

## Reviews of books

Editors:

PETER BORSAY and ELIZABETH TINGLE

Dept of History, University College of Wales Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 7ED

Dept of History, University College, Northampton, NN2 7AL

**Dieter Schott (ed.)**, *Energie und Stadt in Europa: Von der vorindustriellen 'Holznot' bis zur Ölkrise der 1970er Jahre*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997. [VSWG Beihefte 135.] 207pp. DM 68.00.

As Schott points out in his introduction to this volume of essays, the combined consideration of urban history and energy history is in its infancy. Yet the subject has enormous potential. The development and the geographic and demographic expansion of cities posed problems of supply and distribution – and related difficulties with pollution – on a scale never before encountered. Changing energy sources and technologies in turn entailed new possibilities for cities, helping shape everything from constellations of political and economic power to housing patterns and aspects of everyday life. The topic has enormous potential for historiography by enabling exploration of such complex interactions in a variety of national, regional and temporal settings.

The essays presented in this collection hint strongly at this potential. They consider a broad range of time periods, deploy a variety of approaches (some comparative), and examine cities in several European countries. The contributions are generally written in the native languages of their authors, including English, French and German. Each features an abstract in all three languages.

Despite the variety of specific topics and approaches, all of the essays deal with several key issues. The first major one is that of the physical location of the specific city in question, including proximity to waterways and resources. The second is the relationship between the city and its hinterland. In the course of industrialization and massive urban growth, this particular issue became especially prominent: electrification, for example, eventually required construction of technological systems which extended beyond city limits. The third is the problematic issue of energy crises. This final issue is particularly well examined in the first and the last of the essays, one on the alleged pre-industrial wood shortage in the German area primarily, and the other on the alleged oil crisis in the 1970s in the Netherlands.

While all of the contributions indicate fruitful approaches to their subject, some are especially striking. Joachim Radkau's foray into the 'riddle' of why no major crisis emerged from alleged pre-industrial wood shortages is particularly noteworthy. True to form, Radkau demonstrates an easy interdisciplinarity and broad learning, touching on political, technological, legal, social, environmental, economic and gender history as and when appropriate. He finds that the wood shortage was a less objective fact than the product of a changing political economy and new value systems. On the one hand, capitalism was on the rise and with it a

relatively free market, which threatened traditional privileges. But traditional systems of allocation were being eroded too, mainly owing to rising population.

Other essays make similar points about the political economy of energy choice and change using other material. Jean Lorcin examines a case study of municipal socialism in France in which ambitious technological plans were developed, although not actually implemented owing to financial constraints. Alexandre Fernandez, on the other hand, points to political/administrative factors as part of the explanation for the loss of control of electricity by many French cities before the First World War: owing to French administrative law, the localities surrounding cities were able to fend off attempts to annex them, defeating urban attempts to gain economies of scale in electrical power generation and distribution. Uwe Kühl's contribution reinforces this point in a very useful essay comparing French and German developments. Schott's investigation of Mannheim in the early twentieth century concludes that a consensus on 'productivism' emerged between business and the reformist working class with regard to energy investment and supply, while Bill Luckin's essay looks at nineteenth-century London and the rhetoric of energy-induced pollution.

Schott is to be commended for gathering this distinguished and international group together for the Third International Urban History Conference in Budapest in 1996 and for overseeing the book's publication. The coverage here could be better: the period from the 1930s to about 1970 is largely ignored, while, with the exception of Gerhard Melinz's intriguing contribution on gas and electricity development in the three major cities of the Habsburg empire, southern and eastern Europe is largely ignored. Nonetheless, the essays presented here offer methodological and thematic inspiration and a research agenda which, even a number of years after the conference took place, continue to offer rich possibilities for scholars.

**Ray Stokes**

University of Glasgow

**Alan B. Cobban**, *English University Life in the Middle Ages*. London: UCL Press, 1999. xvi + 264pp. 6 illustrations. Bibliography. £15.95.

In this latest of his many contributions to a subject his own researches have done so much to adorn, Cobban is triumphantly successful in providing his readers with 'as rounded an appraisal of life in the medieval universities of Oxford and Cambridge in so far as the evidence will allow'. This is inevitably a book which often covers the same territory as its author's *The Medieval English Universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c. 1600*, published in 1988; but in many ways it is an even more successful attempt to recapture the social as well as educational world of the two medieval English universities. Once again Cobban's scholarship is usually at its most original – and produces more unfamiliar results – when applied to the complex history of his own alma mater of Cambridge; but he has now seized the opportunity of incorporating much recent research by others, notably by the contributors to the first three volumes of the new and now completed official *History of The University of Oxford*. By contrast with most previous historical accounts of pre-Reformation Oxford and Cambridge, Cobban deliberately avoids a chronological structure and prefers a thematic approach

instead. However, so mysterious are most aspects of the history of both Oxford and Cambridge before the mid-fourteenth century that this book is primarily a guide to English university conditions after rather than before the Black Death. As such it is remarkably wide-ranging. Although four of its seven chapters are devoted to the central issue of students and their education ('The undergraduate experience'; 'The postgraduate experience'; 'Commoners'; 'Teaching and learning'), perhaps the most original pages of the volume are dedicated to 'The academic periphery', a category all-inclusive enough to include university and college benefactors as well as servants, both male and female.

Of more interest still to readers of *Urban History* is the chapter on urban relations, recreations and entertainment. Here particular attention is drawn to the way in which the presence of university students proved a 'stimulus to landlordism'. This is undoubtedly a neglected topic which deserves – and would handsomely repay – much more detailed research in the future. Cobban's close reading of surviving late medieval college statutes (one of the more impressive features of this study as a whole) also enable him to present a much more vivid impression than his predecessors of the wide variety of leisure activity available to students, ranging from recourse to the 'highly organized' trade of urban prostitution to the gambling table ('prohibited by most colleges') and the increasingly more tolerated chess board. Rather more surprisingly, here is an authority on medieval Oxford and Cambridge prepared to suggest that many of the notoriously violent affrays between their scholars and their citizens were less untypical of urban conflict everywhere than is traditionally assumed. But then Cobban's admiration for the vanished university world he has so ably reconstructed is a positively endearing feature of his book. Not, alas, that it seems at all likely that those who 'organize universities in the modern age' will prove able to emulate the two English universities of the Middle Ages at all closely, least of all in their fight 'to retain as much autonomy as possible from predatory external powers'.

**Barrie Dobson**

University of York

**Emmanuelle Rassart-Eeckhout, Jean-Pierre Sosson, Claude Thiry and Tania Van Hemelryck (eds)**, *La vie matérielle au Moyen Age. L'apport des sources littéraires, normatives et de la pratique*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1997. 366pp. No price given.

**Denis Menjot and Manuel Sánchez Martínez (eds)**, *La fiscalité des villes au Moyen Age (Occident méditerranéen). 2. Les systèmes fiscaux*. Toulouse: Éditions Privat, 1999. 540pp. 170 FF; 25.91 Euros.

The economic history of the later Middle Ages is – even among those strange creatures, historians – not a subject which generally attracts wide interest. Yet it is undeniably important, not just as a subject in its own right, but also because of its fundamental relevance to our understanding of the pre-modern and modern world. It is all too easy to forget that in their attitude towards money and material things, as in so many other areas of life, our ancestors exhibit a marked tendency to look backwards rather than forwards. And this is especially important for historians of the city: as William Cohen has recently shown, well into the nineteenth century the financial systems of French municipalities owed

far more to the medieval arrangements inherited from the *ancien régime* than they did to the reforming innovations of the Napoleonic state.

The first of these volumes, edited by Rassart-Eeckhout *et al.*, is a collection of papers given at a conference at the Catholic University of Louvain in 1996. The purpose of the conference was to bridge the great divide between medieval economic historians and literary specialists, and to highlight the problems of source interpretation faced by both disciplines: hence the selection of 'the history of the everyday' as a broad theme permitting fruitful contributions from both sides. The sixteen contributors therefore address their common theme from a variety of angles, drawing on aspects of courtly, urban and rural culture.

Some of the articles will be of particular interest to urban historians. Dorothee Rippmann shows how the records of the provision of food and drink to workmen in fifteenth-century Basle can be used as a source for the history of labour relations. Céline Vandeuren-David uses inventories after death from Dijon as a source for a study of the jewellery worn by that town's citizens. A weighty paper by Jean-Marie Yante reconstructs the networks which provided food in Liège, Namur and Luxembourg in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, looking in some detail at the relationship between towns and the countryside. Other papers are more notable for their inventive use of literary material as a source not just for the history of ideas, but also for the history of the everyday. These include a lexical analysis of the frequency with which certain foodstuffs appear in the corpus of medieval French literature, and an assessment of the value of literary accounts of festivals and ceremonies for information on the use of flowers and flower symbolism.

A distinctive feature of this collection is the unusually wide variety of source material which is used, from mystery plays and church frescos to cookbooks and shopping lists. Not all the individual contributors successfully bridge the great divide between literature and history, but taken as a whole the collection stands as a challenge to economic historians to make more imaginative use of the sources available to them, and as an encouragement to further dialogues of this kind.

More scientific in approach and more systematic in construction is the volume edited by Menjot and Sánchez Martínez, which is the product of a collaborative research project between the Universities of Lyon and Barcelona and the Centre for Urban History at the École Normale Supérieure de Fontenay. Two years of preparatory work has enabled a degree of cohesiveness rare in volumes of this kind. The collaborative nature of the project also ensures an outstanding breadth and depth of coverage: the twenty contributors between them cover Castile, Valencia, Catalonia, Bordelais, Languedoc Provence, northern Italy and the Mediterranean islands. The first section, 'Forms of taxation', gives an overview of developments in urban fiscality from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, carefully defining the types of town under discussion (from small market towns to major regional capitals) and their place in local or regional economic networks. The overall picture is of a growth in the importance and regularity of indirect taxes (*sisas*, *imposicions* and *aides et gabelles*) as municipalities tried to develop a more structured financial system in response to royal demands to meet the increasing cost of war. Local elites used this development to reinforce their own position, developing sophisticated credit arrangements to manage municipal debts, and employing various stratagems to undermine the traditional exemptions of clerical and noble city-dwellers. Thus the establishment of robust fiscal structures

at the municipal level went hand in hand with the growth of royal finance, with the predictable consequence that the burden of municipal debt tended to spiral out of control. Equally, though, all the contributors emphasize the need not to overgeneralize, highlighting the fine but often significant differences between different municipalities in different regions at different times – some urban oligarchies did less well out of the changes than others.

The second and third sections are divided not into the conventional direct and indirect taxes, but into 'Taxes on capital and revenue' and 'Taxes on expenditure'. (This subtle distinction, as explained in the Preface, was the product of some careful rethinking by the research team – a further indication of the attention to detail that is a feature of this project.) Here, broad regional surveys are nicely complemented by detailed studies of individual towns. One of the common themes to emerge is the key role played by taxation in the growth of the machinery of the late medieval state – though as Patrick Boucheron suggests, the political impact of the new taxes may have been rather more important than their purely economic significance would warrant. Another theme is the need to be scrupulous in calculating the impact of the different taxes usually bracketed thoughtlessly together as 'indirect': a number of contributors show how urban elites successfully moved the burden of taxation from merchandise to foodstuffs, protecting their own interests at the expense of the poor.

All of the essays in the volume are balanced, detailed and make deft use of the available sources. Together they show how fruitful collaborative projects of this kind can be, especially in areas of research which require a forensic approach and considerable technical expertise, while demonstrating that – in the field of economic history perhaps more than most – a short and tautly-argued essay is as valuable to the non-specialist as a lengthy monograph. The work of Menjot and Sánchez Martínez can therefore be commended to scholars with an interest in late medieval France, Spain or Italy, or indeed to anyone wishing to find out more about the fiscal origins of the modern state.

**Timothy Watson**

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

**Mary Hulton (ed.)**, *Coventry and its People in the 1520s*. Stratford-upon-Avon: The Dugdale Society, volume xxxviii, 1999. xii + 288pp. 4 plates. 5 tables. Bibliography. £15.00.

**Janice Brooker and Susan Flood (eds)**, *Hertfordshire Lay Subsidy Rolls 1307 and 1334*. Hertford: Hertfordshire Record Society, volume xiv, 1999. xxix + 204pp. £20.30.

Coventry appears conspicuously in the literature of the late medieval town. This is partly because its condition in the 1520s is uniquely well documented, and partly because Charles Phythian-Adams exploited these sources as the core of his classic text of 1979, *Desolation of a City*, which made the case for Coventry as the most disastrous example of a major city hit by the phenomenon of late medieval decline. Now we have a good printed edition of the three surveys which together constitute this remarkably rich documentation. It gives us first the Muster or Military Survey of 1522 in which Wolsey, under the guise of a mere listing of men fit for military service, acquired a schedule which in Coventry's case itemized the

occupation or status, landlord, rent paid and a valuation of goods of most of the city's male householders. In the following year a local census was made, which listed the names of each householder and the numbers of adults and children resident in the house. Then in 1525 comes the second collection of Wolsey's reformed Lay Subsidy which exploited the revelations of the Muster to impose a tax burden on a much wider section of the population than had been netted since the fourteenth-century poll taxes. Hulton provides useful tabulated analyses of the incidence of christian names, of the armour listed in the muster, and of occupations. She also gives us a consolidated index of personal names which allows an instant comparison of the appearance of individuals in each survey. In future, anyone trying to trace people and families in Coventry at this date will have an invaluable resource.

The interpretation of these documents presents serious problems – none is complete, and each requires a good deal of further work to bring out even a provisional estimate of what it might mean. The editor gives us the texts, and an introduction which provides some helpful observations, but no statistical comparisons – and quite rightly so, since she is providing the raw material for future study. Readers of this journal may be asking 'Does all this confirm the Phythian-Adams thesis?' and the answer is that Hulton does not see it as her task to address that question directly, so ambiguous and elusive is the significance of the material, and so difficult and voluminous must be the process of analysing it, but she does let slip a number of broad hints. She clearly remains unconvinced that Coventry was the subject of a uniquely vicious economic crisis, or that these surveys provide much clear support for the idea of a sudden demographic collapse. So we must await the further study which this painstaking edition will facilitate; and express gratitude to Hulton and the Dugdale Society for such a well-produced and inexpensive volume.

The fourteenth-century lay subsidies have long been familiar sources, not merely the 1334 record which gives township totals but also the earlier ones which list individuals. The Hertfordshire return for 1307 lists the names of the more substantial taxpayers in each settlement and the sum they owed, and so can tell us much about the structure of the county and the names of its people at this date. The county lacks big towns but has an unusually large number of small ones, whose fortunes can be traced in these tax rolls. The record for 1334 is given in a few pages at the end, for comparative purposes. The text is ably edited and presented, and is prefaced by an excellent introduction by Mark Bailey which deftly sketches the context and is especially conscious of the urban issues.

**Alan Dyer**

University of Wales, Bangor

**Elizabeth Alice Honig**, *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998. xi + 308pp. 24 plates. 100 figures. Appendices. Bibliography. \$45.00.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, Antwerp was the commercial capital of the West: 'the market of all Europe', the Florentine merchant Lodovico Guicciardini called it, 'or rather, . . . of all the Universe'. Yet even as these words were written, the tide of Antwerp's prosperity had begun to ebb. Guicciardini's *Description of All the Low Countries* was published in 1567, the year in which the

Duke of Alva was sent with an army of Spanish veterans to govern the rebellious Netherlands. Within a decade those troops were to sack the city, killing around eight thousand of its inhabitants. And in 1585 it fell to the besieging forces of Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma. By then its population had almost halved. Its foreign merchants had left, taking with them much international trade. The one line of business which continued to do well – better, indeed, than in the city's heyday – was that of the painter.

In broad outline, the story of Antwerp's rise and fall is familiar enough. But Honig gives it a new dimension by telling the tale from the artist's viewpoint – or rather, from the viewpoint of those artists who chose as their subject-matter the buying and selling of goods in the market-place. She begins in the 1550s with Pieter Aertsen, an intellectual among painters, who answered iconoclastic critics of his craft by producing market scenes whose colour and immediacy sought to attract the viewer in the same way as meat and vegetables set out on a stall attract the buyer. Paintings were thus shown to be 'commodities' for sale, 'not idols . . . to perform miracles' (p. 39). And what guided, or ought to guide, the transactions of the market-place was the humanist virtue of judgement, the citizen's duty of honesty and transparency. This, it is suggested, was the message of Aertsen's nephew and artistic heir, Joachim Beuckelaer, in a series of panels executed in the 1560s and 1570s, juxtaposing contemporary market life with the biblical episode (the so-called 'Ecce Homo') in which Christ's innocence is fatally *misjudged* by Pilate and the Jewish people.

The second part of Honig's book takes us into the seventeenth century and into a different kind of Antwerp – less a commercial metropolis than a centre of Counter-Reformation militancy, its once open and cosmopolitan society increasingly hidebound by hierarchy and class-consciousness. From Jan I. Brueghel and Jan Baptiste Saive to Lucas van Valckenborch and Frans Snyders, artists continued to depict the market square. But they presented it now 'as a place where social distinctions were emphasized' (p. 121), with peasant labourers dutifully providing for well-to-do burghers in accordance with 'society's natural life cycle' (p. 132). By the 1620s, moreover, painters like Brueghel and Willem van Haecht were evoking the art market itself in their work, by showing groups of gentlemanly connoisseurs admiring each others' picture galleries – precisely the kind of elite on whose wealth and conventional taste the artists' own livelihood now largely depended.

Needless to say, there is more to this study than can be conveyed in a brief summary of its leading themes. It contains, for example, a valuable discussion of collaboration between artists in the production of paintings, a characteristic (and hitherto neglected) facet of the Antwerp art scene. In interpreting images, the author draws on a wide range of contemporary literary sources, from the plays of rhetoricians to pamphlets and almanacs; and only very occasionally does she seem to be reading more into a picture than is really there. It is worth pointing out, too, that this is a book which strikes resonances well beyond its immediate subject. The social and cultural consequences of a contracting economy are, after all, perennial themes in urban history. Nor do we have to look far to be reminded that the self-regarding connoisseurship of seventeenth-century Antwerp's art-collecting elite is something still with us today.

**Hugh Dunthorne**

University of Wales, Swansea

**Raimo Pullat (ed.)**, *Die Nachlaßverzeichnisse der deutschen Kaufleute in Tallinn 1702–1750. Tallinna saksa kaupmeeste varandus-inventarid 1702–1750*. Tallinn, 1997. 560pp. No price given.

Tallinn, the present capital of Estonia, was formerly known as Reval. During the late Middle Ages Tallinn was an outstanding centre of Baltic trade. In early modern times the city lost its leading position in the trade of north-eastern Europe to Riga and especially to Danzig, but it still retained an international importance. Here western European merchants met their eastern trading partners. In the Middle Ages as well as in early modern times the Germans held an exceptional position among the large number of foreigners.

During the first half of the eighteenth century it was common among the Germans, at death, to produce inventories of property and goods (*Nachlaßverzeichnisse*). These were brought to Germany in the Second World War, then during the Soviet era were stored in the German *Bundesarchiv* in Koblenz, before being returned to Tallinn in 1990. It is thanks to Raimo Pullat that 47 inventories have been published in this volume. Editions of the inventories of the second half of the eighteenth century are advertised to be published in the next few years. In his introduction the editor places the inventories in their social and historical context (pp. 13–14), and explains the special characteristics of these kinds of sources (pp. 15–26). The list of abbreviations (pp. 27–8) which follows shows most of the grammalogues except those of some currencies. The edition itself (pp. 35–559) presents only the inventories. It does not give any comments, it does not explain anything, and there are no notes which mention the problems of transcription or explain unclear terms. Nor does the register of names give a lot of help, for it just lists the 47 testators. Nevertheless, in terms of information the publication's value is enormous, for it allows an overview to be gained of many areas of everyday life – such as nutrition, clothing, housing and education – and in particular of the complete stocks of merchandise and financial circumstances of the testators. These sources are, therefore, of great value for investigating social as well as economic questions, and the publication of the later volumes is eagerly anticipated. The text itself is not easy to read, even for those who have a good mastery of the German language, because it is written in the eighteenth-century dialects of lower Germany, and the spelling is very inconsistent. Thus the far-reaching possibilities for research of Pullat's edition will only be accessible to knowledgeable readers. However, taken all in all, this volume is to be considered an important collection of sources, allowing extensive investigation of economic and social questions, even though it lacks notes (a critical apparatus).

**Gunther Hirschfelder**

Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

**Charles W.J. Withers**, *Urban Highlanders. Highland-Lowland Migration and Urban Gaelic Culture, 1700–1900*. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998. xvi + 271pp. 12 figures. 31 tables. Bibliography. £20 pbk.

In the earlier 1700s, probably about a quarter of Scottish society consisted of Gaelic speakers located mainly in the Highlands. By the 1890s, the Census (somewhat imperfectly) estimated the proportion of the population speaking



Gaelic at 6–7 per cent. By then many Highlanders, or their children, were now in the towns and no longer needed the language. This book demonstrates, however, that the process was not all negative: that something of the culture and identity of the urban highlander persisted in spite of much pressure to the contrary. As the old *Gaidhealtachd* retreated, a new one evolved through adaptation to the exigencies of living in the modern urban context. Withers rightly emphasizes the complexities of this process and shows that such adaptation is not to be measured in the wholesale transfer of a common set of values or language to an urban context but, rather, as something dynamic and shaped by the forces of class and the industrial characteristics of particular places. His is a subtle argument which requires careful reading and might usefully be linked to other studies of, for instance, the apparently more culturally separate Irish migrants who, nevertheless, also had to make myriad individual adaptations and contacts with Lowland Scots or English in the everyday business of working and living.

Agricultural and commercial changes (dictated by the economic agenda developed in the British lowland centres since about 1650) meant the indigenous Highland population had to go to Lowland towns either to earn the cash needed to keep family units together on crofts or, increasingly, to migrate permanently in search of employment. Withers sifts the evidence carefully to show the dynamics of this transformation. Migration was a continuing experience – of short moves to the nearest towns and villages before ending up as part of the Highland communities stretching from Aberdeen down to Dundee, Perth, Stirling, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Greenock. Far from the static and shiftless characteristics attributed to them by their critics, Highlanders were a remarkably mobile group as some of the case studies he has unearthed demonstrate. Like other migrants, they were resilient enough to capitalize on contacts they had with kin groups already established in the towns to get employment in the new industries and service sectors developing in nineteenth-century Scotland. At first, they tended to be young and single, but after 1850 older groups with families continued the stream. Interestingly, since the latter tended to come from the remoter areas this gave a boost to the use of Gaelic in the towns just as it was declining among the earlier settlers and their children. He demonstrates that, like other incomers to the dynamic industrial centres of the new age, they had to adapt constantly to ever-shifting circumstances and make compromises. Common ties through language or place of birth were challenged by the economic divisions of class. In the process, much of their language and community culture was lost but a surprisingly large amount was retained. In his careful analysis of the role played by urban Gaelic chapels, Withers shows how English was the preferred tongue for getting on and Gaelic generally regarded, even by successful Highlanders, as ‘inferior’, although such institutions did something to continue the language, despite their religious rather than cultural motivation. He notes that even those who found it difficult to retain such religious links still gathered together on Sundays to visit each other or talk and reminisce in well-known communal spots or to live in specific town localities among their own kind. These efforts must have done something to keep alive the memory of who they were and where they had come from. Not all urban Highlanders remained Gaelic speakers. However, despite the efforts made to replace it, the language proved a continuing bond. Language as well as kin names and geographical origin helped to constitute a definable Highland group in urban areas. In their effort to remain

distinctive Withers shows in this careful analysis how much they have contributed to the life of modern urban Scotland.

This detailed work contains much which will interest students of migration generally. The author hopes it will be a springboard for further study in this area. Reading it will whet one's appetite to know more, for instance, as to the significance of the oral culture of song and poetry or interest in questions of Highland politics in the making of the urban Highlander.

**John F. McCaffrey**  
University of Glasgow

**Douglas Peter Mackaman**, *Leisure Settings: Bourgeois Culture, Medicine, and the Spa in Modern France*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998. xi + 219pp. 25 figures. 4 tables. Bibliography. \$18.00; £14.50.

The French have always taken both their vacations and medicine seriously, and for Douglas Mackaman the high point of this seriousness was in the nineteenth century, at the spas that proliferated in the east and south of France. The idea of 'productive vacations' was created at the spas, linking bourgeois practices of leisure and pleasure on vacation with bourgeois principles of respectability, rationality and utility. Medicalization transformed vacations and leisure from decadent noble pursuits to the profitable and socially desirable pastimes of the newly emerging bourgeoisie as 'curists' at the spas.

Mackaman begins by describing the old regime spas, concentrating on such aspects as their lack of hygiene, privacy and decency, and their mainly noble clientele. He then shows how the old spas were rebuilt by medical entrepreneurs in partnership with the state and private investors. Such rebuilding created a new medicalized environment with the facilities to benefit from the visits of both invalids and tourists. The 'tourists and curists' were concerned with respectability as they sought to bring their ideas of utility and rationality to the long periods of leisure now possible – vacations were usually three weeks. Consequently the spas were built or rebuilt to conform to new ideas of privacy, as the old ideas of public life gave way to bourgeois sensibilities focused around family and private life. Communal bathing, with problems of indecency and lewdness, disappeared for the rich if not for the sick poor, replaced by the private experience of an ordered return to health.

Health was restored through medical regimes using the full panoply of hydrotherapy – drinking the mineral waters, taking baths, showers, massage showers, vapour baths and so on. Indeed Mackaman manages – almost – to avoid an unseemly emphasis on the more outrageous 'cures' such as the *douche ascendante*, although there are several amusing caricatures of hydrotherapeutic excesses, and various photographs convey the atmosphere of the baths and showers. Waters in different spas were advertised as curing an amazing array of ailments, notably those at Aix-les-Bains, famous for alleviating infertility in women; the sulphurous waters apparently also acting as a Victorian version of Viagra as they restored male potency.

Mackaman maintains, concentrating on Vichy and Aix-les-Bains, that spas were used not only to acquire health but also to acquire cultural capital. Visitors

used their vacations to check their manners and dress codes, and to extend their social circles within the public but protected environment of the spa hotels, parks and casinos. This argument is the completion of his aim to prove that a new 'discursive field' had been created – in which the emerging bourgeoisie moved 'to the peculiar rhythms of its rest'. Whether this claim is proven, or indeed whether such an approach aids understanding of either the bourgeoisie or the spas, remains unclear. What is clear is the quality of Mackaman's research on the creation of the spas, and the treatment received within them, as he provides an approachable and scholarly account of the heyday of French spas.

**Angie Smith**

Oxford Brookes University

**Sarah S. Elkind**, *Bay Cities and Water Politics: The Battle for Resources in Boston and Oakland*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998. viii + 246pp. 16 photographs. 10 maps. Bibliography. \$35.00.

In this monograph, published as a part of the *Development of Western Resources* series, Sarah Elkind explores the evolving responsibility for water provision and sewerage in Boston and a group of East Bay cities. Elkind shows the progression from household responsibility for these services to 'neighborhoods, cities, and watersheds, and finally between adjacent drainage basins, bays, and states' (p. 3). *Bay Cities and Water Politics* identifies trends and themes which move beyond local circumstances to operate on a national or even global scale.

While Elkind traces national trends, she also shows clear regional variations. Water was unquestionably seen as a public resource in Massachusetts, whereas in California private control of water supply was accepted. These regional differences mean that the unfolding stories in each metropolitan area are quite distinctive.

Elkind's choice of Boston and the East Bay cities of California is curious. A comparison of Boston and San Francisco would provide a straightforward comparison of the centre city in a metropolitan area. Instead, Elkind compares Boston with a group of cities including Oakland. This adds unresolved questions of size and primacy to regional differences, but does allow Elkind to explore regionalism from both the perspective of a dominant city and that of smaller municipalities within a region.

Elkind frames the book with a discussion of the Boston Harbor Cleanup of the 1980s. By doing so, she provides an important historical backdrop for current environmental debates. The environmental crisis in Boston in the 1980s revolved around harbour clean-up. The origins of this crisis go back over a hundred years to another environmental crisis revolving around inadequate water supply and sewerage. The solutions to this earlier environmental crisis in a very real sense spawned the environmental crisis of the 1980s.

Elkind integrates several subfields, especially political, urban and environmental history. She builds on the work of historians in each of these fields. The work of Jon Teaford, Robert Higgs, Stephen Skowronek and Thomas Scott all inform her discussion on politics and government. Studies by Joel A. Tarr and Martin V. Melosi on urban infrastructure set a context for Elkind's work on water supply and sewerage. The pioneering work of Samuel P. Hays, John Cumbler

and Andrew Hurley on environmental history in urban areas provided Elkind with a base for her ambitious work.

The book is composed of four chapters. The first chapter explores the early development of municipal water supplies and sewerage in both regions. Initially Boston's water was supplied privately. Then in 1846, after years of debate, Boston voters endorsed a municipal water supply. Sewer construction remained haphazard and largely private throughout the nineteenth century. In 1869 Oakland began its first formal sewerage construction, while water provision remained in private hands into the twentieth century.

In both Boston and the East Bay cities, municipal systems soon proved inadequate to provide for either the growing demand for water or the growing pollution problems caused by sewage. In the second chapter, Elkind explores early attempts at interlocal co-operation regarding both water supply and sewerage in both metropolitan areas. In both regions, demand quickly outstripped available systems. She notes that 'the better services a municipality provided, the greater the demand for public works they inspired' (p. 42). By the closing decades of the nineteenth century, interlocal projects in Boston and the East Bay had failed.

Both regions turned to regional alternatives for water supply and sewerage. In chapter 3, Elkind explores Boston's response, which she calls 'Regionalism in the gilded age'. The 1889 creation of the Metropolitan Sewerage Commission and the organization of the Metropolitan Water Board in 1895 signalled the movement beyond municipal institutions in Boston. In the fourth chapter, Elkind turns to the East Bay communities and what she labels 'Regionalism in the progressive era'. In the East Bay, after decades of controversy, the East Bay Municipal Utility District was formed in 1924. Not until after the Second World War was regional sewerage adopted in the East Bay.

In her conclusion, Elkind traces the transition from regional to super-regional agencies in the last half-century. She suggests caution: 'Centralization may make sense from a purely ecological sense . . . On the other hand, super-regional agencies may ultimately define resources and policy debates as narrowly as metropolitan special districts have over the past century' (p. 172).

**Ann Durkin Keating**  
North Central College

**Edna Robertson**, *Glasgow's Doctor: James Burn Russell, 1837–1904*. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998. xi + 248pp. 8 plates. Illustrations. £12.99.

James Burn Russell was appointed Glasgow's first full-time Medical Officer of Health in 1872 and remained in office until his controversial departure from the city in 1898. His activities latterly coincided with the heyday of municipal socialism as the prevailing (if ambiguous) ethos of civic government in Glasgow. Russell played a central part in shaping perceptions of professionalism within Scotland's much-vaunted 'model municipality' and he came to be recognized as a formidable figurehead for the health of his native city. However, he was also a complex man, whose high public profile was often at odds with his reserved and austere inner-self. As Robertson explains in her introduction, his personality 'defies analysis', making the task of the biographer all the more daunting in

attempting to unravel the fine details of his career. Robertson has therefore been brave in tackling her elusive subject, although she clearly admires Russell and is eager to convey to a contemporary readership his single-minded mission to stem Glasgow's environmental corrosion.

One key to understanding Russell was his skill as a health propagandist, which was rooted in his evangelical conviction (he was a devout Congregationalist) and his early literary pretensions (he was a prize-winning poet while a student at Glasgow University). Russell's background gave eloquent substance to his celebrated pamphlets of the 1880s, such as *Life In One Room*, which is reproduced in full as an appendix to the Robertson biography. One revealing comment was made at the time about Russell's 'almost Zola-esque' qualities in evoking life in Glasgow's slum districts. Although intended as a tribute to his vivid rhetoric, it also begs the question as to how far he was manipulating images to shock his predominantly middle-class audiences. That Russell had a medical training and illustrated his work with copious statistical and scientific data further fuzzes the dividing line between perception and reality. These are issues that Robertson only tentatively explores and she has tended to take his writing at face value. Indeed, her own analysis of industrialization and its blighting effects on the city, which is used to provide a context for Russell's work, seems to have absorbed the distinctive style of the MOH. Given Russell's pervasive polemical influence, a fuller critical analysis of his writing would have helped to give a balanced assessment of his career.

Robertson is more successful when she charts the history of public health administration in Glasgow, from the fledgling Sanitary Department of the 1860s to Russell's 'empire' (her words) of the 1890s. Developments had been accelerated by the inauguration of Glasgow's City Improvement Trust in 1866, an ambitious slum-clearance project, which among several objectives aimed to create a more salubrious inner city. After his appointment in 1872 Russell threw himself into the task of helping to restructure the urban landscape, in accordance with his deeply-held belief that environment was a crucial factor in shaping character. The long-standing quest to secure 'breathing space' in Glasgow directed Russell's strategy. His famous description of the 'semi-asphyxiated city' was a reference to the high incidence of respiratory diseases, a phenomenon associated with grossly overcrowded living conditions. Robertson provides a detailed account of his campaign to establish tighter environmental controls in the city, especially his attempts to tackle the notorious smoke problem. As Russell liked to point out, Glasgow's water supply (from Loch Katrine) was lauded as the purest in the kingdom, while at the same time its air was among the most polluted. His strong feelings brought him into conflict with prominent industrialists like Sir Charles Tennant, the chemical magnate, who Russell condemned as irresponsible because of his laxity over the pollution problem.

Russell's status as a pioneering eco-warrior has resonance for the twenty-first century, and some of his ideas were ahead of their time. His craving for urban control made him aware of the importance of urban planning, especially in improving the layout of streets and buildings for ventilation. On the other hand, Russell deterministically equated environmental purity with personal standards of morality. He believed in the need to regulate behaviour, to the extent that there were claims that he operated an intrusive sanitary police. Self-righteousness and self-importance were among the frequent complaints against him. Robertson's

attempts to redeem Russell from the barbs of his critics are not wholly convincing, as her justification of 'moral outrage' is rather too elastic, the term meaning different things to different people. Moreover, Russell's commitment to the common good had been strongly coloured by his political convictions, which were ultimately a major reason for his resignation as MOH. He was identified firmly as a Liberal Unionist from 1886, a perilous route for a public official at a time of unusual flux in Glasgow's civic politics. Robertson does well to disentangle the complicated undercurrents to municipal debate, when the balance of allegiances could often be at a knife-edge. By the late 1890s, as the Gladstonian Liberals began to regain ground and the rising force of Labour was edging into the political equation, Russell's position became untenable.

The post of MOH disappeared from Scotland's cities in 1974, as a result of health service and local government reorganization. It was a decision much criticized at the time because the public could no longer identify with one individual who embodied the aspirations of their community for better health. As Robertson's intriguing and highly readable biography reveals, Russell had been one of the pioneers for Scotland and created his own enduring legend as Glasgow's MOH.

**Irene Maver**

University of Glasgow

**Wilhelm Ribhegge**, *Das Parlament als Nation. Die Frankfurter Nationalversammlung 1848/49*. Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998. 170pp. Bibliography. DM 26.

The 150th anniversary saw the publication of numerous books on the revolutions of 1848 designed to reach beyond a small academic readership and this is one example. Ribhegge claims little has been written recently on the German National Assembly. There has been no comprehensive study since Frank Eyck's 1969 book (German publication, 1972). However, research has been published on aspects of the parliament, e.g. the *großdeutsch* position, prosopography, petitioning, relationships to various political currents and socio-economic demands, and as a part of general histories of 1848. Furthermore, 1998 saw a marvellous exhibition in Frankfurt which paid especial attention to the parliament (for a review, see J. Breuilly, in *German History*, 16, 3, 1998).

Ribhegge emphasizes the novelty of the parliament, although reflections on the misery of *Kleinstaaterei* itself expresses national values; by 1848 many 'Germans' showed themselves attached to their states, even the smallest ones. A standard narrative takes us to the opening of the parliament. Early debates are considered, showing the taking up of unitary, federalist and confederalist positions by left, liberal centre and right respectively. A liberal majority asserted the sovereignty of the assembly but in a moderate, conciliatory way. The pattern was set and these positions hardened in the debate over the establishment of a provisional German government. Hardening meant party organization which started from scratch in restaurants and inns surrounding the Paulskirche. These gave their names to various factions. Entertaining quotations from the deputy Karl Biederman outline the different styles of eating, drinking and debating across the political spectrum.

Much of the summer of 1848 was spent drawing up 'basic rights', reflecting the liberal conviction that this was of fundamental importance in setting out a framework which not only transcended particularism but also the privileges and arbitrary powers of the old order. Those on the left saw it by contrast as a distraction from the 'real' issues of power. Ribhegge provides a good account of debates on the removal of noble privilege and the commitment to a state bound by law and forbidden from inflicting pain or death on its citizens. He also considers the more contentious debates on church–state relations and schooling. Unfortunately he says nothing about equally divisive issues concerned with freedom of movement, settlement and rights to practise a trade.

'Politics' enters with the Posen debate of July when the parliament supported the Prussian government's partition of the Grand Duchy, against the left's view that this abandoned both the Polish cause and the historic-territorial conception of nationality. For many later historians the sentiments expressed by deputies like Wilhelm Jordan reflected the dark side of the assembly: racist, expansionist, power-hungry. However, it is not clear whether the majority vote expressed agreement with Jordan rather than a disinclination to challenge Prussia.

A challenge was briefly made in September when the Prussian government concluded an armistice in its war with Denmark. The assembly first rejected this armistice, then reversed its position, something followed by riots in Frankfurt, the murder of two right-wing deputies and military intervention by state armies to restore order. The debate is skilfully conveyed through extensive quotation. However, we need comparison with the Posen debate.

By now the assembly's authority was waning and its own divisions growing, as both the Austrian and the Prussian monarchies reasserted authority in the last months of 1848. Ribhegge brings out the complex relationships between the two state capitals and Frankfurt, showing that loyalty to Austria and Prussia was not confined to the right.

By early 1849 some deputies argued that the only realistic option left for establishing a liberal, democratic, national state was to offer a hereditary emperorship to Frederick William IV of Prussia. Ribhegge provides coverage of the debates on this matter, demonstrating the penetrating analysis of many of the deputies, both for and against. The rest of the story is quickly told: the king's refusal of the crown, withdrawal of many deputies, transfer of the rump to Stuttgart, forcible closure on 18 June, failure of the 'second revolution' in support of the imperial constitution. A brief concluding chapter betrays a questionable triumphalism in regarding the '2+4' accord of 12 September 1990 as the 'final' answer to the German question which the Frankfurt parliament had tried but failed to provide.

The merit of this book does not lie in original research or comprehensive analysis. Rather, like the exhibition of 1998 with its physical reconstruction of the parliament and display of contemporary documents and drawings, this book with its extensive quotation from debates brings the assembly alive to a later age.

**John Breuilly**

University of Birmingham

**José C. Moya**, *Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850–1930*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998. xviii + 567pp. 17 maps. 17 figures. 52 tables. \$55, £40 hbk.

Between 1850 and 1930 more than 2 million Spaniards entered Argentina – more than half settled there permanently. By 1914, the number of Spaniards living in Buenos Aires alone (306,000) was greater than that of those who lived in the Spanish colonies ‘at any given time before the Wars of Independence’. Yet, in spite of its size and its contribution to the growth of Buenos Aires, Spanish migration to Argentina (to Buenos Aires, in particular) has been neglected by modern scholarship, with a few exceptions such as the recent work by Blanca Sánchez Alonso. Moya attributes this neglect, among a variety of factors, to the lack of sufficient ‘otherness’ or ‘subjugation’ of the Spaniards in their new home – thus failing to attract the attention of ‘more progressive Western scholars’. Whatever the explanation, he has done a superb job doing full justice to the subject.

Moya has produced an excellent book – revisionist in tone and substance, precise in its details but also offering general interpretations, and backed by a vast array of sources. This is also an enjoyable book to read. Moya exploits his subject to the full: the life of migrants has always been a unique human adventure, open to both drama and joy. He has traced the routes of thousands of individuals, and their relatives and friends who joined from Spain the mass migration movement that was directed towards Argentina between the mid-nineteenth century and the Great Depression. He has located both their origins in Spain and their pattern of settlement in the city of Buenos Aires. The maps, figures and tables in the book give ample evidence of an extraordinary empirical effort. His elegant narrative is often accompanied by interesting anecdotes or folk tunes inspired by the various facets of the migrants’ lives.

The book opens with a discussion of some of the basic questions in any study of migration. Why did so many Spaniards decide to leave Spain? Why did they choose to settle in Argentina? Moya highlights the significance of these otherwise obvious questions, facing the paradox of the Spanish experience: the Spaniards had been ‘the first Europeans to migrate to the New World’, but also among ‘the last to join the nineteenth-century exodus in a massive way’. He argues persuasively that mass migration from Spain was ‘caused not by backwardness but by modernization’. Ambition, not necessity, drove most migrants from their roots; relative prosperity, not adversity, was a more accurate context to understand their movements. And this relative prosperity, to some extent the result of significant changes in agriculture, industry, transport and ideology, came relatively late to Spain. Thus Moya’s explanation for the late migration movement of Spaniards.

Moya revises both ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors, commonly accepted as causes for the migration movement during the period under study. Argentine economic growth after the mid-nineteenth century went hand in hand with the consolidation of political stability. An open door towards immigration, incorporated in the 1853 constitution, became the official policy of successive administrations. The Argentine government set up a department of migration, appointed propaganda agents, opened a Hotel de Inmigrantes in Buenos Aires, and granted free passage to migrants. However, as Enrico Ferri observed, the most powerful Argentine



immigration agent was 'the mail stamp'. Moya agrees. After all, other Latin American countries also tried similar immigration policies without much success. Even in Argentina, as Moya shows, state-sponsored migration could result in disaster. This was the case of the officially organized movement from the Canary Islands, which ended in fiasco. Family members, therefore, rather than migration agents 'constituted the principal sponsors of newcomers'. Emigration was above all 'a family affair and a business enterprise'.

Moya's analysis is particularly enlightening in examining 'local particularisms' together with global forces at work, as the appropriate approach to study migration. Those 'local particularisms', for example, are useful in explaining patterns of urban settlement in Buenos Aires – 'one of the least ethnically segregated immigrant cities in the world at the time' – and social integration. He takes issue with some of the previous works on immigration to Argentina (such as James Scobie's), or with schools of migration studies in the United States and elsewhere. This he does in an exemplary and scholarly fashion. He probably ventures too far in formulating 'laws' to understand migration movements and he often follows his subject too relentlessly, to produce perhaps an oversized book. Reading this book, however, is a most rewarding and illuminating task for those interested in urban history and migration studies.

**E. Posada-Carbó**

Institute of Latin American Studies, London

**Rainer Liedtke**, *Jewish Welfare in Hamburg and Manchester c. 1850–1914*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. 266pp. Bibliography. £40.00.

**Jörg Vögele**, *Urban Mortality Change in England and Germany, 1870–1913*. Liverpool Studies in European Population, No. 5. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998. xviii + 299pp. 19 plates. 50 figures. 43 tables. 9 appendices. Bibliography. £40.00 hbk; £16.95 pbk.

These two books demonstrate very different ways of doing comparative history. Liedtke's monograph, a revised Oxford Ph.D. thesis, rests on a detailed reconstruction of a specific set of institutions in two individual cities on the basis of a thorough examination of manuscript and printed sources at a local level. Vögele's survey, the product of a project funded by the Wellcome Trust and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, is based by contrast on a rigorous evaluation of a mass of statistics from a sample of the ten largest towns in Britain and Germany. Liedtke addresses the rich and varied but not always very precisely formulated historiography of Jewish integration and identity in nineteenth-century Europe. Vögele uses statistical analysis in the time-honoured manner of social scientists to test a number of key hypotheses about the nature and determinants of quantifiable variables of mortality change. Both books are excellent examples of their kind, but they also reveal the problems and limitations of their particular ways of doing comparative history, as well as the undoubted benefits to be gained from undertaking this particularly difficult and demanding form of historical investigation.

Liedtke frames his comparative analysis carefully within the context of the place of Jews in the two societies he is studying. The Jewish community in Hamburg was far older and better established than in Manchester, but this made

little difference in the end. The institutions and practices which the respective Jewish communities developed to provide themselves with welfare services largely mirrored those which developed in the wider societies to which they belonged. There was no general 'Jewish' approach to welfare that covered both communities.

At the same time, the fact that the two communities were small and had a high proportion of the well-off meant that they were able to focus successfully on preventive measures and regarded their welfare provisions with some justice as better than those of the non-Jewish sectors of urban society. This helped cement their Jewish identity, above all after formal civil equality threatened an increase in integration. This was particularly important in a situation where Jewish religious observance was low. Such welfare provisions won the approval of the wider urban community, even at a time when the state was attempting in Hamburg at least to integrate them into a homogenized overall provision of welfare for the whole city.

At the same time the two Jewish communities faced rather different problems. While Hamburg's Jewish welfare institutions dealt with the massive influx of Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe by helping them on their way to Britain and (above all) the United States, Manchester's Jewish community was confronted with the problem of numbers of poor Eastern European immigrants who had come to stay. In both countries this influx fuelled Jewish fears of anti-semitism, but after a somewhat confusing discussion of this issue, Liedtke concludes, probably correctly, that anti-semitism played very little role in creating the Jewish subculture in either city, given the overwhelmingly positive way in which both Jews and non-Jews regarded the Jewish welfare system and the provision it made for the poor, the sick, the needy and the ill-educated. The positive and separate nature of the Jewish welfare system in both towns compensated to a degree for the growth of integration in some other areas and helped develop an identity that was both British or German and Jewish at the same time.

By concentrating on welfare, Liedtke perhaps paints too rosy a picture and in particular obscures the very real differences in the nature and strength of anti-semitism in the two societies. It may be true, as he says, that British anti-semitism has not been the subject of a great deal of research, and so we know too little about it, and it is certainly the case that of all German cities Hamburg, with its rich mercantile elite, careful not to offend Jewish business interests, was one of the least anti-semitic. Nevertheless, Jews were not admitted to the inner circles of the governing group in Hamburg, and in the 1890s there was an active and vociferous political movement in the city whose main aim was to propagate overtly anti-semitic ideas and policies, something that had no equivalent in Manchester. In discussing the pressures operating on the development of Jewish identity in the two cities, Liedtke needed to look beyond the records of the welfare organizations, which as he says make virtually no mention of anti-semitism, to the wider context of urban society and politics.

Liedtke has many interesting and significant things to say along the way to his somewhat optimistic conclusion. His chapter on female welfare activities in the Jewish community, for example, argues powerfully that these two were largely separate and isolated and did little to advance the cause of women's emancipation outside it, or to integrate Jewish women into the wider middle-class

community. Finally, Liedtke has made a significant contribution to knowledge simply by the fact of studying voluntary welfare associations in the German context, where in contrast to the situation in Britain, historians have behaved virtually as if the only philanthropic and welfare activities that existed were undertaken by the state.

In contrast to the local perspectives offered in Liedtke's detailed, archive-based approach to comparative history, Vögele's quantitative study of mortality patterns in the ten biggest English and German towns over roughly the same period provides a bird's-eye view. Vögele's statistical data, quantitative analyses and correlation tables will be required reading for all students of urban mortality in the nineteenth century. More importantly, however, Vögele uses them to revisit the old controversy stirred up by Thomas McKeown's argument that medicine made only a small contribution to mortality decline. By comparing cities in two different countries, Vögele aims to isolate general factors as well as highlight individual national peculiarities.

He finds, as one might expect, that urban mortality rates were higher than rural in the early stages of large-scale industrialization, confirming that this period brought a real deterioration in living standards. Because Germany industrialized later than England, this meant that the 'urban penalty' was higher there in the 1860s and 1870s. While urban mortality rates declined slowly but steadily in England, they fell more rapidly in Germany, reaching a similar level after the turn of the century. Mortality from digestive diseases was particularly marked in German towns during industrialization.

Improved living standards and public hygiene and sanitation were central to lowering urban mortality, rather than medical intervention; even in an unusual case such as diphtheria, where an effective treatment was available, medicine had little impact. However, Vögele notes that effective sewerage systems were not introduced in Germany for many decades, perpetuating the impact of water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid up to and in some cases even beyond the end of the century. He rightly questions the widely accepted view that cholera epidemics acted as a motor of sanitary reform.

There are a few minor errors in Vögele's book – German towns did not have a 'three-class electoral system' (p. 213) but a wide variety of franchises, and the great Hamburg cholera epidemic of the late nineteenth century happened in 1892 not 1893 (p. 172). However, in general this is a carefully argued and researched study that sets parameters for further research. The tentative nature of many of its conclusions demonstrates just how difficult comparative history is at this level. Differences in institutions, statistical categories and many other factors make a comparative exercise such as this problematical and render many of the conclusions somewhat speculative. However, Vögele is convincing when he detects similar processes at work in the two countries, operating at different paces and in different time-frames. In calling at the end of his book for a more detailed study of two individual towns, descending to street-level, Vögele himself recognizes that both the kinds of comparative approach exemplified by the books under review here are complementary to each other rather than posing alternatives between which one has to choose.

**Richard J. Evans**

University of Cambridge

**Christoph Bernhardt**, *Bauplatz Gross-Berlin: Wohnungsmärkte, Terraingewerbe und Kommunalpolitik im Städtewachstum der Hochindustrialisierung (1871–1918)* (Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin, Band 93). Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998. xvi + 379pp. 14 illustrations. 8 figures. 49 tables. Bibliography. DM 220.

The subject of this work is the dynamics of suburban growth in greater Berlin, mainly from c. 1900 to 1913. The central players in this process were the real estate companies (*Terraingesellschaften*). These companies, often financed, sometimes managed, by banks, bought up land in areas where they believed that they could profitably resell it in smaller parcels to builders, having first laid out streets and public utility connections. It was a speculative business, and in the property collapses of the mid-1870s and of 1910–1913, most of the active companies collapsed or had to be reorganized. Thus their expectations were the active ingredient of suburban growth in the more prosperous south and west of the city. An interplay of forces, says Bernhardt, triggered these expectations. The property cycle was basically governed by the rate of household formation, itself reflecting changes in net immigration and the incidence of marriage. In Bernhardt's model this does not so much affect the rate of change of real rents as the stock of empty dwellings. Perhaps more important, in his view, were the effects on prospective property prices of changes in the (Prussian) zoning laws governing where five-, four- or lower-storeyed buildings could be built, and of transport developments. Given these, a vital factor in the development of suburban greater Berlin was competition between the numerous independent municipalities into which it was divided until the creation of the unified city of Greater Berlin in 1920. This made them collaborate with the real estate companies in developing their territories: by fostering transport developments, by petitioning for modifications of state building regulations, by manipulating property taxes on unbuilt land in order to force their owners to sell, etc. For their part the real estate companies would part-finance suburban railway developments in the expectation that they could recoup the outlays through the capital gains on their land, and conduct tough negotiations with public utilities for favourable terms of access.

Urban politics controlled this process: under the Prussian three-class voting system the wealthiest income taxpayers dominated local as well as Prussian politics. This facilitated the formation of *de facto* coalitions between real estate companies and local house owners, which dominated the town councils of certain suburbs. The real estate companies were unable to form a cartel amongst themselves to control property prices: competition – between companies and between municipalities – not monopoly, was the dynamic. The interest which municipalities had in development is not explicitly spelled out, but must have been complex. If in rental values, then it must have been because existing house owners expected to share the capital gains resulting from real estate companies' support for transport and public utility policies; or otherwise it must have been the expectation that enlargement of the tax base would reduce the incidence of local taxation.

The real estate companies showed less interest in the more working-class municipalities, to judge by the case study Bernhardt makes of Rixdorf/Neukölln. Here the local authority stepped in itself as real estate entrepreneur, and also had to offer larger inducements to the companies. This dynamic of growth shaped the

critique which contemporary reformers levelled against housing conditions in Berlin. In their view the overcrowding of the working class in 'rent barracks' (*Mietkasernen* – the large, ill-equipped tenements in which the working class rented tiny flats) in the centre, east and north of the city was caused by the speculative driving up of land prices in the suburbs by the real estate companies. This critique decisively influenced post-1945 social history of the second empire. Bernhardt, however, argues that in the long run the housing market was efficient (and rents seem to have been pitched with the long run in view), that housing conditions slowly improved in Berlin as the second empire progressed, that wages rose faster than rents for constant-quality housing, that the incidence of non-family lodgers (*Schlafgänger*) fell, and that neither before 1914 nor during the war did housing conditions feature in working-class protest in the city. He does, however, criticize the resistance mounted by Berlin local authorities to any redistributive social housing policy. But he charts the growth of a public awareness and discourse which led to rent controls during the war and the housing policy of the Weimar Republic.

This is a fascinating and able analysis of the dynamics of urban growth.

**Theo Balderston**

University of Manchester

**David Hamer**, *History in Urban Places: The Historic Districts of the United States*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998. xiii + 205pp. 20 plates. Bibliography. \$49.95 cloth, \$19.95 pbk.

There are times when a reviewer feels that 'the author should have written a different book'; others when the response is 'I wish I had written that'. The latter is my reaction to this *tour de force* overview of the designation of US Historic Districts, and what has happened to them since designation. Of necessity a very selective overview, this slim volume nevertheless succeeds in presenting a picture of historic preservation across the United States from its origins in individual house preservation through the well-known examples of colonial Williamsburg, Charleston and New Orleans. The development of concepts, and of legal and fiscal mechanisms, is well summarized.

From there, however, a country-wide system was developed, with national criteria for evaluation and designation. But this mechanism was then delegated to individual states to implement, with the result that many designations represent local, or at most state-wide, values and attitudes towards historic value, rather than national ones. The number of historic districts is thus great, and their types varied. By 1986 there were over 2,000 district designations; by 1991 an estimated 800,000 properties were on the National Register, 86 per cent of which were within designated districts. However, 'there has been little clear definition of what a historic district actually *is* or should be'.

Hamer argues that the historic district is thus an integral part of the physical, social and economic fabric of many US cities: the concept, and many of the areas, have been sufficiently long established to be subject to historical analysis. Without reaching for any consensus or quasi-legal definition, his analysis thus seeks to address the problem identified above. Hamer identifies four stages of history represented in historic districts. First is the history represented by or in a

district, assessed against the national criteria: the justification for the designation. Second is the history of the area between the events of historic significance and the date at which the historic significance of those events was judged: the developmental processes and the survival, modification or loss of 'original' features. Third is the history of historic preservation: the development of ideas, values and methods as they apply to individual designations. Last is post-designation history: the continuing processes of urban development and decision-making that may change the area's character, appearance, or the current evaluation of its historic significance.

Hamer views the second period as vital. What happened between events in the (relatively) distant urban past and the present day? This is the period when those events are likely to be un- or under-valued in comparison to today's judgements; when the survival of features is a result of quite different urban histories and processes. And yet it is this period which shapes the urban landscape which we inherit. So Hamer asks a series of interrelated questions, including what is the history that is remembered in historic districts? What representations of the urban past emerge from the interpretation and implementation of the designation criteria? What kinds of history are most likely to be represented as a result of the strategies and priorities associated with modern historic preservationism?

Successive chapters explore these issues, using numerous examples. One of the more frightening (to me) is Independence Mall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Here, three complete street blocks fronting Independence Hall were demolished between 1950 and 1964 since the nineteenth-century industrial urban form and architecture was 'not considered a fit environment for the "shrine of American liberty"'. Equally puzzling, perhaps, is the issue of 'historic significance' embodied in the Harry S. Truman Historic District in Independence, Missouri, where the aim is to preserve the district 'to the greatest possible extent as it was when Truman was a resident' so that visitors can re-create his neighbourhood walks. However, the designation did not include church buildings, and one local church thus demolished six houses to create a car park 'within view of the Trumans' back porch' and the original wide boundaries were substantially reduced in 1984 because of these other local changes. The questions thus have to include others: 'what is the history that is *not* represented in historic districts?'

The book emphasizes ideas which are not in themselves new, but which are particularly well expressed and illustrated. Early districts appear to be products of a search for the rare; later designations seem to focus on the typical. This 'historic preservation' is more akin to 'heritage', with its connotations of selectivity and commodification. History *per se* seems to have relatively little to do with the historic district. These districts are conceptualized, designated, marketed; largely for tourists as income generators, or as aspects of civic boosterism. Academic historians have not featured heavily in the processes of pre-designation research and evaluation.

The book's last chapter focuses on the potential future for historic districts. Hamer notes their lengthy history within US urban history and their strength in representing historical continuity. There are likely to be problems in their perception as elitist and their (thus far) limited cultural and racial diversity. The artificiality of gentrification, heritage and desire for additional development control are recurring issues. They do not represent 'frontier' communities characterized by high levels of transience and change. Yet they are likely to

remain significant aspects of US urbanism: 'they represent the desire of Americans to aspire to the ideal of "community", even if they are seldom able to achieve it'.

The book is sufficiently short, well structured, well argued and well written to appeal to a wide readership. It needs to be read by more than academic urban historians and planners; it has a considerable contribution to make to the evolving heritage/preservation debate at the level of local people, practising planners and developers. It is a fitting memorial to David Hamer, who died suddenly in early 1999.

**Peter J. Larkham**

University of Central England