Urban History Review
Revue d'histoire urbaine

URBAN HISTORY REVIEW
REVUE D'HISTOIRE URBAINE

Zucchi, John E. *Little Slaves of the Harp: Italian Child Musicians in Nineteenth Century Paris, London and New York.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. Pp. xvi, 208. Illustrations, maps, index. $34.95

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Volume 22, numéro 1, october 1993

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1016730ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/1016730ar

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Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)
1918-5138 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Bailey, P. (1993). Compte rendu de [Zucchi, John E. *Little Slaves of the Harp: Italian Child Musicians in Nineteenth Century Paris, London and New York.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. Pp. xvi, 208. Illustrations, maps, index. $34.95]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine, 22*(1), 61–61. https://doi.org/10.7202/1016730ar

hands was displayed conspicuously and spent in ways that did not benefit their fellows citizens, contribute to collective security, or ritualistically mould unity. The increasingly burdensome taxation system, taking payments in kind, created an administrative distribution system that supplanted the place of cities in commercial networks. Civic self-government was weakened as councils came to be seen as minor administrative units and councillors looked for status and preferment in other areas. At a philosophical level, the ideal of the "good life" in the classical city proved more difficult to sustain, especially with the spread of Christianity. The essays that follow Liebeschutz's explore the decline of cities in more narrowly defined areas, Africa, Britain, the Danubian provinces, northern Italy, and northern Syria.

These two volumes complement one another and beyond their importance to scholars of the ancient world, they are of theoretical interest in conceptualizing the evolution of urban settlement on a grand scale.

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Zucchi, John E. *Little Slaves of the Harp: Italian Child Musicians in Nineteenth Century Paris, London and New York.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. Pp. xvi, 208. Illustrations, maps, index. $34.95.

A plangent title indeed, plucking at liberal heartstrings with its message of the servitude that lurked behind the serenades of street musicians in the big cities of the nineteenth century. Contemporary reformers' reports of these and other itinerant entertainment trades certainly foregrounded the victimization of children to push the case for protective or abolitionist regulation. That there was exploitation is undeniable, but John Zucchi is more concerned to get behind the sensationalist rhetoric of humanitarians and low-life journalists to reconstruct the actual practise of the trades and their working relationships. Without sacrificing the descriptive colour that comes from his variegated cast of organ grinders, fiddlers, fife and bagpipe players, statuette vendors and (small) animal exhibitors, Zucchi provides a finely worked and judicious account of the networks that took them from impoverished highland villages in central and southern Italy to the teeming sidewalks of the great world cities of London, Paris and New York. Impressive in the range and competence of its cross-cultural, cross-national research, the book is rich in the specifics of folk migration, occupational sub-cultures, urban ethnographies, the reform sensibilities of liberal bourgeois states and, oh yes, the history of children. More generally, Zucchi argues that the patterns of fixity and flow in these obscure trades prefigures the dynamics of the larger scale migrations of the late century.

The traffic in children that scandalized contemporaries is represented here as a considerable and ingenious enterprise living off the minimal resources of the traditional society that still endured in the hinterlands of a modernizing world. In effect, villagers learned to exploit the city through shrewd market research—the right kitsch for the right niche—while training and policing their child labour at a distance through apprenticeship contracts between the family and the entrepreneurial padrone. An ogre-like figure to reformers, the padrone was not necessarily rapacious; he followed customary practice and traded legitimately upon his accumulated knowledge of routes and markets. The trade could be lucrative for all concerned, and most child musicians were not cruelly treated, though there was some degeneration from the middle of the century. One suspects that it was the inescapable sight and sound of apparent innocents that formed a self-evident cause for reformers.

In Paris, however, liberal demands for protective legislation for the children were reinforced by the state's concerns for its own protection against the allegedly subversive songs the children sang. In London, while some reformers represented street musicians as children at risk, others sought to ban them as a public nuisance. In New York, the campaign to rescue young street performers from the padrone was one strand in a larger reform protest against the boss politics of Tammany Hall. What remained the most idealist reform offensive was that of native Italians anxious to protect the image of their newly-independent state against the stigma of this "ignoble commerce." Legislation in their homeland in the 1860s and '70s appeared to curtail the export of Italian children as street entertainers, though Zucchi attributes the thinning of their ranks to sluggish economies abroad. Within another decade the prime export was adult males as the vanguard of whole families, and the targeted trades were now catering or construction. With the children off the streets, they were soon off the minds of the reformers, though their exploitation probably became more severe. In various guises the padrone endured as middleman. As this excellent monograph demonstrates, it was the padrone and his young showfolk who had reconnoitred the way for their people's diaspora.

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