

glass, the maps of Part I are disappointing and convey little significant information, bibliographies are scattered and uneven in coverage, there is no index, and the gimmick of aligning tables of contents and the editor's excellent introductory notes on the right rather than the left is—to say the least—irritating.

It must be hoped that these matters will be put right in the future editions which this useful text deserves. Until quite recently, students of urbanism and urbanisation in developing countries had to be told that they were entering a very young subject, that they could not expect textbooks containing an 'established body of knowledge' and would have to find their own paths in a jungle of articles and papers scattered over a sizeable number of reports and learned journals. Thanks to the efforts of Professor Breese and his colleagues this situation is beginning to change. Every student and teacher of urbanisation should be duly grateful.

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The City in American History

by BLAKE MCKELVEY. London: Allen & Unwin (New York: Barnes & Noble). 1969. pp. 229. £1.75

This is not a legitimate book, but it is worth reviewing because it is typical of a pernicious genre of publishing enterprise. It is a book of 'readings'; more particularly an introductory essay of one hundred pages followed by another hundred pages of one-to-four page snips from documents which are to illustrate some of the points of the essay.

At this moment I have four such readers on my desk, all sent to me in the last few months by publishers' salesmen. McKelvey's book, and its three rivals, are not legitimate books because they neither contribute to scholarship nor learning. Whether one is concerned with the impact of cities, the development of cities, or life within cities, urban studies are complicated subjects requiring sustained, intelligent, ambitious scholarship. The vacation the professor takes to make a reader is time wasted from serious scholarship. New relationships are not explored, new techniques are not tried, new data are not analysed; what is already known is merely hastily illustrated.

Does it matter if a few historians waste their time? Yes, if wasting time undermines the profession. The university and college, as opposed to the trade school or secondary school, create a situation where the teacher will have time to pursue scholarship as well as to teach. What he does with that precious

grant of time is thus very important to his colleagues his students, and his patrons, the taxpayers and college donors. In the productivity of that time lies the social justification of the professor's role.

Today universities in America and Europe are rightfully attacked by their students either because university scholarship does not help people to understand the difficult problems of the modern world, or because it contributes only to private profit or public war. McKelvey's book, like all urban readers, is guilty as charged; it does not help people understand the urban world, and it was made for private profit.

In the United States the national conventions of the historical societies are now overrun with publishers' agents who are promoting series and readers or trying to sign up professors to write more such material. The atmosphere and energy of huckstering distracts these meetings from the urgent business of public access to information, the pricing and distribution of books, the management of colleges and universities, the problems of teaching and scholarship. Yet the reader game goes on.

No one can maintain that a student learns anything useful to himself or his society from a three-page snip from Jane Addams, or two quotes, for a total of eight pages, on the new federalism. But, publishers sell these books because university and college teachers assign them to their students for purchase rather than working up courses with the materials available in the local library. Thus, readers corrupt the profession at every level: the author as scholar, the college or university as a place of advanced and ambitious teaching, the pupil as serious student. When a senior scholar like Blake McKelvey, himself supported as a full-time historian, participates in this process he contributes his well-established reputation to the further degradation of our profession and its institutions.

The essay McKelvey has written on the city in American history is worth brief comment because it exemplifies a very common, but inadequate, method of historical organisation, and contains politics which also curses much American practice. The introduction is a melange without system. For example, students can use its footnotes and text as an annotated bibliography, but it will not guide them through any subject. The introduction is a capsule history of the United States as a nation, and a list of those topics that American historians have studied which took place in cities, or in which cities were actors. Nothing is steadily pursued. City rivalries helped to build canals, roads and railroads, but the topic of inter-city transport is mostly dropped after the nineteenth century. Black-white relationships are the main topic of the final chapter,

but the northern ghettos of the nineteenth century go unmentioned. The corruption of municipal politics is treated as a major event in the Lord Bryce era, but municipal corruption is not mentioned in the colonial city, even though it was an important element in Revolutionary urban politics. Nor is corruption dealt with in the post-World War II era when it is a major course of urban race conflict. This leaping about from topic to topic is very common in American historical writing, but it is an inexcusable practice since the discontinuity of subject-matter makes it impossible for the narrative to explain change over time, which after all is the rationale for history itself.

Finally, a bland politics of nationalistic self-satisfaction suffuses the entire essay. Most of the chapters conclude with summaries about the parallel progress of the nation and its cities. Racism, capitalism, metropolitan segregation, corporate social structure are never taken up as themes. Thus, although most of McKelvey's facts are true as stated, the history of the American city is falsified by a covering of confident nationalism.

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Imperial Constantinople

by D. A. MILLER. *New Dimensions in History Series*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. 1969. pp. xii + 226. £4.25 (cloth), £2.20 (paper)

Many years ago that great doyen of English Byzantinists, the late Professor Norman Baynes, taught us how great an effort must be made by those who wished to master Byzantine history in order to understand a very different ethos and mentality from that of the history of the medieval European West. Much more effort is required for an understanding of D. A. Miller's *Imperial Constantinople*. The reader must also be well versed in the jargon of contemporary sociology, which has not yet so afflicted English historical studies as it has those of our American colleagues. The result is a very heavy-going narrative, playing upon concepts that are often much too big for the flimsy data offered in support and completely devoid of a vital chronological framework. The down-to-earth urban historian will feel stranded in a sea of mystical and metaphysical rhetoric.

The idea behind Professor Miller's book is obviously interesting, and one of considerable concern to urban historians. A capital city like Byzantium cannot be regarded simply as a collection of inhabitants and their bodily and administrative

requirements. It had an organic quality, a life of its own, which in turn reflects the complicated roots and ideas of the society from which it sprang. In a sense it had two lives. It had its own life as a city, and a life that belonged to it as the centre of the Byzantine world. Too often one feels Professor Miller fails in his attempt to distangle the Constantinopolitan wood from the Byzantine trees. To write about Constantinople, and to convey something of its character as a city and as a capital of a great world would require an *opus magnum et ingens*. Such a history would require much more detailed analysis than Professor Miller gives us if it is to explain, as he tries to do, the decline of a city from its supposed apogee 'somewhere' in the tenth century. It is right to point out the fatal flaws and weaknesses in the Byzantine bureaucracy, to analyse the anti-urban sentiments of the Byzantine aristocracy, and to suggest that these two factors together contributed in no small measure to the defeat at Manzikert. But many other outside factors not mentioned need to be analysed: the Normans, the Latin Church, the Seljuk Empire. The final chapter of the book, 'The Epilogue, the Failure of the City', will just not do.

Professor Miller's book has a value if we use it to find out more about the city itself, but it is a pity that nowhere does he give us any idea of its population. The chapter on the economy of the city and his unravelling of the intricate system of administration and the bureaucracy provide much of interest and importance, and whets out appetite to know more about the organs of the actual administration of the city itself as opposed to those organs of government and administration which really belonged to the empire as a whole, but which, like the court, happened to be located in the city itself. The author provides a vivid picture of the streets, the houses, the different quarters, the areas for foreigners, the food, sport, and the factions (Blue, White, Green and Red).

There is a vivid account of the role of demons in the Byzantine outlook, though nothing about the role of relics. To the West Byzantium was a vast treasure-house of relics, hence much of the pillage of 1204. But above both demons and relics there was the hold of Orthodox Christianity over the populace of the city, of which Professor Miller tells us virtually nothing. After all, in 1054 Schism began that has lasted between the Latin and Greek Churches until the present day.

The book on the whole is disappointing and its illustrations as pointless as they are poor.

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