

Xu Yinong builds upon the scholarship of G. William Skinner, P. Wheatley, and F. W. Mote while walking us through primary sources and eyewitness accounts from official histories, gazetteers, poetry, prose, and fiction.

The author argues that Suzhou's history as a cultural and economic region is distinct from that of imperial capital cities such as Beijing but is representative of regional cities. As such it provides a framework for broadening our knowledge of China's "complex urban history." Founded in 514 B.C as the capital of Wu state during Eastern Zhou's multi-state conflicts, Suzhou became an important economic centre and administrative city only in the ninth century. The medieval urban revolution that began then and continued into the thirteenth century witnessed the breakdown of the official marketing organization, the decentralization of trade and commerce, and the emergence of many small and intermediate towns with economic functions. With rice becoming more dominant in food crop production, and with the adoption of water conservation and new techniques and tools, Suzhou's agriculture became more commercialized, and inter-regional trade flourished along the extensive network of canals, streets, and bridges. The tremendous growth of the silk industry and the extensive use of the Grand Canal were matched by cultural and political success, as seen in the high numbers of degree-holders from Suzhou. The city survived a serious setback caused by the exile of elites and higher taxes in the fourteenth century. Two centuries later, Suzhou's population of a million was living in "China's richest, most urbanized and advanced region." But in the eighteenth century, demographic pressure and rapid economic growth weakened the canal and transportation system, and in the 1860s, when the Taiping Rebellion devastated the city and destroyed more than half its population, Suzhou's leading economic role was overtaken by Shanghai.

Xu Yinong indicates that despite political and economic upheavals, Suzhou's form has generally remained stable over time, with the most notable change being the removal of the inner city walls in modern times. The main streets, bridges, and canals have the same names and the walls enclosing the site have been there since the seventh century. The heavy sense of authority of the past and the weight of tradition dictated the frequent rebuilding of these urban structures. Although Suzhou, like other Chinese cities, was multifunctional, its foundation was administration. Thus the city's construction, cosmological layout, bridges, canal system, and city walls symbolized central authority and the state's presence in the social and political order as represented and upheld by the government offices and officials. Xu observes that while geomancy (*feng shui*) influenced the siting of capital cities, villages, gardens, tombs, and homes, the administrative staff did not use it as a guiding principle in the construction of form and space in the city because the city was not a private property but the extension of the central administration.

Citing the data on Suzhou as a representative administrative

unit, Xu Yinong argues that Chinese urban history is important in its distinctiveness from Western urban history, where "corporate identity" and an "urban-rural dichotomy" prevailed. Defining corporate identity as the influential political power of merchants or the private sector, consciousness and identity with the city, along with ideas of emancipation and liberty, Xu asserts that no premodern Chinese city demonstrated the presence of corporate identity. Europe's concept of free citizenry and the civic square had no equivalents in premodern Chinese cities, which were characterized instead by "extreme diversity and high integration," devoid of the urban-rural dichotomy of Western cities. Instead, the "urban-rural continuum" prevailed in Chinese cities, as indicated the cultural and economic activities involving both cities and the countryside, the absence of strictly urban or rural festivals, the lack of contrast between rural and urban architecture, and social division based more on class and occupation than between city and countryside.

In sum, Xu Yinong's reconstruction of the historical development of Suzhou is a welcome contribution to both Chinese and Western urban history. The volume's attractive presentation and numerous illustrations and maps provide additional documentation and a visual feast of historical geography.

Jennifer W. Jay
Department of History and Classics
University of Alberta

Gordon, Linda. *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. Pp. xii, 416. Maps, black-and-white illustrations, index. US\$29.95 (cloth)

This account of child adoption and "child stealing" in Arizona in 1903 is a story of borders crossed and strictly maintained on the American mining frontier. Exploring this incident as it unfolded, Gordon's book details the ways in which gender, class, race, culture, nation, and religion interacted in complex ways, as a group of orphans brought to the Southwest to be adopted were quickly abducted into new families, with the aid of the law, and later, the blessing of the state. This immensely detailed and rich account of the orphan abduction is a fascinating read, all the more dramatic to us because its final sanctification by the United States Supreme Court seems outrageous to our twenty-first-century sensibilities.

The orphans were the sons and daughters of poor New Yorkers, sometimes single or unmarried mothers, often Irish immigrants, who were placed in a foundling hospital run by the Sisters of Charity. Accompanied by a male agent and nurses, three Sisters transported fifty-seven charges across the country to the southwest, to what was supposed to be a better life for children barely considered "white" because of their Irish origins. They were to be adopted by Catholic families in the growing twin copper towns of Clifton/Morenci. Because the adopting families were Mexican, a group of local white (largely Anglo) townspeople