increasingly shifted the balance in favour of the latter. At the same time, European cities served as an arena for continuous conflicts over the representation and uses of urban spaces. The opening of department stores, which attracted a mostly female clientele, and women's involvement in charity work, enabled many women to overcome the gendered separation between public and private spaces. Similarly, the symbolic separation between the middle-class centre and the working-class suburbs was overcome on the occasion of workers' demonstrations by day, and through the presence of a host of interlopers (beggars, thieves and prostitutes) in the city centre at night. While these were mostly peaceful transgressions, acts of terrorism, pogroms (especially in Russia) and occasional clashes between police and demonstrators turned urban conflict into a bloody affair.

Well written and with a much to be admired ability to transition seamlessly from one topic to another, Lenger's work is a model of accomplished scholarship. While it is hard to challenge the cogency and overall high quality of his synthesis, one area where one would have wanted to see a better integration of the secondary literature and as convincing a presentation of the material as in all the other chapters, is chapter 1. Although the volume's bibliography is 45 pages long, and the author briefly focuses on the literary myth of Paris and on the role of the flaneur as a quintessential figure of urban modernity, from the perspective of Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin, important works by Timothy J. Clark, Christopher Prendergast, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson and Jean-Pierre Bernard on the representation of Paris in the art and writings of the long nineteenth century are not included. The lack of focus on the genealogy of the subjective construction of the city in these works, as well as the chapter's chronological limitation to a coverage of London's Great Exhibition of 1851, Paris's rebuilding under Haussmann and *Exhibition universelle* of 1867, as markers of the two cities' claim to the status of 'capitals of the nineteenth century', leave out discussion of the positioning of London as the centre of a global empire, and of the role of 1789, 1830 and 1848 Parisian revolutions, the building of the Eiffel tower, the world fairs of 1889 and 1900 and the introduction of electricity (which made Paris to be known as City of Light) – that also undergirded those claims, making this chapter less rounded than the others. Notwithstanding, with its panoramic survey of European urban history between 1850 and 1914, the book will enable many students to acquire a bird's eye perspective of developments at a continental scale, before delving deeper into specific topics. As such, it will fulfil an important role in attracting new practitioners to the field, as well as being a text that could be successfully assigned to undergraduates.

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Mark Clapson and Peter J. Larkham (eds.), *The Blitz and its Legacy: Wartime Destruction to Post-War Reconstruction*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013. 197pp. 40 illustrations, 16 colour illustrations. £60.00.
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World War II gave us better fire brigade services and better residential schools for the disabled. It also led to the filling in of canal basins when the piles of debris from bombed buildings blocked London streets, and it concentrated ministerial

and local government thinking on comprehensive planning for the first time. Only the last of these is a familiar subject.

Suzanne Cowan questions whether the Blitz created public support for new land-use planning legislation. Did this matter, however? The need for town planning had already been shown by Patrick Abercrombie with his plans for Doncaster, Sheffield and the Kent coalfield, and the public had showed they wanted better housing. Arthur Greenwood's Town and Country Planning Bill was emasculated by the succeeding National Government, and as enacted in 1932 was largely permissive. In the 1930s, power lay with a central government anxious to protect traditional interests, although the appointment of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population in 1937 marked a realization that more needed to be done. The war revealed the power of comprehensive planning, and showed that it was possible to think big. But in 1941, articles, interviews and commissioned plans fostered the idea that Britons were fighting for a better future at war's end. Stephen Essex and Mark Brayshay show more clearly how little say the public had in the formation of a plan in their more detailed study of Plymouth. In contrast to British cities, the rebuilding of Sendai in Japan was rapid, but Junichi Hasegawa reveals a mix of public protest and allegations of corruption, with smart new buildings being erected at the expense of corresponding infrastructure as new roads proved controversial.

Many essays lose their argument in detail, a problem with many of the essays and an unfortunate one since each is only some 10 pages long, including formal introductions and conclusions that add repetition. David Adams and Peter J. Larkham struggle to fit the story of Birmingham's post-war Birmingham into these pages, so that the results of 22 interviews with local residents seem superfluous.

The core essays are those by Catherine Flinn and Mark Clapson, which look respectively at inner city rebuilding and the dispersal of population to new towns and suburbs. Flinn charts the restrictive practices of the Investment Programmes Committee from 1947 in regulating capital investment, mainly through the allocation of building materials as an example of government bureaucracy; only after 1952 did the situation ease. This stark picture of administrative procrastination between local and central government was true of most blitzed cities, but does not explain the relatively rapid rebuilding of Plymouth, due perhaps to the drive of the city engineer, James Paton Watson, and the bringing in of commercial clients. Authorities that tried to develop their own buildings for retail and commercial letting, such as Coventry, faced longer delays. Flinn's was the most frustrating essay in terms of length, a bigger story imperfectly truncated – thankfully readers are directed to longer articles by her. Better known is the new town story, where the dispersal of London's working-class population during and after the war was the fulfilment of a longer movement. London's politicians favoured dispersal at the risk of losing power through the loss of their voters, unlike many industrial cities of the north that strenuously built tower blocks to keep the population within its boundaries.

This is a curious collection of short essays drawn from the byways of archival research that were first presented as papers at a conference held at the University of Westminster in 2010. It must have been an exciting event, and the result is very attractively produced. The book serves as a splendid window for talented, often young, historians whose previous works are mainly in journals devoted to history rather than architecture and town planning. Such a wide-ranging group

of essays has no obvious market, caught between historians and planners, and with a fascinating yet incongruous essay on the origins of modernism in Japanese architecture, and one on the choice of reconstruction or new building facing those rebuilding West Germany's town halls. The Japanese government declared no less than 115 'blitzed cities', in contrast to England's seven. What is an appropriate architectural form for conquered countries trying to dispel memories of their recent past? Hugh Clout's article describes the complex problem of rebuilding in Alsace Lorraine, an area of contrasting traditions decimated by ground as well as aerial warfare in 1940 and again in 1944–45. Strasbourg and parts of Alsace chose the reinstatement of old properties rather than new buildings, while prefabricated dwellings in Lorraine marked the revival of the coalfields as the French economy was re-established. Despite post-war reconstruction in France being centralized at ministerial level, unlike in Germany, the results were remarkably varied. Variety is indeed the spice of this collection.

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Carole Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies: Communal Health in Late Medieval English Towns and Cities*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013. xiii + 431pp. 28 illustrations. 4 maps. Bibliography. £60.00.
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The Royal Infirmary, Chester, is well known as the location of Dr John Haygarth's pioneering work into the isolation of infectious patients in the late eighteenth century. Much that could be said about this site would fit within traditional historiographies of urban and medical history. Its role in Carole Rawcliffe's monograph, however, is not as the setting of great men and great discoveries behind a grand hospital façade. Instead, she draws attention to the equally impressive late medieval cobbled street excavated there. A central channel can still be identified, which would have carried away water and liquid waste, as can a curb made of local sandstone. Vivid descriptions of early paved streets with their problems of clattering wheels, potholes and discarded waste might seem to belong to Hayward's era or beyond. In Rawcliffe's book, however, archaeological finds like Chester's street are used, alongside architectural and archival sources, to illustrate early schemes to improve the health of the urban environment and challenge the traditional, murky view of medieval English towns and cities.

Many urban and medical histories are drawn to the filthy, the lurid and the infected: perhaps few contexts have suffered more in this than medieval England. Rawcliffe calls for major revision of the historiography. She pursues two strategies in parallel: a convincing challenge to the Victorian characterization of foul medieval England and an assessment of measures taken to improve conditions in the urban environment between *c*. 1250 and *c*. 1530. She also hints at continuities between the medieval and early modern periods – referencing initiatives from the later sixteenth or seventeenth century. She points out that it is essential to separate the conditions sometimes found in such environments from communal efforts to regulate health; even if not always fully effective, understandings of good health and good governance did motivate attempts to intervene throughout England. The language of public 'rebuke' and collective shame when standards of street