

Rose Marie San Juan, *Rome: a City Out of Print*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001, 320 pp., 81 black-and-white illus., \$55.38 Cdn

Erin J. Campbell

Volume 29, numéro 1-2, 2004

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1069682ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1069682ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

ISSN

0315-9906 (imprimé)

1918-4778 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Campbell, E. J. (2004). Compte rendu de [Rose Marie San Juan, *Rome: a City Out of Print*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001, 320 pp., 81 black-and-white illus., \$55.38 Cdn]. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 29(1-2), 92-94. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1069682ar>

chapter, examining a number of caricatures, she investigates how “gendered imagery figured in the process by which the body politic was defined” (p. 18). Subsequently, she considers how women embodied virtue and vice in prints illustrating allegorical figures, such as Equality, Fraternity, Victory, as well as a few depicting specific events. In the final, and probably most original and controversial chapter, “Possessing la Patrie,” Landes explores the relationship between nationalism and sexuality that figured in the revolutionary print culture and discusses the concept of possession of the depicted sexual body of the nation or France by its male citizens. As well, she analyzes the idea of “belonging” that was projected by the images of various maternal figures, who comforted, protected, and educated the nation’s children, that is, Frenchmen.

Such an organization is an indication that the author makes “no claim to completeness” (p. 13) in investigating Revolutionary prints and that her focus is primarily on caricatures and allegories which foreground gender distinctions. Within these limits, Landes offers sophisticated analyses of individual images, such as *Necker has a Man of the Third [Estate] take Measurements for France’s New Costume* (fig. 4.1), where France’s nakedness is interpreted as standing “for the return of France to a wholly natural condition, before the country’s subjection to the overreaching power of a venal ruler” (p. 142). The reader can find equally astute comments about other prints. In some instances, one might want to re-interpret an image, particularly in the cases of works illustrating virtue and vice in chapter three, where Landes’s polarized model does not allow for the possibility that female images are examples neither of virtue nor of vice. This is the case with the Lesueur brothers’ *The Jacobin Knitters* (fig. 3.18), where the three women might not be construed as grotesque but merely unidealized women of the people. And a different interpretation might be posited for the powerful image, *Citoyens né libre*, where a robust market or peasant woman lifts her skirts and delivers an equally stalwart, already standing baby. Such a figure recalls Bouchardon’s voluminous creatures of the Paris streets that were engraved by the Comte de Caylus and issued in a series entitled *Les Cris de Paris*, in five batches from 1737–1746, a series incredibly popular amongst collectors.¹ Rather than grotesque, this woman of the people pictured in *Citoyens né libre* might be a positive example of the healthy,

strong women of the countryside, lauded in earlier medical texts for their constitution, compared to women of antiquity, and contrasted with the enervated noblewoman.² Or, the print might even be viewed allegorically.³ Such alternative readings would surely be welcomed by Landes, who states in her introduction that her studies are “meant to illuminate, but not to foreclose, further debate and discussion on the problem of gender and representation in the period” (p. 23).

Landes herself places this book within an ever-expanding group of studies of visual imagery, extending from the work of historians of the Revolutionary image such as James Leith, Maurice Agulhon, Antoine de Baecque, Claude Langlois, to the more feminist interpretations of Madelyn Gutwirth and Lynn Hunt. Finally, both historians and art historians should welcome the deft way that Landes interweaves political textual arguments with a feminist analysis of this selection of Revolutionary prints.

VIVIAN CAMERON

New Haven, Connecticut

Notes

- 1 Several of these are illustrated in Vincent Milliot, *Les “Cris de Paris”, ou, le Peuple Travesti* (Paris, 1995), 91, fig. 5; 171, fig. 16. Milliot (p. 68) notes that the drawings were also engraved by Jacques Juillet, with the ensuing prints published in 1768. The theme, *Les Cris de Paris*, can be traced back to the sixteenth century (see the chart in Milliot, p. 67). It was incredibly popular in the eighteenth century and was treated by Boucher, N. Guérard, Juillet-Crepy, Poisson, and others. Not only were the Bouchardon works popular in prints, they were even ordered as subjects for ceramics. See Milliot (p. 110) for the percentage of collectors who owned the Bouchardon series. Milliot (p. 111) recounts that the Comte d’Angiviller, Directeur général des bâtiments, ordered ceramic figures after Bouchardon’s drawings from the Sevres factory in 1788.
- 2 See, for example, M. Desessart, *Traité de l’éducation corporelle des enfants en bas âge ou Réflexions pratiques sur les moyens de procurer une meilleure constitution aux citoyens* (Paris, 1760), 397–99, 409–10.
- 3 See the entry of Françoise Reynaud in *L’Art de l’estampe et la Révolution française*, exh. cat., Paris, Musée Carnavalet (Paris, 1977), 23, no. 102, where the image is interpreted as follows: “C’est ici la naissance de l’animal politique, véritable petit homme du peuple.”

Rose Marie San Juan, *Rome: a City Out of Print*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001, 320 pp., 81 black-and-white illus., \$55.38 Cdn.

All roads may lead to Rome, as the popular saying goes, but in Rose Marie San Juan’s new book *Rome: a City Out of Print*, one discovers that neither the roads nor Rome are exactly as ex-

pected. While scholars of the built environment of seventeenth-century Rome, such as Richard Krautheimer or Joseph Connors, offer us architectural studies of the city based on the close study of patronage networks in the context of urban politics, San Juan instead reveals the city, or the many cities, ignored by research on the building campaigns initiated by the papacy, the religious orders, and the aristocracy. By drawing on Henri Lefebvre’s

theories of the social construction of space, Michel de Certeau's writings on the production of urban knowledge, Rogier Chartier's studies of print culture in early modern Europe, Louis Marin's work on representation, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of vision, San Juan shows us how the urban space of Rome is charged with social meaning.

The primary source of evidence for this new reading of Rome are prints, or more specifically, print culture, for the "print" referred to in the clever title of this study encompasses street posters, topical pamphlets, collectible prints, and the important and fascinating series of guidebooks published for tourists to Rome in the seventeenth century. San Juan's aim is to insert visual and textual representations of Rome into what she refers to as "conflictual histories of the city" (p. 9). As she argues, studies of socio-political conflict in Rome tend to overlook the spatial dimensions of conflict. Her book sets out to demonstrate that printed views of streets, *piazze*, civic events, and urban crises, ephemeral public posters, and descriptions of Rome in guidebooks were instrumental in mediating the relationship of the *Popolo Romano* to urban space.

Her claims for the power of print culture are ambitious. She maintains that during the seventeenth century in Rome "a remarkable range of printed images, from street posters to collectible prints, entered urban life, organizing its movements, exposing concealed conflicts, and proposing new kinds of public space" (p. 10). At the same time, the new guidebooks that appear in Rome in the late 1630s map the city in diverse ways, and signal for San Juan "a decisive moment of change in Rome's complex interrelations" (p. 8). The various printed representations of Rome helped redefine the access to city streets for certain groups, including tourists, pilgrims, and penitents, while constraining other classes of city dwellers, such as women, Jewish Romans, and merchants. San Juan also shows us how Rome's publishers exploited the commercial possibilities of print, especially during times of crisis, such as the *Sede Vacante* – the interval between the death of one pope and the election of a new one. The sheer volume and range of representations of modern Rome that appeared during the course of the seventeenth century support San Juan's contention that print "offered unprecedented political and marketing opportunities" (p. 10).

San Juan's reading of early modern Rome as a complex site of social tension is presented in an introduction and seven densely-argued chapters. Pasquino, the famous ancient statue located in the Piazza di Pasquino that was the locus for the posting of satirical verses by the early modern inhabitants of Rome, is the controlling image of the book and our metaphorical guide to the new Rome. For San Juan, the statue defines the new marketplace of print. It simultaneously evokes public space and "the conflictual relations through which early modern notions of the public were formed" (p. 4). Hence, the fragmented

body of the sculpture serves as metaphor for the *Popolo Romano*. The first sentence of the book establishes this image for the reader: "the ravaged body of Pasquino haunts Rome's urban spaces" (p. 1). Each chapter takes up a particular class of print, urban conflict, or significant public space mediated by print, including the street poster or *bando*, guidebooks, processional prints, images of fountains, the *Sede Vacante*, the Piazza Navona, and the plague of 1656–57. These case studies examine how print negotiates conflict amongst the various social, religious, ethnic, and commercial interests in Rome, and demonstrate San Juan's contention that "[i]t is the moment and place that organizes conflict in particular ways, and printing becomes increasingly crucial in this organization" (p. 253). Central to this process is the conviction that meaning is complex and contingent: each print or text "speaks to a particular moment," but at the same time is capable of many diverse strands of meaning as it "reaches elsewhere" (p. 253).

San Juan's prose is labyrinthine and claustrophobic at times. Nevertheless, it is highly effective as a verbal analogy for the city she constructs "out of print" and for which her text functions as guidebook. Significantly, neither the introduction nor the brief conclusion at the end of chapter seven provides a grand overview for the journeys that unfold within the cover of the book. This is a city view that cannot be reduced to the synthetic fiction of single-point perspective. We might wish for the more familiar Rome of Krautheimer and Connors, or Francis Haskell's gossipy and essentially light-hearted portrait of the city in his now classic *Patrons and Painters*, but San Juan's Rome is compelling, and the reader is quickly drawn into the tangled urban scene as into a good detective novel, full of intrigue, corruption, and death. Here, the reader-tourist finds no relief in a city where not even the public fountains, discussed in chapter four, are places of refreshment and where the foul tortures of the *corda* dominate the cityscape. Ultimately, as the final chapter on plague prints makes plain, this is a city where urban space is dominated by corporal punishment, and where the end of the tour is contagion and death. The image of the body in fragments which opens the book as metaphor of the public sphere – Pasquino – is returned to us at the end in the printed spectacle of the transgressive bodies of criminals dismembered in the public square, or, even more horrifically, in the image of the "promiscuous mixture of bodies" (p. 243) in a boat on the Tiber piled high with naked corpses – victims of the plague.

While the reader may find San Juan's Rome oppressive, this book is an invaluable addition to our understanding of the social tensions that actively produce the urban landscape(s) of early modern Rome. Although one may disagree with individual readings of particular images or take issue with certain theoretical models, this is an extremely important study that will change the way we think not only about Rome, but about

the role of print in the social construction of space and the formation of early modern subjectivity across Europe. By foregrounding how print culture may serve as a major source of historical evidence for the production of urban space, San Juan has made an important contribution to the methodologies of

art-historical research. The material presented is fascinating, and readers would be advised to invest in a magnifying glass for they will want to see every last detail in the images that are reproduced.

ERIN J. CAMPBELL
University of Victoria

Christopher A. Thomas, *The Lincoln Memorial & American Life*. Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2002, 213 pp., 81 black-and-white illus., \$49 Cdn.

When the Lincoln Memorial opened to the public on 30 May 1922, Chief Justice Taft and President Harding spoke of Lincoln's role in saving a nation divided by Civil War. By contrast, at the same ceremony Dr Robert Moton, head of the Tuskegee Industrial Institute, which was founded to serve the African-American community, underlined the contending visions of liberty and bondage, entrenched since the settlement period, in the fabric of American life (pp. 153–57). The dissonance was palpable, as was the unhappy irony of the event's 35,000 on-lookers being segregated by race.¹ One newspaper observed that such hypocrisy was unworthy of a ceremony dedicating a temple to a national saviour (p. 158). Details such as this enliven the concluding chapter of this well-crafted study by Christopher Thomas, who maps the chameleon-like associations attached over the years to this revered site of national pilgrimage. A repository of past memory and a focus for shared vision, the Lincoln Memorial has come to embody the highest national aspirations in a land that has always sought to define itself through public symbols and iconicity. Along with the Statue of Liberty, the Washington Monument, and most recently the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial is a touchstone for the imagination of the American public.

Implicit in all of this is the complex interface between the mythologies of nation and individual life experience. Was it the singer, the site, the support of Eleanor Roosevelt, the public broadcast, or some intangible combination of all of these that was so instrumental in determining the impact of the operatic concert delivered by African-American contralto Marion Anderson from the lower terrace of the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday 1939? What synthesis acted to expose the frameworks of institutionalized racism as they were then entrenched? Nearly a quarter century later, on 28 August 1963, a similar confluence of time, place, man, masses, and media made Martin Luther King's declamation "Let freedom ring!" – delivered from the building's portico to those participating in the March on Washington – a clarion call for justice, the righting of historical wrongs, and an unforgettable, deeply moving experi-

ence for a generation jaded by the moral weariness of their forebears. Occasions such as these, Thomas argues, have sanctified this temple of memory, and enfolded it within complex layers of meaning. With each such event the site is not merely revised in meaning, but reinvested with new significance, creating an incremental totality bearing all the luster of a natural pearl (pp. 158–62).

Beginning with the tragic events of Lincoln's assassination on Good Friday 1865, Thomas flashes back to the circumstances under which the Republican president first assumed office on the eve of Civil War. At the time Washington – "the City of Magnificent Intentions" as Charles Dickens dubbed it – was starting to take shape amid the swamps of the Potomac, some seventy years after the plan by Pierre-Charles L'Enfant first gave form to the aspirations of a new republic. The type and location of Lincoln's memorial, debated since 1867, but still tenuous in its conception and execution, was negotiated within a larger set of priorities that jockeyed for recognition in a city still to be realized. As for the fallen hero once described in life as a "homely" man, Lincoln assumed in death a historical persona somewhere between "frontier folk hero/Man of the People" and "transcendent American Christ" (pp. 2–5). Indeed the book proposes that this mythic transformation contributed to Lincoln's longevity as an exemplar: "between the end of [post-Civil War] Reconstruction and the mid-nineties, the ... remembered Lincoln was reshaped ... in the discourse of culture rather than partisan politics" (p. 9).

While Lincoln, himself, may have been de-politicized in the grief following his loss, politics still had a great deal to do with the mechanics of his recognition thereafter. Planning for the memorial resumed in 1896 when Republicans regained control of the presidency and both houses of Congress. When Theodore Roosevelt fell heir to the William McKinley presidency in 1901, after yet another assassination, the memorial's final location, on axis with the Capitol dome and the Washington Monument, was inscribed in the McMillan Commission plan. This revision of L'Enfant's plan was drawn up by a new generation of highly qualified planners and architects, many of whom are assumed to have been Republican sympathizers. Debates ensued about the chosen location and the form the memorial should take. Indeed, one vigorously mooted proposal