

raphy of early towns by Palliser, T.R. Slater and E. Patricia Dennison) and in the later Middle Ages (as in John Schofield's and Geoffrey Stell's fascinating chapter on the built environment between 1300 and 1540). As has become standard in urban history, much of the volume focuses on economic questions. Nonetheless, both traditional political questions about the role of towns in lordship and in the governance of the realms (in essays by James Campbell and Barrie Dobson) and contemporary concerns about cultural expression (especially in Gervase Rosser's stimulating essay on late medieval urban culture) are represented. Also successful is the integration of Welsh and Scottish material with the better-known English scholarship. There was, of course, no "Britain" in the period under consideration in this volume, and a number of chapters (especially those by E. Patricia Dennison and Grant G. Simpson on Scotland, Ralph A. Griffiths on Wales, and Jennifer Kermode on the North of England) elucidate real and significant differences in town development among England, Wales, and Scotland, and among England's regions.

If there is an argument or theme running through the contributions, it is that the urban aspect of medieval British life has been underestimated. Contributors emphasize the early growth of urban life in England, especially from the tenth to the late-eleventh centuries; by Domesday perhaps ten percent of the English population lived in some sort of urban settlement (Wales and Scotland being much less urbanized at this period). The subsequent growth of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is better known, but the extent of urbanization by 1300 now accepted by scholars in the field (fifteen to twenty percent of the population) may surprise some readers. Both historical consensus and matters of continuing debate are acknowledged and outlined: the debate over the nature and extent of conflict within late medieval towns, for instance, is laid out in all its complexity. At the same time as the volume offers the "state of the question" on research on medieval British towns, it provides a clear sense of where the lacunae are: Ph.D. theses for years to come should emanate from the various discussions of issues requiring further research.

There are, inevitably, criticisms that arise in a volume of this size and scope. I will focus here on one in particular—the volume's (and series') start date of 600 and the consequent summary treatment of urban life in Roman Britain. It is notable that the only chapter written by a non-specialist is the introductory "Origins of British Towns," which covers the Roman period and is written by the editor D.M. Palliser (a late medieval and Tudor expert). Although Palliser himself says that "the significance of Roman rule for town life in later Britain should not be underestimated, for it left an ideology and infrastructure which have had lasting influence" (p. 541), nonetheless he chose to begin in the seventh century because "that was when permanent town life, on our definition, began in southern Britain (7)." Even accepting the (still controversial) point that there was a period of 150 to 200 years after the abandonment of Britannia by the Romans when there was no meaningful urban life, this does not convincingly preclude the usefulness of a more serious integration and examination of scholarship on Roman towns in this volume.

If the decision to begin at the year 600 must be placed at Palliser's door, so must also the overall success of the volume, the strengths of which greatly outweigh its weaknesses. Although the prohibitive cost of the volume (U.S. \$140) will prevent many scholars from putting it on their own shelves, it should be purchased by all university and research libraries. Its usefulness as a work of reference and as a collection of stimulating and magisterial essays recalls the classic Cambridge histories of the first half of the twentieth century.

Shannon McSheffrey
Department of History
Concordia University

Joseph W. Esherick, ed. *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900–1950*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000. Pp. x, 278. Maps, black and white illustrations, bibliography, index. US\$65.00 (cloth)

With a large format and many intriguing maps and photographs depicting cities in China during the early twentieth century, this book will be attractive to armchair travellers. Its detailed treatments of particular urban settings will also recommend it to leaders of history-conscious visits to the People's Republic of China (PRC). To readers with serious purposes, it presents with well-deserved polish the results of a decade or so of new opportunities for local archival research in the PRC. For urban studies comparativists, this book is certainly the best available source of information in English on the history of Chinese cities.

Remaking the Chinese City is the outcome of a conference on Chinese cities "Beyond Shanghai," hosted by the University of California at San Diego in 1996. Nonetheless, it highlights the cultural dominance of China's most cosmopolitan metropolis. As several of the individual contributions make clear, it has been difficult to move far from Shanghai conceptually, either in cities themselves during renovations of the 1930s that emulated Shanghai's glamour, or in current discussions of what Chinese modernity has meant to those creating and experiencing it. Considering the importance of state-building projects during the period of Shanghai's pre-eminence, it is noteworthy that, unlike seven of the other nine cities treated in the volume, Shanghai has never been a national or dynastic capital.

In ten contributions visiting nine cities "beyond Shanghai" (Tianjin is the city receiving extra attention), a group of United States-based academics whose research has been based in particular localities in the PRC present samples of their findings. Each researcher has acquired a thorough familiarity with the history of a particular city, and has made use of this understanding for his or her own intellectual purposes. In his contribution in Part One, "The Modernist City," Michael Tsin focuses on Guangzhou (Canton) to discuss the connections between urban renewal and official claims both to represent and to impose order on citizens, while in the next chapter Ruth Rogaski explores early twentieth-century associations between civilization and sanitation in a chapter entitled "Hygienic Modernity in Tianjin." Brett Sheehan sees, in the next chapter, Tianjin's bankers as creators of im-