

working on space. This final essay is different in content and approach from the other three in the section but it holds its own in representing the rich possibilities of the literary analysis of space.

Although many of the essays in this collection are specialized, those that foreground the theoretical significance of their case-studies (such as Bork, Winter and Bouloux) offer stimulating perspectives on the potential of work on space to resonate beyond disciplinary boundaries. For scholars currently working on space, or indeed graduate students requiring a quick overview of the critical field, the introduction will be especially profitable and the footnotes even more so. Cohen and Madeline have produced a valuable and refreshing new collection that amply displays the range and depth of work currently undertaken on space, place, and imagined geographies in the humanities.

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Andrew Gordon, *Writing Early Modern London: Memory, Text and Community*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. viii + 264pp. £50.00.
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Early modern urban historians, especially those of London in the 'age of Shakespeare', have become accustomed to the outpouring of 'new historicist' studies from literary critics on every possible aspect of life during what they characteristically refer to as the 'Renaissance' (a term English historians rarely embrace). This volume prefers the term 'early modern' but addresses the same time period (roughly 1550–1620). Like many such studies, it combines a very broad title with a series of case-studies of particular texts. However, whereas such volumes often offer little more than a collection of essays on a narrow range of canonical or proto-canonical literary works, this book both promises and delivers a great deal more, and should be read by all historians of early modern London or urban culture between the Reformation and the Civil War. Although it does include one relatively canonical writer (Thomas Middleton) and one leading figure among the newly rediscovered women authors (Isabella Whitney, the first woman to publish a secular volume of poetry), they are both considered here as contributors to an ongoing debate about the nature of 'memory, text and community' (to quote the subtitle) in post-Reformation London. Middleton is featured as much as the City Chronologer (which he became in 1620) as the collaborative playwright, and his two (little-known) plays closely analysed, *Michaelmas Term* and *The Old Law*, are discussed primarily for their insight into the workings and ideology of law and custom. Whitney's contribution is her poetic 'will and testament' to London at the end of her *Sweet Nosegay* (1573). Their work is considered alongside three other key texts, namely Henry Machyn's 'book of remembrance' (firmly identified as *not* a diary!), William Smith's manuscript 'Brieffe description of the Royal Citie of London' (1575) and John Stow's *Survey*. However, all these texts are deeply contextualized by comparisons with a range of other texts, published and unpublished and, even more importantly, by analysis of the evolution of writing practices in general, and record-keeping in particular, within early modern London

(providing a valuable sequel to Malcolm Richardson's *Middle-Class Writing in Late Medieval London* (2011), which is curiously not cited).

Through Gordon's well-informed and acute observations on these broader themes, the book offers a superb introduction to numerous questions of the greatest importance to urban historians. Methodologically, he brings out very clearly the issues of genre and purpose lying behind a whole range of documentary sources which early modernists (unlike perhaps our medieval colleagues) tend to take for granted, including the nature of memoirs, wills, chronicles and surveys, and the organization of civic records. Thematically, the volume's unity comes from its presentation of each of his case-studies as representing a stage in the evolving response of Londoners to the crises of both memory and community generated primarily by the Reformation, but also by the rapid growth and changing character of London as a city. His concern, despite the focus on texts by individuals, is actually on the nature of Londoners' collective response to such change, as he acutely explores what both the voices and the silences expressed in each source can tell us about how Londoners might have found (or not found) adequate ways to 'memorialize' themselves and their communities in the face of change. The chapter on Machyn illuminates the collapse of Catholic ritual (parochial, civic and funereal), but also explores Machyn's inability to comprehend the emergence of new Protestant forms of communal remembrance and expression. Smith is shown to have embraced quantification and organizational detail as a way to try to describe London, but to have struggled to relate these to any communal values, reinforcing the message of Whitney's satire on the lack of such values in the London which had rejected her services as an independent woman. Stow is seen as the most successful of these writers in creating, through his *Survey* (which is meticulously distinguished from other models of urban history or geography), a powerful resource for Londoners to deploy in asserting their customary rights (both written and embodied in buildings and practices) against those encroaching on them: Gordon arguably understates the degree to which previous historians have credited Stow with this intention, but this is still a very informative account of his methods. Finally, Middleton provides a powerful commentary on the (fragile) extent to which the law, and its embodiment of complex credit relationships, could provide a reliable and satisfying basis for the support of community values. But this bald summary gives little sense of the range of materials which Gordon illuminates here, deftly showing how textual analysis can complement and extend the insights into 'bourgeois collectivism' (to quote myself!) which urban historians have recently provided through work on parish, guild, ward, civic and charitable organizations and more broadly on the 'politics' of London's transformation during this period. This is truly a model of new historicism in action.

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Yue Zhang, *The Fragmented Politics of Urban Preservation: Beijing, Chicago and Paris*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. xxviii + 201pp. 35 figures. Bibliography. \$ 75.00 cloth; \$25.00 pbk.
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