

town views were often stereotyped, while the maps of the eighteenth century were very precise. However, her argument that urban topography did not change from the late Middle Ages to 1950 seems problematic, like her reduction of urban space to its topographical dimension. Alvaro de Campos analyses the urban landscape in a more socio-economic perspective in her study of the property of the church Santa Justa in Coimbra, which proves that such research is possible for Portuguese towns.

The final section of the book discusses the economic dimension of medieval towns and ports. Bochaca describes the commercial structures of the Aquitanian estuary ports; Portuguese urban history could indeed have a role to play in a European comparison of such ports. However, the book concentrates on the networks of ports. While Blockmans delivers a classical picture of the ports network in medieval Europe, Miranda presents the network of medieval Portuguese towns. He refutes the idea of a Portugal without cities: most Portuguese cities were of European average size, and Lisbon was comparable with Bruges or Barcelona. Nevertheless, the only towns of international importance were Porto and Lisbon. Silveira further details the structures of the Portuguese ports network, and emphasizes the role of salt taxation as a tool of commercial politics – following Menjot who presents the urban tax system and public debt as a complex element in international political strategy. In general, Silveira points out the role of the Portuguese crown as protagonist by constructing and structuring the ports network across the land. Monnet's paper also shows that the German leagues of autonomous towns did not habitually act against the emperor and territorial lords, but rather in a balance of power with the other territorial actors within the political system of the German empire, justifying their comparability with urban history in medieval Portugal, which lacked autonomous cities.

The book reminds us that Portuguese cities should be more often considered within a comparative urban history of the Middle Ages on a European scale, but also that the historiography of Portuguese cities has yet to deliver its full potential.

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**Meredith Cohen and Fanny Madeline (eds.),** *Space in the Medieval West: Places, Territories, and Imagined Geographies*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014. xix + 245pp. 17 figures. 4 tables. 15 maps. £70.00.  
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This collection of 11 interdisciplinary essays, focused upon Europe (particularly France) in the period 900–1400, is a welcome addition to current research on space. The essays are grouped thematically and cover a wide range of topics and approaches, from architecture and cartography to legal documents and communication networks. Responding to the 'spatial turn' in the humanities, the book offers a series of specialized interventions into medieval concepts and practices of space that are framed by an invaluable introduction and a wealth of further reading in the footnotes.

In the introduction, Cohen, Madeline and Dominique Iogna-Prat offer a brief but detailed account of the history of space in European scholarship and identify

important current trends in research, such as the role of time in the production of space and the increasing recognition of the multiplicity of forces at work in its construction. They highlight the significance, and limitations, of Lefebvre's *La production de l'espace* (1974) in shaping the discourse, and the collection is divided into three sections based upon his interconnected concepts of physical space (representations of space), social space (spatial practices) and mental space (representational or symbolic space). The essays broaden out from specific places and buildings in the first section, to spatial networks, cartographic representations of real and imagined geographies and finally metaphorical space in the literary text.

The first section, 'Places, monuments, and cities', focuses on specific sites and will be of most interest to scholars of urban history. Emanuele Lugli's chapter examines medieval geometrical planning, arguing that the Roman practice of land division known as 'centuriation' was still practised in Italy in the Middle Ages, evidenced by the planning of the cathedrals of Modena and Cremona in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Lugli concludes his chapter by using Gerbert of Aurillac's *Geometria* as evidence for the 'cultural relevance' of centuriation, a practice that he concludes 'worked as the crucible through which medieval communities approached space at large' (p. 36). This productive conversation between specific buildings and textual representations of space is continued in Stefaan Van Liefferinge's fascinating chapter on the resonances of the rib vaulting in the choir of Notre-Dame with Hugh of St Victor's description of the sacred geometry of Noah's ark. Van Liefferinge's essay argues persuasively for the additional 'semantic layer' that the connection with the ark adds to the cathedral (p. 49) and this accumulation of meaning through interdisciplinary research is a major strength of the entire volume's engagement with space. The third chapter in this section by Robert Bork examines the importance of two-dimensional drawings in the construction of Gothic buildings, a 'non-spatial approach to architectural design' that was the source of the power of their immense spaces (p. 51). The final chapter by David Ross Winter is a case-study of Utrecht's 'kerkenkruis' or cross of churches in the city. Winter argues convincingly for the cross-shaped configuration of ecclesiastical structures as evidence of the medieval predisposition for seeing crosses in the landscape, both real and imagined, and his essay goes on to provide a rich account of the sacred and political significance of the 'kerkenkruis' for the city of Utrecht.

The second and third sections of the book, 'Spatial networks and territories' and 'Cartography and imagined geographies' respectively, move on from specific buildings to think about regions, territories and countries. Anne Lunven analyses the significance of the vocabulary of 'plebs' and 'parochia' in medieval Brittany; Thomas Wetzstein proposes a more abstract space generated by the networks of communication established by popes, scholars and monks; and most usefully for the urban historian, Ada-Maria Kuskowski shows how the French 'coutumiers', vernacular documents of customary law, negotiated a legal space that extended beyond the regional, a 'juridical space that tagged place but participated in a converging discourse that sought "commonness" and unity' (p. 154). The final section of essays concentrates in the main on the relationship between real and imagined space in medieval maps and geographical treatises with essays by Sandra Sáenz-López Pérez, Jean-Charles Ducène and Nathalie Bouloux. The book concludes with Catherine Nicolas' exploration of the space of the soul in the prose *Romans du Graal*, an essay of particular interest to literary critics and theologians

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

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

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