

a nostalgia that former inhabitants of Maadi, who had benefited from imperial hierarchies, have voiced. Stretching the periodization beyond 1962 and including more Arabic sources might have yielded a different perspective. The book also does not always combine its findings with a history of Cairo. Maadi frequently appears as a *reflection* of imperial policies and economic inequalities, rather than a *driving factor* of these phenomena. Studies by Jean-Luc Arnaud, Khaled Adham and others suggest, however, that the creation of suburbs contributed to the social segregation of the Egyptian capital along economic and colonial hierarchies.<sup>2</sup> While DeVries' book thus offers a detailed history of Maadi, additional scholarship can further clarify the import of the suburb for larger histories of Cairo, Egypt and the British empire.

### Joseph Ben Prestel

Freie Universität Berlin

**Stefan Höhne**, *Riding the New York Subway: The Invention of the Modern Passenger*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2021 [Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2017]. xvi + 365pp. 60 figures. Bibliography. £40.00 pbk.  
doi:10.1017/S0963926822000244

Since its grand opening in 1904, the New York subway has not only been moving people, it has also been making people. This is the central argument of Stefan Höhne's compelling monograph, *Riding the New York Subway: The Invention of the Modern Passenger* (2017), recently translated into English and published in an attractive, generously illustrated edition by The MIT Press (2021). Drawing on a wide array of historical documents – from architectural drawings and complaint letters, to 'subway songs' and artistic photography – the study traces the evolution of the 'passenger subject' from the turn of the twentieth century through to the 'urban crisis' of the late 1960s. Offering a valuable contribution to the 'infrastructure turn' across the humanities and social sciences, Höhne demonstrates how urban infrastructure networks not only produce 'new forms of knowledge and modes of governing' but also alter 'perceptions and experiences', fundamentally changing the 'individuality and collective subjectivity' of those who use them (p. 5).

The book is organized in a loose chronology, with each chapter approaching the formation (or fragmentation) of the passenger subject from a different angle. Chapter 1 traces the pre-history of the subway through the urban problems it was intended to address and the utopian city it was supposed to usher in. As Höhne explains, it was the 'imperative of circulation' (p. 38) – material, economic and cultural – that animated those who advocated for the subway's construction. At the centre of these visions was the passenger-to-be: a morally autonomous, white,

<sup>2</sup>J.-L. Arnaud, *Le Caire: mise en place d'une ville moderne, 1867–1907* (Arles, 1998); K. Adham, 'Cairo's urban déjà-vu: globalization and urban fantasies', in Y. Elsheshtawy (ed.), *Planning Middle Eastern Cities* (London, 2004), 134–68.

male subject heralded as the ‘Hero of the Liberal City’ (p. 51). In chapter 2, we see how this nineteenth-century dream collided with an early twentieth-century reality, as mass society and the ‘machine age’ reconfigured both the subway and its subjects. Ornamentation was immediately dropped from the design of new stations, which became ‘spartan and functional, resembling “utilitarian boxes” more than cathedrals of progress’ (p. 119). Just as Taylorism had recast working bodies as machines in the factory, the emerging logic of the subway imagined and forged passenger bodies as ‘cargo’. The book then shifts from this primarily top-down approach to focus on reconstructing the sensory experiences of passengers. Höhne traces the ‘techniques of the senses’ that passengers developed to cope with the novel world of mass subterranean transit. Almost a century before the smartphone, newspapers comprised the ‘perfect psychic veil’ to avoid the gaze of fellow passengers (p. 147).

The rest of the book addresses the mid-century decades in which the subway – in the context of suburbanization and ‘urban crisis’ – came to be seen as increasingly problematic. In chapter 4, Höhne shows how the emerging artistic and academic critique of mass consumer society ‘crystalized’ around the figure of the alienated and atomized subway passenger (p. 187). The final substantive chapter returns to the task of reconstructing passenger experiences, but this time through the lens of ‘complaint letters’ sent to the New York Transit Authority in the 1960s. In these letters, passengers constructed particular subject positions, denouncing groups of fellow riders and appealing to notions of citizenship and public order. Many preferred to stay anonymous, referring to themselves simply as ‘citizen’ or ‘taxpayer’, whilst one more ominous letter-writer signed off ‘One million middle-class whites who paid their taxes of New York’ (p. 251).

This leads us onto the study’s major shortfall, which, as the author acknowledges in the introduction, is the privileging of white, male, middle-class perspectives (p. xiii). This is in part down to the availability of sources and, at points, Höhne does work effectively against the grain of the archive to highlight a more diverse range of passenger experience. In chapter 5, for example, he addresses the implicit and explicit racism underpinning many of these complaint letters, as well as highlighting letters from people of colour calling out police brutality on the subway (p. 226). Yet, it was also in this chapter that the shortcomings seemed most striking. While Höhne addresses individual cases of racism, there is scant acknowledgment of how fundamental race was to the whole transformation of the city (and by extension the subway) in this period. For a chapter primarily about the public discourse of ‘urban crisis’, race should have been far more central to the analytical approach.

Did the subway fundamentally transform those who rode it, forging new urban ‘passenger subjects’? I finished the book unsure. Höhne does an elegant job of showing how ‘passenger culture’ was ‘closely tied to historical, social, and economic circumstances in the city, as well as overarching developments in society’, but this left me wondering what causal role the subway had in all this (p. 266). The study, rather, is at its finest in the detailed analysis of specific technologies; the 10-page history of the ‘Turnstile’, for example, is masterful (pp. 109–18). In the concluding chapter, Höhne ventures forward in time, highlighting a series of enticing leads for further investigation, from the vigilante ‘Guardian Angels’ of the 1980s to the securitization of the subway after 9/11. Overall, this is a well-researched and highly

enjoyable read that will prove informative and stimulating to those interested in the cultural history of New York, the ‘infrastructure turn’ or the history of urban subjectivity.

**Jack Tyler Hanlon**

Queen Mary University of London

**Tom Allbeson**, *Photography, Reconstruction and the Cultural History of the Postwar European City*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2021. xvii + 272pp. 66 figures. £96.00 hbk. £29.59 eBook; \$124.00 hbk. \$39.96 eBook.  
doi:10.1017/S0963926822000256

In his book *Photography, Reconstruction and the Cultural History of the Postwar European City*, Tom Allbeson tackles the question of how urban photography contributed to the formation of western Europe during the years immediately following World War II. In four loosely chronological chapters, he reflects the shifting issues concerning urban recovery, internationalization and transnationalization: imagery of destruction and reconstruction in ruin photobooks (focusing on the years 1944–50), photographs of modern housing projects during the housing crisis in war-shattered cities (c. 1947–57), the imagery of celebration and solidarity, aspiration and leisure in the illustrated press (c. 1949–55) and of modernist monuments in the spirit of internationalization (c. 1955–62).

The core argument that takes shape over the course of this book focuses on the ‘image of the city’ as a ‘key symbol which facilitated both a negotiation of past conflict and a vision for future cooperation’ (p. 19). It explores the way in which ‘architecture and photography were crucial facets in the national cultures of, and transnational cultural exchange between, the three comparator nations [Germany, the UK and France]...within the network of intersecting local, national, and transnational cultures’ (p. 19). This comparative approach allows Allbeson to unearth insights that reach beyond dimensions of aesthetics in urban photography and their reading as expressions of a static representation of national or regional sentiments. Instead, he focuses on assessing an entire field of knowledge, which he describes as ‘the impact of cultural exchange and political climate on the meaning and significance of urban space as mediated through its photographic representation’ (p. 235).

This approach is convincing and turns out to be effective for three reasons. First, it places Allbeson in a school of thought about the photographic image that understands it as more than an aesthetic documentation or mere illustration, but as a dynamic agent (as discussed in the work of scholars of visual and critical studies such as Roland Barthes and W.J.T. Mitchell, who serve as frequent point of reference for Allbeson). Secondly, Allbeson embraces architectural historical research of the past decade or so that understands urban and architectural photography as ‘photographic architecture’. This concept, coined by the architectural historian Claire Zimmerman in her 2014 book *Photographic Architecture in the Twentieth*