

SHAO, Qin — *Culturing Modernity: The Nantong Model, 1890–1930*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004. Pp. xvii, 351.

Histories of Chinese cities and urban reform have suffered from two deficiencies. They tend to concentrate on Shanghai and Beijing, China's two great centres that captured the imagination of the West, leaving almost all of modern China's rich urban history simply untouched. Secondly, monographs on Chinese urban history have thus far neglected theories of urban history and space. Instead, they concentrate on a narrative of urban reform that privileges foreign-controlled concessions as the catalyst for change. In this way the scope of the field, Chinese-controlled and defined urban reform movements, and new theories of urban time and space have been ignored. Happily, Qin Shao's *Culturing Modernity* has none of these deficiencies and is thus a welcome addition to the English-language material on Chinese urbanism and urban history.

Shao's monograph traces the history of an experiment in urban reform and self-government in the city of Nantong, Tong prefecture, Jiangsu province. This history is woven together with that of Nantong's champion and reform leader, Zhang Jian. By connecting Zhang's rise to economic and political prominence and linking his transformation from social outsider to insider with his role as Nantong's educator, director, and benefactor, Shao constructs a local history that connects both the elite and the reform. Indeed, one of the monograph's many strengths is Shao's observation that the reform cannot be understood without an appreciation of Zhang's complex motivational mix of social climbing, patriotism, and reformist zeal.

The monograph begins with a narrative of the city's reform and Zhang's role. In subsequent chapters, Shao examines the reconfiguration of urban space, the imposition of new ideas of time on Nantong's population, and the attempts to disseminate Nantong's successes through an expanded print media, displaying the city's success not just through its new parks but in the new museum and theatre and sponsoring tourist trips to promote Nantong as China's premier model city. The monograph ends with the decline of Zhang's project and attempts to write and re-write Nantong's history to find a usable past amid the political turmoil of China's last 40 years.

Shao's project has as its theoretical basis the premise that modernity is not just about reform but about creating models to display that reform, what Shao refers to as "exhibitory modernity" (p. 5). As such, the city's reform was meant to demonstrate, exhibit, and teach that Nantong, Chinese cities, and the Chinese could embrace modernity. Shao demonstrates that Nantong's remaking was not just city reform but was meant to serve as a model for a complete re-ordering of urban space, conceptions of time, mass media, education, and even leisure. All of these were ways in which Zhang and other elites could express their identities as patriotic Chinese through building, exhibiting, and promoting an urban Chinese modernity.

Shao argues that Nantong was supposed to serve as such a model. Not only would the city be modernized, but its citizens' lives would be ordered and rationalized, schools and museums would highlight Nantong's and the region's modernity and industrial capability, the entire project would be publicized in the press, and a tourist

infrastructure would be built to accommodate and show off the model city. All this was intimately linked to the prestige of the local elite and the Zhang family.

Shao also places Nantong's reform in the context of elite activism and elite disappointment with politics following the 1911 Revolution. The contributions of local elites to urban reform have not received a detailed study by the first generation of urban historians of China. Urban and social reform through new urbanism was Zhang's strategy to move up the local hierarchy. Seen as a *nouveau riche* by Nantong's elite, Zhang parlayed his financial success into a leadership role as patriotic urban reformer. Shao also shows that Zhang was inspired by Japanese models of social and urban reform, bringing back to the literature an emphasis on Asian, rather than exclusively Western, models in a search for an "authentic" Chinese version of modernity (p. 5). Shao pioneers a new interpretation — placing urban reform not just in the reactive context of post-1911 treaty-port politics. In this way Shao avoids the idea of the worst of the passive Chinese, but instead connects urban reform to Chinese initiatives originating in late-nineteenth-century reforms.

The monograph begins with Zhang's early career, his attempts to break into local politics, and his success in initiating changes that would bring Nantong much attention in the early twentieth century. Situating such reforms in the context of late Qing reforms of, among other things, local government has been so far little studied. The section is not long (13 pages), and this is a pity. The connections Shao draws between self-advancement, patriotism, and self-promotion are fascinating. In particular, Shao reveals the continuities behind this elite role. Zhang was doing what the Chinese elite had done for centuries: direct and regulate local affairs with an eye toward a national reputation. Zhang's discomfort with new forms of mass nationalism and demonstrations arising out of the May 4th movement, outlined in chapter 5, show that for Zhang the path to modernity was still one that was to lead from the elite to the people.

The final section of the monograph covers how this attempt at urban modernization has been remembered. Shao writes that Zhang's image was subject to the political re-makings of the Chinese Communist Party. Remembered fondly as a patriotic industrialist and reformer in the late fifties and sixties, during the Cultural Revolution Zhang was reviled, but Shao points out that many protected his legacy. In the post-Mao era, Zhang has been once more returned to his place as a patriotic hero.

Where Shao may have exaggerated her point is on the ephemeral nature of the Nantong model. Working with a theory of modernity as show or demonstration, Shao projects an idea that Nantong was simply an elaborate façade with nothing behind it. Surely there was more to Zhang's reformist project than an elaborate stage set designed to project an image of modernity? Nantong was a living city whose inhabitants, for reasons of patriotism, civic pride, or self-interest (according to Shao), accepted and appreciated the changes. By reducing Nantong's reform to the level of imitation, Shao discounts the lasting contribution of Zhang and others like him. The new illustrated histories of China's self-governing cities in the 1920s had an exhibitory purpose, but they were also examples of civic pride and evidence of a positive political life in the turmoil of the warlord era. Perhaps Zhang's attempts at reform were set back by his obvious use of the reforms to promote himself and his family. In other Chinese cities where the reform project was more evenly distributed among the

elite, reform continued well into the 1930s. As Shao points out, there were other Nantongs, not just the Zhang's "model" city. However, these are relatively minor criticisms. Shao Qin's monograph deserves praise for its deft handling of theory and its emphasis on the domestic roots of Chinese urban reform.

Blaine Chiasson  
*Wilfrid Laurier University*

SMAIL, Daniel Lord — *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity, and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264–1423*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003. Pp. 277.

Depuis une dizaine d'années, Daniel Smail s'est taillé une solide réputation d'historien de la culture juridique au Moyen Âge, notamment sous l'angle d'observation privilégié qu'est celui de la ville de Marseille, célébrée pour l'antiquité et la richesse exceptionnelles de ses archives. Déjà en 1999, il avait publié une première étude remarquée sur l'activité notariale dans le port phocéén au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, fruit de ses recherches de doctorat : *Imaginary Cartographies: Possession and Identity in Late Medieval Marseille*. Vision originale du rôle décisif du notaire dans la redéfinition de l'espace urbain et l'identité individuelle, *Imaginary Cartography* avait tout à la fois séduit la communauté historienne – en particulier aux États-Unis –, tout en soulevant quelques réserves de la part des médiévistes provençaux sur le caractère spéculatif de ce schéma historique (voir le compte rendu de John Drendel, *Speculum*, vol. 76, n<sup>o</sup> 4, 2001, p. 1103–1105). Dans *The Consumption of Justice*, Smail reprend avec doigté le chemin des archives marseillaises pour nous livrer sa conception de la culture juridique médiévale, se distanciant de la tradition institutionnelle pour privilégier les échos émanant de la *vox populi*. Ce faisant, il entend jeter l'éclairage sur les justiciables, non pas comme de simples objets – passifs par définition – d'un cadre centralisateur (l'État, c'est-à-dire le comté de Provence) et d'un processus de haute culture (le droit romano-canonique) qui leur échapperaient, mais bien à titre de participants pleinement engagés à saisir les tribunaux de la ville, conscients de l'investissement financier et émotionnel qu'il leur en coûte, et ce, moins pour étancher leur soif de justice – la majorité des causes ne débouchant ni sur l'arbitrage ni sur une sentence judiciaire – que pour soulager leurs émotions. Ainsi les tribunaux de justice prennent-ils l'apparence d'un théâtre communautaire où se joue, dans une atmosphère d'intense compétition, la publicité des sentiments, et par conséquent, l'affirmation des réputations, de l'honneur et du statut social. En fait, nous dit l'auteur, il faut rapprocher ce comportement psycho-sociologique de celui qui soutiendra la naissance de la société de consommation dans l'Europe du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, époque où l'accès croissant aux biens de luxe se substituera en partie au litige judiciaire comme vecteur d'affirmation sociale :

In looking for explanations for the European-wide decline in rates of litigation in the eighteenth century, I am inclined to suggest that the eighteenth century marks the age