having survived infant diarrhoea and respiratory dangers, were then immediately subjected in their second year of life to biannual waves of whooping cough and measles, followed up in their third and fourth years by the depredations of scarlet fever and diphtheria. The value of this section reflects the greatest strength of the source material used for the atlas, the GRO's renowned Decennial Supplements. These publications were William Farr's scientific flagships designed to focus contemporaries' attentions on these 'preventable' (because so variable in their incidence, especially as between urban and rural districts) 'zymotic' diseases.

The most appealing single graphic in the volume is the three-dimensional 'dead body under the rug' (figure 50). This is fun but, unfortunately, it is decidedly not history. It is, in fact, dangerously misleading as it is the only illustration in the volume illustrating 'guesswork' (the authors' word) not historical evidence. I fear that unsuspecting readers will fail to notice the 'health warning' in small print, tucked away in a footnote on another page. The similarly three-dimensional 'Alpine landscapes' of figures 51–53 are therefore much to be preferred to figure 50 because they are depicting evidence, not conjecture. They revealingly show that in Birmingham it was still the case in the last two decades of the nineteenth century that diarrhoeal infant mortality in the summer and respiratory deaths (of both the young and the old) in the winter were the two

chief killers. These graphs eloquently tell us, therefore, that urban health was most at risk precisely from those diseases whose causes the public health movement had failed to take effective action against by this time: many poor urban families still lacked the basic domestic hygiene facilities of domiciliary water supply and water closets; and there were as yet no significant controls on air pollution from the nation's coal-fires.

As the authors acknowledge, the maps tend to suggest further, interesting complications and intriguing research possibilities, rather than providing definitive answers to any questions, which is absolutely right and proper for such an extensive exercise in historico-geographical survey and reconnaissance. In view of this virtue of the atlas, it really has therefore been a bad mistake of editorial judgement and a serious disservice, which significantly reduces the utility of this volume to other scholars, that the set of fold-out maps published at the end fail to provide a guide to the identities of all of the 614 registration units which repeatedly appear as a mosaic of shapes in all the maps. Readers of this journal will be relieved to hear that the 25 units of London and the major cities have at least been identified. But this still leaves over 500 'anonymous' scale-like shapes appearing on page after page of the atlas. As a matter of urgency, the authors really ought to publish in a widely accessible journal an addendum set of maps giving this information.

**Simon Szreter**

St John's College, University of Cambridge

**Pamela Horn**, *The Victorian Town Child*. Stroud: Suttons, 1997. 248pp. Illustrations. Bibliography. £18.99 hbk.

Pamela Horn's *The Victorian Country Child* was published in 1974, an early contribution to the history of childhood. It was notable for its recognition of female children as well as male and for its extensive use of primary source material to create the detail of everyday life. Interesting detail and vignette abound, similarly, in *The Victorian Town Child*, this time culled not only from memoir and archive but also from oral history collections and the work of other historians. For in the years between these two books social history has flourished, and with it the history of childhood. So even though this book, like the first, is well grounded and accessibly written, it does not stand out in the same way.

Perhaps, too, we now expect more – a more critical reading of sources, for instance. Horn does not discuss the advantages or difficulties of her various sources, nor how to balance bias or deficiency by reading one set against another. Sometimes she accepts too readily a partial view, as in the discussion of infant deaths and insurance, or when she attributes the failure of Courtauld's 1850s factory crèche to unpopular insistence on bathing the children and changing their clothes. (This may have played a role, but were hours and location convenient? Did the daily payment cover food? Did employment of a local nurse-girl mean that small children could sleep later in the morning, or not be dragged out if they were poorly?) Again, parents who opposed vaccination did so 'on political or religious grounds'. Yet the mother who (despite being summoned 25 times) refused 'to be party to the poisoning of her baby' surely did so because she perceived risk in the procedure.

Although the brief bibliography includes some recent works of urban history, others that one might expect are absent: no Raphael Samuel, no Gareth Stedman Jones, no Jerry White, an article by Carl Chinn but not his book; Ellen Ross listed but little used. Neither bibliography nor text reflects the contribution of cultural studies to childhood history (as in the work of Carolyn Steedman); and theoretical issues are not addressed, even to raise questions about ideology and representation, the role of the state, or the discourses around boyhood which Harry Hendrick has explored.

The book has many illustrations, including unfamiliar ones from local record offices. Their captions are not always adequate ('The girl as temptress', p. 182, has no information as to source and cries out for interpretative comment) and sometimes quirky ('The casual brutality of some working-class fathers is pinpointed by Punch (1875)', on p. 64). 'The author' is the only provenance given for half the illustrations, including about ten which are from George Sims' well-known *Living London*.

Despite such criticisms, the book will undoubtedly be a rewarding read for many. Horn has mined rich veins of oral history and memoir and nuggets from children's lives can be found on every page. The material is well organized (with chapters on Victorian towns, middle-class children, working-class home life, the growth of mass schooling, work, surviving, leisure, and rescue and reform); though the book does end rather abruptly. It is well produced and amazingly free of misprints.

**Anna Davin**

Middlesex University

**Joanne L. Goodwin**, *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform: Mothers' Pensions in Chicago, 1911–1929*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997. xii + 284pp. 7 plates. 13 tables. Bibliography. \$17.95 pbk, \$45.00 hbk.

Joanne L. Goodwin's book on the origins and administration of mothers' pensions in Chicago in the early years of the twentieth century adds a new dimension to the study of the origins of welfare in the United States. Drawing upon the growing body of scholarship on women's role in the creation of the welfare state, Goodwin explores the local political context in which Chicago's 'experiment' with mothers' pensions operated.

Illinois produced the first state-wide bill for mothers' pensions – a publicly funded subsidy to mother-only families. It was quickly followed by other states. This early experiment in social policy reflected the interests of a wide range of reformers concerned with honouring motherhood, dealing with the problem of child poverty and preventing juvenile delinquency. Mothers' pensions evolved at a time in American history when the nature of women's roles was being called into question, race and class had implicitly become factors in defining domesticity and women's rights were being debated. Many social welfare policies were shaped by women who used claims of maternity, equality and social justice to justify their entrance into politics. As a consequence of these debates, policies like mothers' pensions, which were moulded by social expectations of women (and particularly of mothers), were often riddled with contradictions. Thus, as

Goodwin argues, although mothers' pensions were initially intended not as a child welfare measure but as an expansion of married women's rights, it was the commitment to protect motherhood that made the policy possible.

This study also examines how mothers' pension policies developed in the context of local politics in Chicago. Conflict characterized the implementation of mothers' pension laws after their passage through the legislature. Goodwin argues that it was the contest for power and authority to control the policy that shaped the programme and that ultimately limited its growth. Elected officials and office-seekers sought to control the implementation of policy, but organized women's groups aimed to protect and expand women's rights through the mothers' pensions. A third group, the women who applied for the pensions, put pressure on the county administration to look after their interests. Many were denied pensions because of inadequate appropriations and although they were not an organized group, as Goodwin suggests they created a tremendous symbol of a constituency ignored by politicians.

A third aspect of Goodwin's study is her analysis of the way in which mothers' pensions worked in practice. In the past the perception has been that mothers' pensions paid mothers to stay at home to look after their children. Goodwin argues that this was not the reality. As she has shown in an earlier article, the mother's pension was never sufficient to support a single mother and her children, it acted merely as a wage subsidy. While it helped to keep families together, and children of widows out of orphanages, it did not pay mothers to stay home and rear their children. While those who administered the programmes recognized the value of women's domestic work in child-rearing, contemporary values which emphasized self-support and fiscal restraints, worked against any attempts to end requirements for impoverished mothers to work. Moreover, racial and moral systems ensured that certain groups of mothers were excluded – African-American women, deserted women and mothers with one child were denied mothers' pensions and directed to other forms of relief which relied more heavily on wage earning. The attitudes of the social workers who administered the programmes had a marked influence on the treatment families received.

This is a well-researched book which reveals the complex ways in which social welfare policy was shaped and disputed in a local context. It is important as one of the first case studies to explore the implementation of mothers' pensions against the background of new scholarship on gender and the welfare state. While the 'political lesson' of the final chapter does not fit very well with the careful research of the bulk of the book, the policy of mothers' pensions clearly does have contemporary resonance in the debate over welfare mothers. It should be of interest to readers of *Urban History* as a study of a quintessentially urban policy – the relief of poor mothers arising from urban conditions, problems which would not have been as visible in rural areas. While the reader might wish to know more about how mothers' pension programmes were implemented in other cities across the United States, this was not the purpose of the study. It shows once again, the pioneering role played by the group of women reformers in Chicago who seem to have played such a central part in the development of social welfare policies for women and children in the Progressive Era.

**Elizabeth J. Clapp**

University of Leicester

**Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert**, *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914–1919*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. xvii + 622pp. 45 figures. 78 tables. Bibliography. £60.00.

The series *Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare* aims to bring together demography, military and social history, and cultural histories of war. *Capital Cities at War* does this within the setting of urban history, providing a comparative history of Berlin, Paris and London between 1914 and 1919 and bridging the gap that much urban history leaves. The major parts of the work are organized intriguingly around the 'social relations' of labour, incomes, consumption, and public health and indicators of health and sickness. The prevalent tone is, however, demographic.

Such is the breadth and depth of *Capital Cities at War* that it is bound to struggle for intellectual unity, even with the admirable collaborative research. The unifying thread does not prove to be the study of small-scale urban communities which is talked up in the introductory chapters as more significant than the whole-capital concept. Indeed, the study of collectivities is postponed to volume two. Instead, Amartya Sen's idea of refining material well-being with consideration of the capabilities and efficiencies of individuals and groups is co-opted. This, along with the connected concept of expanding citizenship in wartime, aims to achieve the linkage between urban demography and the actual experiences of living that the authors seek. Most of the chapters pay some heed to Sen's concept, but with varying relevance. The idea of the social relations of sacrifice is a more effective mortar for the building blocks of specialist research. It integrates with, and refines, the refocusing of history on the significance of patriotism to those caught up in the First World War and refutes classic 'they was robbed' interpretations of that war.

A clear picture of the losers among city-dwellers during the war emerges – the unadventurous middle-class investors, those working in non-essential sectors, the elderly, parents and grandparents of the men at the front, illegitimate babies, and migrant women from the countryside exposed to conditions conducive to TB. The winners, too – married childbearing women carrying natalist hopes and fears, semi-skilled male workers who escaped service at the front not as the 'urban shirkers' of propaganda but as essential workers in war production, and profiteers and those with capital in the boom sectors – are carefully delineated. Sorting out those in the middle, winners and losers in personal and family fates, probably the majority, is more difficult, and one is forced back on the excellent comparative statistics. *Capital Cities at War* also boosts recent critiques of the supposedly unbridgeable gulf between civilians and front-line soldiers.

The authors conclude that we must reshape our chronologies of the civilian war. They show that London and Paris were able to transcend shortages and hardships and to affirm commitment to the war from 1916. By contrast the urban history of Berlin from 1916 highlights national failure. Berlin tangled up the threads of resource allocation, lost its fragile social and political cohesion in the face of life-threatening inequalities of distribution, and abandoned hopes of a decent future. In contrast, earlier histories of war-weary populations in London and Paris cynical of the conduct of the war, harbouring sharpened class antagonisms, and intrigued by revolution in Russia, receive short shrift. Will this revisionist push continue in volume two?

The authors place the capital cities at war very carefully within national histories and the international struggle of war, emphasizing the power of states over capitals and the material problems of large cities in total war. They avoid the reification of cities that gives London or Paris an agency as well as an urban and cultural identity, regarding this as a pitfall of urban history. It would, though, be helpful to learn how cultural and popular discourse, as well as propaganda, mediated the capital cities to the metropolitan population and to people in the provinces during wartime. Were the capitals held up as exemplars of patriotism or were they the focus for fears of wartime moral deterioration, as Robert's chapter on war profiteers might suggest?

The collaborative enterprise among the historians who produced *Capital Cities at War* has been praised by Anthony Sutcliffe in a long review in the IHR's *Internet Reviews in History*, and Winter has replied, emphasizing the radical and generous nature of the book's production. It is fair to ask if the twelve historians maximize their talents. Winter, in a summarizing chapter on urban demography, refines his earlier thesis about the 'levelling up' of inequities in Britain and extends analysis to Berlin and Paris. Robert, like Winter prolific and influential in the social and demographic history of war, uses caricatures of war profiteers in the press as a touchstone for the wartime workings of moral and patriotic values. The 'younger' generation of historians do not fare so well. Catherine Rollet succeeds in injecting a sense of the realities of health outcomes in the three cities into the statistics, but others remain entrenched in the beautifully constructed statistics and draw very little on individual recollections, literary sources, or oral history. Adrian Gregory has published a wonderful history of Armistice Day in Britain, but his chapter here on the impact of military casualties on the three capitals remains simply informative until the end when he extends his perspective on the remarkably early implantation of forms of mourning and commemoration during the war in London to Paris and Berlin.

*Capital Cities at War* is a special piece of history and a superb comparative survey. Scholars of the First World War and urban historians will be grateful. The appetite of social and war historians and those who are interested in the relation between the national, the metropolitan, and the collectivity is whetted for the second volume.

**Sally Sokoloff**

University College, Northampton

**Greg Hise**, *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-Century Metropolis*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. xiii + 294pp. Figures. Bibliography. £30.00 hbk.

**Cynthia Ghorra-Gobin**, *Los Angeles: le mythe américain inachevé*. Paris: CNRS Editions, 1997. 195pp. 23 tables. 11 figures. Bibliography. No price stated.

Los Angeles must be the most-maligned of the world's great cities. Its many detractors have included liberals worried about its right-wing politics, conservatives worried about its liberality, East Coast Americans concerned about its lack of traditions, Europeans upset about its superficiality. The gulf between this city and those who do not love it is exemplified by New Yorker Woody Allen's sniffy,



'I mean, who would want to live in a place where the only cultural advantage is that you can turn right on a red light?' But here are two books which purport not only to analyse the traditions of Los Angeles, but to do so in some depth, and even to do so in a somewhat sympathetic light.

Hise carefully and even tenderly presents the story of the development of the region's 'suburbia', the phenomenon for which LA is best known: the 'urban sprawl' which has come to symbolize both this city and – to many, particularly many overseas – America in general. Ghorra-Gobin is interested in LA's multiculturalism, or in its pretensions to being multicultural and, she says, its failure to achieve this. Like Hise, Ghorra-Gobin finds cultural traditions in LA which run broader and deeper than Woody's 'turning right on a red light'. She presents an overview of the city's history. It is, she says, a 'metropolis of The West'. 'The West' still conjures up associations of adventure, excitement and novelty to Europeans. All of this comes to mind as she describes the growth of LA from agrarian Spanish 'pueblo' to the 'ideal city' of nineteenth-century American imagination.

But Ghorra-Gobin's central theme is LA as the 'multiethnic city'. She uses maps and charts well to show that, in spite of continuous effort since the Second World War, the 'melting pot' dream of an integrated society has yet to be achieved. From workplace pressures to overt racial tensions to environmental movements supposedly concerned with other issues, social trends of several decades have created a 'polynuclear' city, she writes – a Los Angeles of many centres, of separate communities for each group rather than a single community for all: a city of enclaves.

Her quest for multiculturalism in Los Angeles' history leads Ghorra-Gobin to stretch definitions a bit. Her multiculturalism is a recent invention: a variety, perhaps, of earlier integration and 'melting pot' and coexistence ideals, but one far from the minds of the Chandlers and Huntingtons and other early Angelenos who designed LA. Any social critic who applies modern concepts to earlier situations, considering the latter to offer somehow a 'distant mirror' for the present, encounters this old historical method problem. A reader must remember that 1870s and 1920s Angelenos did not think of multiculturalism in the way that those of the late 1990s did.

Ghorra-Gobin wrestles with another problem, one which plagues most analyses of any large city, concerning area definition: where does the city end – for statistics, for historical study, for analysis in general? Looking at the Los Angeles 'downtown' or even its central statistical areas is like studying London and Paris through the City of London or the Ile de la Cité: too little about the modern city can be deduced from examining its centres.

Hise provides a counterpoint. He wants to demonstrate that LA developed as a result of conscious effort, and not in the unregulated, spontaneous and chaotic manner often imagined by its critics. To do this Hise travels well outside his city's centre, to examine the suburbs which many have thought characterize the chaos of the urban sprawl of American cities. But Hise finds order and much forethought there.

He achieves this by expanding the circle of effective decision-makers in urban design to include some unlikely candidates, pulled in from those LA suburbs. Property developers receive a great deal of attention in his book, and so do construction firms, and land speculators, and advertisers and retailers and aircraft company executives. All had a hand in designing LA, Hise effectively

argues, and all should be considered in any study of the city's development. Through chapters like 'The airplane and the garden city' Hise brings traditional city planning together with this expanded decision-maker role, to suggest a new model for the process of city-building, based upon the LA experience.

One necessary note: Hise's book is a gem. Its design – jacket, fonts, layout, copious endnotes, detailed index, and interesting, poignant and occasionally even funny illustrations – is superb. It helps make the book a pleasurable read, and worth owning even for someone previously uninterested in its subject. For Ghorra-Gobin's book, though, the publisher has done a disservice to its author. Spelling errors – of French terms as well as English – are found, inexcusably, every few pages. The graphics are poor, and the index is ridiculously short and useless. This author's text, and a house as distinguished as CNRS Editions, deserve better.

A fundamental question, then, in any thinking about Los Angeles, is whether the thinking will 'scale up': whether LA, so often depicted as unique in so many ways, is generalizable – and whether principles derived from a study of LA apply only there or might apply to, say, Leipzig. Today I heard a radio broadcast from the latter city, describing 'suburban shopping centres' which just have opened there, with an unhappy German city planner interviewed who 'blames the new property speculators' and sighs 'at least we do not have "factory outlet stores" yet in Germany' – the reporter telling us that he himself just has seen roadside signs proclaiming 'factory outlet stores opening soon', near Berlin. So studies of LA – Ghorra-Gobin's to show us how we all might live together better in a city, Hise's to show us who the new decision-makers are or are going to be – might become very useful in a number of new places now.

**Jack Kessler**

**June Manning Thomas and Marsha Ritzdorf (eds), *Urban Planning and the African-American Community: In the Shadows*. London: SAGE, 1997. x + 321pp. £19.50 pbk.**

The two editors begin their introduction to this book with the claim that 'a crisis mounts in urban America', and that racial isolation and poverty in the 'new American ghetto' are producing dangerous and nihilistic attitudes. Not surprisingly, given this perspective, the historical relationships between urban planning and African-American life are seen in mainly negative terms. But as the African-American predicament is largely a political product so, it is argued, conditions can be improved both by removing old forms of planning and by instituting more positive forms in their place. More black involvement in urban planning therefore offers some hope for the future.

The book is made up of fourteen separate essays grouped into four parts. Part one looks at zoning and real estate, part two at Federal and local government planning, part three at African-American initiatives, and part four at planning education. In addition there are extracts from relevant documents. Each author has, of course, an individual voice, but there is a reasonable coherence of theme and tone. The argument in the early chapters is that the history of zoning is closely bound to racial segregation. Even when specifically racial exclusion was outlawed, forms of mainstream urban planning were used to produce much the

same effects. Land use zoning and controls over the location of flats, non-nuclear family occupation, and mobile homes are all implicated. Other chapters concentrate on the transformation of the American metropolis which, especially after 1945, combined black migration to central cities with white suburbanization. Here again this major structural change had an inherently racial dimension – as attempts to exclude black immigrants from central areas failed so exclusively white territory was re-established through suburbanization. Real estate and other professionals contributed to this by using an ‘infiltration theory’ which linked immigration to an inevitable decline of property.

Thus, it is argued, race is omnipresent in planning, but it is relatively absent from planning history. The racial motivations which prompted, or at least encouraged, policies to move in certain directions were not acknowledged, whilst specific actions to break down racial isolation were not addressed. A chapter on Gary, Indiana, relates how a city created by US Steel was abandoned by business interests when a black mayor was elected, and a whole new downtown created in the suburbs. None the less, as black populations grew in the cities, so the possibilities of political influence developed. The early struggles against racial isolation by the black politician and newspaper editor Charlotta Bass are depicted against the background of developing black settlement. In Birmingham, Alabama, the growth of civic leagues in black neighbourhoods provided an organization which was able to influence planning in the 1970s. Even urban renewal, it is argued in a study of Greensboro, North Carolina, has a more complex relationship to black activity than is conveyed by popular use of the phrase ‘negro removal’.

As to possible remedies for poverty and racial isolation, such glimpses of hope as there are in the essays come mainly from initiatives begun in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Forms of advocacy or equity planning have, it is argued, achieved some results in cities such as Cleveland and Chicago. The model cities experiment is reviewed and some positive results in the form of black participation are underlined. Another article discusses attempts to shift the environmental movement away from origins in white concerns about the great outdoors to matters of urban pollution and public health. At present, the most successful indicator of the location of hazardous waste sites, it seems, is the presence of a black population in the area. Local battles have been fought and some won, but there is also an evident nostalgia for the more sympathetic wider political context which prevailed some twenty years ago.

The main strength of the book is that it develops African-American perspectives across a wide range of urban issues. It assumes knowledge of the American context, and makes no attempt to step outside it. Given the richness of the American literature, it is not the first book that one would recommend to those interested in the general development of American cities and their planning in the period concerned. But neither is it a book to be confined to specialists in racial studies. American models of urban development, and American urban policy initiatives have been exported, particularly to Britain, through much of the twentieth century. Whatever else they may do, the essays in the book provoke further questions about the specific conditions in which these models were formed.

**Jim Yelling**

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