Eugenio La Rocca's perceptive discussion in his chapter titled “The Perception of Space in Ancient Rome” introduces the second sequence of essays in this part of the volume. It also connects with Packer's chapter: the cityscape of late Republican Rome was a jumble that could not be redesigned ex nunc, and new monuments were generally grafted onto that fabric without regard for a larger plan. Augustus, as Diane Favro has demonstrated, tried to (literally) rectify the situation within existing constraints, but even that result is not enough for us to use a modern, Renaissance-based viewpoint with the laws of linear perspective and a single vanishing point. Instead, paratactical arrangements prevailed, even if they could take on the form of ensembles, as is the case with the temples at Largo Argentina. Mainly, however, the experience for the viewers was kinetic, and it was left to them to put this bricolage together in their own way—here, of course, memory comes into play.

Favro follows up on these topics with reference to MacDonald's concept of “armatures” and using Nysa in Caria as a case study. She notes that, influenced by Robert Venturi's departure from the dogma of the International Style and its substitution with a more experiential model and reality (hence Learning from Las Vegas), MacDonald's approach was toward “a more embodied, evolutionary, and operational assessment of ancient cities” (107). In MacDonald's definition, “Roman armatures are sophisticated responses to the universal urban need for an architecture of connection and passage—for unimpeded movement and casual assembly appropriately channeled and tellingly measured out for ready access to public places effectively marked.”

Armature, in most terminology, is the operating system of a city, which now can be holistically reconstructed with digital models; Nysa provides a good illustration. The application continues in the next chapter, “The Importance of the Sea for the Urban Armature in Roman Carthage,” by T.J. Morton, where the focus is on the Antonine Baths.

The book's third section, as one might expect, deals with Hadrian. In a stimulating essay, Guy Métreaux explores the connection between memory and architecture by way of Hadrian's use of “rather outdated” opus reticulatum at his Villa at Tivoli. He argues that it harks back to Agrippa, whose Pantheon Hadrian was rebuilding at the time; similar connections have been made for the caryatids. The larger panorama of associative architectural memories, resulting from Hadrian's travels, includes the palace at Upper Herodium; here Métreaux elaborates more specifically on a suggestion made by MacDonald.

Amid the focus on the Villa at Tivoli, Hadrian’s other villas have been almost totally ignored. In their contribution, Elizabeth Fentress and Sandra Gatti remedy that deficit with a detailed analysis of the Villa at Palestrina-Praeneste and Villa Magna at Anagni. Unsurprisingly, neither shows the inventiveness of the Tivoli Villa, which is truly unique. In the following chapter, “Hadrianopolis and Hadrian’s Fame as a Builder of Cities,” Corey Brennan enlarges the perspective by surveying, in their ancient context, both the traditions of the cities bearing Hadrian's name and the gingerly use of Hadrian and his empire-wide roamings by the Mussolini regime. Alexander was the great model for the former; Plutarch ascribes some seventy eponymous and other foundations to him, while Hadrian's number about a dozen, most of them renamed. That was not enough to project him as a model for the “missione pacificatrice e civilizzatrice dell’Impero.” What obtruded, mainly, was that intellectual curiosity, and not the expansion of Roman power, was the driving force for this peripatetic emperor.

The section concludes with an excellent chapter (in French) by Pierre Gros on the architectural and sculptural citations in the provinces of the temples of the divine emperors in the city of Rome. This is an important contribution, from the side of architectural history, to two subjects that have been discussed much of late: the so-called imperial cult and the imitatio urbis. Gros combines his typically sound control of architectural and other details with an acute perspective on the cosmopolitanism of the phenomenon, which accords well with the outlook of both Hadrian and MacDonald.

Part 4, “The Nature and Legacy of Classicism,” provides a fitting finale. Returning to the Pantheon, John Pinto discusses Piranesi’s evolving attitudes and, in particular, his departure from Vitruvian classicism toward ornamental license. The resulting vision was inclusive, acknowledging the authority of antiquity but also finding merit in noncanonical examples and searching for new forms. As Pinto, citing John Wilton-Ely, notes, this eclecticism of design reflected the cultural diversity of the Roman Empire; it also resonates, for example, in the articulation of modern classicism by architects like Robert M. Stern. The concluding chapter is a stimulating and almost philosophical reflection by Fikret Yegul on the classical column, showing its symbolic and even metaphorical dimensions beyond structural necessity. With examples ranging widely from Palmyra to a cartoon about the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, and including Hadrian's Library at Athens and the Pantheon, Yegul meditates on the multiple meanings columns can take on, easy anthropomorphization among them.

As the discussion above suggests, many of the chapters in this outstanding volume take on topics that connect with one another and also with larger themes. In this, and in their sophistication and substance, they reflect and are a fitting tribute to William MacDonald's interests and vision.

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Notes

Katherine Harloe

Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity: History and Aesthetics in the Age of Altertumwissenschaft

It may not seem at first glance that Johann Joachim Winckelmann has much to do with the history of architecture. His most famous book, History of the Art of Antiquity, says little about architecture beyond brief comments on the “depraved taste” of...
Augustus’s buildings and the observation that architecture differed from the other arts in ancient times. 1 But Winckelmann’s impact on the history of architecture (and architectural historians) is hard to ignore. He is credited generally with ushering in a new method of stylistic analysis, one that generations of historians of the built environment assumed and practiced whether they knew of its originator or not. He is recognized as pioneering a holistic view of art and culture in which one informed the other. He is a key figure in the Greco-Roman controversy, a set of eighteenth-century debates about the relative superiority of Greece versus Rome that formed a fundamental dispute in architecture. 2 Understanding Winckelmann is crucial to understanding the history of our discipline and the practices of modern architectural historians. Katherine Harloe’s learned, incisive book recasts this founding father, raising vital questions about the very enterprise of historical scholarship.

Harloe takes up Winckelmann as the creator of the modern academic discipline of classical studies (Altertumswissenschaft). In the 1800s, German scholars elaborated Altertumswissenschaft as a new systemic way to create a “scientific” understanding of the classical past. Nineteenth-century Germans faced a challenge: how to take the study of antiquities, a field of scholarship that had existed for more than a thousand years, and transform it into a modern discipline. These scholars held up Winckelmann as a flawed forefather, one who provided inspiration even though his interpretations and ideas were problematic. Harloe argues that the historiography of classical scholarship, especially as it has been practiced in Germany, has not been based on the foundations of the discipline constructed by eighteenth-century learned men. She sets as her project “both Winckelmann’s work itself and selected episodes in its early reception as a lens through which to examine aspects of the late eighteenth-century ‘disciplinization’ of the study of antiquity” (xvii).

Chapter 1, which serves as the book’s introduction, describes Winckelmann’s Janus-like status among those scholars who followed him. His life was hailed in many ways by the learned men who took up the study of the ancient world after his murder in 1768. Harloe demonstrates how from the 1830s to the end of World War II scholars of the classical world celebrated Winckelmann as a “monumental inspiration for the classicists of the present and future,” focusing especially on his biography (7). But, she argues, the attention classicists and others lavished on his character did not extend to embracing his theories and conclusions.

The rest of the book is divided into three sections. Part I takes up Winckelmann’s publications and their early reception, re-creating the intellectual and social context of the mid-eighteenth century. Chapter 2 examines Winckelmann’s allegiance to the stateless European community of the Republic of Letters over the more traditional political entity of the court. Harloe focuses on his attempts to insert himself into this community up until 1764, the year of the publication of his History, examining how Winckelmann’s approach was shaped by earlier Italian and French authors. In this chapter, she is especially deft at penetrating Winckelmann’s own carefully crafted self-portrait. This is an important contribution, as later scholars relied on his letters, which began to be published just after his death, and his own writings to create his biography.

Chapter 3 examines Winckelmann’s publications after he arrived in Rome in 1755. Harloe places these works within the context of ekphrastic writing from Giorgio Vasari to Jonathan Richardson. She takes up the importance of connoisseurship to Winckelmann and his use of style as a tool for determining whether a work of art was ancient or modern. She stresses Winckelmann’s study of coins, medals, and gems, a corrective to those who think of him as focused on sculpture at the expense of other forms of art.

The final chapter in Part I delves into his History of the Art of Antiquity (1764) and early responses to it. Harloe argues that Winckelmann made a shift from connoisseur to historian to create his “system” (Lehrgebäude), moving from examining individual works of art to crafting a grand narrative of the history of ancient art. She digs deep into Winckelmann’s sources, from the ancients (Cicero and Pliny) to the modern antiquarians (the comte de Caylus), concluding with the philosophes (Montesquieu and Voltaire). Along the way, she provides an excellent review of the more recent scholarship on Winckelmann. The result is a much more nuanced version of him than was apparent previously. Harloe is rightly wary of those who still claim for him the role of inventor of a new method for the study of the classical past. She also examines these primary sources, reinterpreting them in important ways. Perhaps the most significant result of her careful reading of the History is her tracing of “Winckelmann’s admission of the epistemic fragility of his historical edifice” (127) in the pages of the very text in which he elaborates his system.

Part II takes up the afterlife of Winckelmann’s ideas following his murder. Harloe focuses on the learned fracas between Christian Gottlob Heyne and Friedrich August Wolf over Homer’s poems. She analyzes this quarrel to illuminate the working methods of nineteenth-century philologists and their reliance on Winckelmann’s ideas. While both Heyne and Wolf called upon Winckelmann’s writings in their arguments and counterarguments, Heyne criticized the inaccuracies and unsubstantiated ideas he found in their pages. At the core of their debate was Winckelmann’s “system,” which divided art and cultures into eras and periods. While attacking Wolf for the incomplete evidence he used to support his conclusions, Heyne went further, calling into doubt whether a single scheme or narrative could be capacious enough to encompass the ancient past. Heyne’s explosive reading of Winckelmann is extended in Part III, which explores the work of Johann Gottfried Herder. Herder’s interests in the history of language and aesthetics made him an attentive reader of Winckelmann. He had a complex and deep engagement with Winckelmann’s ideas, critiquing his proposition that contemporary Germans could emulate the ancient Greeks and faulting him for failing to see what the Greeks learned from the ancient Egyptians. For Herder, the History provided “a historical metaphysics of the beautiful derived from the ancients, and from the Greeks in particular,” rather than “history proper” (242). But more important for Harloe, Herder attributed Winckelmann’s deficiencies not to his particular “system” or other ideas but to the problems confronted by any person who tried to reconstruct the ancient past.
Chief among many excellent contributions of this compelling book is its brilliant explication of the role that conjecture, imagination, and reconstruction played both for Winckelmann and for the nineteenth-century scholars who created Altertumswissenschaft. Harloe brings into much sharper focus the likeness of Winckelmann constructed after his death by German scholars. She is rightly skeptical that Winckelmann founded a brand-new approach to the study of antiquity and its physical remains. Her position that he “fashion[ed] pre-existing ideas and approaches into an overarching framework” is a much stronger one (107). This, in turn, makes an important contribution to the history of scholarship and the historiography of classical studies as well as to art and architectural history. Harloe also points the way to future research. We need to know much more about Winckelmann’s Roman world, the habitat in which he spent the most productive years of his life. His willingness to, at turns, respect or violate the norms of this enclave of the Republic of Letters devoted to the study of antiquity seems critically important to an understanding of both his biography and his contributions.

In addition to these offerings, Harloe’s book presents benefits for architectural historians. Knowing something about the critical fortunes of Winckelmann and his “system” for interpreting the art of the ancient world seems very important to our field right now. At a moment in which the historical study of architecture in its global incarnations is becoming ever more important, thinking critically about our methods is especially valuable. Is there a way of doing history that is capacious enough to allow us to think and work as historians on a global scale? Opening up larger questions like these is one of the many valuable aspects of this book.

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Notes
1. Johann Joachim Winckelmann, History of the Art of Antiquity, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2006), 331. For Winckelmann’s dismissal of the talents of artists and praise for architects during the reign of Caracalla, see ibid., 347. His 1762 essay “Observations on the Architecture of the Ancients” has received limited attention from art and architectural historians.


Prita Meier
Swahili Port Cities: The Architecture of Elsewhere

Defining the Swahili, the peoples at the center of this book, is almost always fraught, not least because Swahili is only ever an approximate ethnic category, the putative constituents of which speak a unifying language that is one of the most thoroughly border crossing and widely spoken in Africa. Prita Meier’s exploration of Swahili histories of architecture therefore encompasses other questions not bearing directly on architecture: Why do the Swahili, who typically claim origins in places far from the East African coast, construct their identity through such extra-African filiations? Are these claims true? And if so, are not Swahili peoples other than “African”? The book incorporates serious answers to these questions while constantly circling back to a critical address of its central issue: Can material culture, architecture especially, help frame such questions with more rigor and answer them more persuasively than have other disciplines? Perhaps because this world of Swahili things also helped construct its peoples’ rather unfamiliar kind of African ethnicity in the first place, Swahili Port Cities also explores how objects, broadly speaking, constitute and express Swahili identity and culture, even as they contest the former’s meanings internally.

Unlike other recent studies, Meier’s is distinguished in part by its modern-era focus and by its engagement with both the African world and Indian Ocean maritime circuits. Unusually attentive also to things noncanonical, the book is especially concerned with architecture. Buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are often ignored in the scholarship in favor of centuries-old ruins and archaeological finds—the former thought either uninteresting or inauthentic, presumably because produced amid the unfolding of British colonialism. With determination, the author locates her account instead among the ordinary things of this period, viewed transculturally, while also bringing to their understanding a revaluation of both ancient histories and modern things.

Although the book is polemically complex, it is nevertheless straightforwardly organized into four chapters, not counting the introductory and concluding essays. Offering a historical description of the changing urbanscapes of Mombasa, among the oldest of the large Swahili towns, chapter 1 focuses on the intense shifts between a layered “patrician” rule and the slow coming of Europeans that culminated in British control. Meier explores the signifying constructional medium of whitewashed coral masonry, to which, even in British Mombasa, modern Swahili identity seems primarily affixed, especially as a means of distinguishing it from other East African identities. But we also learn of the tendency for Swahili identity to be fractured, with sections of the community occasionally pitted against one another. Contests over forms of authentication are often articulated in relation to specific buildings, thus otherwise diffuse identities are tied to architectural statements and other transformations enacted on the main streets of cities like Mombasa.

In chapter 2 and subsequently, Meier’s focus shifts to specific buildings, starting with Mombasa’s sixteenth-century Mandhry Mosque and the even earlier Bashiekh Mosque. Through these singular structures, Meier teases out the internal dynamics of Swahili society as it was transforming itself in the face of colonizing Europeans. From her interpretations of these buildings and their strange minarets, we suspect that what drives Swahili identity production is often an imagined mapping of nearness or distance from “Shiraz” or “Oman” or even “Arabia.” The originality of Swahili imaginaries in relation to built identity markers is striking, given for example that the Mandhry Mosque is not exactly characteristic of such distant places. Here, too, Meier engages the materiality and significance of