

as they developed according to specific shifts in colonial politics – with particular attention to the impact of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and declaration of an Italian Empire in Africa in 1936. The final section – which is perhaps its most unique contribution – offers specific case studies of the practices of colonial architecture and planning in Tripoli, in planned agricultural settlements in Libya and East Africa, and in the Imperial city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. As is noted in the introduction, rather than provide a comprehensive history the author presents the major approaches based on the argument that there was no single model for Italian colonial architecture and planning.

While it is hard to argue with any of the major assertions of this book – and one can certainly acknowledge its ambitions – the results are sometimes less satisfying. In part, this is attributable to the relative slimness of a volume that examines architecture and planning in all of Italy's colonial possessions, where any one of these contexts would demand a book of greater length. Although the comparative approach taken is quite laudable, at times the lack of depth leads to some rather questionable assertions. This is particularly true of its discussion of architectural discourse – such as its all-to-brief attempt to capture the full complexity of the debates within modern Italian architecture from 1910 to 1930. One could be equally critical of the lack of intensity with which the author examines 'moderns abroad' in a book that seems to spend so little time discussing the concept (or consequences) of modernity. However, even if it often lacks the full complexity of examination that this subject deserves – particularly for architectural historians – the book fills a quite obvious gap in scholarship on Italian colonialism for scholars of urban history and cultural studies.

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**Carl Smith**, *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. xvii + 183pp. 68 illustrations. \$22.00.

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This book is an extension of the interpretive essay that Carl Smith wrote for the online version of the superb *Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Its genesis as an extended encyclopaedia entry is evident in its admirable clarity, relative brevity for a book, bibliographic essay instead of footnotes, generous quantity of illustrations and balanced tone. Unlike many encyclopaedias, Smith's work is also deeply researched and vividly written. This is the place to turn to for a thorough introduction to what Smith calls 'one of the most fascinating and significant documents in the history of urban planning' (p. xv), Daniel Burnham's *Plan of Chicago*. Burnham's 1909 plan not only helped systematize Chicago's parks and downtown, it also inspired much twentieth-century urban planning. However, although Smith has written a wonderful introduction this is not a critical assessment. What is at stake when a small group of elite businessmen invests more than \$100,000 to promote their specific vision of a city? Smith repeatedly notes that the leaders of Chicago's Merchant's Club, who financed and promoted Burnham's plan, were sincere in their belief that they were serving the entire city even as they were also often serving their own self-interests. This is true, but simply

praising their goals evades the question of their results. Smith notes that others have criticized Burnham's plan for its lack of attention to social problems and especially housing issues, yet he generally refrains from taking any side himself. Do the plan's ambitious goals neglect the realities of actual people on the street? Smith notes that smaller plans may be more successful and serve more diverse people, but big plans are impressively inspiring, and it is important to consider metropolitan regions comprehensively. In other words, he takes few sides. This can be frustrating.

Like Burnham's Plan itself, Smith's book begins with a history of planning. Smith relates early antecedents to Burnham's plan as well as the city that Burnham and his colleagues encountered in 1909 – yet one longs for a stronger authorial point of view than is contained in a list of how many streetlights Chicago had in 1909. In tone, this work resembles Bessie Louise Pierce's classic *History of Chicago* (1940–41). Her work ends in 1893; Smith takes up where Pierce left off, and his work may stand alongside hers as the starting-point for numerous inquiries into the fascinating city of Chicago. For planners and activists interested in changing urban space, Smith's most important chapter may be the one on the extensive promotional activities undertaken by supporters of Burnham's plan. Clever use of the media, school system, churches, public lantern-slide lectures and films were all part of this early and innovative lobbying effort – yet even with all that, the public was not always persuaded by the plan. There are lessons to be learned here, though Smith himself does not draw those lessons out. Smith's measured tone is most welcome in his final chapters assessing the complex legacy of Burnham's plan. He acknowledges how many proposals pre-existed Burnham's plan itself, how many proposals were modified during execution and how difficult it is to assess the impact of this iconic document. Here, his balanced tone is a welcome contrast to the bombast of many Plan supporters and opponents.

Carl Smith and the editors of *The Encyclopedia of Chicago* have placed the full text of Burnham's plan online, as well as the delightful *Wacker's Manual of the Plan of Chicago* (1911), which, for decades, was a required textbook for every eighth-grade student in Chicago's schools. Since the online version of Smith's book is also available, and since the online version features many illustrations in their glorious original colour, instead of the black-and-white necessary for economical book printing, the best way to teach this will be to use the material Smith has provided online, in order to help students assess the primary documents themselves.

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**Ian Packer**, *Liberal Government and Politics, 1905–15*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006. viii + 241pp. Bibliography. £45.00.

**James R. Moore**, *The Transformation of Urban Liberalism: Party Politics and Urban Governance in Late Nineteenth-Century England*. Historical Urban Studies Series. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. xii + 323pp. Appendices. Bibliography. £55.00.

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Recent years have seen a paucity of texts dealing directly with the party politics of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain. Contemporary events,