topic directly; as a result, her chapter is not well integrated into the theme of the volume.

John N. Hopkins’s “The Capitoline Temple and the Effects of Monumentality on Roman Temple Design” also addresses the significance of visibility, looking specifically at the influence of the Capitoline Temple on perceptions of monumentality. Hopkins argues that features of the enormous temple, such as its lateral colonnades, deep porch, triparted façade, colossal foundation grid, and unique architectural decoration, became so synonymous with conceptions of Roman monumentality that during the Republic they signaled “monumental” even for much smaller temple constructions. Hopkins looks beyond Italic foundations for buildings that might have influenced the temple’s multitude of innovative features, positing that Roman architects could have been aware of contemporary colossal constructions in Ionia. This is supported by the Capitoline Temple’s sima decoration of sculpted anthemion friezes, a specific form found previously only in Asia Minor. Hopkins’s attempt to trace directly the varied origins of, and influences on, the monumentality of the Capitoline Temple is one of the many strengths of his contribution.

The remaining two essays consider monumentality in terms of commemorative aspects, which Meyers notes “are at the core of the original monumentum’s role as a reminder” (16). In “The Performance of Death,” Anthony Tuck examines the evolution of Etruscan funerary markers from small, individual forms to the monumental tombs of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. He suggests that monumentality does not have to be coherent to scale, but it should address the perceptions of audiences—of both structures and events—and the observable level of effort and expense that has been invested. With these factors in mind, it is possible to see funerary markers to distinguish personal and familial importance within Etruscan communities. While this is a carefully written and interesting essay that focuses clearly on the idea of monumentality as commemoration, at times the work’s connection to architecture—and consequently to the theme of the volume as a whole—becomes lost.

P. Gregory Warden also considers commemoration as a form of monumentality in “Monumental Embodiment,” which offers a theoretical approach to the Etruscan temple. Starting from a discussion of the metaphorical “burial” of a temple at the Etruscan site of Poggio Colla, Warden considers various ancient and modern ways in which the body is used as a metaphor for the temple and how the rituals of death are entwined with religious architecture. Directly addressing the topic of monumentality, Warden argues that it relates not only to size but also to symbolism, functionality, and even the historicity of architectural traditions.

Overall, this thought-provoking volume is a valuable contribution to a topic that should continue to receive attention. In some ways, the lack of cohesion in the contributors’ discussions of monumentality serves to emphasize nuances inherent in this concept as well as the challenges of applying a modern term to ancient architecture. As is often necessary in studies of Etruscan and early Roman architecture, many of the authors employ innovative theoretical and methodological strategies (particularly Colantoni and Warden) to address critical absences in the material and literary records. In this way as well, the volume represents an important contribution to Etruscan and Roman architectural history. This is a carefully edited and well-illustrated book. The decision to include an individual bibliography at the end of each chapter is warranted considering the diversity of topics and the freestanding nature of many of the contributions.

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Daniel Savoy
Venice from the Water: Architecture and Myth in an Early Modern City
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The city of Venice is defined by a tenuous pact with the sea. Nature and architecture coexist in a balance unprecedented in urban history. No political, cultural, ecological, or architectural examination of Venice can approach the topic without some consideration of the city’s maritime setting. In recent publications, scholars have explored the rich architectural heritage of Venice through a variety of critical stances, yet none has analyzed the urban morphology and aesthetics of this miraculous “floating” city from the perspective of the aquatic milieu as the physical and metaphorical generator of architectural form. In Venice from the Water: Architecture and Myth in an Early Modern City, Daniel Savoy combines scrupulous archival research with extensive voyages through the waterways of Venice to formulate a theory based on a calculated process of water-oriented Venetian urbanism during the medieval and early modern periods.

Despite reference to early modernity in the book’s title, Savoy’s investigation starts in the early thirteenth century, at which time, he proposes, “the Venetians shrewdly recognized potential in their aqueous site for spectacular architectural exhibitionism and then realized that prospect through inventive urban design” (111). He argues that architects and patrons throughout the period under examination sought to perpetuate the “myth of Venice” as a divinely established civic entity through dreamlike architectonic compositions for the express purpose of enchanting and astounding visitors to the island city. Savoy further contends that the Venetian waterways were “integral components of a unified land and aquatic-based spatial network” (4), as important to Venetian civic life as land-based streets and squares. Building on Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan’s history of the concerted efforts of the Venetians to shape a landmass out of their watery surroundings, Savoy proposes a parallel collaboration among architects, planners, and patrons in developing a water-inspired architectural aesthetic. Citing Dominion of the Eye, the groundbreaking study on fourteenth-century urbanism in Florence by Marvin Trachtenberg (Savoy’s doctoral adviser), he suggests that a similar process of rational medieval planning occurred on the waterways of Venice.
The narrative unfolds thematically in four parts. An examination of aquatic metaphors in the myth of Venice establishes the underpinnings of the Serenissima's civic identity. A reconstruction of the premodern ceremonial routes leading to the city underscores the link between Venetian architecture and the hydrokinetic experience. Subsequently, a chronological examination of how Venetian palace façades along the canals evolved as a complement to their aquatic environment is followed by a case study on Andrea Palladio's ecclesiastical “temples” on the Bacino San Marco.

Savoy prefaces the book by placing the reader squarely on the water through the eyes of Cesare Vecellio, a sixteenth-century visitor gliding sybaritically in a gondola toward the “beautiful palaces” of Venice (1). Early modern literary accounts, paintings, and engravings, as well as lavish photographs illustrating the dynamic visual properties of the water—taken by Savoy from the vantage point of a small craft—constantly bring the reader back to the experience of voyage and discovery on the waters of the island republic. Savoy’s thesis is grounded in the belief that the powerful “psycho-spatial” or “somaspheric” (14) experience of the aquatic traveler was intuitively recognized by medieval and early modern planners, who capitalized on the distinctive “spatiovisual conditions” (8) and metaphorical qualities of the aqueous environment to devise a water-based civic identity. This perceptive approach draws on Richard Téri’s concept of the sublime in architecture and on John Onian’s notion of “neoarisththistory” to probe the visual preferences and aesthetic motives of Venetian planners.

Central to Venetian imagery and self-promotion is the metaphorical richness of the lagoon setting. Accordingly, Savoy recounts the important religious and secular aquatic-based ceremonies that filled the Venetian ritual calendar, starting with the Marriage of the Doge with the Sea, which originated in the early eleventh century. Perpetuation of early legends of the city’s divine creation through literary conceits is exemplified by a mid-sixteenth-century oration to Doge Francesco Venier by Venetian diplomat Giovandomenico Roncale, who proclaimed, “[The city of Venice], truly a marvel to everyone, was not made by hands of men ... but by the word of the heavenly King, above the water ... with superb palaces that are simultaneously in the water, earth, and air” (71). Additionally, Savoy meticulously interweaves the panoply of aquatic meanings embedded in Venetian artistic and literary productions, panegyrics, and early modern cartographic representations portraying the Bacino as a cosmological center. Expanding on the noted theatricality of the Piazzetta, Savoy examines the nature of the lagoon itself as a theatrical venue, animated by floating stages, naumachiae, and elaborate ephemeral constructions. This recounting of the numerous metaphorical strains of aquatic meaning provides little new scholarship, but it is fundamental to the development of Savoy’s thesis on material production in relation to the aquatic setting.

No other European city could equal the drama of the waterborne ceremonial entries staged by the Venetians for visiting nobility. Savoy’s second chapter is devoted to the scenographic qualities of the waterways and the ritual geography through the lagoon, wherein four ceremonial approaches to the city, roughly approximating the cardinal points, are reconstructed. Reliant on their Venetian hosts to transport them by gondola over the waters, foreign dignitaries were subject to a prolonged and highly structured course of travel designed to maximize and exalt the dramatic effect of the city as it slowly came into view. A detailed analysis of each route, illustrated by an excellent series of plans (executed by Angela Savoy) linked to a succession of photographs, aids in reconstructing the “strategic sequence of premeditated tactics” (39) used in the incremental movement toward the monuments of the Bacino. Savoy proposes that building sites were identified and façades planned specifically in response to the pathways and perspectives of these moving retinues. Although pageantry in the immediate environs of the Venetian islands has been amply documented, this analysis of early modern processions through the vast 550 square meters of the greater Venetian lagoon provides fresh and important new material on Venetian ceremonial life in conjunction with urban building ventures.

The second half of the book focuses on the architecture itself by initially examining what might translate in a land-based city into street façades—the palaces fronting the Grand Canal and numerous ri. This is followed by an inspection of the monuments of the city square—specifically, Palladio’s religious structures on the Bacino San Marco. In accordance with their varied “spatiovisual conditions,” planners applied different scenographic strategies to each aquatic environment. Savoy argues that the traits of the sumptuous Veneto-Byzantine and Gothic palaces—their verticality, light and airy weightlessness, and copious fenestration, as well as the rich façade surfaces decorated with frescoes, colored marbles, and delicate Gothic tracery—were all intentionally developed to create an otherworldly “aquatic aesthetic” specific to the water setting. He notes that this aquatic urbanism was neither codified nor implemented universally throughout the city; rather, it developed incrementally and through constant refinement over centuries.

Savoy attributes the distinctly Venetian adaptation of Roman classicism—evident in smooth, uniform rustication and the use of Proconnesian marble, with its watery striations, as well as other colored marbles and fenestration that dissolved the wall plane and echoed the rhythm of preexisting palaces—to the “principles of buoyancy.” Citing the sixteenth-century controversy between the giovani, or traditionalists, who sought to assimilate Roman classical forms while preserving the ethereal aesthetics of the Veneto-Byzantine and Gothic architectural heritage, and the vecchi, or progressives, who argued for a faithful implementation of Roman classical architecture, he suggests that the vecchi, criticizing the perceived disregard for Vitruvian order, were in fact reacting to a premeditated, antigavitational aquatic artistry that deliberately defied structural logic.

To strengthen his thesis, Savoy on occasion disregards contradictory evidence. For example, in comparing the light, refined rustication of Venetian palaces to rough-hewn Tuscan rustication, he states that the Venetian mode is antithetical to that on the mainland, overlooking numerous examples of similar delicato rustication, such as the smooth-angled ashlar of the Palazzo Sanuti Bevilacqua (1477–82) in Bologna and that in Biagio Rossetti’s Palazzo dei Diamanti in Ferrara (1493).
Although the book is structured thematically rather than chronologically, the case study of Palladio’s churches of San Giorgio Maggiore and Il Redentore in the final chapter marks the culmination of the “aquatic aesthetic” and a distinct departure from earlier urbanistic strategies through increasingly more mathematical and deliberate planning tactics. Departing from the broad generalizations utilized to identify the aquatically derived commonalities developed over the longue durée in palace façades from 1200 to 1800, Savoy’s analysis of Palladio’s work makes a cogent and exacting argument for a water-oriented urbanism as part of a deliberate communal undertaking.

Precisely plotting the “nautical” sight lines along which he surmises San Giorgio was meant to be seen, both from the entirety of the view spanning the mouth of the Grand Canal as the waterborne traveler rounds the Punta della Dogana in “hydrokinetic motion” (94) and from the city’s main longitudinal axis through the Piazzetta, Savoy establishes groundbreaking new evidence illuminating Palladio’s urban planning strategies linking land and water. Again, a series of elegant plans demonstrates the architect’s affinity with “aquatic theatricality.”

As a coda to support his belief that the geographical and material form of the lagoon city is “trans-historical and trans-cultural” (112), Savoy traces what he deems an intuitive understanding of the uniquely Venetian “aquatic aesthetic” in twentieth-century building proposals by Le Corbusier, Louis I. Kahn, Aldo Rossi, and Frank Lloyd Wright. He also notes that the premodern experience of Venice may be discerned today in the route of the water bus from Marco Polo Airport, which follows the ceremonial passageway from the north, and in the experience of visitors witnessing the perspectival display of the Piazzetta when emerging from the Canale di San Giorgio into the lagoon on the southern ceremonial path.

A minor distraction, particularly in such a slim volume, is the repetition of a number of quotes, including that of Vecellio in the preface, repeated in full in the second chapter, and the recurrence of a quote from Genesis 1:2–8 in two separate discussions on Proconnesian marble. In addition, some of the photographs of vast expanses of water and sky with glimpses of distant buildings on the horizon are of questionable value. More effective are those series of photos taken from a closer range that, linked to the text, successfully demonstrate the drama of the waterborne approach to the city’s monuments.

This highly readable, beautifully illustrated volume should have broad appeal to anyone enamored of Venice and its architecture. Moreover, with its extensive bibliography and copious notes, it provides an important scholarly resource that builds on current research in the field and suggests new avenues of inquiry. Departing from an examination of buildings and monuments as static compositions, Savoy portrays Venice as a city designed to be experienced in lateral movement, in varied weather conditions, and through aquatic reflections and controlled, dramatic perspectival approaches. As Goethe noted, in Venice “the place of street and square and promenade was taken by water. In consequence, the Venetian was bound to develop into a new kind of creature, and that is why, too, Venice can only be compared to itself.” Indeed, this is precisely what Savoy has done: he has developed a multidisciplinary topographical and contextual analysis that provides a new way of understanding the harmony among nature, architecture, urbanism, and Venetian culture that is unique to this always enigmatic island city.

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