

Going back to my initial assertion of reading the book from my Nubian position, I am often searching for my people's voices in the stories of the blights that defined our twentieth century. Especially in "Peopling Nubia," Carruthers could have devoted much more space to Nubian conceptualization, histories, and epistemic grounding. I suggest that future research attempting to people Nubia consider Yasmin Moll's work and her race-conscious analysis of the Nubian stories and Saker el Nour's work that centers peasant struggles around water.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the important localized archival work by Nubian activists and popular historians in Egypt and Sudan, such as Fatma Imam, Moustafa Shourbagy, and Ahmed Eltigani Sidahmed, could contribute to the goal of re-peopling Nubia by Nubians.

Despite this particular shortcoming, *Flooded Pasts* provides a rigorous archival study of the UNESCO salvage operation and the archaeology project in Nubia, examining the power dynamics and colonial legacies while allowing us a peek into the inner workings of the International Campaign through archival evidence. The book reflects on the implications of the salvage campaign and the politics of development, highlighting the socioenvironmental impacts and the legacies of displacement and dispossession experienced by Nubian communities.

MENNA AGHA  
Carleton University

## Note

1. Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Artificial Vision, White Space, and Racial Surveillance Capitalism," *AI & Society* 36, no. 4 (2021), 1300.
2. Yasmin Moll, "Narrating Nubia: Between Sentimentalism and Solidarity," *Racial Formations in Africa and the Middle East*, no. 9 (2021), 81–86.

Miles Glendinning

### **Mass Housing: Modern Architecture and State Power—A Global History**

London: Bloomsbury, 2021, 688 pp.,  
150 color and 40 b/w illus. \$115 (cloth),  
ISBN 9781474229272; \$39.95 (paper),  
ISBN 9781474222501

Miles Glendinning's *Mass Housing* is a monumental history of one of the most

comprehensive global enterprises of modernity: radical modernization through housing for the vast majority. It covers a long period, from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, offering a renewed historiography of modern architecture revolving around mass housing. This comprehensive work is based on archival and field research of state-produced mass housing on four continents, encompassing varied political economic contexts and languages, with attention to emergencies, deep transitions in state apparatuses, and political economy. The result is a grand narrative, echoing Peter Hall's *Cities of Tomorrow* (2014), Lewis Mumford's *The City in History* (1961), and Lawrence Vale's *From the Puritans to the Projects* (2000), works that have had immense impacts on the discipline of urban history.<sup>1</sup> Following this tradition, *Mass Housing* is as ambitious as its inspirations.

Mass housing is a perplexing object of inquiry for architectural historians, for how can the repetitive forms of mass housing be researched from a cultural production perspective? In this book, Glendinning makes a bold methodological proposal for the subfield of housing within architectural history. He employs the grand narrative approach offered by Hall and Mumford yet utilizes it to challenge the established comprehensive and unified view of post-World War II housing for all. While typically works of architectural history explore exemplary case studies of mass housing and assume their relevance for many other housing projects, Glendinning's research demonstrates the differing consequences of mass housing, as well as how we can meaningfully research them architecturally. The book offers a fascinating history that transcends the case study method and provides both an overarching view of a vast global enterprise and a high level of detail, with attention to principles and variations. For example, Glendinning makes a fascinating distinction between the stakes embedded in mass housing in northern Europe and those in southern Europe, largely overlooked for the study of the post-World War II period of "three worlds." He discusses features such as circumference yards versus courtyards as architectural characteristics that differentiate northern from southern European housing in specifying social versus individual spaces.

The vast nature of the subject of modern mass housing, its spread and scope, renders Glendinning's undertaking in this book an ambitious exploration of the methodologies of architectural history. The book, therefore, is not only a historical overview of mass housing as a transformative modern architectural type but also an important exploration of how we conduct inquiries into our built environment. As such, Glendinning's contribution goes well beyond his historical findings; he repositions the scope and nature of research questions, data repositories, and research objects of our discipline.

Glendinning examines this architectural typology as a meaningful cross section in the history of modernity. Providing a meticulous analysis of architectural and planning documents of seemingly unimportant mass housing complexes, from Sweden to Mexico to Hong Kong, he connects the architectural typology, global processes, and local iterations to shed light on how housing constituted the backbone of the modernist state enterprise and its political consolidation in the nation-state. He brings together modern architecture and modern states to make a brilliant argument regarding the role of modern mass housing as an overarching enterprise for the sake of humankind.

The book's attention to the architectural specificity of each setting, determined by unique political, cultural, technological, economic, climatic, and other considerations of the respective modern states, highlights a certain architectural principle of modernism that remained stable—mass housing—while state involvement and financialization led to deep alterations in its meaning and implications. For instance, Glendinning explores variations in prefabrication technologies for mass housing across time and context. He demonstrates how in Denmark in the mid-1950s prefabrication was a means for introducing better quality in design and construction into the vast scale of mass housing, compared to its use for cost savings and resource management in Hong Kong. As Glendinning shows throughout the book, the architectural typology of mass housing cannot be detached or analyzed separately from its wider political, economic, and cultural contexts.

The book is divided into three parts, with eighteen chapters, an introduction,

and a conclusion. The introduction explores the role of mass housing in multiple modalities of modernism, interacting with the modern state and modern architecture. Part 1, “Mid-Nineteenth Century to 1945: The Gathering Storm,” comprises two chapters that provide a much-needed overview of the architectural legacies leading up to the development of the state-sponsored mass housing complex. These two chapters offer a concise historical account of mass housing explorations before state housing that will be highly useful for scholars and as class readings. Part 2, “1945–1989: The ‘Three Worlds’ of Postwar Mass Housing,” contains fourteen chapters that reveal the diversity of the seemingly repetitive forms of mass housing by discussing international modernism from global to local contexts, reflecting on the heritage of the categorizations of First, Second, and Third Worlds as spheres of political alliance and knowledge transfer. Bracketed by the years of the Cold War, this section identifies the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 as the symbolic end of the “Three Worlds” period, a period when states viewed citizen housing as an object of political warfare, as seen in the well-known “Kitchen Debate” between U.S. vice president Richard Nixon and Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev in 1959. Several chapters cover well-known mass housing contexts, such as France during the Trente Glorieuses, the postwar United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, capitalist East Asia, and Latin America. Glendinning gives these settings extended meaning within his book’s comparative cross section of the mass housing typology. Moreover, other chapters offer highly productive but less obvious categorizations, such as “southern Europe,” connecting processes occurring in Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, and Malta; and the linguistic category “Anglophone,” connecting mass housing phenomena in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

The fourteen chapters of part 2 constitute the heart of the book’s original contribution to the study of mass housing, framed as the intersection of modern architecture and the modern state. Part 3, “1989 to the Present: Retrenchment and Renewal,” unsettles the convention that modern states are no longer involved in mass housing by exploring

state involvement in twenty-first-century Turkey and China, two contemporary settings where state-instigated mass housing redefines scholarly dictums of decline. The stakes outlined in part 3 echo the trajectories covered in parts 1 and 2; Glendinning proposes a disciplinary reevaluation of mass housing as an important object of inquiry that goes beyond high modernism and postwar reconstruction to offer a holistic perspective on the modernist enterprise. The book’s conclusion reiterates the author’s focus on mass housing as the major arena in which modern architecture meshes with state power. It suggests that this is not a bygone history sealed off at the end of the Cold War but rather an ongoing one. Glendinning therefore underscores the methodology proposed by this book, challenging many disciplinary conventions of architectural history.

The book is not without a few shortcomings. First, its wide scope places it somewhere between a monograph and a textbook, and the density and depth of the data provided for each case explored make the work as a whole difficult to grasp in one sitting. Use of simpler language and sentence structure would have made the content more accessible to a wider audience. Second, the book’s immense methodological contribution is not given its proper space. A full chapter dedicated to methodology would have highlighted the book’s tremendous contribution to architectural scholarship and benefited the growing community of scholars, policymakers, and activists invested in mass housing. And third, while the book includes numerous images and illustrations, many of them in color, these are often too small to serve as historical documentation.

Nonetheless, the book makes an important contribution to the growing field of the architectural history of housing. Its 688 pages are generously illustrated with archival materials, including architectural drawings, master plans, marketing brochures, historical pictures, protocols, models, and newspaper coverage. Site documentation highlighting art such as the Italian Ina Casa mural plaques is especially moving. The illustrations support the text in conveying the book’s main premise, namely, that a global history of modern mass housing should also be specific, unique, and case

sensitive. Beautifully written and edited, *Mass Housing* is a rich study of a phenomenon so complex that Glendinning is the first architectural historian bold enough to undertake it. Following the tradition of Hall, Mumford, and Vale, he positions himself here as an ambitious historian whose aims go beyond telling a well-researched story, as he strives to make an impact on both the narrative and the reality of our built environments.

Yael Allweil

*Technion–Israel Institute of Technology*

## Note

1. Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design since 1880*, 4th ed. (Malden, Mass.: Wiley Blackwell, 2014); Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt, 1961); Lawrence J. Vale, *From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

Liu Yan

### **Woven Arch Bridge: Histories of Constructional Thoughts**

London: Routledge, 2021, 412 pp., 461 color illus. \$280 (cloth), ISBN 9780367618230; \$52.95 (paper), ISBN 9780367624316

Ronald G. Knapp, Terry E. Miller, and Liu Jie

### **China’s Covered Bridges: Architecture over Water**

Shanghai: Jiaoda Art Publishing, 2020, 480 pp., 600+ illus. \$65 (cloth), ISBN 9781952461026

Two recently published English-language books on China’s wooden bridges make significant contributions to our understanding of this important, yet understudied, genre of Chinese architecture.<sup>1</sup> An estimated three thousand covered bridges still survive in China, more than anywhere else in the world. *China’s Covered Bridges: Architecture over Water* provides an engaging and informative introduction to the most remarkable bridge types and individual examples among them. *Woven Arch Bridge: Histories of Constructional Thoughts*, in contrast, focuses on one subset of Chinese bridges located in a mountainous region in northern Fujian Province and southeastern Zhejiang Province, in China’s southeast. Inscribed in 2009 by