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Olsen, Donald J. *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986. Pp. xiii, 311. 142 black and white plates; 8 colour plates. Index, bibliography. \$35.00 (U.S.)

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range and variety of sources used by the contributors are impressive; and the illustrations are helpful, with the unfortunate exception of the single and unrepresentative one of Warsaw. The city maps are schematic with distances and angles occasionally distorted but quite adequate for their purpose. Taken as a whole, the book succeeds in demonstrating the connection between the urban environment in a stage of rapid and largely uncontrolled expansion and the growth of the revolutionary movement. It will be useful to students of Russian social and economic history as well as to those interested in the more general problems of accelerated "urbanization," internal migration and social conflict.

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Donald J. Olsen's unusual interdisciplinary book is neither traditional art history nor conventional urban history, but imaginatively combines elements of both. By focusing upon the building and rebuilding of London, Paris and Vienna in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he demonstrates that concern for aesthetic principles and social comforts were as important to town planners as considerations brought about by increased industrialization, economic growth and political power. To support this argument, Olsen assembles a particularly rich collection of visual material ranging from old contemporary photographs, plans (both of cities and of individual buildings), prints, drawings and paintings. The result is an attractive volume which offers a fresh approach and original insights into the historical development of three major urban centres.

Olsen believes that "societies better reveal themselves at play than at work." For this reason, he concentrates his study of urban life upon five "superficial" aspects of the city's function: luxury, monument, home, playground and document. In these categories, Olsen examines significant historical events which shaped London, Paris and Vienna.

Each of the three, he argues, was distinctive. Londoners glorified the virtues of domesticity, privacy and family life and preferred individual dwelling houses rather than block units. Neighbourhoods reflected social stratification; upper classes fled the city core and resided in suburbs. Social pleasures were not taken in public places but in private homes and clubs. A social mix was the norm in central Paris; one result was the appearance of cafés, restaurants, gardens and boulevards where Parisians amused themselves informally

out of doors. Their flats were more crowded and communal than English houses but faced an inner private courtyard. The Viennese middle and upper classes aspired to remain in the city core despite the pressures caused by the expansion of commercial spaces. For them social life revolved around formal receptions and the ornate public buildings which lined the *Ringstrasse*. They lived in flats whose private spaces were sacrificed for a series of formal receiving rooms. The circles of the imperial and royal court enjoyed numerous aristocratic social functions. Thus the plan of Vienna came to reflect the preference for monumental public display where parks and promenades, cafés and theatres lined pleasant streets. In all three instances, Olsen believes that the architecture of the city reveals the inner nature of the period in which it was built. He disagrees with some urban historians' implicit denial that art has any relevance for history by arguing that aesthetic factors are simply another kind of evidence which cannot be justifiably overlooked in historical inquiry. Needless to say, he finds the outward appearance of cities a significant factor in determining the *Zeitgeist* of the age which created them.

The text reflects the author's wide range of reading and research in art history which is not applied conventionally towards his subject. He avoids discussions of aesthetics for their own sake; instead he employs the tools of the art historian's trade in order to examine theories of cultural and urban history. His discussions are both scholarly and readable, although at times his generalities seem strained and his comparisons self-consciously forced, as if he were attempting to impress the reader with the breadth of his knowledge. Numerous verbal illustrations to support contentions are provided: historical examples are drawn from politics, music, drama, poetry, painting, architecture and philosophy, among other things. To explain the language of architecture, Olsen writes: "Henry Adams did not really worship the Virgin Mary while at Chartres any more than we adopt the tenets of the Mayan religion while wondering at the monuments of Uxmal. Yet as an understanding of the intellectual life of early thirteenth-century France contributes to an aesthetic apprehension of Chartres, an awareness of the intentions of their builders can intensify our pleasure in Vienna, Paris, and London." Such juxtapositions are typical of both the style and the substance of the book.

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Stinger, Charles L. *The Renaissance in Rome*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985. Pp. xv, 444. \$37.40 (U.S.).

Charles L. Stinger's book on Renaissance Rome is based on a number of assumptions, the most important of which is