Reviews of books

Editors:

PETER BORSAY, BARRY M. DOYLE
and VICTORIA WOLCOTT

Dept of History, University College of Wales Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 7ED
School of Social Sciences and Law, University of Teesside, Middlesbrough,
TS1 3BA
Dept of History, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627-0070

Caroline Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People,
1200–1500.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. xvi + 472pp. Two
appendices. Map and gazetteer. Bibliography. £60.00.
doi:10.1017/S0963926805213202

The theme of this rich book is the public life of medieval Londoners. It is organized
in four parts. The first deals with relations between the city and the Crown,
showing that although each depended upon the other they were not evenly
matched, and that in the last analysis the capacity of Londoners to make money
was dependent upon the good will of the Crown. Among the flashpoints was
the issue of alien merchants, where the Crown's desire to support an alternative
source of revenue threatened the Londoners' economic monopoly. The second part
deals with wealth creation. A splendid evocation of the economic infrastructure
(understood to include credit arrangements and the resolution of commercial
disputes as well as the development of wharfs, bridges, covered markets and
inns) is followed by a chapter on the manufacture and distribution of goods. A
full understanding of the former is provided by giving attention to what was
absent, or less well represented, in the capital as well as to what was produced
in abundance, while a particularly welcome section is devoted to the subject of
London's inland trade and the expansion of its 'distributive region'. The chapter
on overseas trade concentrates on changing patterns and on the various interest
groups who successively dominated it. Among the themes is the way in which the
'colonial' economy of the thirteenth century, where the major exporters were alien
merchants and the major export was raw material, i.e. wool, gave way increasingly
to native merchants and manufactured cloth. The third, and most substantial,
section deals with the government of London, understood in a broad sense. There
are comprehensive and enthusiastic chapters on the city courts, on the mayors
and sheriffs and on the growing civic bureaucracy from the recorder down to the
humble serjeant of the channel (the sanitary inspector). The section closes with a
study of the formation and development of guilds and companies. While the great
royal charter of 1319, which confirmed craft control of the freedom, encouraged
these associations to develop more formal structures, the charters granted to trade
and craft organizations during the late fourteenth century and after, it is argued,
led to the emergence of true companies, with their liveries and liveried men, their
subordinated fraternities of yeomen and their company halls.

Although the later medieval period saw strong tendencies towards oligarchy within the city's government, the author shows that these were tempered somewhat by a wide participation in civic life, not least at parish level. The final section, on the practice of government, deals with the urban environment and with welfare. Building regulations appear to have existed in the twelfth century if not before, and civic responsibility was taken for the supply of fresh water, for drainage and sanitation, for street cleaning and for the regulation of industrial activity. In the author's words, 'one cannot read the records of medieval London without being made aware of a restless pursuit of high communal standards of public health and safety' (p. 266). In the provision of welfare two trends are discerned: the growing involvement of the city government, and the tendency for help for the needy to become increasingly secular. Much depended, of course, upon private charity. Indeed, it is a leitmotif of this book that individual wealthy Londoners showed considerable civic pride in financing initiatives in a host of areas. One of the book's many strengths is that in all its concern with trends and institutions living individuals are never very far from the scene. Close analysis and judicious comment are consistently complemented by pertinent anecdotes which a brief review, sadly, cannot reproduce. Within the 'company' of London's historians, Professor Barron, with her unrivalled knowledge of its records and its historiography, is the acknowledged 'master'.

P.R. Coss
Cardiff University

Paulo Güll, *L'industrie du quotidien: production, importations et consommation de la céramique à Rome entre XIVe et XVIe siècle.* Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 2003. ix + 474pp. 46 figures. 9 plates. Bibliography. Index. No price stated.
doi:10.1017/S0963926805223209

Pottery makes a unique contribution to the study of the Middle Ages. An ubiquitous everyday product with many places of manufacture, it was in use in every home; it was cheap, easily broken and often replaced. Yet its sherds are virtually indestructible, and moreover a range of analytical techniques reveal more about pottery and its manufacture than is possible with any other medieval artefact. It is the common means of dating most archaeological finds, whilst intensive and time-consuming study – particularly of the enormous quantities from urban sites – can provide a wealth of information about trade contacts and patterns of consumption. An intensive study of the pottery in use in a major city such as Rome around the end of the Middle Ages can therefore say volumes, especially when the results of archaeological work across the region is combined with hitherto-unexploited documentation about places and individuals to build up a picture of patterns of supply and demand, and conditions and organization of production. A short review can only indicate the wealth of themes which this book – Güll's doctoral thesis from the University of Provence – covers: the long chapter on production deals both with technology and production procedures and the location of the industry within the geography of the city; a chapter of 75 pages deals with the conduct of the potters' craft, its personalities, their origins as immigrants, their lives and society, their organization; an equally long chapter

addresses the place of pottery in the commerce of Rome and its region. Detailed studies follow of the types of pottery in use and where they came from. We learn, therefore, of the city as both production and consumption centre, of its people, and of its relations with its hinterland, in what is a very impressive book indeed. That it is of enormous relevance to every archaeologist – or historian – with a research interest in the pottery industry goes without saying. But it is much more than that: this is an important contribution both to the literature on late medieval industrial production and on the late medieval city economy and society. Few cities are so well recorded as Rome, or so intensively excavated; nevertheless, this book should stand as a model and an inspiration.

Richard Holt
University of Tromsø, Norway

> **Helen Hills (ed.)**, *Architecture and the Politics of Gender in Early Modern Europe.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003. xvii + 212pp. 55 plates. Bibliography. £49.50.
> **Helen Hills**, *Invisible City. The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. iv + 268pp. 44 figures. Bibliography. £36.50.
> doi:10.1017/S0963926805233205

In these two complementary volumes, gender is framed in relation to women's patronage, agency and institutions, with particular emphasis on the intersections of gender and class. In her introduction to *Architecture and Politics,* Hills notes that feminist art history has tended to focus on painting and other visual media. She proposes that the built environment is a more fruitful subject of enquiry for gender, arguing that architecture organizes all aspects of life spatially through the body. Her theoretical pedigree is informed by Lefebrve, Foucault and the British anthropologist Henrietta Moore. In common with a previous archaeological study of convents (Gilchrist 1994), she highlights the importance of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* in understanding why women actively accepted and reproduced gender relations and institutional spaces, even when they were oppressed by these spatial mechanisms.

The nine case studies in the first volume emphasize the active (versus reflective) role of space and architecture in negotiating social relations, and several focus on the agency of high-ranking women. Individual women are discussed in three chapters: Dagmar Eichberger on Margaret of Austria, Jennifer Germann on Anne of Austria and Elizabeth Chew on Anne Clifford. Convents are addressed in three contributions: Saundra Weddle on Le Murate in Florence, Elizabeth Lehfeldt on Spanish convents and Marilyn Dunn on Roman convents. The place of women in masculine institutions is discussed in two papers, Tanis Hinchcliffe on women and the practice of eighteenth-century architecture and Sherry Lindquist on women in the charterhouse of Champmol; the spatial treatment of women in mixed hospitals in Renaissance Italy is discussed by Eunice Howe. The aim is not to examine the patronage of 'exceptional' women, but rather to place female patronage within the context of specific historical and personal circumstances. In relation to Anne Clifford, for example, Chew examines the personal life history of Clifford to explain her use of 'consciously anachronistic architecture' that contrasted with

contemporary models of innovation and grandeur. For 40 of her 86 years, the Countess fought to have her inheritance restored, and subsequently spent three decades rebuilding her family's six castles to reflect past glories of the house of Clifford. At Brough, she restored a ruin to its former condition during the life of a celebrated fourteenth-century forebear, Roger Clifford; and at Brougham, more intimate family connections were fostered, with the rooms maintained to reflect their use by her parents. Clifford chronicled her use of these spaces in diaries that confirm the significance of family homes in forging intergenerational connections and sustaining family prestige.

Studies of medieval convents have examined the extent and meaning of the enclosure of religious women; in an early modern context, this theme can be extended to consider the impact of the Council of Trent (1563), and the increasing urbanization of convent life. In Spain, for example, Lehfeldt notes that rural and extramural convents were moved inside city walls by the late fifteenth century, for protection during periods of war and invasion. A strong theme emerging from these case-studies is the shaping of urban space by religious women. Early modern convents regularly engaged in disputes with neighbours, legal battles and programmes of land purchase, in order to control views into and out of the monastic precinct. They fervently protected and expanded their enclosure to include the control of views through windows and over walls. In cramped urban spaces, convent architecture stretched upwards, with the nuns of early modern Rome favouring towers, loggios on upper floors and belvederes. They became increasingly concerned with their view outward toward the city's skyline, and with limiting the view of neighbours inward. Prioresses manoeuvred to arrange compulsory purchases of neighbouring gardens and palaces, and when all else failed, the sisters of S. Caterina a Magnanapoli pelted stones at the masons who laboured on an adjacent palace. When seculars entered convents, their contact with the sisters was regulated strictly by grilles and partitions in the parlour (locutory) and the church.

These themes are explored in detail in Hills' monograph on Neapolitan convents. She argues that convents were integral to the concept of the city: their numbers increased in the seventeenth century, and while religious women remained secluded from urban eyes, their institutions played a significant role in religious, political and economic life. She suggests that their status had declined before the Council of Trent, but that afterwards conventual life was 'aristocratized', with the sacredness of nuns enhanced by their nobility. From 1503 to 1734 Naples was part of the Spanish empire, and under their rule, the city became dominated by churches and monasteries. Hills is concerned particularly with exercise of the 'optics of power', through the control of sight lines, visual access and asymmetrical viewing patterns. After Trent, nuns were protected more closely from the danger of defiling gaze, and were removed to the clerestory level of convent churches, where the choir was screened by grilles. Gallery choirs were traditionally located at the western end of the church, an arrangement relatively common in the Mediterranean and central Europe. In Naples, a number of convents placed the choir to the east, raised above the altar. While this may reflect the increased importance of the eucharist in female devotion, as the medievalist Caroline Bruzelius has suggested, Hills emphasizes the enhanced spatial status of the nuns and their dominant gaze over the church.

Both volumes make an important contribution to the study of gender and space in early modern Europe, and more particularly, towards the spaces of

religious women. Comparison with female religiosity in Protestant countries may have been instructive, especially recusant spaces such as the Bar Convent, York, established in 1686 to conceal an Italianate convent within an English terrace. The lack of engagement with masculinity and space is also to be regretted, since gender can only be fully discerned through comparative perspectives. The stated emphasis on class and gender is not fully delivered, although Dunn and Hills make observations on class differences among nuns, expressed through spatial hierarchies within the choir and cells. Although pioneering, these studies discuss space in largely abstract and static terms, with little consideration of physical movement through space or the sensory experience of space. Future studies might usefully engage comparatively with issues of masculinity and femininity, and with more phenomenological perspectives of spatial experience.

Roberta Gilchrist
University of Reading

Penelope Lane, Neil Raven and K.D.M. Snell (eds.), *Women, Work and Wages in England*, *1600–1850*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2004. xi + 239pp. Bibliography. £50.00.
doi:10.1017/S0963926805243201

Despite the fact that women's work was clearly fundamental to the success of the economy in the years between 1600 and 1850, historians have only recently begun to recognize the full extent of their contribution to economic life. This volume of essays, stemming from a conference held at Cromford in 2000, aims to redress the balance a little by highlighting some aspects of women's work that have not been widely studied in the past, focusing in particular on the rewards which they received for their labour. Since the chapters range widely in terms of chronological, occupational and regional coverage, it is inevitable that the contributions with an explicitly urban focus will be of more interest to readers of this journal than others which explore the changing nature of women's work and remuneration in English agriculture. However, all the articles offer high-quality original research that scholars will find stimulating and students will find readable and informative.

The collection begins with an authoritative introduction by Jane Humphries and Keith Snell, which relates the individual contributions to broader questions arising from the diversity of women's experiences in the workplace and evaluates the current research agenda in this field. Given that the title of the original conference included the disheartening quotation 'Much toil and little hope', readers will not be surprised to find that few contributors take an optimistic view of these experiences. The central role played by the poor law in the lives of hard-working women and their families is a theme that runs through many chapters, notably those by Steve Hindle on the coercive pauper apprenticeship system of the seventeenth century and Samantha Williams on nurses hired to care for the sick poor in Bedfordshire between c. 1770 and 1834. Steven King, focusing on northern and Midland England in much the same period, argues that the poor law played a crucial role in allowing women to undermine ideas of dependency and to negotiate their own relationships between work and relief on their own terms as far as possible.

Another of the book's main themes is the question of whether levels of remuneration were determined by customary norms, market forces or a combination

of the two. Penelope Lane, examining women's work and wages in the East Midlands in the long eighteenth century, is concerned to refute Joyce Burnette's argument that gendered pay in both industry and agriculture reflected the differential productivity of male and female workers rather than customary norms. Nicola Verdon, reassessing the employment of female day labourers in English agriculture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, is more ready to concede the influence of market forces but concludes that they do not provide a sufficient explanation of the wage gap she observes. Michael Roberts, in a very welcome return to the issues first raised in his pioneering 1979 analysis of gender differences in harvest work, also tends to emphasize the culturally determined inflexibility of female wages, although he argues that historians should focus their efforts on examining the ways in which custom and the market work together.

The most explicitly urban studies are those by Neil Raven and Pamela Sharpe. Raven focuses on the 'humbler, industrious class of female' who worked in the relatively neglected small manufacturing towns of southern England in the early nineteenth century, arguing that manufacturers (often in collusion with the poor law authorities) operated an employment policy that limited the potential for growth in the local economy and left the docile workforce poorly paid, badly disciplined and precariously balanced between overwork and underemployment. Sharpe's chapter, in contrast, illuminates the lives of the wives of sailors employed by the East India Company in seventeenth-century London, arguing that their particular circumstances allowed them greater independence than most other married women since they could conduct business in their husband's name, resulting in 'lives of much toil but some hope' (p. 66). Given that the literature on women's economic lives in an urban context is both scarce and uneven in quality, the essays in this collection are especially welcome. It is also an important point in their favour that all the contributors acknowledge the multi-dimensional nature of women's work experiences, avoiding crude generalizations while keeping a clear focus on the central themes that underlay the original conference. As a result, the volume should go a long way towards stimulating further research and discussion.

J.M. Ellis
University of Nottingham

Jon Stobart, *The First Industrial Region: North-West England c. 1700–60.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004. xi + 259pp. 37 figures. 29 tables. Bibliography. £49.99.
doi:10.1017/S0963926805253208

Jon Stobart has been writing about the role of towns and urban networks in early industrial development for several years now, and this book, an extension and development of his doctoral thesis, also revisits themes that he has pursued in a series of articles on related issues. This is a work of historical geography, underpinned by extensive research in probate inventories and other primary sources, and informed by dialogue with the work of geographers and economic historians from Christaller to Wrigley. Stobart is more interested in the articulation and interaction of urban systems and hierarchies than in case-studies of individual towns, although (for example) we can welcome his emphasis on the importance of Chester (alongside the contrasting and rapidly emerging centres of Liverpool

and Manchester) as a 'gateway city' whose positive economic influence was far more important than its population trend might suggest. This is in many ways a stimulating study of 'the first industrial region', whose importance cannot be gainsaid and is underlined by Stobart's findings; and it pays due heed to the unevenness of development within the chosen region and to the contrasts between the 'advanced organic economy' of the textile districts and the 'mineral-based energy economy' of the south-west and south central Lancashire coalfield. Due attention is also paid to the service sector and the developing importance of certain towns as centres for consumption, and to the balance between the urban and the rural in the distribution of trades and manufactures.

This is a valuable book whose findings will need to be digested by urban and economic historians as well as historical geographers, and whose importance goes well beyond its chosen region. The north-west is of importance both in its own right and as an 'exemplar of wider processes' (p. 33). It would be interesting to elaborate a comparison between its approaches and those of Derek Gregory's work on the West Riding of Yorkshire for a later but overlapping period, which was published in book form in 1982. Attention should, however, be drawn to two problematic sets of definitions at the core of Stobart's enterprise. His 'north-west' is an unusual version of the region, comprising Cheshire and the southern half of Lancashire, up to the River Ribble; and the only justification provided for this geographical focus is that this area formed a 'reasonably coherent economic entity' and, as it happens, 'an area of considerable interactive integrity' (p. 33). There is always an element of the arbitrary (or the circular) about setting the bounds to a regional study, and county boundaries are no better than others in this respect; but we might perhaps have expected more discussion of these issues from a historical geographer. A related point is that Stobart's threshold of the 'urban' is located at a very low level: in population terms, just over 300 in 1664 and 500 in 1775 (pp. 36–9). This inclusivity affects calculations of the balance between the rural and the urban in the transactions and business distributions analysed in the book, and of the changing nature of the urban hierarchy and the distribution of urban populations. Here again, this is an area where executive decisions have to be taken and their consequences recognized, and Stobart cannot be faulted on this; but the reader needs to remain aware of the knock-on effects of this aspect of the author's assumptions.

This is overall a valuable and important book. It will be of more interest to students of economic development and urban systems than to those who are more attached to case-studies of the texture of urban life, but it deserves an extensive and attentive academic reading public.

John K. Walton
University of Central Lancashire

Frank Warren collected a vast amount of information about the role of music in the area between Lymington and Brighton during the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries and was unable to write up this study of Portsmouth due to ill health. Irwen Cockman produced this study using Mr Warren's detailed notes. This collaboration has worked very well. This well-written and illustrated paper demonstrates how a determined person with skills, in this instance for music and for organizing, can make a big impact in a town, a point that is still true today. Stephen Sibley was appointed the church organist to St John's Chapel in Portsea in 1789 and then spent more than 50 years organizing musical events as a means of augmenting his income and because of his love of it. Sibley's achievement is set in the context of changes in musical taste, the places which were used for such events during this period and how Sibley marketed his events. This is an excellent study of how promoting a leisure activity could give the person with the right skills a very comfortable living during this period. The influence of individuals within and upon towns is a subject that needs more work of this detailed nature for this human dimension is what helps us to persuade more people to take an interest in what we do and challenges the myth that towns were (and are) anonymous places.

Sue Berry
University of Sussex

Gavin Daly, *Inside Napoleonic France: State and Society in Rouen, 1800–1815*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001. xii + 290pp. 3 maps. 3 figures. 11 tables. Bibliography. £45.00.
doi:10.1017/S0963926805273200

The fact that this is the first local history of Napoleonic France to appear in the English language, as the publishers proudly claim, is indicative of the traditional neglect of French regional history during this period (the wider French Empire having fared rather better in this respect). Gavin Daly's belief that the diversity of French society under Napoleon can best be illuminated through regional studies is one shared by a growing number of historians, so that we can expect further studies soon to be added to his useful contribution to the field.

   As is to be expected from a work so heavily grounded in archival sources, there is a great deal of information here about the economy and social structures of Rouen, but it is with the administration of the city that the most telling parts of the book are concerned. Daly maintains that Napoleonic historiography, whilst always acknowledging the importance of the prefectoral administration, has failed sufficiently to consider fundamental questions about the way it actually functioned in specific localities. He therefore sets out to make a central concern of his study the interplay at a local level between government policy, the prefectoral administration and civil society in select social, economic, political and religious contexts. Rouen provides the ideal opportunity to do this. It was one of the most highly prized French cities, heavily populated, strategically important, economically advanced, home to a prosperous and influential bourgeoisie and a large industrial workforce, and the seat of a major archdiocese. Furthermore, the department of the Seine-Inférieure was among the most populous and economically diverse in France, and accordingly its prefecture, installed in Rouen, was among the most prestigious, demanding and highly paid. It was also one of the most stable, with only three prefects serving throughout the Consulate and Empire.

One of the most enlightening aspects of Daly's analysis is the way he brings out the importance of the relationship between the prefects and the local notables, especially those forming a business elite which had been much more prominent and active in the Revolution than was the case in most French towns. Whereas prefects were above all accountable to the government and its ministers, in practice they exercised a degree of independence from Paris; despite being representatives of the central government, the prefects of the Seine-Inférieure consistently sought to defend the interests of local society. The most important reason for this was that the prefects were drawn to the local notables because they needed their support to administer Rouen and the department effectively. Daly makes this contention central to his whole thesis and insists, with some justice, that it casts doubt over the common notion of the prefect as a 'little emperor'. He shows, for example, how the needs of Rouen's elites were served by the administration unofficially tolerating conscription fraud and contraband and argues that the uniform laws fashioned in Paris were tailored at a departmental level to please the particular requirements of the local elites.

Taken as a whole, Daly's study of Rouen does not revolutionize our understanding of Napoleonic France, but it does refine it and in some cases modify it. He identifies some areas which have traditionally been understated (such as the role of the prefect in the implementation of the Concordat), and others, such as the extent of opposition to Napoleon in Rouen, which may well have been exaggerated. The future regional studies Daly looks forward to in his conclusion will no doubt refine our view further, but his book will remain a very useful contribution to the investigation at regional level of the interaction between state and society.

Geoff Watkins
University of Teesside

How should we define, capture and measure citizenship and civic culture, and the influence these had on the nineteenth-century city (1815–1914)? Rodrick rightly thinks beyond the political power of elites (party based or otherwise), or the authority of the 'mob', to consider what she loosely labels a 'popular citizenship . . . divorced from political suffrage'. One that was not class based or economically determined, and was thus open, theoretically, to 'individuals at any social or economic level' (p. xiii) within an overarching construct of 'improvement'. This is a book essentially about the 'excluded', and the societies through which they acted: those 'self-exiled' but passionate advocates of 'self improvement'; working-class men, middle-class women, and men/women of the lower middle class who 'all shared the potential sense of alienation from the broader culture they inhabited' (p. 23). How many were actively involved we are not told, although clearly such effusive self-exile affected only a minority who, purportedly, were drawn from a broad social base (empirical evidence would have been useful here too). Nor is any concerted attempt made to measure the impact – in terms of policy formation and outcomes – that such societies had within the civic arena. These are shortcomings. But perhaps this is inevitable when citizenship – not unreasonably – is defined

primarily in terms of taking an 'active interest' in cultural activity (pp. 66–7), and success measured by the longevity or otherwise of such civic cultural institutions, the fare that these offered and the openness and spread with which they recruited (all factors that Rodrick views positively generally in her assessment of the early to mid-Victorian societies).

Tracking the changing constituency of Victorian autodidacticism offers some valuable insights into the inter-action between the nature and function of civicness and the public and private expression of ideas. Active participation – here the obligation not simply to study but the 'duty' to debate, communicate and express ideas in public (although mainly to other self-improvers presumably) – is articulated as a powerful and influential force on public affairs for the otherwise disenfranchised. However, Rodrick identifies that increasingly through the century self-help institutions became bastions not of openness, in terms of accessibility and a universalist subject matter, but instead exclusive, elitist and specialist, or conversely concerned more with providing entertainment and spectacle so that education became less about citizenship and more about the better use of leisure. It might, of course, be argued that a correlation had always existed between attendance, viability and cultural mission and programme: was this one further reason, for example, why Birmingham's Mechanics' Institute failed beyond that of a lack of elite support or the cost of offering a catholic programme. These were, after all, the socially isolated: what is being studied is the 'political culture of the lonely' (p. 38).

There is an acceptance within the text that increasingly the local state took control over the civilizing mission previously exercised by a ubiquitous voluntary sector. There is an acceptance, too, that after 1900 the very nature of local identity changed from being active to passive: so that, for example, 'the professionalization of municipal reform neutralized culture as a means to power', so that aspects of 'local identity based on the mid-century notion of improvement, of being and doing' declined markedly (p. 206). How great were the changes after 1900 to civic culture and identity remains keenly debated, if comparatively underexplored. But if Rodrick is right, then our understanding of nineteenth-century civic society will certainly have to take greater account of a discourse and audience previously undervalued.

Nick Hayes
Nottingham Trent University

John Henry Hepp, IV, *The Middle Class City: Transforming Space and Time in Philadelphia, 1876–1926.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. ix + 288pp. 46 figures. Appendix. Bibliographical references. Index. $36.50; £26.00.
Robert D. Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland.* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003. xxii + 394pp. 25 illustrations. 12 maps. 2 appendices. Bibliographical references. Index. $41.00; £26.95.
doi:10.1017/S0963926805293203

The middle class has long occupied a central place in the history and historiography of the industrializing United States. Yet it has remained an elusive concept. During the 1950s Richard Hofstadter wrote of an 'old middle class' anxiously clinging to

status and power in a modernizing economy and society. A decade later Robert Wiebe described a 'new middle class' of corporate managers and university-trained experts engaged in a 'search for order' that ushered in a modern bureaucratic social and political structure. Both historians used the term 'middle class' but referred to distinctly different sets of people with different and even opposing political agendas. Reading John Henry Hepp's *The Middle Class City* and Robert D. Johnston's *The Radical Middle Class* reminds us again of the ubiquity and the vagueness of this category. They too use the same phrase to describe dissimilar groups with contrasting political agendas, though Johnston is more concerned with this variability and engages with it more directly.

Hepp argues that Philadelphia's middle class engaged in a cultural search for order during the late nineteenth century that prefigured the Progressive-era political movement described by Wiebe. The Victorian bourgeoisie developed a scientific mindset that encouraged a taxonomy of time and space. Hepp examines the development of railroads, department stores and newspapers to document this process. Railways created more precise schedules and more carefully ordered stations during the final decades of the nineteenth century. Stores such as Wannamaker's shifted from selling 'dry goods' with little distinction between types of merchandise to a departmentalized system based on the classification of products. They also created a more elaborate retail calendar marked by seasonal sales. Genteel newspapers such as *The Evening Telegraph* moved from presenting information chronologically to a format that placed different sorts of news in different categories – sports, local news, national news and so forth. Hepp sees these innovations as evidence of a larger cultural pursuit of order and rationality that characterized a distinctively middle-class vision of urban life. Sustaining that middle-class city proved difficult after 1900. Economic and social changes soon allowed working-class residents to make inroads into bourgeois spaces. Growing numbers of blue-collar Philadelphians could afford to ride on railways and streetcars and could shop in department stores. City leaders and proprietors accommodated them by mandating 5-cent fares or creating 'bargain basements', the latter a further elaboration of the classification system developed during the late nineteenth century. Newspapers used their more rational layouts to target multiple audiences, including working-class readers, men and women. The result was a more self-evidently plural and multi-class city that forced bourgeois Philadelphians to commence a political search for order designed to preserve the middle-class city they had envisioned before 1900.

Hepp's analysis benefits from a rich body of sources and creative readings of institutions. He consulted the diaries and manuscript collections of sixty-three Philadelphians, which he uses to enrich and confirm his interpretations of the spatial and temporal patterns of the middle-class city he describes. His discussions of the physical layouts of train stations and department stores and the reconfiguration of newspapers, while not entirely new, are made especially effective by well-chosen quotations from manuscript sources and by apt illustrations. One comes away convinced that there was a mental geography that characterized the urban imagination of many middle-class Philadelphians. However, Hepp is vague about who created this vision of the middle-class city. It is not simply imposed by proprietors such as John Wannamaker, he insists. Rather, 'we can see the fantastic success of the Wannamaker store and its counterparts as reflecting the shopping rituals and values of their customers'

(p. 13). Though undoubtedly true to some extent, this formulation probably underestimates the degree to which marketing strategies shaped the identities and values of consumers. Thus Hepp might do more to explore the business strategies of department store owners and railroad managers, although his discussion of *The Evening Bulletin* after 1900 is effective in this regard. The middle-class city that Hepp presents is a bit too tidy in another respect as well. He argues that trains, stores and newspapers allowed bourgeois residents to experience urban life with relatively little contact with the working-class. This seems unlikely given the tensions of late nineteenth-century urban life in the US. Even if bourgeois Philadelphians did not encounter blue-collar workers on the train as fellow passengers, they encountered them in the form of ticket takers and porters, as well as in many other direct and indirect ways. As numerous urban theorists have argued, city spaces are contested terrain on which different groups struggle to inscribe different meanings. It seems likely that the creation of the middle-class city Hepp describes was a more contested process than he shows.

The relationship between the middle class and the working class is central to Johnston's study. He argues that the lower middle classes of Portland, Oregon, offered an oftentimes radical challenge to capitalism during the Progressive era. Distinguishing the *petite bourgeoisie* from the professionals and corporate managers who made up the upper ranks of the middle class, he shows that small proprietors often began their working lives in blue-collar jobs and that they continued to identify more with those below them on the socioeconomic scale than with those above them. Far from the reactionary group depicted in most historical scholarship, it is this middle class that Johnston sees as the moving force behind the most direct efforts to remake the inequitable social order created by the rise of industrial capitalism. In campaigns on behalf of direct democracy, proportional representation, the single tax, women's rights and, most provocatively, in opposition to compulsory vaccination, these middling folk offered an alternative social and political vision rooted in nineteenth-century republican conceptions of 'the people' as producers. Such a bare-bones summary cannot do justice to the richness of *The Radical Middle Class.* The book includes numerous discussions of historiography, biographies of several key reformers and a series of engaging arguments about topics such as *Muller v. Oregon*, anti-vaccination campaigns and the Ku Klux Klan. Johnston challenges the reader to think carefully about definitions of capitalism, the nature and consequences of electoral reform, state-sponsored medicine, Progressivism and even contemporary politics. Most important, he makes a convincing case for the necessity of 'rethinking the middle class'. Drawing on the insights of E.P. Thompson in particular, he offers an 'anti-definition' of the concept, in which there are many middle classes constantly being made and remade in an inherently political process.

Faced with so wide-ranging and provocative a book, scholars have plenty of opportunities to quarrel with Johnston. At times his zeal to redeem *petite bourgeois* politics carries his argument too far. His claim that Curt Muller may have been motivated by feminist and even anti-racist concerns when he launched his lawsuit challenging limits on women's work hours seems a stretch. Although Johnston clearly acknowledges the racist and ethnocentric ideas expressed by some of his subjects, he is perhaps too quick to dismiss them and the limits they place on the radicalism of the lower middle class. His discussion of voting patterns,

while suggestive, would benefit from more rigorous statistical analysis. Certainly one could also argue that other portions of the middle classes were less radical than the middling Portlanders he presents, but that is in part Johnston's point. One cannot offer facile generalizations about a single middle class after reading his dissection of that category. Rather scholars who write of the middle class must define the subjects of their investigations more carefully and more flexibly, recognizing the contingent character of any group definition. In this regard, the *Radical Middle Class* is a splendid success. One can debate the details and the degree of radicalism demonstrated by Johnston's heroes – indeed that is one of the pleasures of reading the book – but on the largest point he is convincing. Reducing the middle class to a conservative monolith is an insupportable simplification. The small businessmen and their allies in Progressive-era Portland were a significant, though by no means dominant, political group that did seek to reopen 'the question of capitalism'. More broadly, Johnston's closing claim that this hidden democratic tradition remains alive, if dormant, in contemporary America rings true. But unless our current political discourse and the process of political mobilization change significantly, it is likely to remain latent, despite Johnston's best efforts to rescue it.

The juxtaposition of Hepp's and Johnston's books offers a striking demonstration of the complexities of writing about the middle class. Of the 63 'middle-class' diaries and manuscript collections Hepp consults, only about ten of them could be considered part of Johnston's middling folk. Although Hepp notes that 'maintaining a sensitivity to the multitude of divisions that existed in the turn-of-the-century bourgeoisie is important', he opts to focus on a shared middle-class culture instead (p. 15). That decision places him squarely in the mainstream of scholars who have heretofore explored the middle-class experience. But in the wake of Johnston's book, that mainstream has been altered significantly.

James Connolly
Ball State University

The opening scenes of the 1977 movie, 'Saturday Night Fever', take the viewer on a sweeping flight high above New York City, giving glimpses of the Brooklyn Bridge, Lower Manhattan and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge before descending into the Italian-American community of Bay Ridge. At street level the camera focuses on the feet of a young man (John Travolta as 'Tony Manero'), as he strides along the sidewalk to the insistent beat of the Bee Gees' hit song, 'Stayin' Alive'. This sequence, echoing the opening scenes of another great New York movie 'West Side Story', acts as a modern-day version of the nineteenth-century 'bird's eye

view' prints beloved of that era's city boosters, realtors and politicians eager to see their city depicted in the most celebratory manner. Both 'West Side Story' and 'Saturday Night Fever', in their opening scenes and plotlines, connect New York City's infrastructure, its cycles of building and rebuilding, to the negotiations of identity, territory and community at street level. While none of these three authors may have had either movie in mind as they wrote their books, nonetheless Jameson Doig and Keith Revell's books connect notions of 'the public' and public works, while Francois Weil provides a concise narrative history which, like a bird's eye view, provides overall context while making an argument about the economic and social forces which shaped the city. Doig and Revell in particular make significant contributions to the histories of government, city planning and public service that shaped the lives of the real and imagined 'Tony Maneros' in twentieth-century New York. Both movies, like these books, connect New York City's bridge-and-tunnel working classes to the engineers, politicians, planners and lawyers who imagined and built that infrastructure.

In *Building Gotham*, Keith Revell identifies what he describes as a 'civic culture of expertise' emerging in the Progressive Era in New York City following the unification in 1898 of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens County, Staten Island and the Bronx into Greater New York. This new turn-of-the-century metropolis of three and a half million people came second in demographic size only to the 'Great Wen' itself, London. How to manage such a vast area and population? How to foster commerce and growth while also protecting the well-being of the citizenry? No model existed for such a municipal enterprise, particularly one taking place in the midst of the nation's greatest wave of mass immigration, its first steps into imperialism and its rapidly expanding industrialization. This culture of expertise emanated from the reformers and technocrats committed to hiring the best man for the job in the hopes of finding the 'one best way' to get the job done. But the culture into which this generation of Progressives entered was still dominated by older American ways of doing business, getting and holding power and making change. It was a culture in which corporate leaders led by virtue of their capital investment in their companies, a culture in which loyalty to class and culture dictated politics and business from the ward level to City Hall and up through the storeys of downtown Manhattan's skyscrapers. Revell argues that the challenges of urban development and political culture demanded flexibility from both the experts and from the constituencies with which they worked. While the experts recognized and accepted a degree of 'interdependence' – the mutual backscratching necessary to implement change – their non-expert counterparts who owned railroads or skyscrapers, or who enjoyed unregulated use of city services such as the water supply and sewage systems, insisted on maintaining independence from what they saw as un-American governmental control.

Revell organizes his book in a series of case-studies, showing how this 'civic culture of expertise' attempted to regulate, reform and redesign infrastructural, monetary and architectural resources fundamental to the city's present and future – such as the railroad system, the water supply, the management of sewage and waste, the city's finances and the rights of private property owners. In each case, the reformers could only achieve success if they persuaded power elites and their constituents to see beyond their own short-term or narrowly defined self-interests. The city, the new experts argued, had to be imagined as embedded in a region and, beyond that, connected to national and international networks of demographic and

traffic flows, the distribution of goods and the circulation of finance. Revell's book is an important contribution to the history of the Progressive Era and its urban setting. Deeply researched, clearly written and argued, *Building Gotham* is required reading for scholars of early twentieth-century New York City, including those whose interests lie more in the cultural and social realm since Revell's book provides such a detailed examination of the systems which underpinned (or threatened to undo) the lives and neighborhoods of the city 'classes and masses', its ever-growing and diverse public.

In his engagement with the meaning of public service in a capitalist democracy, Jameson W. Doig's *Empire on the Hudson* picks up part of Revell's story, their studies overlapping in the 1920s as the Progressive Era closed and the Fordist world of mass consumption and mass production set new challenges for American cities and their governing classes. Doig's book tells a more encouraging story by examining the evolution of the Port of New York Authority, an agency born out of Progressive Era urban politics in 1921, surviving challenges from the Depression and New Deal, and developing into the builder and manager of some of New York's greatest public works, such as the George Washington Bridge and the World Trade Center. Through his study of the Port Authority, Jameson Doig mounts a spirited argument in favour of both public works and the need for the public officials who run them to have broad-based powers to act as they see fit. Thus, Doig adopts a biographical approach, focusing on the lives of three men who shaped New York City politics through their roles in the formation and running of the Port Authority: Julius Henry Cohen, Othmar Ammann and Austin Tobin. These men – a Progressive Era lawyer, an engineer and a real estate attorney who became the Authority's longstanding director – exhibited what Doig calls 'entrepreneurial' vision and ability. The image of the entrepreneur has, in recent times, been warped by the looming figures of Donald Trump and Bill Gates. But the difference here is that Doig describes men who had many of the same skills and personality traits of a Gates or a Trump but who used them in public service rather than private enterprise.

One of Doig's liveliest chapters details the confrontation between, on one side, August Tobin and the Port Authority and, on the opposite, that other 'entrepreneurial' figure of post-war planning, Robert Moses. Proposed in the early 1940s, the New York City union bus terminal was planned to accommodate local, regional and national bus lines in a new facility immediately adjacent to the Manhattan terminus of the Lincoln Tunnel. Mayor La Guardia and the Port Authority hoped such a terminal would relieve the worsening congestion problem on Manhattan's downtown streets caused by the almost two thousand buses which daily traversed the city. In his account of the battle between Moses and Tobin over the terminal plan, and in the chapter's discussion of the midtown bus terminal's planning and construction, Doig perhaps best demonstrates the type of progressive entrepreneurial leadership he so admires and the ways in which strong government might operate in the interests of a diverse public. Doig shows how Tobin, under pressure to choose a contractor for the planned Midtown bus terminal, was forced to compromise on his own high standards of political ethics. In this complex episode, it is entirely appropriate that Doig quotes Shakespeare in his account of this struggle, given the presence on stage of the morally conflicted leader August Tobin, beset on all sides by political intrigue in his urban court, and accosted publicly by the dastardly figure of the powerful and ruthless Robert Moses. Doig muses as to what motivated Moses to turn against

the Port Authority's bus terminal plan and side instead with the Greyhound Bus Company, the single hold-out to the venture. While sympathy with Greyhound's desire for independence, and possible financial interest in that company's planned new 34th street station both seemed likely motivators, Doig concludes that sheer anger at being thwarted by Tobin and the Port Authority provided sufficient impetus for Moses' several years of opposition and legal challenges, even as the midtown Port Authority bus terminal was completed. The type of selfish hunger for power that Doig depicts Moses indulging in allows the author most effectively to spotlight Tobin's moral high ground, even at a moment in Tobin's career when he faltered ethically in the effort to achieve a greater public good. Tobin's flawed humanity, coupled with his creative and masterful political leadership, places him at the pinnacle of the leadership style Doig commends and that which he still hopes is possible in the even more complex political landscape of the twenty-first century.

If the reader of these two studies wishes or needs to step back and get a longer, macro view of the city history into which these narratives fit, he or she need only turn to *A History of New York*, the skilfully translated (by Jody Gladding) one-volume history of New York by French scholar Francois Weil. Weil covers the years 1620 to 2000 in an elegantly written and concise narrative synthesizing a necessarily huge body of scholarship. He shapes his narrative around the idea that while New York does not represent America, the city nonetheless represents the idea of what America has to offer – the national potential. Weil focuses on the tension in the city's history between capitalism and diversity, between private enterprise and varied public cultures. New York's growing strength as a commercial centre throughout its history, and its connections to the vast North American interior by means of its harbour, rivers, the Erie Canal, and the bridges, tunnels and airports discussed by Doig, attracted populations of all classes, races and cultures to New York from North America, Europe, South America and beyond. The city's role as a migration and immigration magnet helped increase the city's productive capacity and made money for small businesses as well as industrial enterprises and large corporations, many of which were labour intensive – at least until the technological and economic changes of the post-World War II period.

Weil's narrative maintains this tension between capital and diversity while telling an overall historical account of the city's development over five centuries. As such, his book certainly fills a gap in the city's historiography – a relatively brief history of the city. But the book's breadth necessarily omits depth and, for the serious scholar, the meagre number of footnotes leaves one wondering about the sources for some of Weil's facts and arguments. However, the inclusion of a bibliographic essay goes some way to supplementing the lack of footnotes. It is unfortunate that the bibliographic essay does not include further references for the images included in the book. Most are familiar to scholars of New York, in either type or actual image, but their captions omit details of provenance that would acknowledge the role of images and representations in structuring the history of the city and its people. Many images in Weil's book are simply credited as copyrighted by 'Roger Viollet', a picture agency, with no other explanation. Given the variety of sources for New York City imagery, and the author's own acknowledgement of the Museum of the City of New York and other repositories of the city's visual and material past, it seems strange that the author and publisher paid so little attention to the images they employ throughout the volume. These reservations aside, Weil's achievement – a compact 354-page volume ideal for briefcase or backpack – will

prove very useful to the academic student of New York City history as well as the general reader looking for a handy narrative account.

Other than a section at the end of Doig's book summarizing the Port Authority's history from the 1950s to 2000, both Doig and Revell focus on the period before the social and economic disruptions of the 1970s ushered in a new era of city government, urban (crisis) management and citizen action and involvement. August Tobin retired as Director of the Port Authority in 1972, before New York's economy collapsed. In a final gesture of what some might see as creative entrepreneurial leadership, Tobin made sure the plans for the World Trade Center went ahead. The WTC, like other major public works, displaced neighbourhoods and livelihoods, pushing out the individual entrepreneurs of 'Radio Row', replacing their small businesses and shops with a towering centre for US-dominated global capitalism. In the political aftermath of the WTC's destruction on 11 September 2001, we have seen a twenty-first-century version of the public and private powers that must necessarily combine to rebuild and reimagine Lower Manhattan. From across the New York–New Jersey metropolitan region championed by Revell's 'experts' and Doig's political entrepreneurs came the 'bridge and tunnel crowd', that motley crew so often mocked by arrogant Manhattanites. Many thousands of them, from 1973 on, made their way to work in the WTC towers. Many are now gone – some happily retired, but as a result of 9/11 some are dead, some unemployed, some reemployed elsewhere. When Travolta's increasingly chastened 'Tony Manero' character, the Italian-American Brooklynite trying to find his way in a 1970s New York offering fewer opportunities to working-class men, crosses in and out of Manhattan in pursuit of a future and a girl, we see him driving across Brooklyn Bridge, taking the subway under the East River and courting death on the spans of his beloved Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. In this film, as in 'West Side Story's tale of love and race in the rubble of urban renewal, and in these three books, we see the sometimes paradoxical relationship between the public–private infrastructure of New York and the working and middle classes of the city's five boroughs. While the city's bridges and tunnels, and the engineering and political feats behind them, gave the choice of mobility to the city's working- and middle-class populations, their construction also forcibly displaced and destroyed local communities and cultures. This tension, between capitalism, cultural diversity, opportunity, enterprise and community, lies at the heart of what these three scholars wrestle with. And at the heart of what New York City might mean.

Angela M. Blake
University of Toronto

Nigel Yates is perhaps best known for his work on religious history but he has also published some excellent work on the history of the seaside. This study of Southsea and Portsmouth covers the development of public sector marketing and the way in which the policy shifts from promoting Southsea as a resort to Portsmouth

and Southsea as a heritage destination. The question as to whether any of the policies were really in touch with either the views of local people or the taste of the prospective visitors is gently hanging in the background for the reader to think about. So too is the question of whether or not the majority of the grand 'tourist' developments did attract visitors as the council hoped, the main users (as is often the case) being local people. The data in this study suggests that the simple facilities in Southsea that all can enjoy such as gardens and pitch and putt were the most popular along with shopping and eating out, as tourism researchers would expect. The council thought that something more was needed, an error repeated along the coast from the 1960s as 'lookalike' projects eroded the unique identity of resorts. Nigel Yates handles this study which shows the limited impact of public sector tourism strategies with great diplomacy and skill. He is to be applauded.

Sue Berry
University of Sussex

Mark Jancovich and Lucy Faire with Sarah Stubbings, *The Place of the Audience: Cultural Geographies of Film Consumption.* London: BFI, 2004. vi + 281pp. Bibliography. £15.99.
doi:10.1017/S0963926805323200

The relationship between geographical space and filmgoing is implicit in any account of film audiences and their consumption of the films made available to them through a system of distribution and exhibition. However, it is comparatively rare for that relationship to be made explicit. The authors do this for the city of Nottingham by tracing the history of filmgoing through the course of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. The objective of the authors is to move audiences to centre stage as consumers occupying cultural space. After the two chapters that make up Part 1, which sets out their study in the intellectual context of reception studies and cultural geography, the authors organize the book into periodic histories: Part 2 investigates the early history of filmgoing in Nottingham, Part 3 inter-war years, Part 4 the post-war period to 1970 and Part 5 the modes of film consumption since 1970. The book is based upon published sources, and is particularly strong on reports from the local press and the proceedings of the City Council. Furthermore, we are informed that a planned second volume will present their ethnographical findings.

The book provides a rich source of information about filmgoing in this urban locality. Two examples will have to suffice. The 1910 Cinematograph Act gave the Local Authority the means of controlling film consumption, through a statutory monopoly in the granting of exhibition licences, at a time in which the upper classes were trying to preserve class segregation, religious leaders were fearful of films as an alternative source of psychic pleasure and cinema owners were marketing their product as luxurious, safe and wholesome. Hence, we find in Nottingham that a number of disreputable film venues were closed down and cinema development was kept away from certain upper-class areas of the city, while at the same time new cinemas were being built along the traffic thoroughfares in the city centre, among the theatres and shops. Another episode well told is the part that cinemas played in the redevelopment of the City during the inter-war years, involving slum clearance and new suburban estate development. Of the 21 cinemas that opened

in Nottingham between the late 1920s and 30s, 19 of these were located in the suburbs. Thus, while suburbanisation has often been seen as the cause of cinema's decline, it might be more accurate to see it as the reason for the phenomenal boom in cinema-going from the late 1920s onwards (p. 86). Although it is possible to question the veracity of their claim about the growth in attendances during the 1930s, the more important point is that cinema development in the City had a strong local dimension to it: the growth in suburban estates without public house facilities meant that cinemas met an important local demand for leisure and entertainment (p. 87). However, while this aspect of exhibition was important, so too was the emergence of luxury cinemas such as the Ritz, with its resident organist Jack Heyler. For the authors, 'Cinemas were not just places to show films; they were celebrated as spectacles of consumption in themselves' (p. 120).

Unfortunately, the book is disappointing on a number of counts. For a work of cultural geography, the absence of maps is difficult to fathom. So too is the absence of tables that list the names, locations, affiliations, openings, closings and characteristics of cinemas in Nottingham at certain junctures. Furthermore, the authors do not really grasp the empirical issue of film popularity or the logic of their own, impressionistic position. If it were true that audiences were attracted to 'the type of experience that was associated with each cinema' (p. 88) rather than the films being shown in 'each cinema', then the box-office attendance figures or revenues for 'each cinema' would be invariant between films. They were not. The work thus suffers from the absence of a hard empirical edge: one that would have made it a more distinctive and valuable source of reference.

John Sedgwick
London Metropolitan University

Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. x + 202pp. Bibliography. £13.50 pbk.
doi:10.1017/S0963926805333207

This is a book about three upper-class Indian women's different attitudes towards colonialism and the way that they articulated these attitudes through their writings about home. Burton also uses the book to argue that the 'archive' is not just sources found in a physical location but a whole body of material including sources such as autobiographies, novels and oral history. While the debate about what constitutes sources and history has broader relevance, the focus of the book is colonial history, rather than urban history: the issue of urbanity is not Burton's concern and the setting is national rather than urban.

In her introductory chapter, Burton sets out her defence of memoirs and fiction as an 'archive' source of equal importance as unpublished sources in official archives. Chapter two examines Janaki Majumdar's unpublished memoir 'Family history', which is based primarily on her childhood in India and Britain in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Chapter three looks at Cornelia Sorabji's memoirs about her position as a legal practitioner and official adviser to the Court of Wards taking up the cases of widowed women and minors regarding family related legal matters. This chapter also draws on her diaries, articles and annual reports. Chapter four focuses on Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, a semi-autobiographical

novel about the impact of partition on an Indian family. Hosain's few existing radio scripts of her programmes broadcast by the BBC are also discussed. All the women were mainly writing either in or about the 1930s. The book ends with a short epilogue which revisits some of Burton's arguments of the first chapter.

Political history, not home as a topic in itself, is the focus of the book and historians of home will find little that extends their knowledge of everyday life of Indian families. Chapter two on Majumdar's 'Family history' provides us with the clearest picture of how one Indian upper-class family lived and there are glimpses of upper-class Indian homes in the subsequent chapters when the zenana (the physical location of women in purdah in the Indian home) is discussed. Instead the book is about how, in Burton's words, three itinerant women used the material culture of the home to 'complete an otherwise unfinished history of late colonial India' (p. 144). Thus Majumdar's memoir reflects new developments in Indian nationalism in the 1930s and Burton argues that she articulates wider changes in society regarding Indian nationalism and the increasing freedom for women through her discussion of changes in the home, demonstrating 'the inseparability of their family narrative from the story of Indian nationalism' (p. 46). Sorabji discusses the zenana as part of her defence of Indian traditional values against the progressive values of Indian nationalists, but also uses the women of the zenana to enhance her own status by portraying them as medieval and primitive in contrast to her position as a modern, professional woman. Hosain uses the disintegration of an upper-class household and loss of the family home as a means to discuss the experiences and consequences of the partition of India. Burton's argument that home is political (in a national and colonial sense) and is a part of 'the larger culture' (p. 6) is most welcome. As a historian of domestic life, however, I would argue that home does not have to be made subordinate to high politics in order for it to be a relevant topic of historical analysis.

Burton makes useful points concerning some academics' attitudes towards non-archival material such as oral history. She is correct that autobiography and testimony have often been considered less authoritative by traditionalists than other sources (not all of which are found in an archive). One way, however, to ensure that autobiography and oral history are taken seriously as sources, is not to submit their factual qualities entirely to their narrative ones, as Burton often does here. Burton also draws interesting parallels between critiques of oral history and the way that women themselves have been represented, that is, it is considered unreliable, subjective, emotional and associated with fiction rather than fact. In addition, she shows that one of the more important values of reminiscences is that they give voice to people who rarely feature in the traditional archive. Somewhat confusing, however, is Burton's assertion that concern with 'truth-telling' is returning as part of a backlash against postmodernism and that this backlash elevates the kind of sources found in the physical archive above non-archival ones. She sees imperial historians as the main culprits of this, but also claims that it is 'by no means unique to them' (p. 138). She argues that discourses and 'reality' should not be viewed as opposites 'but as a vast, interdependent archive' (p. 5). This seems to me what most social and cultural historians already take for granted and she herself admits this when she comments that it is possible to 'respect' the traditional archive while being critical of it and that these 'are the

assumptions under which most professional historians work as we head into the twenty-first century' (pp. 139–40).

Most of this discussion occurs in the first chapter; the other three chapters are far more readable. Burton has chosen three women who had interesting lives and produced compelling narratives and she provides a strong historical context for these.

Lucy Faire
University of Leicester

> **Ravi Kalia**, *Gandhinagar: Building National Identity in Postcolonial India.*
> Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004. xiv + 165pp.
> 19 halftones. $29.95.
> doi:10.1017/S0963926805343203

The book under review focuses on the interplay between competing postcolonial architectural ideologies and political exigencies that shaped the construction of Gandhinagar, designated in the early 1960s as the capital of the newly created state of Gujarat. Gandhinagar was one of a number of postcolonial cities that were created to reflect the ideals and aspirations of newly independent India. Of these, Chandigarh, built by the French architect Le Corbusier, has attracted the most scholarly attention; viewed as a 'national project', it reflected the Nehruvian ideal of a modern Indian city divested of both its colonial and indigenous past. However, by the time the Gandhinagar project commenced, the heady optimism and faith in the possibilities of modernism that had characterised the immediate post-Independence period had begun to dissipate in the face of growing economic, social and political crises. Moreover, the building of Gandhinagar brought to the fore many of the tensions that characterised the Indian engagement with modernist architecture; from the outset, Kalia argues, conflicting architectural visions and rival political agendas dogged the venture.

The book is divided into four chapters. The first provides a potted account of the political history of Gujarat from the fifteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The second chapter examines the politics that lay behind the choice of Gandhinagar as the capital city of the newly created Gujarat state. The two prominent cities in the Gujarat region, Baroda and Ahmedabad, were both overlooked in favour of Gandhinagar; strategic errors on the part of the ruler of Baroda ruled it out of contention, while Ahmedabad, in spite of the power and influence of its commercial magnates, lost out for reasons that are not quite clearly spelt out by the author. The following two chapters chart the tortuous progress of the Gandhinagar project from its commencement in June 1960 to its completion in 1982. On the one hand, the wealthy Gujarati cotton textile magnates of Ahmedabad tried, unsuccessfully as it turned out, to procure the services of the American architect Louis Kahn in order to design a city fit to rival Le Corbusier's Chandigarh. On the other hand, Gujarat's political leadership felt compelled to design a new capital that would strive to reflect the ideals of the state's most famous son, Mahatma Gandhi. Ultimately, it was the latter that triumphed; the construction of Gandhinagar was entrusted to an Indian, H.K. Mewada, who sought to build a capital that would honour Gandhi's political and social vision.

The empirical evidence presented in this book makes for fascinating reading. However, the author could have sustained a clearer line of argument; in many places the detail in the narrative tends to obscure the salient analytical issues at stake. On the whole, the strength of this book lies in its thick description of the political manoeuvrings and ideological tensions that marked the Gandhinagar project; its explanation of these developments is rather less satisfying.

P. Kidambi
University of Leicester

Deborah L. Parsons, *A Cultural History of Madrid: Modernism and the Urban Spectacle*. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003. viii + 129pp. 7 illus. Notes. Bibliography. Index. £45.00 hbk, £14.99 pbk.
doi:10.1017/S096392680535320X

This little book is to be welcomed for many reasons. Perhaps the most important is that here we have a literary critic and theorist who has a sense of history and is prepared to use it specifically to study and extend our understanding of the range of cultural experiences of modernity in cities. Of course the city in question is Madrid. What the author sets out to show is that Madrid, the capital city that economic, political and social circumstances in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century pushed to the periphery of the European mainstream, still has much to tell us about the process of modernity. For this reviewer, she is preaching to the converted. But she consciously sets out to add the city often considered to be the epitome of Spain's 'backwardness' to the list of 'hidden' cities of modernism. In the preface to their new 1991 edition of *Modernism 1890–1930*, Bradbury and McFarlane offered an extended list including 'Rome, Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Munich, Berlin, Zurich, Oslo, Barcelona, St Petersburg, even Dublin and Trieste'. Parsons is determined to add Madrid. Her effort is further welcomed for employing both a careful historical context to explain her 'urban spectacle' as well as a literary discourse in which the city plays a major part. This interdisciplinary approach proves very effective. A central theme is that the construction of the city's modernity was unique. It was based on a triangular interaction: of court and government, the political importance of Madrid; of a local, traditional urban culture of the lower classes, *lo castizo*; and of a bourgeois moment of prosperity and influence, the product of new economic power. The main thesis is divided into five chapters: on Madrid as a court capital; as the capital of nineteenth-century Spain; as a city of contrasts; as a conduit for new technology, especially relating to electricity and urban expansion; and finally, to the place of Madrid in an urban cosmorama, life on the city streets. In each chapter, there are elements of history (fairly rudimentary), contemporary commentaries from a variety of sources and above all, analyses of works of fiction in which the city plays a key role. The result provides a vivid expression of the 'lived experience' of the city.

Walter Benjamin is the guiding spirit of the enterprise and the focus is a particular historical period, the moment of modernity between 1880 and the 1930s. However, in the attempt to marshal the geographical, sociological and aesthetic imaginations to create an understanding of modernity, infelicities sometimes occur. Madrid appears to create its own modernity in isolation. The competition offered by Barcelona is deafening in its absence, especially in terms of architecture and

planning and cultural institutions. Everyday life obviously has a very local focus and comparative analysis is difficult. But we could be spared generalizations that a particular character's narrative in one novel – of desire, extravagence and fall in the Spanish capital – 'accords with anxieties about mass urban modernity that were common across Western Europe generally'. This study shows that Madrid, like every other capital in western Europe, could not opt out of what was happening elsewhere. What makes the book important is that it analyses the uniqueness of the urban experience in Madrid at this moment of change.

Helen Meller
University of Nottingham