

nevertheless introduced. These later chapters provide opportunities for reflection on changing theories of architectural renovation *all'antica* or *alla moderna* and David Hume's position (articulated in 1739–40) that “an entity transcends its material state” (267). Camerlenghi's term “self-spoliation” to designate the reuse of material elements from one phase of the building in a later one merits more discussion; to me the practice seems more like salvage, the taking of tokens, or the keeping of souvenirs (204, 260).

Camerlenghi's book is deeply researched and exceptionally well illustrated, with a generous selection from the 1,400 historical images that he discovered in museums, libraries, and photo archives. The digital stills set a new bar for the publication of multiphase churches, even if they isolate new features from the entropy (also a dynamic process) that surrounded them. The models are available online, and the author generously encourages others to download and make use of them (273).² This is the proverbial icing on the cake. Remarkably, Camerlenghi's biography is the first book in English on this seminal building of Western Christendom. We can be thankful that it is such a good one.

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Notes

1. The seventh-century date was demonstrated by Paolo Liverani, “S. Paolo f.l.m. e i restauri di Eusebio (*ICUR* II, 4794),” in *Marmoribus vestita: Miscellanea in onore di Federico Guidobaldi* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2012), 2:867–81.
2. See “St. Paul's outside the Walls: A Virtual Basilica,” <https://n2t.net/ark:/81428/v81593> (accessed 28 July 2021).

Jaap Evert Abrahamse

Metropolis in the Making: A Planning History of Amsterdam in the Dutch Golden Age

Turnhout: Brepols, 2019, 535 pp., 100 color and 105 b/w illus. \$163/€125 (cloth), ISBN 9782503580302

Historical atlases and studies of urban development in the engineered geography of the Netherlands have multiplied over the past decades. Yet, until recently, the literature lacked a scholarly monograph on

Amsterdam's seventeenth-century extensions, which occurred from 1588 forward as the young Dutch Republic flourished and expanded in all domains: from overseas trade, capital, and culture to military power and colonial outposts. This gap in planning history has now been filled by Jaap Evert Abrahamse, whose holistic approach in *Metropolis in the Making* reveals the reality behind mythical master plans for Amsterdam in the Dutch Golden Age.

The “Versailles of the north,” the Protestant counterpart to “baroque urbanism,” and the “cult of geometry” are metaphors forged by late modern historians and planners who interpreted images of an ideal city that existed only on wall maps (25–32).¹ Rarely, if ever, did these authors and designers study Amsterdam's archival sources. Looking to verify the beauty of architectural theory in planning practice, they even less often accounted for the microhistory of conflicting social and economic interests. Nor did preexisting ground conditions and an ever more subsided substratum of peat polders fall under their purview. Such are some of the real city's components with which, by contrast, Abrahamse fully engages by drawing on archival material. He has mined, for the most part, the archives of the city (Stadsarchief Amsterdam) to show how “Amsterdam would become an icon of capitalism, but also the most meticulously planned city in Europe” (470).

The result is a thick volume, abundantly illustrated with historic views (sketches, engravings, paintings), maps, and architectural and allotment drawings, as well as images of legal documents and construction records. It is structured in two parts, organized, respectively, by chronological order and by theme. Part I is dedicated to the “urban structure” of the city's third and fourth historic phases of extension, from 1600 to 1650 (chapter 2) and 1650 to 1700 (chapter 3). The second part is concerned with the city's “functioning,” which includes “land-use planning” (chapter 4), “traffic, infrastructure, and public space” (chapter 5), and “problems of a water city” (chapter 6).

From the outset, Abrahamse acknowledges his debt to a few methodological precedents: Willem Barent Peteri's city planning dissertation, archivist L. Jansen's innumerable articles published from 1953 to 1975 in *Werk in uitvoering* and *Ons Amsterdam*, and Ed Taverne's historiographic

overview in *Stedebouw* (1993).² In their wake, he fully examines the history of Amsterdam's urban development “from the perspective of the city's administrators and their civil servants or ‘stadsmeesters’ ” (38), and thus delivers a detailed account of the city's contingent growth from the ground up.

The author walks us through “resolutions, regulations, reports, and requests” (36) to highlight the interactions between the public and private, political and religious, and collective and individual interests of the city's stakeholders. He contrasts statute books with the legal framework of construction and the dynamics of land economy. Likewise, he examines landownership and tenancy, surveying and layout procedures, value and taxation. He compares failed projects with final designs at all scales: from infrastructure (polders, groundworks, fortifications, dams, canals, ports) to street grids, blocks, plots, and buildings. Most important, Abrahamse provides a comprehensive chronicle of events and decisions, complete with the water board and city council deliberations, decrees, and litigations that shaped successive phases of extension.

From the same administrative records, we are presented with a variety of numerical data that include not only physical measurements and land revenues but also construction costs and demographics of residents and migrants. The wealth of information helps us to characterize the flow of materials (peat, clay, sand, stone, bricks, timber, water, urban refuse) as well as their transformation through practices ranging from hydraulic engineering to real estate auctions, tree planting, and waste management.

Along the way, Abrahamse brings to the fore the actual makers of the city, whose roles often overlapped: burgomasters, treasurers, merchants, speculators, surveyors, architects, carpenters, contractors, masons, diggers, and other laborers. We realize how contradictory their motivations, vested interests, and decisions were. We follow the transactions and disputes, resolved through negotiations or connivance, that were meant to increase revenues but also caused damage and unrest. We thus understand the social correlations among soil composition, ground elevation, income levels, and the efficiency of water management (395–447).

In the end, Amsterdam's development projects emerge as ever-evolving responses to concrete problems that resulted from a combination of environmental forces and human agents, realized on messy, long-lasting construction sites. Grand designs for the third extension (1600–1650), west of the city, fell apart and gave way to more fragmented, disparate patterns than were initially planned (the first canal belt and the Jordaan quarter). The lessons learned from these experiences subsequently helped to frame a more rational, better-controlled approach to planning the eastern parts of the city (1650–1700). Only here did the city develop a more coherent radial-concentric system of streets and canals, which nevertheless absorbed preexisting structures. However, when the Franco-Dutch War (1672–78) halted the real estate market, the governors had no choice but to create open spaces, including allotment gardens (the Plantage), and to grant land to charitable institutions in places where it would no longer sell.

Abrahamse's command of his subject is unquestionable, and his career in urban heritage management lends authority to his findings. He started his inquiry as researcher for the planning department of the city of Amsterdam's Central District. He completed it, from 2007, as senior researcher at the Cultural Heritage of the Netherlands Agency, sponsor of the publication under review, which is itself an updated version of the doctoral dissertation that Abrahamse defended at the University of Amsterdam in 2010. However, such advantages may also prove to be the sources of the study's few deficiencies.

What Abrahamse presents as his "methodology" (36–40) is restricted to the sorting out of archival records. He applied no other tools to interpret this material spatially, such as reconstruction drawings, diachronic maps, or geoarchaeological cross sections. These instruments, employed by scholars of urban morphology along with geographic information systems, would have helped the author visualize spatial dynamics over time and might have allowed readers to better grasp the complex, multilayered phenomena under consideration. Such means can be crucial for addressing landscape dimensions, and they would have added much depth to the research, more

than the evidence provided by the book's digital maps (the odd placement of which as endpapers is symptomatic).

Furthermore, between historic city maps and views, on the one hand, and parcel plans and representations of individual buildings on the other, readers unfamiliar with Amsterdam's geography will miss medium-scale images that could have helped to locate some of the architectural features and their grounds in the urban fabric that the author discusses at length (e.g., the Zuiderkerk or the Stock Exchange).

The terminology and key notions also raise a few issues. For instance, the author applies the phrase "bird's-eye view" both to imaginary aerial views (in central perspective), which is correct, and to hybrid forms of maps that combine vertical, orthographic and oblique projection (cavalier perspective) with central perspective, which would be better called "bird's-flight view." Also, while planning professionals may not object to his use of the phrase "functional zoning" to discuss land use, building ordinances, and easements, the largely opportunistic and inconsistent character of the latter, as he clearly demonstrates, will make this usage sound all the more anachronistic to early modern scholars. Likewise, historians of science and technology will view as misplaced the use of terms such as "industry" for dyeworks, tanneries, foundries, smithies, sugar refineries, and breweries, or "chemical pollution" for the refuse of "ovens, furnaces, and distilling vessels." These phrases flatten the historicity of embodied material knowledge (techniques) in trades predating the Industrial Revolution. They fail to capture the interconnectedness of practices whose spatial distribution Abrahamse nevertheless documents with much care (283–325).

In keeping with his positivist approach to archives, the author does not prioritize style. Instead, the text at times borders on dry and seems somewhat fastidious, with dates and day-to-day events listed one after the other, ample description, and paraphrasing of original Dutch sources.

In its quest for exhaustiveness, this work might not appeal to lay audiences, but it will be valuable to scholars. Whatever the minor reservations expressed here, for all the reasons listed above, it will become a key reference on which all students of

Amsterdam's urban history will rely for their future research.

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Notes

1. The historians include Lewis Mumford, Pierre Lavedan, Leonardo Benevolo, and Spiro Kostof. Among planners, Steen Eiler Rasmussen's interpretation of Amsterdam's Canal District as a precursor of André Le Nôtre's canal vistas in the flat landscapes at Vaux-le-Vicomte and Versailles (whose sites are, actually, anything but flat) is even more famous than references to that district in Hendrik Petrus Berlage's *Plan Zuid* (1915) and Cornelis van Eesteren's *General Extension Plan for Amsterdam* (1935). See Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *Towns and Buildings Described in Drawings and Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), 90.
2. Willem Barent Peteri, "Overheidsbemoeiingen met stedeboouw tot aan den vrede van Munster" (PhD diss., Technische Hoogeschool, Delft, 1913); Ed Taverne, "Inleiding op een historiografie van de stedengeschiedenis in de Nederlanden," in *Stedebouw: De geschiedenis van de stad in de Nederlanden van 1500 tot heden*, ed. Ed Taverne and Irmin Visser (Nijmegen, Netherlands: SUN, 1993), 9–28.

Michela Rosso, ed.

Laughing at Architecture: Architectural Histories of Humour, Satire and Wit

London: Bloomsbury, 2018, 272 pp., 73 b/w illus. \$103.50 (cloth), ISBN 9781350022782; \$35.95 (paper), ISBN 9781350170490

The essays collected in Michela Rosso's edited volume *Laughing at Architecture* chart diverse historical trajectories of architectural satire and humor from 1750 to the present. In this field, there is no dearth of material, even if the nexus between the built environment and the rhetorical strategies of the comic remains largely unexplored. Mobilizing an impressive array of instances of visual and verbal invention, these essays show how the architectonic and the humorous intersect in unexpected and often explosive ways, exposing ideological fault lines and critical subtexts that are not always obvious at first glance.

Drawing on recent historiographical developments that have moved the focus of scholarly attention away from buildings, their architects, and their clients and toward a general public of readers, Rosso adopts an approach that produces new insights into