In seeking the origins of the celebrated portico-framed fora of Imperial Rome, John R. Senseney explores the earliest recognizable example of this architectural type, a lost porticus of the 160s BCE built by the victorious commander Gnaeus Octavius. Adrift toward Empire: The Lost Porticus Octavia in Rome and the Origins of the Imperial Fora adduces ancient testimony to aid our understanding of the purposes and formal appearance of this pivotal monument. While the author suggests that Octavius emulated a Hellenistic model, he does not posit that the patron necessarily sought to associate his triumph with those of his Greek forebears. Those meanings did, however, become attached to the building type by later viewers and the architects who created the Imperial fora. In order to appreciate this phenomenon, the author questions the usefulness of fixed categories like “Hellenistic” and “Roman” and argues for a history sensitive to the fluidic intentions and changing meanings of architecture.

Jacob van Campen, the most distinguished architect of the Dutch Republic during its seventeenth-century Golden Age, is identified as the designer of Amersfoortweg (the Amersfoort Road) in A Roman Road in the Dutch Republic. This large-scale landscape architecture project was conceived to improve transportation in the province of Utrecht and also to catalyze the transformation of a large wasteland into a landscape of prosperous agricultural estates. The grandiose roadway, over sixty meters wide and lined with trees, ran perfectly straight for most of the route between Utrecht and Amersfoort. Jaap Evert Abrahamse argues that Van Campen and his clients created Amersfoortweg on the model of the ancient Roman roads that they had read about in the Renaissance treatises that were beginning to circulate in the Netherlands.

Gothic architecture, revived and decorated with motifs borrowed from folk art, provided the foundation for the creation of a Croatian national style in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Dragan Damjanović explains how the Viennese architect Friedrich Schmidt and his student and collaborator Herman Bollé created the signature architecture of this movement, the brilliantly colored and boldly patterned tile roofs of St. Mark’s church (restored 1875–82), Zagreb cathedral (restored 1878–1902), and the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Marija Bistrica (restored 1878–85). In Polychrome Roof Tiles and National Style in Nineteenth-century Croatia, this architecture is placed in the context of the Gothic Revival in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the collecting and analysis of traditional textiles by the amateur ethnographer Felix (Srećko) Lay.

Gondar, Ethiopia, expanded dramatically in the late 1930s as a colonial administrative center for Italian East Africa. David Rifkind shows how urban design and architecture functioned in Gondar between 1936 and 1941 as key tools of Italian colonial policy. Italian urbanism throughout the fascist era illustrates the disquieting compatibility of progressive planning and authoritarian politics, and in Gondar modern urban design was used to define imperial identity for both Italian settlers and African colonial subjects. Gondar: Architecture and Urbanism for Italy’s Fascist Empire documents the striking sensitivity to topography and historical preservation that Italian designers brought to their colonial mission as well as the skill with which they adapted to the material and political challenges of working in Italy’s overseas dominions.

In the 1920s and 1930s Savannahians argued about the future of their world-famous town plan, with its many squares. Savannah’s Lost Squares: Progress versus Beauty in the Depression-era South tells how one body of modern Savannahians—primarily young, white, male business owners—argued that the squares had to be altered—paved over for parking or cut open to allow highways to penetrate them—to accommodate the automobile. Their ideas were opposed by the majority of the city’s residents, who, often led by women’s groups, rallied to preserve the beauty and pedestrian character of the squares. Time after time, the “progressives” were defeated, and the squares largely endured until they came under the protection of sweeping preservation laws in the 1950s. But Nathaniel Robert Walker explains that in 1935, when economic conditions were dire, the financial might of the federal highway program combined with local racism to destroy three of Savannah’s squares for the making of the Coastal Highway, a path for motorized modernity.