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Commerce in Russian Urban Culture, 1861–1914. Washington
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tendances récentes

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Rodger, Richard. *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. xix, 540. Illustrations, maps, tables, bibliography, index. US\$80.00.

With this substantial tome, resting on an impressive quantity of archival research, Richard Rodger buttresses his reputation as one of Britain's most distinguished urban historians. Its mass of accumulated detail does not make for an easy read or render it accessible to a broad audience. In spite of its lavish and helpful illustrations, including photographs, maps and charts, one imagines that it will not find a place on the shelves of popular histories of Edinburgh in the city's bookstores, nor even that any but the most diligent of undergraduates will be prevailed upon to plough through it. But for its intended readership of specialists and connoisseurs it will prove indispensable, its wealth of challenging insights elevating it well above a mere urban biography.

The last vestiges of feudalism in the Western world, as Macaulay's schoolboy will tell you, were of course swept away by French Revolutionaries and classical liberal ideas about property. And that was "A Good Thing". Not so in Scotland. Rodger constructs his account of Edinburgh's transformation around the reinvention of a form of Scottish feudalism during the nineteenth century. In contrast to England and Wales, land in Scotland was feued – sold outright subject to a fixed annual levy in perpetuity and to other occasional payments. This encouraged vendors to hold on to land in the hope that, with a burgeoning population, its value would rise, and then to charge an initially high feu-duty to compensate for likely erosion in real terms. Through the practice of subinfeudation, the levy – generally substantially increased – was passed down the line from landowner to developer to builder to house agent to purchaser. A landmark House of Lords ruling in 1818 stimulated an elaboration of the feuing system by encouraging landowners and developers to add detailed clauses controlling the future use of the property.

The downside of all this was that tenants paid more in Scotland than in England and Wales, so could afford to rent less space; and, to cover the feu-duties on the land, developers built higher, denser tenements. Rodger eloquently describes the appalling overcrowding and abysmal sanitation that often resulted and gave rise to dismal morbidity and mortality rates. The upside was that the system encouraged a wide range of small investors to place their modest capital in the hands of solicitors and property investment companies to buy heritable securities (i.e. feu-duties on a property in the future). This had pleasing dual benefits. First, it elicited and circulated limited capital supplies within Scotland, encouraging economic expansion and urban transformation, staunching a potential hemorrhaging of capital toward tempting English stocks and bonds. Second, petty capitalists, as low down the social scale as shopkeepers and skilled workers, became participants in this extension of property rights and thus benefited from rising land and property values. Rodger contrasts Scotland favourably with England and other less fortunate na-

tions. "Where property owners had an individual right to the exclusive use and disposal of plots of land," he writes, "then under free market conditions this resulted in a concentration of ownership, resources and power which infringed equality of status, the central tenet of liberalism. The very freedom of contract on which the capitalist market system was constructed could not logically prevent individual and unequal appropriations of wealth and power." (506) Scotland avoided this paradox of liberalism and property.

Questions remain. For example, if capital leakage from Scottish cities was prevented by the peculiarities of Scottish property law, did northern English cities suffer from this phenomenon, and if not, why not? Did Scottish cities, building on this relatively favourable foundation, do better than other British cities during the course of the twentieth century, and if not, why not? Rodger only touches on comparisons in time and space, but he might reasonably argue that the book is long enough already and that it is for others to make hay with these contrasts. In guiding us through the tricky business of raising capital, negotiating the law, and constructing the fabric of Edinburgh; in introducing us to pivotal estate developers like the Heriot Trust and Sir James Steel; in explaining the spatial configuration and class relationships in the city's architectural layout and building types; in detailing municipal and cooperative responses to urban squalor and attempts to mould civic pride: Rodger has already served up a handsome feast upon which scholars can gorge themselves.

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Brumfield, William Craft; Boris V. Anan'ich; Yuri A. Petrov, eds. *Commerce in Russian Urban Culture, 1861–1914*. Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press / Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. Pp. xiii, 239. Illustrations, index. US\$49.50 (hardcover).

The first post-communist decade in Russia saw a massive flight of historians from social history into a booming field of "archival revelations." However, when the dust settled by the beginning of the new millennium, the profession realized that declassified party archives yielded little new information. Russian political historians have produced dozens of descriptive volumes about the executions of the Romanovs, Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, and about the Cold War. But the real contribution to knowledge has been made by those few who stayed with social and economic history, which was traditionally strong in Russia owing to the prolonged supremacy of Marxist theory. Given the financial woes of post-Soviet historical scholarship, specialists on modern Russian economy and society were fortunate to have secured some additional support from the country's new entrepreneurs and foreign endowments. The collection under review once again proves that Western sponsors made excellent use of their money.

Book Reviews

Compared with an earlier, excellent collaborative effort of Russian and American urban historians (West, James L.; Yuri A Petrov, eds. *Merchant Moscow: Images of Russia's Vanished Bourgeoisie*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), *Commerce in Russian Urban Culture* wins through its comparative approach. The editors made a point of contrasting developments in several major cities of the Russian Empire and even introducing, in Blair A. Ruble's concluding chapter, a comparison of Moscow with Chicago and Osaka. The chapters by Russian and American authors share similar theoretical approaches and read well together – a proof of both the editors' fine work and the validity of Russian-American projects in humanities and social sciences. (The book is based on a project of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.)

The collection's overarching theme is the connection between commerce and urban culture during the Late Imperial period, with an emphasis on the growth of banks, the development of charitable activities, and the emergence of commercial architecture. The first three chapters portray St. Petersburg as the Russian Empire's leading banking center, where the financial elite was closely connected with government circles. Boris V. Anan'ich and Sergei G. Beliaev show that banking institutions emerged late in Russia – during the 1760s – and as a rule were of state origin. Although the State Bank and the Exchange remain St. Petersburg's architectural landmarks, private banking developed as such only after the 1860s, and entrepreneurs never challenged the aristocracy's control over the city. Sergei K. Lebedev argues that the structure and operation of St. Petersburg banks demonstrate a quick appropriation of "European business culture." (The word "European" is generally overused in present-day Russian scholarship and often means modern, Western, or capitalist.) In Chapter Three, Sergei K. Beliaev shows how, in the 1870s, the St. Petersburg municipal authorities discovered city bonds as a means of financing bridge construction, eventually using them to bankroll the city's streetcar system and telephone network.

As Yuri A. Petrov argues in Chapter Four, in contrast to the imperial capital, Moscow was fast developing into the country's major mercantile and industrial center, where a diverse bourgeoisie aggressively claimed the role of "city fathers." Old Believers, who in the seventeenth century had rejected the reform of Orthodox religion, as well as ethnic Germans and Jews, were represented prominently in Moscow's business world. Galina Ulianova reveals that bankers from all these groups contributed to charities. Although the state usually initiated charity projects, the bankers viewed philanthropic activities as enhancing their social status. In his chapter James L. West addresses an interesting question of whether the prominent role of Old Believers among the business elite in Moscow and elsewhere was determined by their religious views. Rejecting a simple explanation of the success of Old Believers as "Russia's answer to Weber's enterprising Calvinists" (80), the author notes that there was nothing in their ideology that sanctioned enterprise. Rather, the precarious

position Old Believers as a persecuted religious minority instilled the values of self-discipline, thrift, and striving for surplus. Galina Ulianova's second contribution to the volume, Chapter Seven, focuses on Nizhnii Novgorod, where commerce and industry were virtually dominated by Old Believers, who developed a network of welfare institutions and "a local civic spirit."

Chapters Eight through Twelve examine bank and commercial architecture in various cities. Boris M. Kirikov discusses financial St. Petersburg, which was represented by massively constructed state buildings. Natalia Datieva's painstaking research documents developments in Moscow, where private banks played a bigger role, and functionalism was more pronounced. William Craft Brumfield focuses on Moscow's various "trading rows" that symbolized the transition from small shops to department stores, while at the same time illustrating the search for a national style in architecture. Patricia Herlihy argues that Odessa's diverse architecture reflected the southern port's specificity as a multi-ethnic trade center. Finally, Brumfield contributes another chapter, on Nizhnii Novgorod, tracing a fascinating continuity in architectural styles in Odessa between the 1900s and the 1990s. These chapters are accompanied by beautiful illustrations, mainly building photographs and architectural drafts.

Blair Ruble's article, Chapter Thirteen, serves as a thought-provoking conclusion to the book by comparing the mercantile elite's political ideas in three economic powerhouses – Chicago, Moscow, and Osaka. All in all, the collection succeeds admirably in analyzing the connection between the entrepreneurial world of the Russian Empire and the cultural milieu of its major cities. The book is a significant contribution to the field and will be of interest to urban historians working on other regions.

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Sheard, Sally; and Power, Helen, eds. *Body and City: Histories of Urban Public Health*. Historical Urban Studies. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000. Pp. xvii, 221, tables, figures, index. US\$84.95

The essays in this volume were, with one exception, presented at a conference on the history of public health held to mark the 150th anniversary of the appointment of England's first municipal medical officer of health, Dr. W. H. Duncan of Liverpool. Though the papers selected for publication in this volume are primarily rooted in Duncan's century, their diverse questions and methodologies – contributors include geographers, economists, and social, medical, and economic historians – give the collection an impressive interdisciplinary breadth.

Three papers analyze medieval and early modern developments. Peregrine Horden's fascinating essay on medieval