

Quant à la décision de traiter simultanément de l'histoire culturelle et de l'histoire religieuse, elle se justifie justement par ce constat d'une « rupture historique entre le profane et le sacré » qui ne fut ni brutale ni complète mais qui au contraire se comprend à l'intérieur même de cette histoire plus globale de la culture que fait apparaître les processus d'industrialisation, d'urbanisation, de communication.

Compte tenu des difficultés de cadastrer ce domaine du culturel et surtout du culturel contemporain, l'ouvrage de M. Gerbod constitue une synthèse provocante de l'évolution culturelle européenne mais surtout française depuis 1815 et une introduction de grande qualité à l'histoire, aux questions de méthodes et aux champs de recherche actuels de l'histoire culturelle et de l'histoire religieuse.

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FRANZ BALTZAREK, ALFRED HOFFMANN and HANNES STEKL. — *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft der Wiener stadterweiterung*. Vol. V of *Die Wiener Ringstrasse. Bild einer Epoche*. Edited by Renate Wagner-Rieger. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1975.

The social and economic pressures associated with nineteenth-century industrialization forced drastic changes in the size and lay-out of cities. Sometimes this reorganization occurred through more-or-less uncontrolled speculation; other times it was carefully planned and supervised. Two of the most spectacular examples of supervised change were Paris and Vienna. Pride of place must go to the rebuilding of Paris under Napoleon III, but the creation of Vienna's famous Ringstrasse during the long reign of Franz Joseph is a worthy comparison in terms of its economic, social and cultural impact. The recognition that the Ringstrasse symbolized an important cultural epoch now beyond recall moved the West German Fritz Thyssen Foundation to sponsor a multi-volumed investigation that will undoubtedly make it the best studied street in the world. The present volume deals with the economic and social history of the Ringstrasse; most historians will probably consider it the lynchpin of the series.

During the century and a half before the mid-nineteenth century, Vienna emerged as the preeminent metropolis in Central Europe. The physical lay-out of the city, however, changed little in response to this growth; the inner city with the imperial court and its appendages remained sealed off from the surrounding suburbs by walls, bastions and glacises. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century numerous writers were advocating the razing of the fortifications, but it was not until after the revocation of the city's status as a fortress in 1817 that such proposals were seriously considered by the Habsburg government. Nonetheless, little had happened by 1848; the dozen or so projects submitted over the years were all thwarted by financial problems, jurisdictional disputes and lack of interest on the part of Emperors Franz and Ferdinand.

This situation was substantially altered by the political and economic reforms and reorganization that followed the accession of Franz Joseph to the Habsburg throne in December, 1848. In 1852 a commission was established to evaluate proposals to raze the fortifications and the rivalry between the Emperor's two most influential, competent ministers, Trade and Finance Minister Bruck and Interior Minister Bach, pushed the matter forward. Ultimately Bach's version won

out; on December 20, 1857, Franz Joseph signed the well-known proclamation beginning with the imperious words "It is My Will..." that set in motion the construction of the Ringstrasse.

The circumstances of its approval determined the character of the Ringstrasse project as a contribution to Vienna's city-planning. Its construction was put under the aegis of the Interior Ministry and it remained essentially an imperial project, serving the imperial needs with little concern for the overall needs of the metropolis. The various advocates of the razing of the fortifications and the sub-division of the glacis prior to 1857 had argued that the project would answer several pressing urban needs: alleviation of traffic congestion, new public markets, reasonably-priced housing, representational buildings and governmental offices. The resultant Ringstrasse really only met the latter two. Instead of being separated by bastions, the inner city and its suburbs became separated by a monumental boulevard whose numerous public edifices — opera, theatre, museums, university, parliament, etc. — were an imposing testimony to imperial splendour and authority. These were joined by other non-imperial representational buildings — the stock exchange, a new city hall, two concert halls, an additional theatre, an exposition hall, etc. What residential buildings did find a place along the boulevard and its immediate hinterland were equally monumental and catered almost exclusively to the *haute bourgeoisie* and the aristocracy. The Ringstrasse became above all a preserve of the aspiring so-called "second society" — the industrialists, bankers, merchants, rentiers, etc. of the new industrial capitalist order; it was their patronage of the area that made the Ringstrasse promenade between Schwarzenberg Platz and the Opera such a social event.

It should not be thought that this situation was solely caused by the project being directed by imperial authorities. Financing problems played a great role as well. The original organizer of the project, Interior Minister Bach, wanted the state to direct it but realized that to tie it to state finances would jeopardize its completion because of the chronic crisis in the state budget. Thus a special authority, the *Stadterweiterungsfond*, was established on a self-financing principle; it would cover the costs of the imperial buildings through the sale of the property, i.e., the fortifications and the glacis. Over the long run the authority succeeded brilliantly: its income between 1858 and 1914 exceeded its outlay by ten million florins; but this mode of financing militated against the preservation of green spaces and modestly-priced apartment houses.

The three authors utilize a topical approach with each responsible for particular chapters. The result is considerable repetition, stylistic variation and a disjointedness that makes it difficult to follow an argument. It is also regrettable that the authors focus on events in Vienna largely in isolation; they should also have considered the ramifications of the construction of the Ringstrasse on the economy and society of the entire Empire. To what extent did the concentration of energies and resources on the rebuilding of Vienna affect the process of investment and economic growth in the critical decades of the 1860s and 1870s? Did it not promote the speculative attitudes that contributed to the disastrous *Krachs* of 1873? Such macro-economic questions are not posed in this volume. On the other hand we are given a painstakingly researched account of the economics and social structure of the Ringstrasse that is invaluable if old-fashioned. The narrative is supplemented by several appendices giving house values, names of owners, etc. and by forty-seven well-chosen pictures handsomely reproduced; a comprehensive bibliography, an index and two large, folding maps complete the scholarly apparatus.

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