



J. F. Merritt (ed.), *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598–1720*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. xii + 304 pp.

Studies of London in the early modern period have flowered brightly and abundantly in the last few years, after several decades when the field lay largely barren and neglected. Cultural geographers, literary scholars, musicologists as well as historians have been busy gardeners. This new collection edited by Julia Merritt brings together well known experts on London with religious and political historians. It looks at changing perceptions and images of the capital during a period when its population rose from under 200,000 inhabitants to nearly half a million; a time of economic expansion but also one punctuated by the upheavals of the Civil War and English Revolution and the catastrophe of the Great Fire of 1666, which destroyed a good part of the old City. In an interesting chapter Julia Merritt considers how the later editions of John Stow's *Survey of London* (1598), the first published history, reinterpreted the city's development, shifting from Stow's nostalgic vision of the past to a more forward looking view that lauded Protestant achievements and celebrated recent changes. Also on the historiography, Patrick Collinson reminds us that Stow looked at London's past through rose-tinted crypto-Catholic spectacles. Turning to other forms of memorialisation, Ian Archer highlights the way that guildhalls and parish churches with their monuments, paintings and lists of officials and benefactors, served to maintain continuity with the city's pre-Reformation traditions, as well as confirming company and parochial loyalties and the position and reputation of civic worthies (more might have been said how memorialisation also served to protect charitable benefactions from predators). Vanessa Harding shows that literary descriptions and maps plotted the contours of an ever expansive metropolis- the growing density and infilling in the inner city with multi-occupancy infilling and shacks and cottages (as at the Tower), and the extension of more respectable construction to the new suburbs, thereby contributing to growing social differentiation. There is also an interesting section on types of space (as parishes became both and less significant). Urban space is further considered by Robert Shoemaker who looks at its use by women and suggests that in some respects they travelled more widely in the capital than men. In a good chapter, Tim Hitchcock analyses the different kinds of beggars in the Georgian metropolis- the itinerant domestic beggar (begging from house to house), the beggarly self employed, and the stationary public beggar. The growth of public improvement leading to wide, clear streets and the spread of railings separating house and pavement created somewhat anonymous public areas perfect for stationary begging, which was increasingly tolerated (of course, rising levels of prosperity and the general containment of poverty may also have contributed). Another valuable contribution is by Laura Williams who argues that post- Restoration

town histories and other descriptions put greater stress on proximity to green space and fresh air. This reflected changes in the real world where, in the West End at least, access to the royal parks and private gardens were more and more prized by the genteel classes, often themselves social migrants from the countryside. The new urban green spaces tempered bucolism with civility and public display. Finally there is a miscellany of pieces. Peter Lake discusses pamphlets and plays before 1640 which excoriated the vices of the city to frighten, edify and entertain the respectable citizenry (not unlike the mendicant literature at this time). Tim Harris returns to the London crowd and changing Whig and Tory perceptions of it. Nigel Smith draws attention to the preoccupation with fire in the writings of London preachers and other commentators- as for instance, in the identification of civil or religious division with fire. This was perhaps not so surprising in a large wooden metropolis before the conflagration of 1666.

Some of the chapters appear miniatures- well polished pieces for a small circle of specialists. Others illuminate more important themes in London history- such as memorialisation and urban space. Personally I would have liked more on the continuing role that rituals and ceremonies had in the later Stuart capital, with the streets thronged with processions, not least by clubs and associations, like the county feast societies or the later freemasons, marching back and forth across the City and suburbs, celebrating society, civic and other traditions, old and new. But overall, this is a useful and interesting volume, albeit one which competes in the increasingly crowded market place of London studies.

* * *

Julia Merrittin toimittama teos käsittelee Lontoo-kuvaa ja Lontoon kaupunkiin liittyviä käsityksiä 1598–1720, jona aikana kaupungin historiaa leimasivat suuret muutokset, mm. voimakas väestönkasvu sekä kaupungin palo vuonna 1666. Arvostelun kirjoittaja **Peter Clark** toimii kaupunkihistorian professorina Helsingin yliopistossa. Hän on kirjoittanut ja toimittanut lukuisia kaupunkihistoriaa käsitteleviä teoksia.

The author of the review, Peter Clark, is professor of urban history at the University of Helsinki, Finland. He has written and edited several books in the field of urban history.

ENNEN JA NYT
Historian tietosanomat