

**Mack, Charles R. *Pienza, The Creation of a Renaissance City.*
Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987. Pp. 250.
Illustrations. \$39.95 (U.S.)**

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annexes of the Liberal party programs of 1960 and 1962.

Lapalme appears to be a different kind of politician. He gives the impression of caring for the people, of believing in justice and fairness. But there is an almost blind belief in the intrinsic merit of the Liberals as the only party capable of bringing about positive change or able to practice or understand democracy. That naivety is evident throughout the work.

In the first section criticism is levelled against the federal Liberals, who did not support the Quebec provincial Liberals and who advocated the separation of the two if the provincial wing ever hoped to be successful. As well, he takes the provincial Liberals to task for failing to work together, and for being easily bought off. He chastizes Liberal businessmen, the media, and the Catholic church for following Duplessis while denouncing the Liberals' actions. He is rather gentle in this and it would have been beneficial had he been more explicit.

It is, however, the proposals that he made for the Liberals to implement when in power that are significant. He stressed the importance of the Québécois culture, which must be preserved, magnified, embellished, and extolled if Quebec was to survive. Only through this recognition and promotion would their "épanouissement" occur. The creation of an office to protect the language and promote its use, and the improvement of education, with the establishment of a ministry of education, were essential for such growth.

The reforms proposed go beyond culture: expanded obligatory free education for all until the age of 16; nationalization of energy resources; ministries for health, social services, and natural resources; revision of the tax structure; increased government spending on communications and transportation; and improvements in municipal government. These suggestions

are impressive, but many were being proposed by Quebec socialists and labour leaders at the end of the 19th century.

Although favourable to Confederation, Lapalme felt only Quebec could protect its own interests. He wanted provincial powers to be extensive and desired the central government to leave the field of indirect taxation to the provincial government. No comment was made on succession duties: one therefore assumes that Lapalme favoured or accepted the federal government's proposal to reduce them, which appears inconsistent with his suggestions.

Many of Lapalme's proposals were included as part of the changes introduced by the Lesage administration, and for that reason the book merits a wide readership. It will correct the emphasis on Lesage as the progenitor of change in Quebec, a position at least a few historians in English Canada have been arguing for some time.

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Mack, Charles R. *Pienza, The Creation of a Renaissance City*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987. Pp. 250. Illustrations. \$39.95 (U.S.).

In 1350 Corsignano was a small medieval hilltown with 359 houses and 1,350 inhabitants. Over 100 years later Corsignano, renamed Pienza in 1462 in honour of Pius II, had become "a very model of Renaissance urban thought and a testimonial to architectural taste in the Age of Humanism." The story, presented in C. R. Mack's book, is a fascinating one. It is centered on a town that had hardly changed since the time of its creation, and on two men - Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, Pius II, a humanist of great renown, and Bernardo Rossellino, the great architect who was an eclectic synthesizer of classical motifs.

The drive toward changing Corsignano into a showpiece of Renaissance urban symbolism came from Pius II, two years after his pontificate, probably during a brief visit to his native hilltown. The pope was motivated, according to Mack, by a number of factors: his understanding of classical Rome, the impressions he had gathered in the Gothic North where he had served as Emperor Frederick III's secretary, his love of nature, his desire to emulate the ancient rulers who had built cities and palaces to perpetuate their names, and his decision to fulfil, in the context of a small town, what his predecessor, Nicholas V, had envisaged for Rome.

The project seems to have advanced by leaps and bounds. Initially Pius wanted to build only a church and a palace for his family, the Piccolomini. Then his project extended to most of the town, and if time, opportunity, and money would have allowed, even to the surrounding landscape with the creation of an artificial lake. Pius, says Mack, had also in mind to renovate the social and economic fibre of the town.

The project, left in the hands of Rossellino, became the synthesis of various traditions - Rome, Florence, and Siena - but in the interior of the cathedral there was also an echo of the Gothic churches on the other side of the Alps (such an interior, said Pius, "makes the church more graceful and lighter"). The entire town became an "aesthetic proving ground" and a model of the "international architectural style" of the early Renaissance. Palazzo Piccolomini, for instance, is a striking example of the departure from a medieval framework. It is spacious and open in radical opposition to medieval "towerlike verticality." Its "inviting exterior" is the opposite of the "forbidding fronts" of earlier palaces, while the whole structure is a subtle interplay of "comfort, elegance, grace, and not least, tasteful ostentation." But this is characteristic not only of Palazzo Piccolomini but also of most of the 40-odd constructions built or refurbished

between 1459 and 1464. The town is the external expression of "the inward spiritual grace inherent in the life of a Renaissance commune." However, Pienza is not the "ideal" city of the "gridiron-inspired Renaissance planner." It is neither regular, as is Antonio Filarete's Sforzinda, nor calculately irregular, as is Vincenzo Scamozzi's Sabbioneta. Rossellino follows instead Alberti's approach to architecture. In the process he "recognizes the antisocial nature of too much rigidity" and strikes "a happy medium between discipline and freedom" and in so doing he provides a legacy for the modern planner.

This account is indeed fascinating and at times eye-catching, especially in matters of architectural detail, which are preserved in a series of beautiful photographs and clear maps (printed, alas, on rather mediocre paper). It is a pity, however, that Mack never properly develops the connection between architecture and what he calls the Age of Humanism. This short-coming becomes more tantalizing because of hints he drops here and there about the relationship. He also, on the basis of the evidence presented in the book, seems to overstate the ties between Rossellino and the other great architect of the era, Battista Alberti. An example is Mack's discussion of the connection between Alberti's Palazzo Rucellai in Florence and Rossellino's Palazzo Piccolomini at Pienza (the latter often seen as an imitation of the Rucellai's facade). Mack seems to think that Rossellino's work predates Alberti's. He argues that it is possible that Rossellino received his inspiration from Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*. Then he goes on to conclude on the basis of rather tenuous evidence that Alberti had "a direct influence ... even the controlling influence" on Palazzo Piccolomini - a statement which is soon tempered by the assertion that Alberti's "possible participation in preparing the plans (for Palazzo Piccolomini) should not be overemphasized." Now the question is how can a person have a "direct" or "controlling influence" without

allowing that role to be overemphasized? In all, however, the book is well written and interesting and its overall interpretation is acceptable even if one should be a little cautious in agreeing with Mack's views when he leaves the specific area of his interest, Pienza, to tie the town's renewal to the larger issues of the Renaissance period.

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Fishman, William J. *East End 1888: Life in a London Borough among the Labouring Poor*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988. Pp. xv, 343. Illustrations, tables, map, index. \$34.95.

The Jack-the-Ripper murders, the first match-girls' strike, and the first full year of Frederick Charrington's nocturnal crusades against prostitution and intemperance all share one thing in common: they occurred in 1888 in East London. William Fishman of Queen Mary College, University of London, was inspired by the conjunction of these and other events to embark on a detailed investigation of East London during that year. The choice is a good one, for by 1888 East London had the reputation (especially among West Enders) of being uniformly poor, dirty, violent, and diseased. As such, it was one of the most threatening urban districts in Victorian Britain, a potent symbol of urbanization at its worst.

To carry out his study, Fishman read widely in newspapers, magazines, and government reports (both printed and manuscript) for 1888. Indeed, his deployment of a diverse array of primary sources is one of the outstanding features of this work. Of special note is his skilful handling of relevant fictional works, notably *In Darkest London* and other novels by Margaret Harkness. Other primary sources could have been used more effectively, however. Many are simply quoted at great length - in some places these

quotations seem ready to swamp the narrative. Perhaps as an antidote, Fishman inserts dozens and dozens of exclamation points - even into quoted material where no such punctuation exists in the original. Moreover, his command of relevant secondary sources is somewhat weak. Particularly surprising is his failure to incorporate the work of James Schmiechen and Duncan Bythell on the sweated trades and George Behlmer on the abuse of children.

Still, the resulting monograph adds significantly to our knowledge of Victorian London and demolishes a number of stereotypes. The author finds many positive things to say about Poor Law guardians, for example, and he repeatedly emphasizes the immense variety of occupations, living standards, and attitudes to be found in East London. This is not to say that Fishman has produced a balanced survey. His chapters on crime and "The Ghetto" are disproportionately long, and, when taken together, they comprise about one-third of the book. In the former he provides copious details on the violent context of the Ripper murders and spends considerable time evaluating the documentation on the six murders themselves. Following Stephen Knight, he concludes that "the most plausible evidence" points to the killings "as a series of ritual executions carried out under the direction of Freemasons in high places to protect the Prince of Wales' son, Albert Edward, ... from exposure to public scandal." In the other lengthy chapter, it becomes clear that the East London Jewish community was hardly a "ghetto," like those of Eastern Europe, but was more of an urban immigrant enclave of a kind found in many times and places. As such, the conflicting attractions of ethnic solidarity and assimilation with the wider English society were strong and enduring. Fishman is especially good on the community-building activities of East London Jews, which included the Jewish Board of Guardians, the Jewish Orphans Asylum, and the Jewish Working Men's Club. Apart from