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Ian Talbot, Tahir Kamran. *Colonial Lahore: A History of the City and Beyond.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. 256 pp. $35.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-064293-8.

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Although landlocked and without high-rise housing, Lahore has the identity and vibe of any modern city. The residents of Lahore are a proud people, who have known the good life as well as the bad, and such memories live on, not least among the thousands turfed out and exiled from the city in the years because of partition. This is a Lahore neglected and ignored in most historical literature, a literature that focuses on communal strife, or idealizes Lahore through an orientalist optic as static, somehow preserving the mysteries of the unchanging East. Happily, this book falls into neither category. Rather, it is a synthesis of recent work that has opened up the city's history to new questions and perspectives. The authors are seasoned Punjab historians, but in this work they seek to write a global history of Lahore, illuminating the connectedness of its citizens, their links with zones of trade, consumption, and cultural zones within and beyond the city. In this way, they describe the architecture of the city as influenced by waves of migration. They show how the development of military cantonments from the nineteenth century onward shaped the urban economy and topography, similarly the railways from the 1870s. Lahore as a crossroads of empire also emerges from this study: made and remade by the Mughals, Persians, Sikhs, and the British.

Evidence of Lahore's cosmopolitan identity is drawn from familiar sources: tourist accounts and the travelogues of overseas visitors, such as Beatrice and Sidney Webb. For the most part, however, Tahir Kamran and Ian Talbot take us to a Lahore that was invisible to Rudyard Kipling and other Western gazers. The authors point the reader to the spaces in the city where Punjabis came together as poets, wrestlers, filmmakers, and pilgrims. The first banks of Lahore, the city's newspapers, motor industries, and shopping centers are vividly brought to life. Sometimes the coverage is too slight. For example, we are offered snippets from the English-language newspapers, rather than analysis of long runs. At other moments one is left asking for more: why for instance did Lahore come relatively late to the itinerary of Thomas Cook's tours? On the whole, however, this is a satisfying read. Biographical vignettes enliven the chapters, for example, the legendary wrestler Ghulam Muhammad or "Gama," Altaf Hussain or "Hali," and the musharia culture of the city. We watch the rise and fall of the business magnate Lala Harkishen Lal, and follow the experiences of migrants from Delhi. The combined effect of mixing life stories with structural analysis is to emphasize how the unique character of the city comes from the particular alchemy

created by its people. This is the book's main achievement.

In most respects, the book is a fresh departure from older treatments, continuing the innovative work of such scholars as Farina Mir (***The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab*** [2010]) and William Glover (***Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City*** [2008]) on the cultural history of the city. However, the authors do tend to follow Markus Daechsel (2012) in privileging the agency of the Lahore middle class, meaning the that book mainly explores the city of a certain type of Lahori: bourgeois, literate, and masculine. [1] Although women appear as consumers in one chapter, they are absent from the discussion here of Lahore's cultural scene, its public spaces, its changing fashions. Women were as much a part of Lahore's elite in the colonial period as were men, even if less documented. A peek at just a few celebrities, such as the artist Amrita Shergill and the Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz, would have presented a more rounded picture. Other examples would complicate the story. Women were central to the establishment of the first female college in Lahore in 1922, and they participated in local politics (especially at the time of Bhagat Singh's trial) and in local election campaigns.

A preoccupation with the middle class also excludes other Lahoris, and Lahore's "others," namely, Dalits or Ad-Dharmis. The Ad-Dharmi movement started out from nearby Hoshiarpur, and had a huge impact on Lahore politics in the 1920s and 1930s, a factor that is neglected in the authors' account of local opposition to the Simon Commission in 1927. Moreover, looking at what the British termed the "depressed classes" would add a number of layers to the story of Lahore presented here. How were these communities zoned in the spatial development of the city? Where did they fit? Did the modernizing city liberate "untouchables" from their caste background, or was their ascribed lowly status reinforced in the urban context? What about the municipal history of Lahore: could the arguments of Vijay Prashad's study of the Balmikis of Delhi (***Untouchable Freedom: The Social History of a Dalit Community*** [2000]) be extended to Lahore? In these ways, the history of women and Dalits would have enhanced this book. Despite that omission, we are left with a rich and varied history of the city. It is a must read for any student of Punjabi history and of the history of the city in South Asia. And it shows the way ahead for future research for historians of Lahore, Faiz Ahmad Faiz's "city of lights."

Note

[1]. Markus Daechsel, "Being Middle Class in Late Colonial Punjab," in ***Punjab Reconsidered: History, Culture and Practice***, ed. Anshu Malhotra and Farina Mir (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 320-356.

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