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Unreviewed Mixed Matters Article:

Book Review: From Rome to Las Vegas. Reconstructions of Ancient Roman Architecture by Anita Rieche

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For more than 200 years ancient buildings have been reconstructed. Reasons for the reconstruction of Roman architecture in particular are many. People enjoy being surrounded by fully realised reconstructions of ancient ruins where they can be taught in a manner reflecting a museum-like academic rigour.

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People take delight in themed attractions and enjoy staying in hotels with an historical focus. In this book Anita Rieche, an archaeologist by profession who is well acquainted with this topic, presents a catalogue of such building reconstructions. In the introduction she deals with the multiple factors influencing such reconstructions and then classifies them. This is very helpful to the reader as it enables them to distinguish a reconstructed model on a scale of 1: 1 from an anastylosis. The reader will also better understand the intentions and behind and problems incurred during the establishment of reconstructed ancient buildings.

In what follows, using selected examples, the author takes us through the broad range of replica catacombs, arenas, temples and villas which one can visit throughout the world. Rieche confines herself largely to a thorough but impartial analysis of the buildings. Here I would have desired more personal, deeper criticisms of those projects which are immediately challenging. Obviously a book like this cannot cover all existing reconstructions – the number is enormous. Surprisingly the Limes Museum in Aalen fails to appear, except for a small sentence, even though it is not a local history museum.

Nevertheless I recommend this book because the author offers the reader a very informative and practical guide to the facsimiles of Roman architecture; it also offers a detailed view of what lies behind the facades of (re)constructed buildings.

Book information:

Anita RIECHE, 2012, *Von Rom nach Las Vegas. Rekonstruktionen antiker römischer Architektur,* Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 239 pp, 131 images in colour and 5 in black & white. € 29,95

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