

## Reviews of books

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**Alfred Fierro**, *Historical Dictionary of Paris*. Lanham, Maryland, and London: Scarecrow Press, 1998. xx + 245pp. 4 maps. \$68.00.

**Roman Cybriwsky**, *Historical Dictionary of Tokyo*. Lanham, Maryland, and London: Scarecrow Press, 1997. xxi + 212pp. 3 maps. \$49.00.

**Adriana Gozdecka-Sanford**, *Historical Dictionary of Warsaw*. Lanham, Maryland, and London: Scarecrow Press, 1997. xxv + 319pp. 2 maps. \$49.50.

**Robert Craig**, *Historical Dictionary of Honolulu and Hawaii*. Lanham, Maryland, and London: Scarecrow Press, 1998. xlii + 297pp. 2 maps. \$55.00.

These are four of the eight volumes that have appeared so far in the series *Historical Dictionaries of Cities of the World*: the others are by Dennis Gould on Stockholm, Graham E. Johnson and Glen D. Peterson on Guangzhou (Canton) and Guangdong, Naomi and Reuben Musiker on Greater Johannesburg and Peter Csendes on Vienna. The series is useful, although overpriced. The pattern is that of Chronology, Introduction to the City, Dictionary and Bibliography. Three of the volumes are written by experts. Fierro, Chief Librarian of the Historical Library of the City of Paris, is the author of nine books on the history of the city, including the *Histoire et Dictionnaire de Paris* (1996). Cybriwsky, Professor of Geography and Urban Studies at Temple University, is the author of *Tokyo: The Changing Profile of an Urban Giant* (1991). Robert Craig, Professor Emeritus of History at Alaska Pacific University, is the author of several books on Oceania.

The tone of the volumes is not eulogistic. For example, from the chronology on Paris: 1996 – The American Center is closed. Former Mayor Jean Tiberi is accused of malpractices regarding low-cost rental apartments of Paris municipality. Another Islamic bomb attack. New building of French National Library is inaugurated.

The introduction to that volume compares Paris to a 'vampire, sucking up the intellectual life of the rest of the country for its own benefit', refers to the 'thousands of hectares of rusting industrial hulks' in the suburbs, and comments on 'a long-term weakness in the areas of banking and trade'. The Dictionary entries are also blunt where necessary. Indeed, the dominant impression is of a careful and interesting volume. All sorts of topics are covered and the chance of alphabetic organization provides some interesting juxtapositions. Eugène Sue is followed by Taxis, and then by the Temple. Tollgates is followed by Toulouse-Lautrec, Verlaine by Versailles. The bibliography is thorough and there are eleven

interesting statistical appendices, including area, population, number of streets, housing and foreigners.

The volume on Tokyo is more cheaply produced, but is similar. The Dictionary is tailored specifically to English-language readers, and stresses the people, places, events and terms that English-language readers would most likely encounter. The individuals listed were those who had the greatest direct impact on shaping the city and guiding its historical development. The treatment is comprehensive. There are entries on crime and pollution, although the latter is covered under environmental protection. Warsaw is treated in greatest detail, and the coverage extends to entries such as Homosexuality. The Honolulu volume fills a gap, not least because there is little in print on its recent history. Craig deals with sensitive issues including the problem of development. This is a useful series, but can only be recommended if published at a more reasonable price.

**Jeremy Black**

University of Exeter

**James Corbett**, *A History of St Albans*. Chichester: Phillimore, 1997. xiii + 162pp. 121 illustrations. Bibliography. £14.99.

**Rex Marchant**, *Hastings Past*. Chichester: Phillimore, 1997. xi + 132pp. 157 illustrations. £14.99.

**Sandy Macfarlane and Chris Kingham**, *Princes Risborough Past*. Chichester: Phillimore, 1997. xii + 124pp. 159 illustrations. £14.99.

**Evelyn Lord**, *Derby Past*. Chichester: Phillimore, 1997. x + 134pp. 148 illustrations. Bibliography. £14.99.

These four books are popular histories, intended to give residents, and perhaps particularly newcomers and schoolchildren, a sense of the antiquity of the town in which they live and an understanding of its development. In this all four books succeed admirably. Within a comparatively brief span, none is more than 65,000 words, *Risborough* and *Hastings* considerably less, each gives a good indication of the nature of the town concerned and the salient points of its history. The generous numbers of illustrations provide a clear sense of their physical character, something often missing from more academic works. Each book is entertainingly written.

Academically-oriented historians should justifiably expect to obtain from such books what is unique about the economy or society of the place, a springboard from which more detailed studies can be launched, a bibliography allowing interesting sections of the text to be explored, and comparative material for those working on other towns, such as population statistics. What can we learn from these four?

*A History of St Albans* is the longest of the four. It has a bibliography, but the only clue to non-printed sources is in the acknowledgements. Corbett is strong on how the abbots of St Albans developed the cult of St Alban and tried to control the town they created. The conflicts of the Middle Ages are described vividly. Interestingly, although Corbett does not remark upon it, the town appears to have avoided having a Norman castle imposed on it. He notes a printing press present 1480–88 and the origins of steeplechasing there in 1830.

There is good material on attempts to shorten shop assistants' hours in the nineteenth century and on the murder of a nonconformist by a militia officer during unlicensed worship in 1662. His view of left-wing political activity in the early twentieth century is refreshingly left-of-centre. The book is weakest in providing statistical material. Although Corbett identifies the importance of St Albans' role as a thoroughfare town, he supports his case only with a quote from a nineteenth-century observer. There is no census data proving how important an employer the straw-plait industry was, nor showing its rise and decline. Most problematically, he provides only the vaguest idea of how big the city was at any particular time.

*Hastings Past* takes a thematic approach. Marchant argues plausibly that the town was a port for the nearby Roman ironworks at Beauport Park, but is shaky on the town's medieval history. His account of local smuggling as brutal and mercenary rings true. He tells a story of conflict between Hastings fishermen and the polite society of the rising leisure-oriented town and gives good accounts of the development of the town as a resort and of topographical change in the twentieth century. The book has no bibliography, however, and idiosyncratic footnotes that reference only direct quotations. Thus sources to a fascinating account of a riot against women suffragists can only be inferred. The book is let down, also, by having too few maps.

Macfarlane and Kingham also adopt a broadly thematic approach and make no pretence of having written a comprehensive history. They concentrate on the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, providing a charming picture of this small market town in these years but paying very little attention to the town's transformation since 1945. Their account of the local brewers is a useful case study of the trade in a small community. A couple of pages of footnotes are some compensation for the lack of a bibliography.

*Derby Past* stands as a model for single-volume town histories. Lord's approach is chronological, half the book being devoted to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Industry is covered well throughout, and there is also much useful material on topography. Comparative material can be found on almost any topic, whether the Reformation, eighteenth-century banking, street paving or parliamentary reform. Unlike the other three books reviewed here, *Derby* was written by a professional historian, and it shows. Lord has consulted a wider range of records, including standard sources ignored by the other authors, such as the Poll Tax. She uses statistics with greater confidence and more frequently, making her work of more use to other urban historians. Alone of the four books, for example, Lord's gives an idea of the size of the town at most periods. Although dealing with the largest of the four communities, she has provided the most consistent and comprehensive view of it.

The contrast between the works is such that one wonders how many non-professional historians are failing to take advantage of the plethora of local history courses. Publishers should ensure their authors have at least read W.G. Hoskins' *Local History in England* or some of the many similar works, while we professional historians must work harder at sharing our knowledge.

**John Stedman**

Portsmouth Museums & Records Service

**Elizabeth Williamson and Nikolaus Pevsner**, *London: Docklands – An Architectural Guide*. London: Penguin, 1998. 276pp. Glossary and indexes. Numerous maps, figures and illustrations. £11.99 pbk.

As a Port of London official handbook from the early 1960s reminds us, the Port at its heyday directly employed some 28,000 dockers, handled one-third of the country's trade and supported a myriad of other businesses and industries. By 1980 it did none of this; rendered obsolete by containerization, the docks were largely derelict, many infilled and most of the original dock buildings demolished.

Then Docklands – the concept of a homogenous area is a significant neologism – underwent a remarkable rejuvenation at the hands of the London Docklands Development Corporation. Disbanded earlier this year, its task completed, the Development Corporation has overseen the conversion of a massive swathe of London stretching 10 miles east along the river from Tower Bridge into a mixture of new businesses and housing. The deindustrialization of the docks being irreversible, the businesses are mostly offices and the housing for people who have money to spend.

*London Docklands* is extracted from the forthcoming East London volume of the celebrated *Buildings of England* series, and we are in effect being offered a small part of a future publication. The publishers clearly consider that this is worthwhile and this reviewer agrees. While certainly not uniform, this area has sufficient common characteristics to justify this as a separate publication. Indeed, having been repackaged as 'Docklands', we must seek to assess it as such.

So what does this book offer us? First, there is a 50-page introduction which provides a compact history of the riverside, industrial development and building types, together with discussion of the work of the Docklands Corporation and the design of recent buildings. Thereafter *London Docklands* follows the familiar theme of progressing alphabetically through the various districts, providing for each one an introduction, a map, a discussion of public and religious buildings and then one or more perambulations. While potentially disjunctive this approach actually suits the area rather well since it helps to emphasize that there is really no such place as Docklands but, rather, a dozen distinct districts linked by a common past.

The authors operate most successfully within the constraints of the Pevsner house style – they are authoritative, thorough and no doubt unerringly accurate. They also have refreshing opinions which they do not hesitate to share with us. A car park at Beckton is large and intimidating while some 1980s housing is twee and nostalgic. Even the celebrated Smithsons, once demigods of utopian planning, feel the sharp edge of the collective tongue. Robin Hood Gardens in Poplar 'is ill-planned to the point of being inhumane . . . Over 600 people live . . . on this horrible site flanked by two trunk roads full of thundering traffic.' Pevsner with attitude indeed.

*London Docklands* is an invaluable aid for getting to grips with this difficult part of London: difficult because it is only now being viewed as a coherent area, because it has changed so much in recent years, and because surprisingly little has been written on it. Armed with this book you can feel up to the task of exploring the residential area of Beckton, the surviving historical nucleuses of Wapping or Shadwell, viewing the great silent stretches of water in the largely preserved Royal Docks or, above all, experiencing Thatcherism writ large in the

Isle of Dogs, easily the most significant area of development. Together with *Docklands in the Making – Redeveloping the Isle of Dogs 1981–85* published by the Survey of London, *London Docklands* provides a key to unlocking what is for many Londoners its last great terra incognita.

**Simon Morris**

London Topographical Society

**Heather Swanson**, *Medieval British Towns*. Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. 161pp. Select bibliography. £42.50 hbk; £13.99 pbk.

The brevity of Heather Swanson's title ought to draw attention to one of her book's most distinctive features. It is genuinely a study of towns across medieval Britain, and within a compact and readable format covers a remarkable range of material. In its treatment of Wales and Scotland the book avoids tokenism, as a glance through the index will demonstrate. It even contains some discussion of urbanization in Ireland. Though stretching the identity of Britain, this can readily be justified for the period after 1179, and creates the opportunity to comment on the way in which Irish towns, having been shaped or reshaped by English models in the twelfth century, became more Irish in the fourteenth and fifteenth.

Some of the benefits of the wider geographical perspective presented by Britain as a whole are evident in the first chapter, which discusses the chronology of urbanization. Given the weakness of urban development before 1100 in the north and west of Britain, and in Ireland, the growth and multiplication of towns in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries appears all the more striking, though those outside southern and central England remained smaller. However, the wider perspective does nothing to establish easily identifiable trends for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, especially given the extent to which restructuring was imposed by the effects of war. The urban histories of Scotland, Wales and Ireland all raise issues which fall outside discussion of English towns alone.

Following her chronological outline, Swanson divides the subject matter tightly between three well-chosen areas of analysis, the economic (chapter 2), the political (chapter 3), the social and cultural (chapter 4), each chapter containing a succinct introduction to current debate. The economic chapter is concerned not so much with growth and decline (which are discussed in chapter 1) as with structures of employment and the organization of production and trade, subjects on which the author's past research enables her to be particularly authoritative. The political chapter gives due weight to the whole hierarchy of power relations that operated in the day-to-day affairs of towns and sometimes gave rise to conflict – the power of kings and princes, the power of landlords, the power of urban officers (whether or not 'elected') and the power of burgesses over those who lacked borough freedoms. The final chapter is a well-constructed analysis of a range of topics related to differences of social status, mobility and welfare. It includes a useful summary of gradations of wealth and status that should help a student perplexed about the nature of the medieval middle class. The discussion is consistently well focused, avoiding excessive concentration on issues that would distort the balance of the book or complicate the picture more than is necessary for an introductory text.

This is, in short, an impressive illustration of how a complicated topic can be made approachable, and the author will earn the gratitude of many readers for whom it clarifies its chosen range of historical discussion.

**R.H. Britnell**

University of Durham

**Alexander Cowan**, *Urban Europe, 1500–1700*. London: Arnold, 1998. ix + 229pp. 2 maps. Bibliography. £14.95 pbk, £40.00 hbk.

'Why write a history of early modern Europe?' proclaims the publisher's blurb on the rear cover of this volume. If an answer to this question is still required by anyone familiar with the results of thirty years of burrowing by historians in urban archives over Europe then this book provides it. Urban history is an exciting and challenging subject which forms a convenient clearing ground for many of the historical debates on early modern Europe, encompassing religion, politics, economics and cultural change. All these themes feature prominently in this volume. This is a wide-ranging book which draws together much of the important research in the last thirty years on European urban history. The book is divided into two parts. The first part deals with what might be called the 'structures' of everyday urban life. Five chapters deal with the urban economy, government, urban elites, the social structure of towns and urban religion, both in the form of institutions and religiosity. A second section deals with the mechanics of urban change, the changes in the urban fabric, poverty and poor relief, and order and disorder.

Writing European history is, at the best of times, a difficult practice. There are two tendencies. The first is to produce a grand synthesis which incorporates the entire European experience. Fortunately this volume does not fall victim to this temptation and it is conscious of both regional and functional variation within the European network. Second, and more problematic, there is a tendency to concentrate on the core at the expense of the periphery. This is a problem to which almost all surveys succumb and this is no exception. This is not a book about European urbanization in its widest sense but about the larger towns in the core of Europe. There is little, for instance, about the smaller centres which characterized Scotland, the Baltic, Poland and Ireland. To have included some indication of the urban experience, or lack of it, on the periphery would have highlighted the importance of regional and functional diversity. It would also have enhanced the important point made in the introduction about the importance of the road network in linking the urban and rural worlds. What happened when there were only very small towns for roads to run to?

To answer such problems of the integration of one type of urban experience with other experiences would, of course, have required a book of much greater length than is available here. It would also have priced the volume out of the reach of the intended student market. Given the market at which it is aimed, this is an excellent book which provides an up-to-date and highly readable synthesis of the state of play of European urban history. Moreover, it presents to a new readership the ultimate challenge of urban history: the integration of continuity

and change and the linkages between economics, politics, religion and culture in one type of environment. Those who read this book attentively will receive a fine introduction to these complex problems.

**Raymond Gillespie**

National University of Ireland, Maynooth

**Margaret Pelling**, *The Common Lot. Sickness, Medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England*. London: Longman, 1998. xiv + 270pp. 4 figures. 7 tables. £14.99 pbk; £42.00 hbk.

This book is essentially a collection of ten papers sharing common themes, with these links explored in an introduction. Seven have already appeared in print since 1982 and the remaining three are rewritten conference papers; all have been updated and amended in detail, with a profusion of footnoted references to recent literature and cross-references to other sections of the book. Margaret Pelling is an authority on early modern medical history, but her – laudable – approach stresses how much the medical history of this period owes to many other historical subdisciplines, and how much medical history can contribute to our understanding of other aspects of the past. Thus there is much here to interest economic, social and demographic historians, and, above all else, the urban specialist, since the author has a strong involvement in towns and so much of her source material and her topics – epidemic disease, poverty, hygiene, trades and occupations – are the natural stock-in-trade of urban historians. She believes that historians have neglected disease as a formative influence in an early modern period when people were obsessed with health matters. Her work is characterized by an interest in women's issues, in the old, the poor, the sick and the child, and in economic aspects, while she uses a long time-scale in which similar phenomena are pursued into the twentieth century if necessary, and she is keen to employ literary evidence, such as the works of Shakespeare. Her concern is chiefly with the middling and lower social groups, rather than with the elite who were the chief customers of doctors and so tend to dominate the literature. The themes with which these papers are concerned include the impact on health of the urban environment and the effects of diet; illness among the poor and the curative facilities available to them; and child health and welfare. Two concentrate on the old – one on the association of age, poverty and disability and the other on older women and the strategies available to them. A third set are concerned with nurses, both of infants and the sick, the barber-surgeon as a trade and the various occupations which provided medical services. It will be clear from this list that a wide spectrum of issues of urban relevance are explored in this collection. A good deal of the analysis is derived from the city of Norwich's pioneering census of the poor of 1570. Nuggets of striking detail can be found in the book: for instance that in sixteenth-century Norwich there was one medical practitioner for about every two hundred of the population, that a quarter of the elderly poor were disabled and between a third and a half of the over-sixties were classified as poor. We are introduced to the world of barber-surgeons who made nets, slays and heavels, of nursekeepers and lithotomists, bonesetters and lazarhouses. We are constantly reminded that there is a large medical sphere which was far removed from the pretensions of professional

physicians and their academic concerns with Galenic dietics. There is inevitably some repetition as similar ground is covered from different directions, but this should not diminish the value of a collection well worth the attention of the early modern urban historian.

**Alan Dyer**

University of Wales, Bangor

**Laquita M. Higgs**, *Godliness and Governance in Tudor Colchester*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998. 443pp. 8 appendices. \$54.50.

The Reformation in English towns has failed to receive the attention it demands until relatively recently. With a few exceptions, studies of the Reformation in an urban context have been confined to London and the larger provincial cities. Laquita Higgs' detailed study of the impact of the Reformation in Colchester is especially useful in two respects. First, it concerns a town which, though important and with a population of around 5,000, was neither a provincial capital nor a county town. Second, it addresses one of the fundamental yet least systematically studied aspects of the English urban Reformation, namely the politics of the Reformation in towns.

The twin themes of governance and religion are interlinked throughout the volume. Higgs argues that the governing elite of Colchester were already tending to exercise greater power in the town before the start of the Reformation. At the same time Lollard teachings, which found sympathizers among the highest levels of town government, and increasing laicization in religious matters had already prepared the ground for the process of Reformation. As a result of these conditions there was a comparatively rapid acceptance of religious change, full co-operation with royal policy and increasing intrusion by the borough court on ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Colchester became a regional centre for discussion of protestant ideas and a refuge for some radical preachers from London during times of persecution. The Marian regime's attempt to restore catholicism was a crucial period. The burning of some inhabitants polarized the town, the co-operation of the governing elite with the Marian authorities led committed protestants to understand the need to take stronger measures to promote their ideas, and the exile in Geneva of some radical preachers and their subsequent return to the town gave impetus to the model of godly magistrates and ministers working in harmony to produce a godly society.

The more complete records for the Elizabethan period permit a more detailed examination of civic rule as a cohesive group of protestants took control of the governing body and developed an agenda for godly rule. With the failure of the established church to supply even minimal preaching the corporation made provision for regular Friday sermons and from 1564 hired a common preacher. Higgs argues that ordinances requiring church attendance, invitations to Flemish refugees to reside in the town, attempts to deal with the problems of poverty, strict sabbatarian orders, attacks on alehouses, regulation of moral behaviour and links with puritans elsewhere all demonstrate the zeal of the governing body to shape religious practice and fashion godly governance. To sustain such an agenda in the face of the structural problems of the established church in



Colchester posed problems for the aldermen. But by 1592 the Colchester parish churches were better served and in a better condition than at any time since 1554. Higgs also argues, mainly on the evidence of wills, that radical protestant preaching resulted in the internalization of the theology and values of puritanism, which by the end of the 1580s had ardent supporters among all social groups in the town.

Yet this experiment with godly governance failed. Divisions began to emerge in the 1580s and by 1590 a new generation of leaders had emerged, more concerned with civic pride than puritan zeal, satisfied that the presence of responsible preaching ministers in the parish churches reduced the necessity for civic power to be so exercised for pious purposes and more willing to compromise when challenged by the authorities in London. The neutralization of some influential puritans and bitter divisions over the appointment of a new town preacher in 1593 dulled the zeal which had marked earlier experiments. Secular government was not equipped to produce the godly society to which the previous generation of leaders had aspired.

Higgs sensitively intertwines national events with local developments. Colchester's governing elite consciously and successfully tapped into national power networks, retaining town clerks, recorders and Members of Parliament who were able to wield influence to benefit the town materially and augment its independence from magnate and gentry interference. But not everything is plain sailing in Higgs' analysis. It may be that the strength of the pre-Reformation church in the town is undervalued and too much reliance has been placed on evidence drawn from wills. The failure of the governing elite to articulate their aims in the way urban rulers did in some towns may undermine key arguments that what happened in Colchester amounted to a deliberate experiment to 'blend the sacred and the secular'. The Reformation in Colchester was not simply imposed from above and amounted to more than a crude mechanism for social control.

It is impossible to do justice to a study of this scope in such a short review. This is a thought-provoking and important book, which makes a significant contribution not just to studies of the urban Reformation, but to analyses of urban government and politics in the Reformation period.

**D.J. Lamburn**

University of Leeds

**John Davies (transcribed and described),** *The Carmarthen Book of Ordinances 1569–1606*. Carmarthen: Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society, 1998. xi + 55pp. £5.00.

This important contribution to the history of Carmarthen by the Carmarthenshire county archivist gives urban historians a precious opportunity to delve directly into a wealth of information about the largest town in Wales, with over 2,000 inhabitants, and the most economically advanced, between 1575 and 1606. The author's introduction guides the reader, expertly and clearly, through the arcane aspects of Welsh town government at the time. His numerous comparisons with the situation in England are an anchor for our deeper understanding of traditions which would otherwise be easily misunderstood. John Davies guides us vividly

through the 'Ordinances' which, used with another Book of Orders (CRO MUS 155) and other documents kept at the National Library of Wales (Great Sessions, Probate records) and at the Public Record Office, offer great opportunities for research into the system of government, the trade and the commerce of Carmarthen and some social and ecclesiastical customs.

The Appendix (appearing at the end of the Introduction) gives a physical description of the manuscript, together with the history of the ownership, and the author adds the principles of editing which he has adopted. In fact, the text is scrupulously transcribed and the spelling is unchanged, with the exception of abbreviations which have been expanded. The notes and references give, in effect, the bibliography on the subject. The very fact that only fifteen references can be adduced speaks for the importance of publishing this document.

A subject index and a names index complete this edition. The former is impressive in its number of topics appearing in the Ordinances; the latter equally so by the number of people who took an active part in the government of Carmarthen during these years – over eighty men with their professions and civic functions.

The importance of the 'Ordinances', and the scholarship with which they are presented and transcribed, make it an essential book of reference, not only for the historians of Wales and Tudor times in general, but also for those who are fond of Welsh history and culture.

**Nicole Crossley-Holland**

University of Wales, Lampeter

**Paul D. Halliday**, *Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England's Towns 1650–1730*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. xvii + 393pp. 2 appendices. Bibliography. £45.00; US\$69.95.

This book will receive a warm welcome among historians of the late Stuart and early Hanoverian period, and has much to interest the urban specialist. It tackles a much-studied subject from an original perspective, and poses a challenging thesis concerning the political development of the early modern English town. Political analysts have long recognized the significance of the purges of corporate government undertaken in the 1660s and 1680s, and have in the more recent past directed considerable effort to an examination of the urban response to the 'rage of party' of the reigns of William and Anne. However, no single work has attempted to address the development of the urban corporations across the Augustan period, and Halliday is to be congratulated for the ambition implicit in his work. Analysts of the late Stuart town (myself included) have tended to study either the policies of a single monarch or the experience of individual boroughs, and this book is rightly critical of such approaches. In order to achieve a general survey, Halliday focuses on the role played by King's Bench in transforming the politics of English towns, although this central theme is supplemented by informed analysis of scores of boroughs across the country. If nothing else, he has demonstrated the riches still to be found in the archives of the great courts, and provided intriguing new detail on political activity away from Westminster and Whitehall.

The principal argument of the book is that the period in question saw a

fundamental change in the nature of urban politics, as partisan groups sought to extirpate their rivals in an effort to restore harmony within their communities. In order to do this, rival factions worked with successive governments to purge their enemies from their town councils. Thus 'loyalists' and the 'factious' fought it out in the 1660s and 1670s, and Whigs and Tories squared up from the early 1680s onwards. Halliday shows that King's Bench had a vital role to play in overseeing these battles, and provides a much-needed commentary on the developing weaponry of the court, most notably the writs of mandamus and quo warranto. His study of the court's activities after 1688 is particularly valuable, for he shows how both King's Bench and Parliament worked to curb local partisanship amid the intense politicking of the 'rage of party'. Remedial legislation was necessary to limit the endless opportunities for attack spawned by the constitutional uncertainties of the 1680s, and helped to shape the corporations as responsible organs of local government. In this way, King's Bench channelled the restless humours of English society into safer waters, although politics was not to be cured of its partisan character. In accordance with much recent scholarship, this work stresses the continuing divisions of the early Georgian period, and suggests that even though religion was losing its polemical force, new issues emerged to fuel the factiousness of the Hanoverian corporations. As the author stresses throughout his work, the 'paradox' of partisanship was that its continual failure to eliminate rivals only sustained such conflicts, and thus ensured that England's towns remained a dynamic environment, in which an acceptable level of stability was maintained by rivalry rather than by uniformity.

This is a bold thesis with much to recommend it, especially in the way that it questions current assumptions concerning the role of conflict within early modern society. However, specialists in the period may well ask more searching questions of the nature of the partisanship portrayed here. The big picture supplied is a compelling one, but experts will demand closer analysis of the roots of local factionalism, particularly in such fluctuating times. In his defence, it should be pointed out that the author is principally concerned with partisanship as a political process, but more evidence will be needed to back up contentious claims, for instance concerning religion's declining force as a divisive issue in the early eighteenth century. Moreover, several historians of the early Stuart town might take issue with the argument that his brand of partisanship only began in the 1640s.

A particular strength of this study is that it locates the corporation at the very heart of urban life, and demonstrates the wide-ranging importance of corporate government for the development of English towns. It also shows that town politics were not simply determined by the whim of party bosses and gentry borough-mongers. However, as the author recognizes, the town councils did not have a monopoly on urban political activity, and their role must be integrated with that of other groups and institutions which could influence factional struggle. In the later sections there is some excellent discussion of the interplay of parliamentary and civic contests, and of the importance of the freemen in determining the political complexion of boroughs; these wider perspectives could have enlivened the earlier chapters too. More broadly still, analysis of extra-corporate bodies such as the parish vestries, militia commissions and (after 1688) improvement commissions could also have shone much light on the character of partisanship in this period.

These comments merely serve to highlight the value of this work in stimulating interest in the early modern town. It has succeeded in demonstrating that urban politics had an independent life of its own, and that there is a most important legal dimension to the course which it took in the Augustan age.

**Perry Gauci**

Lincoln College, Oxford

**Grigory Kaganov**, *Images of Space: St Petersburg in the Visual and Verbal Arts*. Translated by Sidney Monas. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. xxv + 206pp. 75 figures. Map. £30.00.

Russia's most European city, St Petersburg has occupied a special place in Russian cultural imagination since its foundation by Tsar Peter in 1703. In *Images of Space*, Grigory Kaganov, an architect and architectural historian at Moscow's Institute for the Theory of Architecture and Urban Planning, examines the changes in how St Petersburg's space has been imagined and depicted by artists and writers over the past three centuries.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, artists focused on the imperial grandeur of the city. Urban street life was subordinated to 'the demands of architectural space' (p. 28) in engravings that promoted a stately vision of St Petersburg from lofty perspectives. Mikhail Makhaev, in a series of drawings prepared for the city's fiftieth anniversary, presented the urban landscape as a huge blueprint visible from the heavens (pp. 26–8).

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, such panoramic views of the city 'from the outside' gave way to a new concern with depicting the city 'from the inside', which Kaganov links to the work of the Italian architect Giacomo Quarenghi, who came to Russia in 1779. In Quarenghi's *View of the Old Police Bridge* (early 1780s) we see St Petersburg from the perspective of a pedestrian, an approach which gives priority to the 'intimacy' of the urban space (pp. 30–3). These contrasting ways of seeing, from within and from without, resulted by the end of the century in a synthesis which united the two. The foreground was used to depict everyday urban life, with the background used to show an architectural panorama of the city, as in the work of Fedor Alekseev and Benjamin Paterssen. In Paterssen's *Palace Embankment near the Winter Palace* (1799), for example, the foreground shows workmen loading barges and carrying bricks, separated from the formal facade of the Palace Embankment by the broad expanse of the Neva River.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the cultural image of St Petersburg had changed, argues Kaganov, as artists and writers began to reject the image of urban space as a united architectural ensemble in favour of an image that focused on the role of everyday life in creating an urban space of 'secret inwardness'. Annual memory books commemorated the city's architectural monuments by depicting them in isolation from the urban landscape, with no concern for their situation or surroundings. Kaganov relates this shift in focus to the displacement in Russian intellectual life of the aristocracy by the *raznochintsy* (people of various ranks), like Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov, whose 'imagination is entirely absorbed by the narrow corners and dark depths of the city' (p. 130).

At the turn of the century the symbolist artists affiliated with the journal *World*

*of Art* turned again to the integral image of St Petersburg, creating a new mythology which alluded to the interplay between the linear structures of Peter's city and the elemental forces which struggled against them. War and revolution put an end to the symbolists' ethereal preoccupations, but the destruction of the human face of the city was accompanied by an enhanced appreciation of its imposing architecture and gigantic spaces, now empty and returned to what the artist Alexandre Benois called their 'primordial charm' (p. 155).

Kaganov does not dwell long on the early Soviet and Stalinist periods, but moves rapidly onwards to the art of the 1960s–1980s, in which the old centre of the city becomes a lost 'house of childhood', surrounded by the high-rise prefabricated housing blocks that most late twentieth-century Petersburgers call home.

The book is well illustrated with black and white reproductions of many of the images that are the subject of analysis, although in a few cases details are not as clear as the reader would like them to be. Kaganov uses a wide variety of visual and written sources in his discussion of the changing depiction of urban space, relating architecture to fashion and interior design.

For all its wealth of innovative interpretations of the distinct spatial qualities of St Petersburg, *Images of Space* sometimes fails to provide an adequate historical context for its insights, and many of the personages discussed need more in the way of introduction to the non-specialist reader. Kaganov's approach to the changing depiction of St Petersburg is rather hermetic, with little attempt at the kind of comparison with treatments of other Russian and European cities that would reveal what is distinctive about depictions of St Petersburg and what they have in common with contemporaneous portrayals of other cities. Many of the artists examined were trained in Western Europe or spent long periods working there, and were undoubtedly influenced by wider European trends in the imagination of urban space, just as Gogol, Pushkin and Dostoevsky drew inspiration from the works of Sue, Dickens, Walter Scott and other Western writers.

None the less, *Images of Space* is a valuable and pioneering work on the cultural image of St Petersburg. Urban historians interested in depictions of urban space during the past three centuries will find Kaganov's arguments stimulating, and the book contains much information that could be useful in developing a comparative analysis of the urban landscape's changing image.

**Anthony Swift**

University of Essex

**Elaine A. Reynolds**, *The Night Watch and Police Reform in Metropolitan London, 1720–1830*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. 235pp. Bibliography. £49.50.

This book contributes to both the history of policing and to our understanding of the nature of governance in London during the long eighteenth century in a number of interesting and useful ways. Its structure is essentially chronological. It maps the development of what the author terms 'professional' policing from the early legislative initiatives undertaken in Westminster during the 1720s and 1730s, through a broader period of expansion in watching experiments in many areas of London during the following half-century, to the more intensively

studied years leading up to the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829. The latter period is dealt with by chapters devoted to the debates and initiatives of three periods – the late 1770s to 1793, the war years and the final decade and a half before reform was introduced. Finally a chapter entitled ‘Why 1829’ uses the long-term perspective provided by the study to offer fresh insights into the timing of reform.

The complex story the book unfolds involves various forms of local watching and policing initiatives organized by a range of bodies (open vestries, watch committees, turnpike trusts, improvement commissioners, select vestries), but it illustrates clearly that by focusing too much attention on central government many historians of policing reform have given too little credit to the range of measures introduced by local bodies. By a detailed study of the adoption of watching acts and other localized policing initiatives the book argues cogently that policing reform was more of a lateral than a vertical process. It was not primarily about enlightened government imposing reform on reluctant parish bodies. Rather, reform emerged out of and reflected the various forms of policing that had evolved at the local level over the previous 100 years. Issues such as wages, accountability, shift systems, visibility, the use of beats and watch houses, weapon carrying, discipline, and the problems of rewards had all been debated and experimented with as paid ‘professional’ watching networks developed in the eighteenth century. Since the vast majority of London parishes had obtained watching acts by the 1780s, and since the watching systems they then organized using the powers gained through those acts were ‘tantamount to professional law enforcement agencies’, the origins of professional policing predate the Benthamite pressures of the early nineteenth century. Continuity rather than change emerges as the more important theme in understanding the reform of 1829. Peel’s reform was not revolutionary. It rationalized and extended, but did not alter existing practices. The new police took on the functions of the old and performed them in much the same way. The only substantial change was centralization.

The primary motive behind the watching reforms of the eighteenth century, Reynolds argues, was concern over property crime. This explains, for example, why almost all the specific watching acts passed in the eighteenth century were pushed through in peacetime when crime was perceived to be increasing. Riot and popular disorder, by contrast, cannot usually be linked with these acts although it may have played a role by the 1790s. Her detailed discussion of the 1828 Committee and the passing of the 1829 act explores both the particular contingencies that enabled this previously highly controversial measure to pass through so easily, and the underlying structural reasons for the coming of reform – the most important of these being that ‘professionalisation was so common by this point that the debate about policing no longer concerned amateur versus professional’ but centred instead on how to make paid police more efficient. These arguments are clearly put and the introduction and the conclusion include cogent summaries that will be very useful to all students of the timing, nature and causes of policing reform in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is primarily, however, an administrative history. The watchmen, constables and beables of the metropolis remain shadowy figures. The reader longs for a more direct view of their activities, status, etc. The Old Bailey Sessions papers contain many cases in which they were called as witnesses which reveal both

directly and indirectly what activities they were involved with, how often they used their watch houses, for what purposes they were utilized, by which social groups and at what times of day or night. Depositions, rewards listings and indictments for failing in their duty might provide further insights. A history from below of these officers, fragmentary though it would be, can be written and if the author had succeeded in writing that history her account of their professional nature might have emerged as less unproblematic. The watchmen and constables of West Ham, for example, made large amounts of money from rewards in the later eighteenth century. They were policing entrepreneurs. The coming of the new police with the accompanying crackdown on such earnings fundamentally altered the nature of their operations, I suspect. They and their equivalents in Middlesex may therefore have experienced the new policing acts as somewhat greater discontinuities than is sometimes implied here. This said, however, Elaine Reynolds' book offers a number of very important insights into policing history in this period. She has written a clear, well-structured and important account of the old police which also challenges our view of the new.

**Peter King**

University College Northampton

**Stephen Harbottle**, *The Reverend William Turner: Dissent and Reform in Georgian Newcastle upon Tyne*. Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 1997. viii + 200pp. 5 figures. Bibliography. No price stated.

This biography was commissioned in 1993 by the Newcastle upon Tyne Literary and Philosophical Society to commemorate the bicentenary of the Society, and in particular its founder, the Revd William Turner. Turner was the Unitarian minister at Hanover Square Chapel from 1782 to 1841, when he retired at the age of 80 to Manchester, dying in 1859. His lifetime covered the most rapid period of economic and social change in English history, particularly for towns like Newcastle, which tripled in size during his ministry there. It also witnessed significant political change, especially for dissenters like Turner.

In the first decade of his ministry he began a Sunday school, founded a Vestry Library for the congregation, and conducted a private day school; he was elected an honorary member of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society (the first such in the country) in 1783, where he read a paper on crime and punishment; he supported inoculation and later vaccination in relation to the Newcastle Dispensary, and helped to form the Newcastle Society for the Abolition of Slavery in 1792. The example of Manchester was clearly the inspiration for the formation of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society in 1793. Although conversation on the subjects of religion and politics was forbidden, the Society was dominated by Unitarians in its foundation: Turner was Secretary. Its objectives were broadly educational, but with the specific intention of relating scientific discovery to the industry surrounding Newcastle. A library was soon established and from 1799 various lecturers were invited to give a series of public lectures. In 1802 Turner was appointed Lecturer by the Society, a position he occupied for the next thirty years. From the Society too came the inspiration for the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries (1813), the local Natural History Society (1829) and the North of England Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts.

There were few reforming causes with which Turner was not associated. Many of these were educational: the foundation of the Royal Jubilee School (on the Lancastrian system) in 1811, the Girls' School in 1814, and the Infants' School in 1825; the Newcastle Mechanics' Institute in 1824; and the proposal for a Collegiate Institution in 1833, as an alternative to the University of Durham, which dissenters might attend. The last did not succeed in Turner's time. He was involved in measures for the relief of the deserving poor by soup kitchens and public works, and in the foundation of the Newcastle Savings Bank in 1818. Finally, he supported the movement for parliamentary reform in 1820, the Anti-Slavery Society from 1823, and the local petition for parliamentary reform in 1830. By 1832, however, he was in his seventies, and he seems to have had little enthusiasm for the new style of popular agitation through public meetings which developed in the 1830s.

Since this is essentially a biography, one gets only an indirect impression of the development of Newcastle as a town in this period. The range of causes and enterprises in which Turner was involved can be paralleled from many other places, and in few of them is there a distinct Newcastle flavour. It is, however, a world in which Dissenters and Anglicans mix almost on equal terms, and one in which the driving forces, particularly for education, are industry and commerce. The importance attached to education, and education for all, old and young, girls and boys, indicates something new. This is not a society in which the ownership of land as such plays a significant part. Societies like the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society were founded in many places in this period. Radical impulses did not die between 1790 and 1830, but they were expressed in different ways. The libraries and lecture series of such societies may seem to represent an elite middle class, and undoubtedly they did. But the long-term goals of this group were changing so that, unlike the medieval merchant class, they did not aspire to purchase land and support the established church; this change in goals was to produce a differently motivated urban industrial community. That is the significance of this story.

**David M. Thompson**

Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge

**J. Pedro Lorente**, *Cathedrals of Urban Modernity: The First Museums of Contemporary Art, 1800–1930*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998. xiii + 322pp. £47.50.

**Anselm Gerhard**, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century*, translated by Mary Whittall. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. xxi + 503pp. No price stated.

Lorente starts with Paris and the museum of contemporary art established in the Luxemburg Palace after 1815 while Gerhard considers the development of grand opera in 'the capital city of the nineteenth century' [Benjamin]. These are urban histories not only because their subjects are located in cities but are inconceivable except in a type of city – principally but exclusively capital cities – which developed in post-1815 Europe. These were cities where, even if monarchs, churches and nobility retained important cultural functions, commercial influence, voluntary association and private philanthropy ensured



that bourgeois tastes shaped the meaning of 'culture' and its forms of provision.

Buildings took on specialized cultural functions. Art was no longer subordinated to the higher goals of palaces and churches, but determined the purpose of buildings. Where there was a rich heritage of palaces they might be converted into museums. Where there was not, bourgeois initiative funded new buildings. Princely subsidies could sustain royal influence – grand opera in Paris, construction of museum complexes in Berlin and Munich – but it was less pervasive than before and dependent on the continuation of royal power and active interest.

Lorente surveys the emergence of one specialized cultural building: museums of contemporary art. He portrays the development of a distinction between historical and contemporary art, the constant tension involved in making this distinction (was it one of chronology or did it embody aesthetic judgements?) and sustaining it against others, such as between foreign and national art. Generally speaking in the nineteenth century 'modern' art in France and Britain meant 'national' art as certain critics and collectors championed living artists in their region/country against the presumption that the highest standards had been set and achieved in the past. An interesting division of labour formed between museums focusing on the past (Louvre, National Gallery) and the present (Luxemburg, South Kensington, later the Tate Gallery). In Paris there was a concordat: the Luxemburg should not keep paintings more than ten years after the death of the artist; the Louvre should not acquire paintings until an artist had been dead ten years. The Luxemburg came to be described as a purgatory where paintings waited before seeing if they could achieve salvation at the Louvre.

Lorente then moves beyond Paris and London to the provinces, to other parts of Europe, the USA, ending with the New York Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art. His knowledge is encyclopaedic and synthesizes much secondary literature. It is largely narrative though supported by a central argument that the combination of museological legacy (e.g. Italy has many palaces) and type of patronage (e.g. the greater role of bourgeois initiative in Britain compared to that of the state in France) explain much about patterns of provision.

Gerhard has a narrower focus, just one opera theatre in Paris and then only the work of a few major composers (Rossini, Meyerbeer, Verdi) and librettists (de Jouy, Scribe, Victor Hugo). However, this is more than musicology because Gerhard relates his subject to the development of new forms of urban life in which Paris led the way.

I have neither the space nor competence to evaluate Gerhard's analyses of particular operas. His technique in each chapter is to foreground one, perhaps two major works. After a short summary of the plot Gerhard considers dramatic problems and their (attempted) resolution by means of composition, script and staging. As he explores specific themes, so he brings in other works. He moves beyond aesthetic analysis to relate these themes to the broader historical context. Thus chapter 5 focuses on Meyerbeer's work *Les Huguenots*. Among themes considered is the role of the crowd. This raises aesthetic issues, such as how to ascribe identity to an anonymous collective. It also has to be set in a context where, since the 1790s, the crowd took on the character of an historical force rather than a backdrop to the actions of individuals. This is a crude summary of just one theme which Gerhard explores in rich, convincing detail.

Grand opera sought to be 'realistic' but at the same time dramatically satisfying, meeting popular demand for spectacle and novelty. Composers took longer to complete a work; librettists were reduced in status; the visual took primacy over all else. Yet Gerhard demonstrates the innovative and creative ways in which composers like Meyerbeer rose to these challenges, anticipating many devices later to be deployed in cinema. Gerhard recognizes the weaknesses of grand opera – its time-boundedness, its awkward handling of public/private relationships, its constant need to amaze – but rescues it from the condescension of a posterity primed by Wagner's prejudiced and self-interested account. He ends with a different kind of transcendence of grand opera, but one also indebted to its conventions, in considering the transition in Verdi's work marked by his opera *Un ballo in maschera*.

The focus is on the operas and contextualization is mainly about the circumstances of composing, writing and staging. However, Gerhard argues that underlying the emergence of grand opera in Paris were changes in the 'structure of perception', drawing upon writers such as Koselleck and Sennett. However, as with so many studies of particular cultural products, there are problems about providing an independent account of such change instead of reading it off from the analysis of the products. Sometimes this can seem too peremptory and convenient (e.g. the crisis of paternal authority in Verdi's *Les Vêpres siciliennes* correlated with a breakdown of family relationships), although it is a perennial and perhaps insoluble problem.

Both books contribute to a view of the nineteenth-century city as a new type of society where 'culture' becomes a specialized product to be put before the gaze of a bourgeoisie emancipated from princely or church control, seeking spectacle or consolation in their leisure time but with a fearful sense of also being at the mercy of 'history' and the masses.

**John Breuilly**

University of Birmingham

**David Pam**, *The Royal Small Arms Factory Enfield & Its Workers*. Enfield: published by the author, 1998. 213pp. 111 plates. £14.00 (hbk).

For nearly two hundred years the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield was at the heart of weapons manufacturing in the country. The factory itself has since disappeared, falling foul of the changing economic climate and political mood of the country during the 1980s. This book recounts in great detail the story of the development of arms manufacturing at Enfield and outlines the growth of the working-class community that lived around the works. The chapters follow in chronological order, largely following the ebb and flow of arms production in and out of wartime conditions. There are abundant technical details of production scattered throughout the book as well as figures on output, costs, numbers employed, etc. Whilst these might prove somewhat indigestible for all but enthusiasts of weapon history, nevertheless they also provide a source of fascination about life and work in and around the factory. Descriptions of the pungent smell of wooden handgrips soaked in linseed oil, for example, or changes in the daily routines of workers as demand for weapons rose and fell help to ground the work in the everyday experiences of the workforce. For those

interested in the history of weapons or of factory production, this book is a mine of information. However, even for those less interested in such topics, it remains a story lovingly told.

**David R. Green**  
King's College London

**Peter Hall and Colin Ward**, *Sociable Cities: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*. Chichester: John Wiley, 1998. x + 229pp. 53 figures. Bibliography. £15.99 pbk.

*Sociable Cities* was written to coincide with the 1999 centenary year of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) to which the book's authors are closely affiliated: Peter Hall is the current Chairman and Colin Ward was formerly the TCPA Environmental Education Officer. It is also one hundred years since the publication of Ebenezer Howard's *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* and although the garden city legacy is now a well-trodden path, the authors tell not only the story of twentieth-century planning through Howard's philosophy but also consider the way in which the principles might still be relevant into the new Millennium.

Hall and Ward make no secret of their faith in the Howard utopia; the book has an affectionate if not celebratory tone regarding the garden city ideology and is similarly evangelical about the role of town planning. Howard is portrayed as the Victorian hero among a circle of free-thinking radicals, achieving his position in history on intellectual merit, although he is also shown to have been single-minded in his vision and clearly understood what was needed to realize it. It is interesting that without the underpinning by various wealthy capitalists and the promotional capabilities of Alfred Harmondsworth's *Daily Mail*, the garden cities would probably have remained conceptual.

Howard is important because he attached a physical form to utopian idealism in the notion of a town and country combination. By including the virtues and designing out the vices of nineteenth-century life he sold his vision of utopia along practical and achievable lines. A clever combination of Victorian self-help and radical co-operative control encouraged many that might today be termed stakeholders in his utopia. Through memorable diagrams Howard's argument is very persuasive and this book accepts it rather uncritically. However, Hall and Ward's thesis aims to demonstrate the flexibility of his principles and their adaptability to changing contexts.

By the time of the 'Homes Fit for Heroes' campaign Howard was joined by many disciples such as F.J. Osborn and C.B. Purdom who continued his general planning ideals. It is interesting that Howard was aware of the realities of municipal inertia and maintained his belief in a form of philanthropic capitalism to execute his plans. Similarly the new towns remained outside of local authority hands, with public development corporations, and the influence of Howard remains explicitly clear.

The book includes aspects of NIMBYism and also has chapters dealing with the alternative traditions of plotlands and land settlement movements. These sections display Ward's expertise, showing how planning anarchism was manifested in the unorthodox building of Heath Robinson style shanty towns. The

desire for cheap land and the rural idyll, in the context of holiday with pay and increased car ownership, meant the Englishman's castle might have been a railway carriage but it is still perhaps the truest form of property-owning democracy. The paradox is the question of whether the extrinsic planning role is a negative and restrictive one or whether it has an enabling and protective role. This is as crucial to 'Silkingrad', as it is to the freedom-to-build movements, and later Nimbyism, and sensibly the authors do not attempt to resolve this problem because the individualist ideal remains difficult to support in the hands of developers and speculators.

The second part of the book is based around the adventurous experiment of revisiting the three magnets for the twenty-first century. Many of the problems have since become compounded with benefits attributed to towns in 1898, such as opportunities for employment, now being diminished, similarly the countryside has been transformed and repopulated and land control has increased rural housing prices. Town and country might have both improved for the affluent, but the problems and options for the poor are the same regardless of location. Town and country are perhaps no longer the issue and cannot be seen as homogenous entities; perhaps the book might have considered geographical magnets or rich and poor magnets.

The authors present a new recipe for a sociable city of tomorrow with twelve building block ingredients. These reflect the changing modern context where sustainability is the new buzzword and perhaps the utopian dream for the twenty-first century. However, they still consider planning as the solution, rather than structural economic and social issues. The problems to be overcome are shown to remain the same: ephemeral urban policy, half-hearted political will and polarized party politics. The danger of this very British solution is attaching Victorian ideals to a modern problem, which could restrict progress rather than encourage new alternatives.

*Sociable Cities* is an adventurous book that goes further than many anodyne histories, by authors committed to their thesis. The debates are practical, relevant and thoroughly researched, and the authors manage to balance historical detail with future projection. This book deserves a key place on academic reading lists and provides an ideal discussion tool for historians and designers concerned with the urban built environment.

**Richard Sober**

University of Teesside

**Paul Kruty**, *Frank Lloyd Wright and Midway Gardens*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998. x + 262pp. 33 plates. 204 figures. Bibliography. \$44.95.

Very near to the site of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, the University of Chicago and Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House was Wright's own Xanadu, Midway Gardens. Paul Kruty is quick to pick up the analogy because, like Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, Midway Gardens needs reconstructing. Built in 1914, it was demolished in 1929: 'Archival documents, contemporary accounts, historic photographs, and scattered fragments are *all* we have to work with in this case. Only

by calling upon these resources can we conjure, even temporarily, the grandeur, excitement, and exotic fantasy of this elusive chimera' (p. 4).

Kruty lives up to his aim. *Frank Lloyd Wright and Midway Gardens* is a meticulously researched and beautifully presented book with a large portfolio of plates and numerous figures in the text. It fills in what is probably the chief gap in Wright scholarship; that is to say, it is a single-building study of one of Wright's relatively few non-domestic buildings, a building which rivals in aesthetic and cultural significance Unity Temple, the Larkin Administration Building and the Guggenheim. Kruty tells of his amazement when, as a student at the University of Chicago, he learned what had been just a few blocks away from his classrooms and, by the 1970s, largely forgotten and certainly off current street and cultural maps. However, the lack of physical evidence and a history of neglect, which began when the building was less than ten years old, have at least provoked this imaginative interdisciplinary study. Kruty does full justice to the detail of the building, initially through the device of a typical visit in the summer of 1914. Working back and forth between maps of the Woodlawn area and its location in greater Chicago, photographs and the story of our 'visit', Kruty takes us through some of the facilities on offer at Midway Gardens: a fresco concert and dining area, interior dinner-dancing, a tavern, sunken garden, and private areas reserved for the Midway Garden Club. Later in the book the architecture is examined in more conventional ways, but during the imaginary visit Kruty draws carefully upon Wright's own explanations for what he produced, though notes that, as so often, Wright's versions are part of a self-mythologizing and in need of ventilating with other perspectives. To this end, Kruty incorporates the biographies of others involved, besides Wright; strands of Chicago's cultural life from music, dance and avant-garde art to politics and entertainment; and the matter of social class. Sometimes this amounts to detective work. Wright's reference, in his own 'Tale of Midway Gardens', to being asked by the client, Ed Waller, to inscribe into the design the image of 'Pawlova dancing – Max Bendix full orchestra playing' (p. 3) is a challenge and Kruty researches the involvement of these two figures, even when there is no definable link with architecture. On other occasions Kruty's research is more consequential and Wright's 'architecture of pleasure' is shown to be part of Chicago's cultural history; more than this, part of early twentieth-century America's cultural history. The significance of Max Bendix's appointment as concert master at Midway Gardens is brought out in an account of how the management of the Gardens sought for a while to bring together high, even European, traditions of music with that which had genuinely popular appeal. In the first week Bendix set out his programme, summarized by Kruty as 'Monday – opera; Tuesday – popular; Wednesday – symphony; Thursday – request; Friday – Wagner' (p. 38). With depressing speed, however, a complex combination of factors led to the decline and eventually the destruction of Midway Gardens and with it some of the hopes for an embracing musical culture.

Kruty examines a number of hypotheses for the loss of Midway Gardens: that it was somehow associated with Germanic culture (some of the music and the institution of the beer-garden) and therefore suffered during the First World War; that it lacked the kind of sustained patronage from 'Chicago's Upper Set' (p. 5); and that its future got entangled with Prohibition. None carry sufficient weight and Kruty concludes that 'Midway Gardens simply disappeared by default'

(p. 59). He puts the issue more intriguingly a few pages earlier, however: 'The temperaments of the major contributors to the Midway Gardens project – Waller's enthusiasm, [Charles] Matthews' amateurish intensity, Wright's notorious ability to convince clients to spend more, and [Paul] Mueller's willingness to construct almost any building by Wright, regardless of how much money was actually available – combine to make both the building possible and financial disaster almost inevitable' (p. 41).

Kruty's simple title is accurate because as he interweaves biographies, cultural history and architectural analysis, Midway Gardens becomes more than Frank Lloyd Wright's Midway Gardens. For two months after the Gardens opened, Wright remained on the site of a building which – like others on a smaller scale – he had minutely designed, right down to the dinner plates. At one point he sacked the painters engaged on the murals and took over himself only for the news to reach him from Taliesin of the death by arson of Mamah Cheney and her children and staff. In 1916 he complained bitterly about the changes to Midway Gardens (then known as Edelweiss Gardens) implemented by the new owners, Schoenhofen Brewery. More noticeable remodelling occurred in 1923 under yet another owner. A 1924 photograph by Richard Neutra shows the winter garden interior minus the lower tiers and mezzanines. Although Kruty's overall narrative is one of decline and loss, he is too good a cultural and architectural historian not to acknowledge that such changes were accompanied by interesting shifts in the musical programme as Art Kassel's band took up residence, to be followed by Floyd Towne and some soon-to-be-recognized jazzmen. Similarly, the architectural fate of the Gardens is ironically signalled when Kruty tells us of the interest shown in the building by Neutra and Erich Mendelsohn. A couple of pages later, Kruty includes a 1949 photograph of a fortunately rare sight, a Frank Lloyd Wright ruin, yet another way of posing the question 'When is a Wright building no longer a Wright building?'

There is some more traditional and very good architectural criticism in chapters three, four and five, the last of these assessing Midway Gardens as an event in European and American Modernism. There are some perceptive pages on the question of ornament which revitalize a debate which, in American architectural history, sometimes gets reduced to Louis Sullivan's organicism. In the context of international Modernism, Wright's explanations and his practice take on a greater resonance than when Sullivan could simply establish a connection with mid-nineteenth-century American Romanticism. Kruty's conclusion to this debate takes us on a stage from the transcendental pronouncements of Sullivan and most of his critics: 'Wright's textured blocks added richness to the surface and complication to the ensemble, but they were not an inseparable part of the architecture' (p. 216). But the discussion of ornament and also the role of abstracted sculpture in the design of Midway Gardens is just part of a convincing claim by Kruty that this complex marked a bigger change in Wright's style. The usual division in Wright's career, with the Taliesin tragedy a watershed, obscures the importance of Midway Gardens, at once a summary of earlier achievements and a building with ramifications right through to the Marin County Fair Pavilion project of 1957–59 which, in Kruty's words, 'shows Mr. Wright, approaching his ninetieth birthday, still as enthusiastic as a child about the properly festive forms required for an architecture of pleasure' (p. 205). Paul Kruty's own achievement is that by capitalizing on the loss of Midway

Gardens and broadening the scope of his reconstruction, so that Chicago and its relation to America's cultural history and European Modernism become almost as important as the architect's genius as explanatory factors, he has put Wright's 'fantasy' back on the map.

**Douglas Tallack**

University of Nottingham

**Douglas Bukowski**, *Big Bill Thompson, Chicago, and the Politics of Image*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998. ix + 273pp. 19 plates. \$49.95 hbk, \$21.95 pbk.

Big Bill Thompson served three terms as a Republican mayor of Chicago (1915–23 and 1927–31). By the time of his election defeat in 1931 he already appeared to be a caricature of the American city boss: he was the man who had once claimed that he would punch the king of England 'on the snoot' and he was alleged to be associated with Al Capone. The Thompson of legend is a Bottom-like figure – an ass whom it is difficult to envisage as an effective vote-gatherer. Moreover, if a politician is judged on the basis of those who support him, then it is not surprising that Thompson was regarded with suspicion: William Randolph Hearst was one of his backers, and he got on well with Huey Long. Douglas Bukowski's well-researched biography of Thompson seeks to remove him from the realm of folklore and to understand him as a real political actor. Bukowski acknowledges that Thompson was a demagogue, but argues that his connections with Capone were no closer than those that for decades nearly all successful Chicago politicians had to have with the city's gangs.

Three factors were important in Thompson's success at the polls. First, his style was that of the showman, with big parades a speciality. Second, he was an opportunist who could identify which electoral coalitions could succeed at any given time, and he did not hesitate to abandon elements of his own coalition later. Thus in 1915 Thompson presented himself as broadly supportive of the kinds of reforms, including Prohibition, that might appeal to native-born Protestants. But they were soon abandoned as Thompson sensed correctly that the balance of voting power was shifting to various ethnic groups in the city. Third, Thompson was a booster of city redevelopment, an issue that enabled him to appeal to a broad range of voters, even while he was alienating significant bodies of public opinion, through, for example, his opposition to American involvement in the First World War.

Bukowski's book is written in a jaunty style that, generally, makes for a 'good read'. Unfortunately, the author cannot resist making 'clever' remarks, even when these are forced and detract from his substantive arguments. Thus, in a brief aside, comparing Thompson's support for public works in Chicago with similar support given by mayors in New York City, he writes: 'And where Thompson built according to plan, La Guardia followed his (Robert) Moses' (p. 40). A more significant criticism, though, is that Bukowski has missed an opportunity to write a really important book. *Big Bill Thompson* is good 'local history', but Bukowski does not explore how the case of Thompson can be related to broader changes in American urban politics between the end of the nineteenth century and the 1960s.

For most of the second half of the nineteenth century political competition in America's large cities was between parties, within which power was rather decentralized. For all the talk of 'machines' and 'bosses' both at the time and subsequently, the reality was one of rivalry between local politicians who had strong bases in particular districts but who struggled to convert that power into stable control over their parties citywide. By contrast from the 1960s onwards city politics had become much more centred on individual politicians who used party connections to propel themselves into positions of leadership.

Lying between these two eras is a period which, in a sense, can be described as that of the rise and fall of the city bosses. Unlike the nineteenth-century politicians, they could establish in their parties much more stable citywide power bases for themselves. If there was an era of bosses, this was it, and Thompson is interesting partly because he was just not very good at constructing a long-term organization to back up his skill in the electoral market-place. Other bosses, such as Ben Stapleton in Denver, were much better at organization-building, and they survived until the 1940s. The key difference between these 'bosses' and urban politicians after the 1960s is that the former's power base was still located quite firmly in a political party organization. Consequently, one interpretation of this middle era is to see it as the high period of urban party machines. However, from another standpoint it represents a transitional period between the party era of the nineteenth century and the candidate-dominated era of the second half of the twentieth century: it was the period in which the politics of image was largely invented. This is why Bukowski's title seems to promise so much. However, while we learn from the book much about Thompson and Chicago, and even about how Thompson used image in promoting himself in Chicago, the more general issue about the construction of a politics of image in twentieth-century urban America is one that Bukowski does not use his insights into Thompson to tackle. This is a pity, but it is still a book that is well worth reading.

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**Joel Outtes**, *O Recife: Gênese do Urbanismo 1927–1943*. Recife: Editora Massangana, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, 1997. 250pp. 12 figures. 1 table. Bibliography. No price stated.

The city of Recife was, at least until the 1950s, one of the most important Brazilian urban centres. Founded by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, Recife acquired greater prominence after the Dutch Company of the West Indies occupied Pernambuco and made it the capital of Dutch Brazil, between 1630 and 1654. After the departure of the Dutch, Recife was able to keep its important economic and cultural role. Situated in the north-west shoulder of Brazil, Recife – capital of the state of Pernambuco – was the third largest city in Brazil, sustained by a vigorous commercial activity centred on its port, which served a rich agricultural hinterland.

In the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, Recife was home to the same type of problems, debates and practical measures of most large cities throughout the world. Town planning, in its various expressions, was a discipline born out of the severe problems of the nineteenth-century city and of



the need to solve them. Outtes' work deals with this process in the city of Recife. The book is centred in the period between 1927 and 1943, which Outtes characterizes as the birth of urban planning in Brazil. That was the period when important plans were developed for Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Recife, the three largest Brazilian cities at the time. Key references are Agache's plan for Rio de Janeiro and Prestes Maia's plan for São Paulo, both published in 1930. By contrast, little was known of Recife. Outtes' book – *O Recife: Gênese do Urbanismo 1927–1943* – which won in 1991 the Nelson Chaves prize for History, promoted by the Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, is intended to fill this gap.

In the earlier part of his book, Outtes deals at length with the first debates about the salubrity of the city, which he traces back to the late seventeenth century, and the development of the hygienist discourse in the nineteenth century. As elsewhere, the development of social medicine and the growing intervention of the state in urban matters were hand in hand, and related to an increasing awareness of the precarious sanitary conditions of the city. Important steps in this process were the setting up of campaigns against the epidemics that periodically ravaged the city, the establishment of systems of domiciliary supply of water and of sewage drainage, and the creation of a General Council for the Public Health of the City in the first half of the nineteenth century. Urban planning was the next step. Soon the morphology of the city was regarded as one of the culprits of the poor state of the city's salubrity. The old colonial city was wrongly understood as a confusing medley of narrow and crooked streets and associated with backwardness and unhealthiness. This led to the elaboration of successive urban plans dealing with the reform and physical transformation of the city. It would also lead ultimately to the almost complete destruction of the colonial city in subsequent years, of which few traces remain today.

In the following chapters, Outtes deals extensively with the successive plans that were elaborated for Recife in the period covered by his study. The main options of each one of these plans are explained in detail, but the lack of a greater number of pictures sometimes makes the descriptions hard to follow. In any case, for those well acquainted with the urban structure of Recife this is undoubtedly a worthwhile exercise. Plans that are reviewed include those of Domingos Ferreira, published in 1927, the project elaborated by the Clube de Engenharia in 1930, and the plans of Nestor de Figueiredo and Corrêa Lima from the 1930s. We witness the evolution of town planning as consisting of a collection of partial plans to different parts of the city, of which the plan of Domingos Ferreira was still an expression, to the consideration of the whole city as the proper unit of planning, expressed in the plans of Figueiredo and Corrêa de Lima. In addition to a great wealth of details concerning each one of the plans, Outtes presents and discusses the various proposals in the context of the ongoing theoretical and political debate on the city. This was taking place in the municipal boards of planning, where the relationships of planning with the political power are examined, in the plans' reviews elaborated by fellow urbanists, as well as in conferences and in newspaper articles and polemics. The names of José Estelita, Moraes Rego, Washington de Azevedo, Prestes Maia, Ulhôa Cintra, amongst others, appear in this context. Together with the authors discussed, they made up the educated elite of engineers and architects who – either in positions of command or as professionals – controlled the planning of the city.

Outtes' analysis of the various plans is also set in the wider context of the multiple foreign influences that were present in the planning of Recife. As he emphasizes, the plans for Recife developed in the first half of the twentieth century incorporated the ideas of the modern movement. The zoning of different urban activities, the concerns with the fluidity of circulation within the city, as well as the technocratic attitude that permeated the whole act of planning, were all expressions of the new rationality that was characteristic of modernity and which ought to be embedded in the very structure of the city. Again, the old city was equated with backwardness, and the very opposite of the ideology of progress and civilization of which the city should be expression. Consequently, a particular attention is given to the reform of the neighbourhood of Santo Antônio, which saw its old urban structure nearly obliterated in this process.

*O Recife: Gênese do Urbanismo 1927–1943* is an important work that fills a gap in the knowledge of Brazilian urban planning in the first half of the twentieth century. In addition to its monographic component, it gives us insights into the relationships of Brazilian urbanism with the international scene both in the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century. In both situations, there was a clear parallelism of the problems and of the political and formal solutions found worldwide.

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**Jüri Kivimae and Leo Kõiv (eds)**, *Tallinn tules: Dokumente ja materjale Tallinna pommitamisest 9./10. märtsil 1944*. Tallinn: Tallinna Linnaarhiivi toimetised, nr. 2, 1997. 240pp. 37 plates. 1 map. Summary in German. 60 EEK.

On the night of 9–10 March 1944, the Soviet Air force struck the Estonian capital of Tallinn with 300 aircraft. The attack consisted of two separate waves, during which a total of 3,068 bombs were dropped. Over 5,000 buildings were hit, 1,549 of them totally destroyed, including three hospitals, 11 schools, several important medieval monuments, the Estonian National Theatre and the Estonian National Museum of Fine Arts. The number of casualties was 1,416, of which 757 died and 213 were seriously injured. Most of them were from the local population. Over 20,000 people lost their homes. German losses counted 50 dead and 65 injured.

*Tallinn tules* (Tallinn burning) now presents a detailed picture of the bombing damage, which was one of the largest Soviet offensives against civilian urban populations in the Baltic lands during the Second World War. The book uses the Estonian sources for the attack supported with contemporary photographs and later memoirs. Most of the published material comes from the Tallinn City Archives, which suffered great damage in the offensive. The archive building, a medieval merchant house, was destroyed, but the invaluable medieval and early modern material survived after being deposited elsewhere some time earlier. In addition to the published sources, the book includes an introductory article by Jüri Kivimae (University of Tartu).

For a long time the Soviet bombing of Tallinn in March 1944 has been considered as one of the main turning points of the war in Estonia. With a population of 187,712 in 1941 Tallinn was the largest urban centre of the country

and one of the biggest cities in the Baltic lands before the war. After Soviet deportations and German occupation the population had shrunk to 133,281 by January 1944. Tallinn's harbour and railway junction had provided an important terminal point for German troops going to the Leningrad front since July 1941. The objective of the Soviet offensive was to cut off these facilities and to spread terror among the local population. The latter is confirmed by the relatively large number of incendiaries dropped on the city (1,300). Only three days earlier a similar attack had destroyed the town of Narva on the Eastern Front, where the Red Army had been trying to establish a secure bridgehead over the River Narva since January 1944. The Soviet forces finally captured Tallinn during the summer offensive of 1944, on 13 August. In terms of human losses, the bombing of Tallinn may well be compared to that of Coventry in November 1940, where the number of casualties in a population of 229,500 was 1,431.

*Tallinn tules* is interesting for two reasons. First, it is a publication of sources, which offers valuable information on the damage inflicted by large-scale strategic bombing and helps to evaluate its consequences for the physical infrastructure of the city. The book contains official damage reports as presented by various local authorities soon after the disaster and information on methods used to take control of the situation on the night of bombing. Especially interesting are the reports of Tallinn City Archives and Estonian State Archives, which list all the material lost during the attack. Destroyed holdings included the Archives of the Estonian Central Bureau of Statistics 1920–40, several important national and local associations and material concerning Tallinn's civic administration, infrastructure and city planning from the late nineteenth century onwards. Because of this the book is essential for all scholars researching the history of modern Tallinn and Estonia.

Second, *Tallinn tules* may be read as an attempt to form a picture of one of the most important modern catastrophes in the history of Tallinn. In this sense the book is something more than an ordinary source publication on a terror offensive against a civilian urban population during the Second World War. In Soviet Estonia the March 1944 bombing of Tallinn was not only *a* bombing of *a* capital city but *the* bombing of *Tallinn*, which as such was an important part of the collective memory of all Estonians during the years of Soviet occupation and comparable to that of the deportations of June 1940. The memory of a national urban apocalypse was preserved not only in people's minds but as open wounds in the Old Town, where a couple of cellars and destroyed walls of medieval merchant houses were left untouched after the war. In the late 1980s a modest sign was added as an emblem of national dissent informing the visitor about the losses in the Soviet bombing of 1944 in Estonian, Russian and German. Yet another mental change happened in May 1997, when a haphazard open-air beer-terrace was built over the ruins as a sign of the booming economy of the city.

Considering the mental consequences of the March 1944 bombing, *Tallinn tules* with its introductory article, newspaper extracts, damage reports, photographs and memoirs must thus be viewed as part of the archaeology of Estonian national mentality and especially that of Tallinn in relation to the mental sufferings of the city and the nation. The book is a document of the beginnings of a national catastrophe and it is designed to provide material for the evaluation of the actual event as experienced by Estonian authorities, newspapers and individuals of the time. According to the editors, this has been one of the main focuses of the book.

The importance of the mental consequences of the bombing explains why no Soviet material is included. The lack of Soviet and German material is, however, one of the main deficiencies of the book. Also regrettable is the lack of proper statistical information considering the losses on and maps of the destroyed areas, which would have made the book of greater use to future studies. But even if *Tallinn tules* does not quite succeed in building a full-scale picture of the March 1944 bombing as an historical event, it offers invaluable information for all scholars interested in the history of modern Tallinn and Estonia. As such it must be warmly welcomed.

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**P. R. Josephson**, *New Atlantis Revisited*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. xxii + 351pp. 2 maps. 27 photos. 10 tables. \$39.50; £27.50 hbk.

Paul Josephson's book looks at the origins and development of one of the most interesting features of science in the Soviet Union, the creation of a town devoted to scientific research in the middle of Siberia. Other such science towns were created, but these were mainly in the defence or nuclear sector or dedicated to one major field of science. Akademgorodok was different in that it was deliberately created to combine a number of sciences but with the application of mathematics as a unifying factor. The project was also intended to help to develop the enormous potential of Siberia which even then was still largely untouched. The town was created on a greenfield site in Siberia and was intended as a deliberate contrast to the bureaucratic approach to science which characterized much of Soviet science, particularly near Moscow. The success of this project was largely thanks to Lavrentev, its first head who was helped to no small extent by Khrushchev, the Soviet leader from 1954 to 1964, whose intervention was often crucial in ensuring progress. In its early years it was unlike any other place in the Soviet Union. It was a company town for scientists but at the same time an oasis of progressive thought in a Soviet Union still under the influence of Stalinism only a few years after his death.

The opening chapter of the book deals with the construction of the town and the main problems which it faced. Other chapters go on to discuss the achievements of Akademgorodok in a number of major fields of science – physics, genetics, computing, the environment, economics and sociology.

One of Josephson's conclusions is that 'perhaps only in post-Stalinist Russia could such an undertaking as the construction of a city of fully-equipped research institutes have taken place in the face of political, financial and logistical problems that scientists in other societies may have found too daunting' (p. xx). There were certainly some advantages in building such a project in a centrally planned economy but there were also many drawbacks mainly linked to the inefficiency of the Soviet Union.

The site near Novosibirsk was in virgin forest and the whole town had to be built from scratch. Originally the idea was to build attractive cottages for scientists and other buildings to a high architectural standard, but although some of these were built gradually the pressure on finance and problems with supplies

meant that corners had to be cut and as time went on the quality of construction declined. There were long delays in deliveries of supplies and equipment and in one case a trainload of construction materials was hijacked by the neighbouring local authority in Novosibirsk for its own use and was only retrieved after Lavrentev's intervention. In addition, as the town developed the transport, health, education and other facilities for the inhabitants, and indeed the whole infrastructure, remained weak.

The appeal for scientists lay not only in the chance to work in new, well-equipped institutes, often with opportunities for fast-track promotion to the rank of corresponding member or even academician in the USSR Academy of Sciences. It also lay in the opportunity to work in a more relaxed atmosphere under a sympathetic head in Lavrentev. There was, however, another factor – the new site promised unbelievably spacious living accommodation by Soviet standards. Some of the non-scientists fared less well – Josephson reports that in around 20 per cent of the workers' flats there were no toilets (p. 126).

In the chapters on the different sciences Josephson sets the research carried out in Akademgorodok in its wider Soviet context and analyses the distinctive contribution of the Siberian scientists to their development. This account is based on extensive interviews with many of the leading participants. He shows clearly how the excitement of the early years began to fade and the relaxed atmosphere began to disappear in the Brezhnev years and in particular after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 which marked a watershed. The Akademgorodok scientists went too far in their protests against this event. In the years that followed Akademgorodok gradually became more like the rest of Russia, as the Communist Party re-established its ideological control. After Lavrentev's retirement the new administration became more conservative and the excitement of the early years passed. At the same time the uniqueness of the city and its environment also declined and it confronted many of the problems faced by most other Soviet towns.

Overall this is a fascinating account of a major Soviet project in both science and urban development which has long awaited its historian, though it occasionally gets bogged down in the detail. For urban historians more information on the background of the development of the town would have been welcome.

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