Harmanşah’s book would have benefited from a lighter load of theoretical agenda yoked to its chapters, some of whose gist is perhaps much more immediately available in the articles published by the author on the various aspects of this study. Such an observation, however, cannot over-ride the importance of collecting within one volume all this rich material in bringing to attention the many elusive cultural aspects of a crucial but still relatively little understood geographic area during a key span of time in Near Eastern antiquity.

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Notes
1. One is reminded here of Barry Kemp, Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization (New York: Routledge, 2006 [1989]), 111–60, a chapter titled “Dynamics of Culture,” which makes a case for the crucial role of the “preformal,” meaning local, rudimentary, or provincial, in the forging of ancient Egyptian dynastic culture, especially architecture, in contrast to an “art historical” method that picks and chooses highlights and achievements in explaining historical development (esp. 112). Kemp’s very apt emphasis on the “preformal,” however, is readable only in reference to the ancient Egyptian monumental record, which eventually ends up taking the upper hand in the intellectual agenda of his book as well. Here, it is not so much Kemp’s approach that is problematic as it is the way in which he (mis)represents or (mis)construes a scholarly discipline, art history (and what it really does), against which he would like to juxtapose and justify his own. Comparable, in principle, is Harmanşah’s choice of words in stating that he is taking into consideration the thickness of the orthostat slabs and not just their “fancy representational surfaces,” which, according to him, have been analyzed in the “standard art historical” fashion.

2. We are often conditioned to value three-dimensionality in our perceptions of architecture and space. An unusual but revealing discussion that argues for an essentially two-, even one-, dimensional, planar and linear, mind-set in ancient Mesopotamian conceptions of architecture and space may be found in Irene J. Winter, “Reading Concepts of Space from Ancient Mesopotamian Monuments,” in Concepts of Space, Ancient and Modern, ed. K. Vatsyayan (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1991), 57–73, which Harmanşah also lists in his extensive bibliography.

In 1967 a group of five buildings bearing the name Marina City opened for business on the north bank of the Chicago River. The city greeted the addition enthusiastically, and on two levels—cultural and social. The arts community recognized the pair of sixty-story towers that dominated the new complex as architecturally unprecedented in Chicago. Unlike most of the city’s tall buildings, they were cylindrical, not rectilinear. They were constructed of concrete, not steel. Forty-two stories of residences with balconies above were served by fourteen stories of parking ramps immediately below, and the edges of both were curved. The designers did not intend the resemblance, but the public could not help likening the elevations to a pair of giant corncobs and enjoying the comparison.

So much for Chicago’s early, fascinated response to the vision newly materialized on the river. No less important, especially to the city’s movers and shakers, was the probable demographic impact of Marina City on the inner city. Chicago had recently witnessed a major population shift, with downtown steadily losing numbers, and economic and political clout, to the suburbs. For a variety of reasons Marina City promised a reversal of these fortunes.

In 1959 William McFetridge, head of the Chicago Janitors’ Union, approached local architect Bertrand Goldberg with a request that Goldberg design a new headquarters for the union in downtown Chicago; the union would provide the financing. Conversations led to the proposal for a building that would combine commercial and residential facilities, with the understanding that housing would
be made available to office workers in the downtown area, thus bringing new life to that section of the city. The result would be, in Goldberg’s words, “a 24-hour environment” (Ryan, 34). With the passage of time, the building became five buildings, consisting of apartments, an office building, retail and other commercial spaces, and recreation facilities, the last including an ice-skating rink and a theater. At the conclusion of the 1960s, it could be argued that Marina City had been the most successful achievement in the revitalization of the downtown of an American metropolis. The suburbanization of Chicago had been reversed.

This preface is a brief summary of events and concepts covered in detail in the two books reviewed here. Igor Marjanović and Katerina Rüedi Ray’s *Marina City: Bertrand Goldberg’s Urban Vision* consists of six chapters, with an introduction and an epilogue. The first chapter, “Before Marina City,” begins with Goldberg’s birth in Chicago in 1913 and discusses his later years as a student at Harvard College during the Great Depression. The authors comment on the effect that misery had on Goldberg’s immediate and long-lasting belief in the influence of social conditions on architecture. One of his Harvard professors urged him to go to Germany and enroll at the Bauhaus. Once there he learned of the relationship of industry and the arts. In Dessau and Berlin he worked under Mies van der Rohe, who became a major figure in the young man’s maturation—only later to be given up when Goldberg rejected Mies’s inclination toward rectilinear composition.

That rejection, expressed in full in the curvilinearity of Marina City, had to wait. Goldberg would return from Germany to America and—as luck would have it—to Chicago, where modernism found a home in the work of several Chicago architects—George Fred Keck, Paul Schweiker, Buckminster Fuller—as well as in that seminal affirmation of early American modernism, the Century of Progress International Exposition in 1933. Goldberg worked on his own in the mid-1930s and opened a practice in 1937. His special competence in prefabricated structures was manifest in his North Pole Mobile Ice Cream Store, finished in Chicago in 1938. That building, notable for transparent glass walls and a cantilevered tension-cable-supported roof, provided evidence of Goldberg’s mastery of the modernist vocabulary. Though three decades would have to pass before Marina City was constructed, the stage was set.

By the time ground was broken for Marina City, in 1959, a third man had been added to the Goldberg–Miettirej team. Thirty-five-year-old Charles Swibel had taken courses in commerce and finance at Northwestern University, and that was enough to ignite a natural gift that led to his playing a major role in the financing of Marina City.

Following their objective discussion of the five buildings of Marina City, Marjanović and Rüedi Ray devote three chapters to interpretive treatments of the buildings. “The Structure” begins with a statement by Carl Condit, who was unsurpassed as an authority on architecture: “Bertrand Goldberg’s Marina City...is a stunning exhibition of the unparalleled and inexhaustible power in the city’s great building tradition” (71). “The Deal” describes the way in which, in the authors’ words, “In Marina City, labor unions, the political machine of Chicago, the federal government, real estate interests, bankers, and architects used the market economy’s mechanisms to advance new ideals about urban life” (93). “The Image” is a twenty-four-page-long fortissimo advertisement promoting the project.

Zoe Ryan’s edited volume *Bertrand Goldberg: Architecture of Invention* was published in appealing form, with richly displayed photographs and essays printed in a variety of colors. It accompanied a retrospective exhibition of the work of Goldberg in the galleries of the Art Institute of Chicago. Its authors are as exhaustive in their coverage as Marjanović and Rüedi Ray are in theirs, and the two books have added significantly to our awareness of Goldberg’s achievements, especially since the Art Institute of Chicago has set up an archive in his name. The book is the architect’s gatekeeper, and for the most part it is reliably accurate—though, as we shall see, not always.

The lead essay is by Elizabeth A. T. Smith, who served at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. Here she surveys the record of Goldberg’s professional reputation, and finds that despite the early local success of Marina City, he lost two important commissions at about the same time: the American Broadcasting Corporation Office Building (1963) in Manhattan, and the San Diego Theater (1968) in La Jolla, California. With the coming of the 1970s, he had become known to the architectural press as a regionalist.

Once Smith makes that point, she goes on to discuss Goldberg’s successes, citing three Chicago buildings notable for his inventive ways of reflecting the economic class of their residents. The Astor Tower Hotel (1963) was built in an exclusive Gold Coast district and constructed with a central core that prefigured Marina City. Goldberg also used an unusual construction sequence in the building that was meant to minimize disruption of its neighborhood. Astor Tower stood for luxury. Goldberg’s wife, Nancy, managed the restaurant, naming it Maxim’s (echoing Maxim’s in Paris), thus providing a touch of the French capital’s elegance in Chicago.

Marina City followed, both chronologically and symbolically, as housing for the middle class. It led to changes in the zoning laws as well as in the Federal Housing Authority’s definition of family housing to include apartments for couples without children.

The third of the buildings cited by Smith as important to this period in Goldberg’s career was the Raymond Hilliard Center (1966), a low-cost housing complex commissioned by the Chicago Housing Authority. Residents were meant to be the elderly and families with children. The center consisted of two towers, each with load-bearing walls that were dependent on Goldberg’s innovative use of concrete as a structural material. The remainder of Smith’s essay is given over mostly to miscellany, though she devotes considerable space to Goldberg’s River City (1986), a Chicago housing complex that established him as an urbanist of consequence.

Alison Fisher, assistant curator of architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago, is the author of the chapter titled “The Road to Community: The Houses and Housing of Bertrand Goldberg.” Goldberg had been
back in Chicago for a year before designing a house in 1935 for Harriet Higginson in Wood Dale, Illinois. It showed the influence of Mies van der Rohe, apparently still the master Goldberg remembered from his Bauhaus days, brightly enough that in 1937 he designed a house in Glencoe, Illinois, for Lewis Abrams that repeats the rhythms of Mies's famed 1930 Tugendhat House in the Czech Republic. With the passage of time Goldberg became his own man. In 1937, in the Chicago suburb of Melrose Park, he and fellow architect Gilmer Black saw to the completion of five houses based on an earlier Goldberg project. The five became known as the “Standard Houses Corporation answer to the lowest cost housing problem” (66).

Goldberg's interest in the design of communities lay behind his first project built with a developer—the 1954–55 Drexel Town and Garden Houses, made in partnership with Arthur Rubloff, president of a noteworthy Chicago real estate firm. Goldberg now assumed a direction he would follow for the rest of his career: projects based on their relationship with nearby urban areas. Drexel was built in a neglected neighborhood on Chicago's South Side, close to cultural and educational institutions, including the University of Chicago. From the remains of a once splendid mansion Goldberg created an urban landscape of sixty-four townhouses, a common playground, and a pavilion for community activities. Drexel also enabled lower- and middle-income families to gain homeownership.

During the 1950s Goldberg added multifamily urban constructions to single-family residences. Given the personal connections cited earlier in this review, it was now only a short step to Marina City.

There are some minor errors in the text. In their first chapter, “Before Marina City,” Marjanovic and Rüedi Ray identify an architect working for Mies and his colleague Lilly Reich as Bruno Walter (24). In fact, one Ernst Walther was Mies's assistant in those Bauhaus years, as Smith notes, correctly, in her essay (Ryan 21). Zoë Ryan, in “Shifting Scales: Bertrand Goldberg's Furniture Designs,” also names Bruno Walter as Mies's assistant, but she commits other mistakes as well. She identifies Holabird and Root as the designers of the Travel and Transport Building of the Century of Progress Exposition. The actual designers were Edward H. Bennett, John Holabird, and Hubert Burnham. Ryan also writes about a plywood chair (1939) and bench. The chair is illustrated in a two-page spread; the bench is not shown. Ryan continues: “Goldberg's plywood chair and bench have finlike braces providing additional support …” Nothing like that appears in the illustration. These errors detract from the otherwise thorough and accurate commentary on Goldberg's furniture design.

With “Humanist Structures: Bertrand Goldberg Builds for Health Care,” Alison Fisher contributes a second essay covering a portion of Goldberg's output that could be a corpus unto itself. Her title recalls Goldberg's belief that architecture as an activity should be inseparable from social considerations. To that end the hospital seemed an ideal institution. Goldberg visited a demonstration hospital at the Century of Progress International Exposition in 1933, an occasion that would lead to his active involvement in hospital design in the 1960s. That connection demonstrated something about Goldberg's creative approach. Many architects did not seek hospital commissions; the technical and programmatic requirements were burdensome and did not encourage creativity. Goldberg, however, took as a challenge the very problems that other architects turned away from. By the mid-1960s he had gained commissions for master plans for Harvard University, the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and Stanford University. He was a pioneer in the organization of quarters serving physicians, nurses, and patients. One of his most accomplished buildings, Prentice Women's Hospital (1970) in Chicago, was notable for four adjacent cylindrical concrete lobes, with a nurses' and physicians' station at the intersection. In 2011 the owner, Northwestern University, decided to have it demolished and replaced by a biomedical research tower. Renowned architects such as Frank Gehry, Renzo Piano, and Tadao Ando signed a petition protesting the demolition plans, but the university has proceeded with its intentions.

The final essay, “Speculating Beyond Iconicity: Bertrand Goldberg's Urban Project,” is by Sarah Whiting, dean of architecture at Rice University. One of her principal topics is Goldberg's interest in population density. Much of the public attention to Marina City, she notes, was paid to the amenities—bowling alley, theater, ice-skating rink, and office building: “Goldberg's interest was primarily the complex's density and its effect on the city” (152). As Whiting points out, quoting Goldberg, “If one were to string together a line of Marina Cities, the entire population of Chicago could fit along ‘the North Bank of the Chicago River in a strip four miles wide running from the Merchandise Mart to the lake’ ” (152). Goldberg went on to speculate about the schools our taxes would pay for, how much cheaper the costs of electricity and telephone service would be, and other benefits. These concerns were central to his urban vision. Another Goldberg quote cited by Whiting summarizes the arc of his career: “I became sort of interested in another aspect of architecture; not interested alone in architecture as a series of individual projects … but to see how those various projects began to influence other people's lives, who weren't our clients necessarily, became a matter of interest to me so I became really interested in this thing called urbanism” (156).

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Constitutional Modernism: Architecture and Civil Society in Cuba, 1933–1959

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Through times of democracy and dictatorship, revolution and rebuilding, cultural actors in twentieth-century Cuba self-consciously constructed national traditions, synthesizing colonial anachronisms left after the island's independence from Spain in 1898 with imported modernist innovations. Between the ouster of the infamous president-cum-dictator Gerardo Machado in 1933 and the revolution of 1959,