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## A decade of urban history: Ashgate's Historical Urban Studies series

BARRY M. DOYLE

School of Music, Humanities and Media, University of Huddersfield,  
Huddersfield, HD1 3DH

The first half of the 1990s was a pivotal period in the development and growth of urban history in Europe. In Britain the Urban History Group began to convene again after a decade in abeyance, work commenced on the three-volume *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, the *Urban History Yearbook* became *Urban History* whilst the European Association of Urban Historians organized their first conference.<sup>1</sup> It was in this climate that Ashgate Publishing commissioned a new monograph series, Historical Urban Studies, under the editorship of Richard Rodger, editor of *Urban History*, and Jean-Luc Pinol, the leading French urban historian and a key figure in the European Association of Urban Historians (EAUH).<sup>2</sup> The aim of the series was and is to be comparative over both time and space, drawing on multiple locations to explore what is common and what distinctive about the urban experience of diverse towns and nations. The broad agenda for the series was shaped by an overarching concern with the administration and governance of the city which underpinned attempts to manage the social, economic and political challenges wrought by 300 years of urban change. In particular, the editors stress the importance of the comparative element which should allow historians to distinguish 'which were systematic factors and which were of a purely local nature'.<sup>3</sup> The editors set themselves an ambitious agenda and this essay aims to explore how the series has developed over the ten or so years since it commenced publication; the degree to which it has provided a platform for advancing

<sup>1</sup> R.J. Morris, 'Author's response', *Reviews in History*, Mar. 2001. <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/paper/morrisR.html>. Accessed 11 Mar. 2008; D.M. Palliser, P. Clark and M. Daunton (eds.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 2000); S. Gunn and R. Sweet, 'Editorial', *Urban History*, 35 (2008), 3. The association was founded in 1989 and the first conference was held in Amsterdam in 1992. [http://www.stedengeschiedenis.nl/Downloads/Stedengeschiedenis/1992\\_09\\_04.pdf](http://www.stedengeschiedenis.nl/Downloads/Stedengeschiedenis/1992_09_04.pdf). Accessed 30 Apr. 2008.

<sup>2</sup> See Jean-Luc Pinol (senior ed.), *Histoire de l'Europe urbaine*, 2 vols. (Paris, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> The editors' preface appears in all of the volumes, but see for example, M. Gee and T. Kirk (eds.), *Printed Matters: Printing, Publishing and Urban Culture in Europe in the Modern Period* (2002), x–xi. All volumes in the series were published in Aldershot.

the sub-discipline of urban history; and to consider some future directions which urban history might take.

The series has two strands – monographs and edited collections – and at the time of writing 35 titles had been published, the majority of which are edited collections. Many of the edited collections owe their genesis to either meetings of the Urban History Group or strands at the European Association of Urban Historians' conferences, with all the patchiness that might be expected from such origins. Similarly the monographs are mostly derived from doctoral theses, though drawn from an international pool of younger scholars. Superficially there are a wide range of disparate subjects, periods and nations addressed in the volumes under review. An initial focus on early modern topics<sup>4</sup> gave way to the dominance of modern subjects, though the most recent clutch of publications has once again picked up on the pre-modern era.<sup>5</sup> The spatial spread is more promising. Though a few of the texts deal only with Britain,<sup>6</sup> there is a clear endeavour to offer comparisons within the UK, with texts examining similar themes in different urban contexts, for example Leicester and Manchester in the case of Liberal politics, or a much bigger pool of places in Beckett's study of city status.<sup>7</sup> However, international comparison is the dominant methodology adopted. In the case of a number of the monographs there is a straightforward appraisal of a theme in two locations.<sup>8</sup> More ambitious is Donatella Calabi's *The Market and the City* which draws on examples from across western Europe from the mid-fourteenth to the seventeenth century to provide a truly comparative approach to a key theme – architectural and economic change.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> F.-E. Eliassen and G.-A. Erslund (eds.), *Power, Profit and Urban Land: Land Ownership in Medieval and Early Modern Northern European Towns* (1996); P. Clark and B. Lepetit (eds.), *Capital Cities and their Hinterlands in Early Modern Europe* (1996); G. Crossick (ed.), *The Artisan and the European Town, 1500–1900* (1997).

<sup>5</sup> J. Miller, *Urban Societies in East-Central Europe, 1500–1700* (2008); A. Cowan, *Marriage, Manners and Mobility in Early Modern Venice* (2007); D. Keene, B. Nagy and K. Szende (eds.), *Segregation – Integration – Assimilation: Religious and Ethnic Groups in Medieval Towns of Central and Eastern Europe* (forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> For example, A. Rodrick, *Self-help and Civic Culture: Citizenship in Victorian Birmingham* (2004); R. Colls and R. Rodger (eds.), *Cities of Ideas: Citizenship and Governance in Urban Britain since 1800* (2004); K. Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850–1914* (2005); J. Moore and J. Smith (eds.), *Corruption in Urban Politics and Society, Britain, 1780–1950* (2007).

<sup>7</sup> J. Moore, *The Transformation of Urban Liberalism: Party Politics and Urban Governance in Late Nineteenth-Century England* (2006); J.V. Beckett, *City Status in the British Isles, 1830–2002* (2005).

<sup>8</sup> M.J. Miller, *The Representation of Place: Urban Planning and Protest in France and Great Britain, 1950–1980* (2003); D. Pomfret, *Young People and the European City: Age Relations in Nottingham and St Etienne, 1890–1940* (2004); S. Reynolds, *Paris–Edinburgh: Cultural Connections in the Belle Epoch* (2007); M. Niemi, *Public Health and Municipal Policy Making: Britain and Sweden, 1900–1940* (2007); Håkan Forsell, *Property, Tenancy and Urban Growth in Stockholm and Berlin, 1860–1920* (2006).

<sup>9</sup> D. Calabi (Marlene Klein, trans.), *The Market and the City: Square, Street and Architecture in Early Modern Europe* (2004). This volume was originally published in Italian as *Il mercato e la città: piazza, strade, architetture d'Europa in età moderna* (Venezia, 1993).

In general, however, it is the edited collections which are the main vehicle for international comparison. These vary widely in format and quality from the strong, coherent and closely edited collections such as Morris and Trainor's *Urban Governance* or Schott, Luckin and Massard-Guilbaud's *Resources of the City* to the more disparate and less satisfactory selections drawn from some of the EAUH conference strands.<sup>10</sup> These works do allow for a wide geographical range of nations to receive exposure in English. Although Britain, France and Germany dominate the modern period, Morton *et al.* have included a significant number of scholars examining central and eastern Europe whilst Scandinavian countries are common in a number of the anthologies.<sup>11</sup> Extra-European locations also feature, particularly Canada through the work of Dagenais,<sup>12</sup> the United States,<sup>13</sup> Latin America and India.<sup>14</sup> But these are relatively few and far between and the central comparative focus is Britain and continental Europe.

These three approaches each have their advantages and drawbacks. Whilst the British texts invariably have a coherence derived from a shared set of professional priorities and aided by their rooting in long-established historiographies, they obviously speak to a set of national concerns which do not always travel well. In particular, their focus on broadly 'political' issues limits their applicability beyond the United Kingdom whilst even within Britain the comparative element is often less apparent than the desire to present a variety of examples. More successful are the two centre studies which utilize similar places,<sup>15</sup> draw together cities with comparable functions though different sizes<sup>16</sup> or focus on common issues in disparate

<sup>10</sup> R.J. Morris and R.H. Trainor (eds.), *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* (2000); D. Schott, B. Luckin and G. Massard-Guilbaud (eds.), *Resources of the City: Contributions to an Environmental History of Modern Europe* (2005).

<sup>11</sup> G. Morton, B. de Vries and R.J. Morris (eds.), *Civil Society, Associations and Urban Places: Class, Nation and Culture in Nineteenth Century Europe* (2006), features essays on nineteenth-century Trieste, Bratislava and cities in Austria, Italy and the Netherlands. Scandinavia is the focus of P. Clark (ed.), *The European City and Green Space: London, Stockholm, Helsinki and St. Petersburg, 1850–2000* (2006); Niemi, *Public Health*; and Forsell, *Property, Tenancy and Urban Growth*.

<sup>12</sup> In addition to editing and contributing to M. Dagenais, I. Maver and P.-Y. Saunier (eds.), *Municipal Services and Employees in the Modern City: New Historic Approaches* (2003), she has essays in Morris and Trainor (eds.), *Urban Governance*, and Schott *et al.* (eds.), *Resources of the City*. See also B. Young, 'Patrician elites and power in 19th century Montreal and Quebec City', in R. Roth and J. Wolfgang (eds.), *Who Ran the Cities? City Elites and Urban Power Structures in Europe and North America, 1750–1940* (2007), 229–46.

<sup>13</sup> For example essays by Sven Becker in Morton *et al.* (eds.), *Civil Society*, and Roth and Wolfgang (eds.), *Who Ran the Cities?*, or Joel Tarr and Clay McShane in Schott *et al.* (eds.), *Resources of the City*. The main vehicle for the dissemination of US urban history is the *Journal of Urban History* which concentrates almost exclusively on change in American cities. *Urban History* has appointed a US editorial board and editor to complement the North American book review editor.

<sup>14</sup> Most prominently, P. Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890–1920* (2007). See also Kidambi's Dyos Prize winning essay, "'An infection of locality': plague, pythogenesis and the poor in Bombay, c. 1896–1905", *Urban History*, 31 (2004), 249–67.

<sup>15</sup> Pomfret, *Young People*, examines Nottingham and St Etienne, cities with similar economies and experiences of the early twentieth century.

<sup>16</sup> Forsell, *Property, Tenancy and Urban Growth*.

locations.<sup>17</sup> These help to capture the commonalities and differences – the systematic and ‘the purely local’ – though the side-by-side approach normally adopted detracts from the analysis and breaks up the narrative.

This essay will examine the key themes explored in the texts under review and how the series has taken advantage of the opportunities open to it to reflect and develop the research agenda for urban history. The series has been shaped predominantly by a concern with urban management or governance and how this was manifested in a range of areas from cultural institutions to the policing of public health and the management of youth. Some of the texts reflect the editors’ initial agenda with its strongly social science influenced understanding of urban issues and problems,<sup>18</sup> others evidence the impact of cultural history and aspects of cultural geography whilst others still are shaped by the growing fascination with health issues – both the health of the body and the environment.

The exploration of urban management is most obvious and successful in those volumes directly concerned with governance and civil society. In particular, Morris and Trainor’s collection is already highly regarded and widely cited for its excellent mix of surveys, theoretical approaches and a range of apposite case studies drawn primarily from Britain.<sup>19</sup> The strong introductory essays and the spread of topics covered in the empirical chapters helped to solidify understanding of governance as a predominantly bourgeois approach to urban control, emphasizing the various sites of power in the city and the complex networks of urban leadership outwith the council chamber.<sup>20</sup> The collections edited by Colls and Rodger and Morton and colleagues have extended this work to some extent. The former provides a rather bi-polar picture of an effective, democratic and engaged service provision in the towns and cities of nineteenth-century Britain and the gradual elimination of such characteristics in the professionalized and centralized governmental world of the mid- to late twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> The Morton collection bravely attempts to extend the study of the quintessentially bourgeois and British institutions of voluntary association and civil society to the rest of nineteenth-century Europe. The geographical spread represented

<sup>17</sup> Miller, *Representation of Place* which contrasts Glasgow and the French industrial town of Roubaix.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between social science and urban history in Britain see Richard Rodger and Roey Sweet, ‘The changing nature of urban history’, *History in Focus*, <http://www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/City/articles/sweet.html#14>. Accessed 2 May 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Particularly important has been R.H. Trainor, ‘The “decline” of British urban governance since 1850: a reassessment’, in Morris and Trainor (eds.), *Urban Governance*.

<sup>20</sup> See also F. Trentmann and J.A. Hall (eds.), *Civil Society: A Reader in History, Theory and Global Politics* (Basingstoke, 2005); and R.J. Morris, ‘Civil society and the nature of urbanism: Britain, 1750–1850’, *Urban History*, 25 (1998), 289–99. The latter is the introduction to a special issue of the journal based on the papers from the 1997 UHG conference.

<sup>21</sup> Colls and Rodger (eds.), *Cities of Ideas*. For similar views on the eclipse of nineteenth-century education see Rodrick, *Self-help and Civic Culture*.

is impressive and the conclusions salutary. In most of southern and east central Europe, power structures and ethnic competition arrested the ability of voluntary associations to play the key role ascribed to them in Britain of integrating the new urban middle class and disciplining political conflict and competition.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, Dagenais *et al.* highlight the growing importance of bureaucratic elites in solidifying and professionalizing the work of governance. They show that across the western world, local power was increasingly held by officials less directly integrated into the broader governing elite of the world of politics and associational control and more shaped by their own professional standards and networks.<sup>23</sup> Yet this was a slow process and throughout the nineteenth century and probably into the twentieth century, the interaction between officials, politicians and pressure groups was more fluid.<sup>24</sup>

These volumes, and the more recently published collections on corruption, mayors and elite urban leadership across the west,<sup>25</sup> have both reflected and shaped study of urban power structures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an area of study which had become unfashionable in the 1980s. Their primary concern has been to shift attention away from the contest for control of the council chamber with its tropes of clean and dirty parties, the challenge of socialism and the rise of the state to show the multiple sites and modes of power in the nineteenth-century city and to illustrate differences and similarities within Britain and across Europe and North America. In particular, there has been a desire to emphasize the unity of purpose in the elite, especially around Simon Gunn's and Bob Morris' ideas about voluntary associations, civil society and visual display.<sup>26</sup> Yet these approaches tend to minimize the scale of conflicts within the elite over issues such as religion and to downplay the enduring political competition between bourgeois parties emphasized in Moore's work. Moreover, as the European evidence shows, the centrality of

<sup>22</sup> Morton *et al.* (eds.), *Civil Society*. For the classic statement see R.J. Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites, 1780–1870: an analysis', *Historical Journal*, 24 (1982), 95–118.

<sup>23</sup> Dagenais *et al.* (eds.), *Municipal Services*. For the interaction of politicians, governance and the municipal bureaucracy in Britain, see B.M. Doyle, 'The changing functions of urban government: councillors, officials and pressure groups', in Daunton (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History*, vol. III, 287–313. For a European perspective see *Contemporary European History*, 11 (2002), special issue on municipal connections edited by P.-Y. Saunier.

<sup>24</sup> Moore, *Urban Liberalism*. J. Moore and R. Rodger, 'Municipal knowledge and policy networks in British local government, 1832–1914', *Yearbook of European Administrative History*, 15 (2003), 239–57, which includes a number of other essays on European municipal urban structures.

<sup>25</sup> Moore and Smith (eds.), *Corruption*; J. Garrard, *Heads of the Local State: Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters since 1800* (2007); Roth and Wolfgang (eds.), *Who Ran the Cities?*

<sup>26</sup> R.J. Morris, 'Associations', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain*, vol. III: 1750–1950 (Cambridge, 1990), 395–443; R.J. Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns', in Daunton (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History*, vol. III, 395–426; S. Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City 1840–1914* (Manchester, 2000); S. Gunn, 'Class, identity and the urban: the middle class in England, 1800–1950', *Urban History*, 31 (2004), 1–19.



voluntary governance characteristic of Britain, the Netherlands and North America was weak or non-existent further east, where strong rural and older urban elites and massive ethnic conflict and diversity squeezed the space for bourgeois elite unity.

As this suggests, urban power and conflict were not confined to traditional sites of political contest but were played out across many disparate loci and in particular in the field of cultural production and reproduction.<sup>27</sup> It is therefore unsurprising that the links between politics, power and culture emerge strongly in a number of the volumes. Broadly divided between the physical and the communicative elements of urban culture, the works of Lorente, Hill and Reynolds provide new insights into our understanding of museums and galleries in capital and province.<sup>28</sup> Lorente and Reynolds, with their interest in the elite institutions of capital cities, tend to operate within the conventional world of cultural history and museology, emphasizing national and international concerns over those of the urban<sup>29</sup> – though they do also recognize the importance of the city as a central place for the collection and dissemination of cultural ideas, discourses and products. Hill's work on English provincial museums, however, takes the urban as the focus, drawing evidence from a range of large and medium-sized northern English cities. Her work fits comfortably within the governance agenda by exploring the role of the museum and gallery in 'making' urban society through the creation of city narratives, the connection of the urban and the national and the city and the world. But the work is also concerned with discipline and education, linking the amateur collector or connoisseur with the autodidact and educators who inhabit Rodrick's Victorian Birmingham. Hill's exploration of the interaction between citizenship and knowledge, education and self-help, updates existing concerns with working-class education<sup>30</sup> by linking it to concepts of citizenship influenced by cultural studies and thus connecting intimately with the exercise of power in the city.

Central to the contest for knowledge was the availability of printed texts, especially generalist newspapers such as the *Penny Magazine* or the *Halfpenny Magazine of Entertainment and Knowledge* which brought together an eclectic range of fact and opinion, science and art, ancient and modern

<sup>27</sup> The rise of cultural history has seen the launch of the new journal, *Cultural and Social History*, by the Social History Society. Though predominantly empirical in focus, the journal has debated the form and status of cultural history, notably P. Mandler, 'The problem with cultural history', *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2004), 94–117; responses by C. Hesse, C. Jones and C. Watts, 201–24, and a reply by Mandler at 326–32.

<sup>28</sup> J.P. Lorente, *Cathedrals of Urban Modernity: The First Museums of Contemporary Art, 1800–1930* (1998); Hill, *Culture and Class*; Reynolds, *Paris–Edinburgh*.

<sup>29</sup> There have been some important recent studies of national museums, especially N. Prior, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture* (Oxford, 2002); C. Whitehead, *The Public Art Museum in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Development of the National Gallery* (Aldershot, 2005).

<sup>30</sup> D. Nash, *Secularism, Art and Freedom* (Leicester, 1992).

knowledge.<sup>31</sup> The way in which urban populations came to terms with this burgeoning world of print and image is examined in the collections of Wischermann and Shore and Gee and Kirk.<sup>32</sup> Just as Rodrick and Hill complement each other by their concern with education and knowledge so these texts are connected by their interest in written and visual culture. Both collections are overwhelmingly focused on the modern period – especially the period of high ‘modernity’ from the 1880s through to the 1940s<sup>33</sup> – with a particular focus on French and German examples. Yet whilst promising to increase our understanding of the impact of the printed and visual world on these modernizing urban societies, the essays tend to look at the producers rather than the consumers – though some of the contributions, such as Peter Fritzsche’s chapter on Berlin,<sup>34</sup> are a little more successful in telling us about the meaning people made of this new world of all pervasive words and pictures.

What these texts point to is an open, if not quite democratic, moment for urban culture when access to knowledge and its interpretation and use was fluid. This, it is suggested, ended when mass education and the development of a cadre of professional educators, curators and publishers solidified the boundaries of useful knowledge and shifted control from the specific urban milieu to the national and international stage, an analysis which mirrors the views expressed in the Colls and Rodger collection and more generally within the influential work of Gunn.<sup>35</sup> These texts also highlight a key trope of cultural studies – the rise (and fall?) of distinctive mass and elite cultures both in the city and nationally.

Culture was clearly a major battleground in urban management as was space, the contest for which saw law, language and heritage employed to ensure control of the physical city. Given the centrality of housing and the physical form of cities to the foundation of urban history (especially the work of H.J. Dyos but also its prominence in the *Cambridge Urban History*)<sup>36</sup> this series has relatively few works dealing directly with residential property.<sup>37</sup> Rather, given the key theme of the series, there is a concern

<sup>31</sup> Rodrick, *Self-Help and Civic Culture*, e.g. 51–2

<sup>32</sup> C. Wischermann and E. Shore (eds.), *Advertising and the European City: Historical Perspectives* (2000); Gee and Kirk (eds.), *Printed Matters*.

<sup>33</sup> Three important texts exploring modernity in Germany and Britain are A. McElligott, *The German Urban Experience, 1900–1945: Modernity and Crisis* (London, 2001); M. Nava and A. O’Shea (eds.), *Modern Times: Reflections on a Century of English Modernity* (London, 1996); M. Daunton and B. Rieger (eds.), *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford, 2001).

<sup>34</sup> P. Fritzsche, ‘Readers, browsers, strangers, spectators: narrative forms and metropolitan encounters in twentieth century Berlin’, in Gee and Kirk (eds.), *Printed Matters*, 88–104. The relation between advertising, spectacle and commodity culture is explored in a British context by T. Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851–1914* (Stanford, 1991).

<sup>35</sup> Colls and Rodger (eds.), *Cities of Ideas*; Gunn, *Public Culture*, especially the epilogue. See also Morris, ‘Structure, culture and society’, for a less pessimistic view.

<sup>36</sup> D. Cannadine and D. Reeder (eds.), *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History by H.J. Dyos* (Cambridge, 1982); Daunton (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History*, vol. III.

<sup>37</sup> Though see J. Stobart and A. Owens (eds.), *Urban Fortunes: Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700–1900* (2000); Forsell, *Property, Tenancy and Urban Growth*.



with space and power and with issues of material and cultural ownership. Thus, the collection of Gunn and Morris, *Identities in Space*, throws up a number of examples of contested space, including sites of monuments, public parks and redevelopment projects, such as Helsinki harbour and ethnic spaces in Los Angeles.<sup>38</sup> A number of the essays also touch on the cultural and political importance of heritage sites in the construction of urban, regional and national identity, a theme of increasing importance across a range of historical sub-disciplines.<sup>39</sup>

Contests for space operated at both discursive and physical levels, with the powerful often using both argument and authority to maintain control, as with suffragette and socialist attempts to claim the promenades of Liverpool's parks.<sup>40</sup> Miller's monograph study of planning and redevelopment in post-war Scotland and France builds on these ideas – though he claims to be more interested in place than space.<sup>41</sup> Picking up on one of the livelier debates of recent years – that around the slum discourse<sup>42</sup> – he illustrates the way language was used by the powerful to identify and condemn spaces but that campaigners could be successful in defending an area by reference to place. Such influences from cultural geography and the linguistic turn have raised important questions for urban historians, leading to a more subtle understanding of discursive and physical landscapes and of the cultural power of space and place.<sup>43</sup> This in turn has permitted a refocusing of urban conflict away from the work place and the council chamber to theatres in which more diverse contests, including those of gender, ethnicity and nation as well as class, can be explored.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> N. Canefe, 'One Cyprus or many? Turkish Cypriot history in Nicosia'; K. Cowman, 'The battle of the boulevards: class, gender and the purpose of public space in later Victorian Liverpool'; D.Y. Ghirardo, 'Space, race and identity in the Pueblo of Los Angeles', in S. Gunn and R.J. Morris, *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850* (2001), 60–78, 152–64.

<sup>39</sup> G. Ford 'Constructing a regional identity: the Christian Social Union and Bavaria's common heritage, 1949–1964', *Contemporary European History*, 16 (2007), 277–97; R.J. Morris, 'The capitalist, the professor and the soldier: the re-making of Edinburgh Castle, 1850–1900', *Planning Perspectives*, 22 (2007), 55–78; R. Koshar (ed.), *Histories of Leisure* (Oxford, 2002).

<sup>40</sup> Cowman, 'Battle of the boulevards'.

<sup>41</sup> For Miller's distinction see *Representation of Place*, 1–24.

<sup>42</sup> A. Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper Representation in Three Cities 1870–1914* (Leicester, 1993); A. Mayne, 'A barefoot childhood. So what?', *Urban History*, 22 (1995), 380–91; D. Englander, 'Urban history or urban historicism? A response to Alan Mayne', *Urban History*, 22 (1995), 380–91; Bill Luckin, 'Revisiting the slums in Manchester and Salford in the 1930s', in B.M. Doyle (ed.), *Urban Politics and Space in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Regional Perspectives* (Newcastle, 2007), 134–47.

<sup>43</sup> S. Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, 2004); M. Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918–1957* (Chicago, 2005); D.L. Pike, *Subterranean Cities: The World beneath Paris and London, 1800–1945* (Ithaca and London, 2005); P. Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, MA, 1996).

<sup>44</sup> Gender and ethnicity are particularly significant in the urban history of the United States, with local studies of the 'modern' period dominated by these concerns. See particularly the work of Zane L. Miller, most recently *Visions of Place: The City, Neighbourhoods, Suburbs and Cincinnati's Clifton, 1850–2000* (Columbus, 2001), Timothy Fong's review essay, 'Epidemics, racial anxiety and community formation: Chinese Americans in San Francisco', *Urban History*, 30 (2003), 401–6, and the *Journal of Urban History*.

Indeed, gender is central to the recent interest in land and property ownership and its transmission.<sup>45</sup> The interaction of legal frameworks – of inheritance, disposal and land use – with family strategies and social and cultural norms shaped the morphology of the city in profound ways. Acquiring, utilizing and disposing of property was central to the growth and maintenance of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century middle class, whilst the relationship between property owners, investors, the market and the local and national state was at the heart of the shaping of the urban form.<sup>46</sup> Mirroring Morris' study of Leeds, the contributors to the Stobart and Owens' collection emphasize the importance of property in broad family strategies in both the emergent industrial towns and major cities of Britain.<sup>47</sup> In particular, there is a strong focus on women and their place in the ownership and movement of wealth at this key stage in urban and industrial development. Conversely, Forsell's comparison of late nineteenth-century Berlin and Stockholm focuses more explicitly on urban governance issues, exploring the boundary between the private and the municipal by examining how the regulation of property and its ownership helped to shape the urban form in a way similar to that of Rodger in his major study of Edinburgh.<sup>48</sup>

Discussion of the politics and management of space also features strongly in the emerging urban environmental history. Clark's collection on green space in northern Europe mixes traditional and new interests in *rus in urbe*, capturing the merging of the aesthetic and health elements in the promotion and maintenance of city parks and gardens.<sup>49</sup> By highlighting the key social and political factors shaping gardens policy, it shifts attention from the traditional historiography dominated by art and garden historians<sup>50</sup> to a focus on the political contests which surrounded gardens policy in the era of state-dominated green space formation. Of particular note is the chapter on Leningrad which not only shows the importance of monumental scale garden projects in the Soviet era but also provides a rare opportunity to examine Soviet urban history in English.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>45</sup> R.J. Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780–1870. A Social and Economic History of Family Strategies amongst the Leeds Middle Classes* (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>46</sup> H.J. Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: A Study of the Growth of Camberwell* (Leicester, 1961); Morris, *Men, Women and Property*; R. Rodger, *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> Stobart and Owens (ed.), *Urban Fortunes*. See also M. Winstanley, 'Owners and occupiers: property, politics and middle-class formation in early industrial Lancashire', in A.J. Kidd and D. Nicholls (eds.), *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), 92–112.

<sup>48</sup> Forsell, *Property, Tenancy and Urban Growth*; Rodger, *Transformation of Edinburgh*.

<sup>49</sup> In addition see the work of Helen Meller, such as *European Cities 1890–1930s: History, Culture and the Built Environment* (London, 2001).

<sup>50</sup> H. Conway, *People's Parks: The Design and Development of Victorian Parks in Britain* (Cambridge, 1991), and H. Conway 'Everyday landscapes: public parks from 1930 to 2000', *Garden History*, 28 (2000), 117–34.

<sup>51</sup> A. Kitaev, 'Red parks: green space in Leningrad, 1917–1990', in Clark, *European City and Green Space*, 289–305. See also S.V. Bittner, 'Green cities and orderly streets: space and culture in Moscow, 1928–33', *Journal of Urban History*, 25 (1998), 22–56.

Indeed, the shape and use of urban green is a growing area of both historical and contemporary fascination<sup>52</sup> with space featuring prominently in this journal in recent years.<sup>53</sup>

Schott's anthology is similarly revisionist, updating and re-prioritizing some traditional aspects of the historical investigation of water and pollution,<sup>54</sup> particularly re-framing them as sites of conflict over resource allocation and environmental justice.<sup>55</sup> This has permitted a broader consideration of the politics of environmental impact which can move beyond crude class analysis to incorporate race, gender, ethnicity and urban/rural divides.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, this collection showcases the important work being undertaken by the European Society for Environmental History whose meetings and publications<sup>57</sup> have helped to give an urban focus to the environmental history agenda for so long dominated by discussion of the rural and wilderness landscapes.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, whilst the conventional interests in smoke, water and filth remain central, historians are also focusing on the cultural meaning of environmental issues, especially where they overlap with issues of public and private health.<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, the interaction of health and the environment is back on the agenda in a big way, the subject of a major international conference in London in 2007<sup>60</sup> and represented in the series by complementary volumes<sup>61</sup> which emphasize two key tropes of recent historiography – cultural

<sup>52</sup> R. Lee and K. Layton-Jones, *Places of Health and Amusement: Liverpool's Historic Parks and Gardens (Informed Conservation)* (Liverpool, 2008). See also the 2008 conference, *Vauxhall Revisited: Pleasure Gardens and their Publics, 1660–1880*, <http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/eventseducation/symposia/14274.htm>. Accessed 25 Jul. 2008.

<sup>53</sup> J. Conlin, 'Vauxhall on the boulevard: pleasure gardens in London and Paris', and P. Elliott, S. Daniels and C. Watkins, 'The Nottingham Arboretum (1852): natural history, leisure and public culture in a Victorian regional centre', both in *Urban History*, 35 (2008), 24–47 and 48–71.

<sup>54</sup> R.J. Morris, *Cholera, 1832: The Social Response to an Epidemic* (London, 1976); R.J. Evans, *Death in Hamburg: Society and Politics in the Cholera Years, 1830–1910* (Oxford, 1987).

<sup>55</sup> See also A.C. Isenberg (ed.), *The Nature of Cities: Culture, Landscape and Urban Space* (Rochester, 2006), for a largely American vision of urban environmental contest.

<sup>56</sup> B. Luckin, 'Pollution in the city', in Daunton, *Cambridge Urban History*, vol. III, 207–28; H.L. Platt, *Shock Cities: The Environmental Transformation and Reform of Manchester and Chicago* (Chicago, 2005).

<sup>57</sup> Christoph Bernhardt (ed.), *Environmental Problems in European Cities in the 19th and 20th Century. Umweltprobleme in europäischen Städten des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Münster, 2001); C. Bernhardt and G. Massard-Guilbaud (eds.), *Le démon moderne: la pollution dans les sociétés urbaines et industrielles d'Europe/The Modern Demon: Pollution in Urban and Industrial European Societies* (Clermont-Ferrand, 2002).

<sup>58</sup> For a recent discussion see B. Luckin, 'Environmental justice, history and the city: the United States and Britain, 1970–2000', in Schott *et al.* (eds.), *Resources of the City*, 230–45.

<sup>59</sup> For example S. Mosley, *The Chimney of the World: A History of Smoke Pollution in Victorian and Edwardian Manchester* (Cambridge, 2001).

<sup>60</sup> The European Association for the History of Medicine and Health Conference 2007, 'Environment, Health and History', University of London. <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/history/EAHMHconferencefullprogramme.html>. Accessed 25 Jul. 2008.

<sup>61</sup> S. Sheard and H. Power (eds.), *Body and City: Histories of Urban Public Health* (2000); Niemi, *Public Health*.

approaches<sup>62</sup> and attempts to capture the experience of the objects of public health initiatives, 'reforms' and charity.<sup>63</sup> Often concerned with the same spatial issues touched upon by Miller and the contributors to *Identities in Space*, this new history of medicine casts a much more critical eye over the work of the powerful and their efforts to improve the health of urban populations.<sup>64</sup> It highlights how discourses of health and space often elided physical and moral traits, sometimes to the detriment of the population to be protected. Thus Niemi shows that the tendency of British urban reformers to condemn whole areas as unhealthy frequently failed to address the impact of diseases like TB in comparison to the Swedish policy of individual treatment.<sup>65</sup> Kidambi's study of Bombay in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries picks up on many of the issues covered in a European context and addresses them in one of the most significant cities in the sub-continent. In particular, the work focuses on public health, public order, elite structures and the development of civil society and associational cultures providing an important examination of the management of space in a colonial context.<sup>66</sup>

In a similarly expansive vein, the collection edited by Cowan and Steward, *The City and the Senses*,<sup>67</sup> offers a novel approach to the study of the urban environment which allows the juxtaposition of a range of themes which would not previously have been considered together. It gives new life to traditional topics such as sewerage, alcohol and nutrition, advertising and art, some of which are covered in other volumes, though more exciting are the approaches to touch, smell and sound, the latter in particular coming to adopt an important place in current urban historiography.<sup>68</sup> Together this collection taps into a lively research area which appears particularly attractive to early modern historians as evidenced by a recent conference on the senses and the enlightenment which touched especially on cultural, medical and olfactory issues.<sup>69</sup> This book brings together many of the key themes present in the other volumes in the series, exploring as it does public health, elite culture, the constructions of space and visual culture as well as pointing to fruitful

<sup>62</sup> Ludmilla Jordanova, 'The social construction of medical knowledge', *Social History of Medicine*, 8 (1995), 361–81.

<sup>63</sup> P. Shapely, *Charity and Power in Nineteenth Century Manchester* (Manchester, 2000).

<sup>64</sup> B. Luckin, 'Revisiting the idea of degeneration in urban Britain, 1830–1900', *Urban History*, 33 (2006), 234–52; Luckin, 'Revisiting the slums in Manchester and Salford in the 1930s'.

<sup>65</sup> Niemi, *Public Health*.

<sup>66</sup> Kidambi, *Indian Metropolis*.

<sup>67</sup> A. Cowan and J. Steward (eds.), *The City and the Senses: Urban Culture since 1500* (2007).

<sup>68</sup> For example the special issue on 'Music and urban history', *Urban History*, 29, 1 (2002); special issue of *Cultural and Social History* on music, 5, 1 (2008); D. Vaillant, *Sounds of Reform: Progressivism and Music in Chicago, 1873–1935* (Chapel Hill, 2003).

<sup>69</sup> *The Five Senses in the Enlightenment*, Birmingham Eighteenth-Century Centre: University of Birmingham 17–18 May 2008. See also the work of Mark Jenner, such as 'Civilization and deodorization? Smell in early modern English culture', in P. Burke, B. Harrison and P. Slack (eds.), *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas* (Oxford, 2000), 127–44.

future areas for research including food, music and the links between the body, the city and consumption in various forms.

Reflecting historians' increasing interest in identity over class, the series has opened up new ways of examining the denizens of the city, with rather less emphasis on the working class as a homogeneous group. Thus, there have been explorations of youth, the artisan, recipients of charity and on how citizens developed their urban identities – often in conflict with local elites. Thus, the monograph of Pomfret and the collection of Schildt and Siegfried on youth<sup>70</sup> foreground a group central to the history of the city yet one which is frequently overlooked. Unlike much of contemporary social science literature on youth<sup>71</sup> Pomfret is not bent on exposing adolescents as a dangerous social problem, a deviant group or a site of heroic opposition. Rather his focus is on the ordinary young person's transitions to adult life – incorporating their experiences of starting work, engaging in voluntary organizations and even politics – and how the increasing range of urban managers appearing in the early twentieth century, came to terms with the changing needs of young people and society's expectations of youth. Such concerns are also central to the collection of Schildt and Siegfried which picks up on the increasingly fashionable theme of youth and consumerism, and especially an oppositional consumption which prompted anxiety and fear in adult cultures across Europe and in both democratic and non-democratic regimes.<sup>72</sup> Together these texts illustrate two important areas of research which urban historians have been slow to address – the status of youth in the city and the nature of urban consumption patterns.<sup>73</sup>

Conversely, one of the earliest contributions, Crossick's edited collection on the *Artisan and the European Town*, illustrates the changing fashions and methods of urban history, for it is the only volume concerned primarily with elements of the working class in their own right.<sup>74</sup> Covering the experience of the artisan across four centuries and much of Europe, it

<sup>70</sup> Pomfret, *Young People*; A. Schildt and D. Siegfried (eds.), *European Cities, Youth and the Public Sphere in the Twentieth Century* (2005).

<sup>71</sup> For example S. Hall and T. Jefferson (eds.), *Resistance through Rituals* (London, 1976). B. Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Oxford, 1998), provides a good general introduction to the literature and the politics of youth.

<sup>72</sup> D. Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Interwar Britain* (London, 1995); J.R. Wegs, *Growing up Working Class: Continuity and Change among Viennese Youth, 1890–1938* (University Park, 1989); A. McElligott, *German Urban Experience*; M. Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock 'n' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (Oxford, 2007).

<sup>73</sup> B. Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (London, 1995); E. Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton, 2000); G. Crossick and S. Jaumain (eds.), *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store, 1850–1939* (1999); C. Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life, 1860–1914* (Manchester, 1999). Breward has recently been involved in a major project with David Gilbert to map the development of retailing and fashion spaces in post-war London. Results can be seen in *Shopping Routes: Networks of Fashion Consumption in London's West End 1945–1979*, a special issue of *The London Journal* edited by David Gilbert, 31 (2006).

<sup>74</sup> Studies of the urban working class of western Europe are legion but key texts could include J. Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns* (London, 1974); R.J. Evans (ed.), *The German Working Class, 1888–1933*:



aims to provide a more nuanced and complex image of an often maligned group. Influenced by the editor's own important reappraisals of the role of the artisan,<sup>75</sup> it nevertheless demonstrates the marginalization of class – or more specifically study of the working class – as a central focus of historical concern in recent years. Some volumes do focus on working-class experience – particularly the encounter between the weak and the powerful. Thus the essays in the Borsay and Shapely volume<sup>76</sup> illustrate the significant disjunction between the aims and desires of donors and those of the recipients of medical charity, the latter frequently challenging the assumption that they should accept quietly and gratefully the largesse offered.<sup>77</sup> Yet although there is some evidence from the most recent volumes that there is a growing interest in the most marginal groups in the city,<sup>78</sup> there remains little concern with the organized working class, their politics or their associational life. Overall, this series and recent trends in historiography continue to privilege the world of the bourgeoisie and the more traditional urban elites. However, in the work of Rodger and Herbert, with its emphasis on diversity and ethnicity, we do see new ground being broken. Focused on the post-war period, it employs oral history to examine urban identity formation touching *inter alia* on issues such as space, work and youth culture.<sup>79</sup> Along with Miller's work it shows that there is a significant set of new issues emerging for the history of the post-war period, many of which were common across east and west Europe but which led to markedly different and more or less successful responses.<sup>80</sup>

Overall the Historical Urban Studies series can be regarded as a significant success. More than 35 volumes have been published covering a wide range of subjects which encapsulate many of the key concerns of urban historians and which provide geographically and temporally broad coverage (with a clear emphasis on western Europe since 1700). The series editors have also done an excellent job in maintaining the overall quality of the product, especially given the large number of edited collections where both coherence and academic standards can often be rather limited. Indeed, some of the collections have been path-breaking, providing new directions

*The Politics of Everyday Life* (London, 1982); J. Merriman, *The Red City: Limoges and the French Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1985).

<sup>75</sup> G. Crossick and H.-G. Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe, 1780–191: Enterprise, Family and Independence* (London and New York, 1997).

<sup>76</sup> A. Borsay and P. Shapely (eds.), *Medicine, Charity and Mutual Aid: The Consumption of Health and Welfare in Britain, c.1550–1950* (2007).

<sup>77</sup> See also M. Daunton (ed.), *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare in the English Past: 1500 to the Present* (London, 1996); J. Barry and C. Jones (eds.), *Medicine and Charity before the Welfare State* (London, 1994).

<sup>78</sup> R. Rodger and J. Herbert (eds.), *Testimonies of the City: Identity, Community and Change in a Contemporary Urban World* (2007); Keene *et al.* (eds.), *Segregation – Integration – Assimilation*.

<sup>79</sup> Rodger and Herbert (eds.), *Testimonies of the City*. See also J. Herbert, *Negotiating Boundaries in the City: Migration, Ethnicity, and Gender in Britain* (2007).

<sup>80</sup> Miller, *Representation of Place*.



and solid underpinning for the discipline. Yet this is overwhelmingly and self-consciously an urban history of the public world of the city – its leaders, its property and space, its culture and environment and the interaction between them. As such its major contribution has been to provide an interface between the more discursive analyses of cultural historians and the power politics of the physical world of buildings, spaces, institutions and administration. In the process, however, it has had only a limited engagement with the topics such as consumption, leisure, fashion, tourism and heritage, which form the basis of modern social history. Moreover, the older concerns of social historians such as gender, sexuality or the family are also entirely absent whilst even the traditional interests of the urban historian, such as housing or the domestic interior, have had little or no coverage.

It is also a very Eurocentric series, one which reflects much of the urban history published in the English language. Indeed, the presence of Kidambi's study of Bombay, with its holistic approach to colonial urban management, highlights the relative paucity of work on Indian, Asian, African and even south American urban history published in Europe.<sup>81</sup> This is being addressed to some extent by *Urban History* which has published a wide range of articles in recent years on non-European subjects,<sup>82</sup> whilst Phil Ethington's appointment as editor for North America has seen increased coverage of the Hispanic world.<sup>83</sup> Together this suggests that urban history can expand outside of the predominantly Euro-American world so well represented in this series and present a new perspective on the urban history of the pre-conquest, colonial and developing non-European world.

Although many of the texts take the urban historian's traditional concerns and reshape them in new and exciting ways, and most present evidence and argument of a very high standard, the omission of the daily life of the ordinary town's person raises important questions about the future of urban history. Will the discipline remain focused on this public

<sup>81</sup> Though see the *Planning History and the Environment Series* edited by Anthony Sutcliffe for Routledge which includes A. Almandoz (ed.), *Planning Latin America's Capital Cities, 1850–1950* (London, 2002); R. Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities* (London, 1996); and S. Hamnett and R. Freestone (eds.), *Australian Metropolis: A Planning History* (London, 1999).

<sup>82</sup> For example, A. Burton, "'Brothers by day': colonial policing in Dar es Salaam' (winner of the Dyos Prize for 2003), *Urban History*, 30 (2003), 63–91; K. Man Bun, 'Chinese urban history: four cheers', *Urban History*, 29 (2002), 254–61; J.E. Taylor, 'Colonial Takao: the making of a southern metropolis', *Urban History*, 31 (2004), 48–71; R. Thakur, 'Mechanisms of urban growth in India: AD 600–1200', *Urban History*, 29 (2002), 187–96; T. Frascch, 'Urban growth in India AD 600–1200: a comment', *Urban History*, 31 (2004), 118–20; A. Almandoz, 'The intelligentsia's two visions of urban modernity: Gómez's Caracas, 1908–35', *Urban History*, 28 (2001), 84–105; S.J. Martland, 'Progress illuminating the world: street lighting in Santiago, Valparaiso and La Plata, 1840–90', *Urban History*, 29 (2002), 223–38.

<sup>83</sup> For example, C.M. Jiménez, 'Performing their right to the city: political uses of public space in a Mexican city, 1880–1910s', *Urban History*, 33 (2006), 435–56.

world, maintaining, in effect, a barrier between urban and social and cultural history, or will urban historians more generally embrace some of the themes of mainstream social history and its concerns with the bodily pleasures and pains of the citizen. This series has done much to put urban history firmly back on the academic agenda; urban historians should now endeavour to move towards a more integrated approach which unites the concerns of the governors and the governed.