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and students today much to reflect on. But to the extent that Moses will continue to be understood as an ahistorical character, he will haunt New York’s memory more than inform it.

Randall Mason is an Associate Professor in the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Design. The efforts of Andrew Hassell Green and others to build a preservation movement in New York are detailed in the author’s forthcoming Memory Infrastructure: Historic Preservation in Modern New York, 1870–1920.

Endnotes
* Ibid., 66.
* Ibid., 70.

A Global History of Architecture
Francis D.K. Ching, Mark M. Jarzombek, Vikramaditya Prakash
Wiley, 2006

For nearly three centuries, western architectural historians including Fischer von Erlach, Durand, Fergusson, Fletcher, Millon, and Kostof have attempted to explain the world’s architecture in a single published work. The first major attempt, by J.B. Fischer von Erlach in 1725, resorted to engravings based on the scant evidence of monuments depicted on coins or even the hearsay of travelers. Over a century later, James Fergusson’s History of Architecture in All Countries, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day was one of the first works based on first-hand experience of Asian architecture. At the turn of the twentieth century, Sir Banister Fletcher’s A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method for Students, Craftsmen, and Amateurs grouped architectural histories by a rigorous comparative method. These titles, among others, were produced primarily for instructional purposes, and all are telling indicators of prevailing views of architectural history at the time they were written.

The 816-page textbook, A Global History of Architecture, by Francis D.K. Ching, Mark M. Jarzombek and Vikramaditya Prakash, is a departure from its predecessors in that it presents architectural history by stratifying the sweep of human civilization into eighteen distinct epochs. Designed as a large-format textbook, each section opens with a graphic timeline and a schematized world map that locate its topics in time and space, after which the book’s moderately detailed text is ordered by place, period, and subject. The book also provides inset maps, an array of illustrative material, a glossary, an index and bibliographies, and a companion web site.

The extensive preface argues, if not completely convincingly, for the separation of the world’s history into discrete eras as the appropriate tool for the chronological teaching of architecture. The authors suggest that since most survey courses are taught chronologically, the time-cut organization of this book should not pose many difficulties. Additionally, they state that other faculty may wish to cut and paste selectively chosen subsections to suit their own historical narrative. Given the encyclopedic nature of the book, setting through its chronological time-cuts to piece together seamless narratives is no simple matter.

In addition, the preface provides a caveat “that by and large we have only dealt with large or significant symbolic
monuments, the traditional objects of academic scrutiny." However, the selection of examples and its support information is not as limited as the authors describe. Some familiar monuments are not present, such as the early surviving temples of the Forum Boarium in Rome and San Miniato in Fiesole. In their place, however, A Global History discusses related issues and other building types of the period, such as rock-cut tombs in Asia Minor, and Pope Piut II's improvements to Pienza, the first of many papal retreats. The book contains information not present in other textbooks: the intentions of builders, vernacular architecture, architectural décor (murals, engaged sculpture, furnishings), and, in some instances, details on functionality.

The layout of the book is one of its strongest features. Its threecolumned text is supplemented by good photographic illustrations and excellent line drawings, especially the plans of the more complex sites, many of which are from the hand of the noted architectural book illustrator Francis Ching. Less successful, however, is that in their efforts to sidestep the sensitive issue of having any one continent or hemisphere in the center of the illustration of the repeating general site reference map, the authors chose to depict the world flattened out as seen from above the North Pole, which makes location of sites difficult for readers more familiar with the Mercator Projection or other more standard systems.

Despite the necessary back-and-forth referencing created by slicing world history into discrete epochs, A Global History does a very respectable job of presenting architectural history, whether the more familiar topics of ancient Greek and Roman, Gothic, Chinese, Incan or Islamic architecture or its considerable number of new topics. However, some topics, while falsely in length, omit crucial elements of the histories they describe. For example, descriptions of post-Medieval English architecture begin with Elizabeth I's ascension to the throne in 1558, neglecting mention of the first arrivals of Italianism and the official establishment of specialty building trades under Henry VIII. Such omissions are not limited to topics on western architecture. There is no mention of European influences on the design of buildings during the Qing Dynasty such as the Yuanmingyuan Palace and Gardens in Beijing.

While A Global History of Architecture represents a tremendous effort to say more about architecture in diverse places throughout the world, in many instances its time-cut approach poses challenges of juxtaposition to the reader. For example, what are we to make of the presentation that the sites of Kamak and the Temple of Hatshepsut in Upper Egypt were built at about the same time as the earthen mounds at Native American site Poverty Point in Northern Louisiana?

At the circa 800 CE time-cut what, if anything, might we try to compare between the Dome of the Rock (Jerusalem), Borobudur (Indonesia), St. Gall monastery (Switzerland), and Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon (New Mexico)? Except for the fact that they are all roughly contemporaneous works of architecture, none of these examples have much in common. Even the statement in the book's preface "every specific architectural project is always embedded in a larger world that affects it directly or indirectly" does not explain such physically and culturally disparate comparisons.

Despite its difficult aspects, A Global History possesses some unexpected assets. Several special building types are described in detail, such as cemetery designs from the Napoleonic era, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century penitentiary designs in England and the United States, and Japanese theaters from the Edo period (complete with inset drawings of the art of Kabuki make-up). Other freshly portrayed or altogether new specialty topics separately treated as subheadings or sidebars include ancient Egyptian design methods, Zoroastrian fire temples, Armenian architecture, Italian hill towns, Shaker aesthetics, synagogues and other temples.

Adding to the book's interest, especially in its initial chapters, are architectural highlights from recent archaeological discoveries. Several examples offer earliest evidences of purpose in architecture and address the allied topics of burial customs, storage systems, designs of wall paintings, and construction techniques. The role of the archaeologist in continuing to inform architectural history is seen elsewhere as in the description of araghe (conical corbelled stone domestic forms or towers) in Palmavera, western Sardinia, and in reconstruction drawings of the sanctuary of Athena on the acropolis at Lindos.

Welcomed as well is a certain amount of revisionist history, for instance the book's mention of some positive consequences of the Mongolian invasions in Asia and Eastern Europe. Such current thinking results in a better balance of the presentations of world architecture within A Global History of Architecture. Architectural developments across time in the Indian subcontinent can now be fairly compared with those in Europe, China, Japan and Egypt. Illustrated examples in sub-Saharan Africa such as Great Zimbabwe, the Palace of Kubwa at Kilwa in Tanzania, and the rock cut tombs of Lalibela, Ethiopia are present as well. The acknowledged role of specialist contributors, reviewers and others who helped compile the book reflects how its wealth of information was gathered, as well as the breadth of current consensus on the subject.

In presenting a truly "global view," the book boldly takes on the attendant obligation of describing broad historical
forces that shaped architecture, for instance its plausible explanation of social circumstances in the eastern Mediterranean that led to the so-called Dark Age in Antiquity. Helpful contextual information is also found in its background explanations of cultural history as found in its profiles of Eastern religions and a subheading entitled "Spanish Conquest of America." By this means the transmission of ideas across distances is addressed and the architecture of colonialism is given due credit, as in the essays on British colonial architecture. " Sometimes, however, the cultural circumstances and descriptions tend to overwhelm the topics at hand as seen in the approximately 150-word essay on Etruscan religion in comparison with about 350 words on Etruscan architecture adjacent to it. Some might question the relevance of such essays while others will find that it adds interest to the book.

A Global History does a creditable job in portraying the spread of architectural modernism throughout the world with mention of the usual names, though not much beyond. The final chapter of the book labels the period from 1970 until now as Post-Modernism, which is a bit discomfiting, though thankfully within this section a number of architects who have been eclipsed in popular memory but who made important and promising regional contributions are properly credited, among them Hassan Fathy in Egypt, Geoffrey Bawa in Sri Lanka, and Max Fry and Jane Drew in Nigeria.

More could be said about the restoration and preservation of historic architecture since the topic is only mentioned at the end of the Post-Modernism section in the last paragraph of the book. For example, in the earlier profile of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, his enormous contribution to the history of restoration of monuments is not cited. The same goes for the book’s profiles on John Ruskin and William Morris. If ever there were a trend in architecture in modern times that has had an influence on architectural history as a whole, it is the architectural conservation movement.

In the epilogue of the book called "Globalization Takes Command" the authors begin by defining globalization in relation to the present global economy. In doing so they miss an opportunity to mention earlier “globalizing influences” that technically begin with the first circumnavigation of the world in the sixteenth century. Surely, in the offering of a global view of architecture, the British Empire must be regarded as globalization well before the modern term gained currency.

Despite the benefit of having such a wealth of information about the world’s architectural history all in one place, it is debatable as to whether the time-cut approach of the book is the most sensible way to learn and teach this subject. The format makes it not easy to use as reference as well. For instance, if one is interested in the progress of architecture in say France, Egypt, Japan or Peru their descriptions must be researched in different parts of the book. The same goes for the contextual material where, for instance, Buddhist architecture and the religion it accommodated must be pieced together from several different locations.

The emphasis on contemporaneous world comparisons combined with its richness in contextual information makes one think that the book is better described as a reference guide to the study of world architecture rather than its more promising title, A Global History of Architecture. In any case, this hefty tome and companion web site represent a great documentation and presentation effort that well reflects today’s knowledge of world architectural history, and a new way in which to view it.

John H. Stobbs is Vice President for Field Projects for the World Monuments Fund and serves as Adjunct Associate Professor of Historic Preservation in Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. He is currently completing a book that offers a global view of architectural conservation.

References
- A Global History of Architecture, xxi.
- With the possible exception of Kostof’s A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals, with its more limited scope of Europe, Western Asia/North Africa and the Americas.
- Though in no fault of his own, the birds-eye view drawing of the Place Royale in Paris is printed upside down.
- The former example here could be a casualty of the time-cut approach used in this book. The time-cuts within A Global History are not only impracticable in many instances, as the authors admit in the preface, some topics at their edges appear to have been dropped.
- Preface, xi.
- In other specialty presentations the technique of comparison works well, an example being in the profile of Strawberry Hill near London where in a subheading Horace Walpole’s intentions and aesthetic are contrasted with those of his contemporary Robert Adam.
- I was permitted to see one of my own archaeological drawings (4-d, Stage 4 evolution of the forum at Cosa, 1973) redrawn in A Global History, though its authors will be disappointed, as I was, to learn that subsequent excavations at the site proved our initial public interpretation of Borrochi, L. Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome, suppl. Vol. V, 2001. Quite a few other sites which I am quite familiar are very accurately portrayed, though I may have minor quibbles about the facts offered in several: SS. Sergius and Bacchus, Istanbul, Ataturk Cathedral, Kars, Turkey; the National School of Art in Hawaii; and Phnom Bakheng and Poeth Khun at Angkor. Other debatable points of Angkor’s history is its estimated population of a million people by the eleventh century, how some of its barages (reservoirs) worked, and that colonnade columns found within the temple Angkor Wat “might be viewed within the sphere of Alexander’s hellenism” (351).
- On the whole however, the write-up on Khmer monumental architecture represents good concise objective writing on the essence of a complex subject.
- In descriptions of Calcutta, for instance, the rationale for sometime new architecture and its proper sources are vividly described.

* The little is also said in A Global History of Architecture about garden and landscape design, cities, urban planning, and engineering.