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*Berlin's Forgotten Future: City, History, and Enlightenment
in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (review)

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festhält" (10). Jeder Tag der zweijährigen Reise ist so abgedeckt, aber persönliche Elemente wie Beschreibungen und Urteile (von der Landschaft bis zum Volkscharakter) sind knapp gehalten und eingestreute Anekdoten sind selten, ausgesuchte sprachliche Formulierungen und Witz nicht das Hauptinteresse der Schreiberin. Aufgrund der Tatsache, daß es all dies immerhin gibt, wendet Brandsch sich gegen bisherige Forschungsmeinungen, die das Tagebuch als für die Herzogin geschrieben und deshalb als deren amtliches Dokument (Sandra Dreiser-Beckmann) oder ein Bedienstetentagebuch (unveröffentlichte Magisterarbeit von Dorothee Müller, Marburg 2005) in Ergänzung zum privaten Tagebuch der Herzogin einordnen. Die Herausgeberin argumentiert dagegen, es handle sich bei dem Tagebuch um "ein privates Schriftstück, das seine Spezifik gegenüber anderen zeitgenössischen Tagebuch- und autobiographischen Texten aus der sozialen Existenz seiner Schreiberin, einer im Dienste an ihrer Fürstin aufgehenden Hofdame, gewinnt" (11). Bei Nichtspezialist/innen erweckt der Titel sicher falsche Vorstellungen, denn spannend zu lesen ist dieses Diarium nicht.

Das Titelzitat ist nicht glücklich gewählt, stammt es doch vom Besuch des Antikensaals im Münchner Herzogsschloß (am 25. August 1788, 25), thematisiert also nur die Vorfreude auf Italien. Passendere Aussagen finden sich zuhauf, gerade in ihrer Schlichtheit, das der häufige Vermerk "Abends in die Oper" oder "Den ganzen Vormittag Visiten" (16. April 1790, 142); "Das Meer sah ich nie prächtiger" (8. Februar 1789, 65), "Früh um 9 Uhr von Rom ab" (19. April 1790, 142), "Vormittag in die Sixtinische Capelle" (10. April 1789, 76), "Abends zeichneten wir mit Tisbein" (21. März 1789, 72) oder "Auf keinen Theater in Neapel wird geküßt" (30. August 1789, 99), wenn denn ein Stichwort Italien oder Kunstinteressen vermitteln soll.

The University of Iowa

Waltraud Maierhofer

Matt Erlin, *Berlin's Forgotten Future: City, History, and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Germany*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004, 216 pp.

Matt Erlin's *Berlin's Forgotten Future* represents an ambitious and (mostly) successful attempt to isolate eighteenth-century discourses on urbanity and modernity that strikingly prefigure those we associate with names like Simmel, Kracauer, and Benjamin. Indeed, as Erlin suggests, "the innumerable interpretations that [the modern urban] upheaval elicited . . . have tended to overshadow earlier confrontations with urban modernity" (64). The book aims to show that many of the central *topoi* of modernity's engagement with the city, from the city's representation of a peculiarly modern rupture with the past, the modern city's impact on the subject's sensorium, and the city as a site of social disaggregation and thus of enhanced individual autonomy originate in eighteenth-century debates over the role of the city and the meaning of the transformations taking place there. As Erlin's exciting opening chapter makes clear, the city of Berlin, which became the royal Prussian capital at the very beginning of the eighteenth century and tripled in size as the century wore on, became a flashpoint in debates over the mechanisms of historical change, the meaning and merits of the Enlightenment, and the ascendant Prussian monarchy.

In considering the apparently unprecedented newness of the city and its life forms, Erlin argues, the eighteenth century oscillated between two conflicting models of historic time—one based on the notion of a fundamentally ahistoric truth, the other based on a developmental model that emphasized the incom-

mensurability of the present. Erlin is able to trace this central contradiction quite effectively—however, the reader gets little sense of whether the contradiction (which seems to inhere to some extent in the idea of Enlightenment itself) is unique to eighteenth-century Germany, and whether its connection to the question of urbanity is unique to Berlin. Certainly the fact that Berlin emerged as a metropolis in the eighteenth century from what had hitherto been a glorified village brings to the fore the question of change and its relationship to historical time. However, planned cities, rebuilt cities and reimagined cities were common throughout the eighteenth century (this reviewer happens to hail from one of them). Did similar discourses attach to and similar questions hover over Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Kassel? A little more comparison would have gone a long way towards establishing the Berlin part of Erlin’s “forgotten future.”

A central confrontation with Berlin’s modernity centered around the question of whether the clear rupture with the past visible there constituted something genuinely new or a mere curious novelty—whether this newness was the result of evolution or simply a shallow, passing fad. Eighteenth-century debates about Berlin, Erlin shows, were always also debates over the Enlightenment and its ramifications. The book’s second chapter, easily its strongest, focuses on discourses of fashion and their impact on representations of Berlin: as a matter of cyclicity and repetition, the ebb and flow of the fashions represented for the eighteenth century the exact opposite of linear progress. It was this sense that much of the critics of the ascendant metropolis drew on, suggesting that, with its squalid huts behind grand facades and its quickly-built palaces, but moreover with its bustle, impermanence and superficiality, the city of Berlin was a world-historical flash in the pan, here today, gone tomorrow. This of course also entailed a rejection of the kind of modernization in evidence in Berlin—modernity itself became a mere blip, rather than an inexorable forward motion. Berlin’s defenders on the other hand insisted precisely on Berlin’s status as a token of an as yet unrealized future.

The third chapter traces Friedrich Nicolai’s engagements with Berlin in his critical oeuvre and the novel *Sebalduß Notbanker* (1773–76). Nicolai’s writings generally stage an opposition between the “virtual” public sphere of the Republic of Letters and the preferable physical public sphere of interaction, exchange, and sociality. Nicolai associates this sphere not just with the metropolis, but more specifically with the capital city, thus suggesting that, when compared to London and Paris, the shortcomings in Berlin’s intellectual life inhere not in its being insufficiently metropolitan, but rather in its not being the capital of a modern nation state. The author convincingly shows that it was precisely Nicolai’s situation at the heart of an emerging metropolis (and an emerging mercantile class) that shaped his understanding of historical change and its permanence.

The fourth chapter, probably the book’s weakest, focuses on Lessing’s *Minna von Barnhelm* and the role the metropolis plays in the play’s happy ending. In general, Erlin’s chapter links Tellheim’s change of heart that resolves the play to urbanity understood as a loosening of conventional bonds. However, given the fact that the city in general (to say nothing of Berlin in particular) looms only with the faintest presence throughout the play, and that *Minna* can also be seen to partake (as Erlin himself acknowledges) of the notion that travel sets you free, that “*Stadtluft macht frei*,” that an inn occasions productive mixings of social classes and geographic regions, the play’s connection to enlightenment discourses about Berlin seems much more tenuous than in the other texts Erlin considers.

The author shows quite clearly that it was no accident that Nicolai and Mendelssohn arrived at a particular understanding of urbanity, enlightenment and historical change in Berlin—but Lessing's *Minna* lacks any such specific groundedness. The book's final chapter is much more successful in tethering the development of Moses Mendelssohn's philosophy to his urban environment. Mendelssohn's thought on sociability and human perfectibility clearly presupposed the social disaggregation effected by the urban alembic, and his thought on religion could only emerge from a city like Berlin, in which the Jewish community enjoyed prominence precisely because there were fewer entrenched structures in the city. Nevertheless, as Erlin shows, Mendelssohn's later works are marked by much greater ambivalence about the effects of urbanity on enlightenment and human perfectibility (160)—the threat of atomism, of urban *anomie* looms large in the eighteenth century already.

This book opens fascinating new avenues into a history of an urban modernity well before what has become the "canonical" urban modernity of German Studies. Erlin's accessible prose and lucid presentation make this study especially valuable. However, as the wide scope and sweeping syntheses of the early chapters give way to increasingly narrow single-author chapters with relatively limited purview (and at times relatively tenuous connections to Berlin), the book loses some of its initial momentum—a problem perfectly encapsulated (and even compounded) by the fact that the book's conclusion consists of little more than a synoptic close reading of a single poem. The book narrows its focus too early and leaves the reader dying to know more about the emerging urban eighteenth century.

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Jost Schillemeit, *Studien zur Goethezeit*. Ed. Rosemarie Schillemeit. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006. 620 pp.

Der Großteil der hier vorgelegten sechszwanzig Studien des 2002 verstorbenen Germanisten Jost Schillemeit wurde bereits zu seinen Lebzeiten veröffentlicht. Der älteste Aufsatz erschien 1964, der jüngste ein Jahr vor seinem Tod. Die Herausgeberin betont, dass "der Verfasser . . . an eine Sammlung dieser Studien nicht gedacht" (616) habe. Dennoch handelt es sich bei diesen Arbeiten um alles andere als eine überflüssige Publikation. Knappe vierzig Jahre war Schillemeit sowohl als Autor als auch Herausgeber eine wichtige Stimme in den literaturwissenschaftlichen Debatten Deutschlands. Ob es sich nun um Rezensionen oder Beiträge in Buchlänge handelte, stets argumentierte Schillemeit auf hohem wissenschaftlichem Niveau. Schon aus diesem Grund lohnen die nicht mehr leicht zugänglichen oder vergriffenen Texte eine erneute Lektüre.

Die Disparatheit der verschiedenen Studien lässt sich auch durch die Gliederung in fünf Schwerpunkte (Poetik und Hermeneutik / Studien über Goethe / Verfasser von Bonaventuras *Nachtwachen* / Studien über Heine, Mörike, Gutzkow, Fontane, Raabe / Philologische Streifzüge) nicht verbergen. Ins Positive gewendet, könnte man sagen, dass dieser Band Schillemeits äußerst facettenreiche Arbeit dokumentiert. Kritiker mögen ihm zwar ein nicht allzu ausgeprägtes Theoriebewusstsein vorwerfen, Schillemeit zeigt allerdings auch Qualitäten, die unabhängig von theoretischen Standpunkten auch heute noch gewürdigt werden sollten, nämlich stupende Belesenheit und manchmal geradezu an Pedantik grenzende Genauigkeit beim Lesen. Was er für eine Mörikelektüre empfiehlt, trifft