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Reviews of books

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Gregory Smith and Jan Gadeyne (eds.), *Perspectives on Public Space in Rome, from Antiquity to the Present Day*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013. 433pp. 112 BW illus. £75.00.
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This volume is one of the fruits of the first Biennial of Public Space organized by the Italian National Institute for Urban Planners in 2011. Rome is the focus of this book because of 'its organization around public space' and its 'central and timeless characteristic'. But permeating the project is a sense of threat to the/any city as public space. Ali Madanipour begins the book with a passionate 'presentation' that unnecessarily surveys Rome's urban history while asking what the future of public space in a market economy might be: the gated compound, and lawns designed to be looked at, not walked upon? This volume examines the problem – directly and indirectly – through 14 historical case-studies.

In the first of five chronological sections, Manuel Royo argues that the centre of ancient Rome was as much defined by sacred and political rites as by geography. The first emperors of the new Flavian dynasty reset the city's foundation myth by refocusing the city on the Colosseum and the victories celebrated there, conveniently erasing Nero's duality of private palace and public forum at the same time. Royo's essay is followed by Dallas DeForest's exploration of the role of bath complexes in late antiquity. These massive structures – cities within the city – embodied the permanence of empire and imperial rule long after the emperors had moved east. They were commissioned for public use by emperors who cast themselves not as kings but as public representatives and military generals sharing the spoils of war.

The second section moves on to the medieval city. Jan Gadeyne defines the transformation of ancient Rome according to 'short cuts' which made the best of crumbling remains by cutting more direct routes through them. In this incredibly rich essay the reader is walked round part of the Campus Martius, and shown fragments that survive above and below ground. Unfortunately, it is rather meanly illustrated by a hard-to-read plan where a few well-chosen details would have better suited to the text. Lila Yawn moves on to consider the 'publicly accessible' spaces within the Aurelian wall in the second half of the eleventh century, just before the city became a forest of towers – Master Gregory's 'spikes of grain'. The essay reveals the city to be a stage for papal ceremonies, such as stational masses, but it reads like a fragment of a larger work and its focus is unclear as a result.

The 'Renaissance' section of the book moves from St Peter's to the Capitoline Hill and back again. Ioana Jimborean's somewhat undigested narrative on the benedictions loggia of Pius II (1458–64) at St Peter's rehearses arguments originally made by

Christof Frommel and, more recently, Hannes Roser on the significance of the loggia for the presentation of the pope as both individual and as office at a time when the papacy rarely appeared in public. Paul Anderson describes the installation of the ornate coffered ceiling in the Franciscan church of Santa Mara in Aracoeli on the Capitoline Hill as a stage for the celebration of the victory of the battle of Lepanto (1571) and reconstructs the triumphal procession that celebrated Marcantonio Colonna's victory as papal admiral. Tamara Smithers argues that Michelangelo's use of the giant order on both the Campidoglio and the new St Peter's was an assertion of papal supremacy both in Rome and in the Christian world.

Jasmine R. Cloud begins the 'Baroque' section by treating the Forum in the seventeenth century as more than the victim of early modern vandalism. It was Pope Alexander VII (1655–63) who had the cattle market removed to the Velabrum near the river port, and instigated an avenue of elm trees between the arches of Titus and Septimius Severus to signal a point of traverse across the space and connect the churches that dominated the area. Joanna Norman's essay on the theatre of life performed in the city's open spaces, with particular focus on Piazza Navona, comes closest to dealing with the themes set out in the book's prologue and introduction. She points to the 'complexity of the relationships between the many institutions, groups, families and individuals seeking to appropriate ... supposedly "public" space in Rome'.

In the 'Modern' section Paola Di Cori's thought-provoking essay explores Rome through the eyes of Sigmund Freud who dreamed about the city long before he could or would visit it. Freud surrounded himself with his collections of antiquities designed to recalibrate how he looked 'from the inside to the outside'. Public and private space is as much psychological as physical or architectural. Vittorio Vidotto surveys changes in political public space – which in Rome can be national, municipal or ecclesiastical – from the unification to the present day. He clearly sees the church as an obstacle to the establishment of a civil tradition: 'public' equals 'civil' which was 'suffocated for centuries by the autocratic power of the Popes'. Nevertheless he provides a useful overview of the ways in which the city has been transformed, including the long shadows left by Fascism.

In the 'contemporary' section, Gregory Smith considers the city as film set for Pasolini's iconic films and returns to the theme of interior/exterior opened up by Di Cori to explore the public/private divide. David Mayernik explores the shift in the twentieth-century city from place or area to a dependence on building with the accidental result that 'junkspace' (non-space created by the corners or awkward angles left over by all-important architecture) becomes a secondary, unintentional public arena. He writes as an architect rather than as a historian, admonishing contemporary politicians for thinking only of buildings, not of the spaces they inevitably create or disrupt. Marco Cremaschi rounds off the book by analysing the current state of play in understanding, planning and reinventing Rome's public space. As the city grows outwards in all directions, the result of planned and illegal building, he finds an unresolved tension between the city as unified centre and periphery, and as dispersed, federated urban sprawl, each part defined (or not) by its own public space.

In their introduction, the editors set up Rome as a universal example: what are the lessons that can be drawn from this volume (and from the city) as to 'the fate of the city as a unique expression of western culture'? How useful is space, as opposed to time/history or society, in 'understanding human action'? Perhaps

it would have been better to have opened up questions for the essays to tackle, rather stress a thematic unity that only highlights difference in the end. A lack of stylistic and formatting consistency further fragments the text. The richer details of the unfolding narrative represented by essays rarely refer to the book's themes but certainly add up to more than the parts.

This volume contains a wealth of information and, though uneven, some of the essays (e.g. Gadeyne, Vidotto) are bound to become set reading for students, scholars and anyone wanting to understand how Rome evolved from classical monument to medieval maze and back again. Overall, the value of its chapters is in the synthesis of recent research they achieve and in the long period the book as a whole covers. But it does not – perhaps cannot – hang together. A bit like the palimpsest that is Rome. But that is what makes it so interesting.

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John Broich, *London. Water and the Making of the Modern City*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013. xiii + 214pp. £25.00.
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Book titles are tricky things – serving multiple purposes. Broich's ambitious title is shortened on the spine of this slim volume to just 'London'. The sub-title also suggests a much larger work, and in many ways I wish it had been. It would have been more helpful and accurate to specify the period – essentially Victorian – or the predominant focus on water policy. So the reader who begins this book hoping to understand London's achievement of an adequate water supply (in both quality and quantity), and perhaps even how water was seen and used by Londoners, is going to feel slightly short-changed. The book ends at April 1903 on the eve of the creation of the Metropolitan Water Board (MWB). London, viewed in terms of its water supply, was still far from modern: a significant number of properties did not receive a constant and pressurized supply, and often the upper floors had no piped supply at all. There were sporadic disease scares caused by failures in the filtration system, and beneath London's streets lay a jumble of pipes belonging to the eight private water companies that were about to be brought into public ownership.

In many British towns and cities in the mid-nineteenth century the threat of epidemic diseases (Broich oddly shortens to 'epidemic') was used by local authorities to gain parliamentary approval to buy out – municipalize – private water companies whose primary concern with generating a good dividend for their shareholders was increasingly seen as incompatible with providing water as a public good. Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham and most other large municipalities took control of their water supplies and usually then began monumental engineering projects to bring remote, unpolluted upland water to their residents. Ratepayers complained, but were persuaded that these civic investments would have wider social as well as economic paybacks.

London was different. There was no single 'local' authority for the whole urban area, but responsibilities were divided between ancient parish vestries and *ad hoc* organizations, such as the MWB created in 1855. With rapid population growth, the eight private water companies found their river and well sources increasingly polluted. The MWB was finally pushed by the appalling condition of the Thames