

*Acquedotti e fontane del Rinascimento in Toscana: Acqua, architettura e città al tempo di Cosimo I dei Medici.* Emanuela Ferretti.

Aqvae: Studi e testi sulle terme 8. Florence: Olschki, 2016. x + 332 pp. €35.

To date, studies on the subject of water consist of substantial research conducted with an interdisciplinary approach, aimed at analyzing the wide cultural spectrum within which the uses of this precious resource vary in individual historical and geographical contexts. It is in this line of study that Emanuela Ferretti's volume enters, dedicated as it is to aqueducts and fountains created in Florence and other centers in Tuscany, at the time of Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici.

The author begins by reflecting on the hydrology culture in Florence and the entire region, where, already at the beginning of the thirteenth century, motivations for functional and symbolic commissions had been suggested to the princes and municipal oligarchs in order to undertake works of technical and economical dedication of great relevance. Innovative provisions and hydrologic studies have favored, in particular, the territory of Florence, a city characterized for centuries by the presence of wells, the delicate water arrangement of the Arno River, and the abundance of aquifers and thermal springs. It was, however, Cosimo I who wanted to realize a new plumbing system in order to improve water accessibility in the city, one of the business strategies devised to provide Florence with the status of the grand duke's capital city. Cosimo undertook a real and personal duel with water: he not only tried to discipline the impetuous Arno, but to expand the use of water for drinking and for productive and political-symbolic uses in fountains, with conceptual and practical implications that would also find support in an academic context, through various theoretical debates. In relation to the new hydro-system, in the first chapter, Ferretti illustrates the principal parts: the aqueduct fed by the water of the Mugnone River, which enters the city in the vicinity of Porta Castello, in the northeast section of the city walls; and the hydrosystem in the Boboli Gardens behind the Pitti Palace, from which a branch of the hydraulic system designed to transport water into the heart of Florence began. It explores a complex challenge that put Florence in sync with other Italian cities, which during the same years were equally interested in the realization of impressive water-adduction systems.

Ferretti then highlights the role that the grand Roman structures had in the relaunch of the construction of new waterworks, as well as in the wake of Roman aqueduct restorations during the Renaissance in various parts of Europe, such as that of Segovia in Spain. Consequently, she considers the will to compete with ancient Rome that was present in the political culture of Cosimo I. The creation of a water-feeding system in different points of the city was in fact for Florence a work that characterized the image of the prince according to precise references to codes and symbols held in ancient Rome. Remembering the Florentine aqueduct from the Roman age, also depicted by Giorgio Vasari in the frescoes of the Palazzo Vecchio, therefore supported the exaltation of Co-

simo I's new infrastructure, celebrated in medals, sculpture, and frescoes, as well as in the funeral orations written to honor the death of the grand duke.

The protagonists of this effervescent cultural climate were artistic and technical figures who played a fundamental role in defining the impressive project: Montorsoli and Tribolo, Fortini and Vasari, Bandinelli and Ammannati. Rereading the contemporaneous biographical annotations, in the second chapter the author highlights the training of these personalities in the study of hydraulics, retracing the different paths of these youngsters. The architectural techniques and the relevant treatises that characterize the work of these artists are then compared to other urban contexts that saw imposing hydraulic creations, such as in Rome, Palermo, and Bologna, and attempts to highlight differences and peculiarities with respect to the Medici aqueduct. As regards this structure and the fountains connected to it, the author therefore highlights the correlation between ephemeral apparatus, in particular the triumphal arches of Carlo V in Italy, confirming the strong connection between ephemeral architecture and permanent architecture. Reflections on the recycling of the ancient concept of *commoditas*, recalled in a selection of printed works by writers, not only from the area of Tuscany, eventually allow the author to document the growing understanding, during this era, of the fundamental role that water assumed in the organization of modern-age cities.

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*The Noisy Renaissance: Sound, Architecture, and Florentine Urban Life.*

Niall Atkinson.

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Once the *motorini* are parked and the tourists have gone for the evening, the *vie* of Rome, the *calle* of Venice, the *vicoli* of Naples, the *gallerie* of Bologna all settle into the tonalities of night, of lowering *persiani* and closing windows, of meals, laughter, and conversation echoing along stone and brick, cobblestone and tufa. In the earliest mornings, store shutters, bird songs, and the faint peeling of church bells still resonate across Italian cities. While light, space, and mass, and stasis and movement through them, have all been commonplaces in art and architectural history, new turns in ritual, liturgy, and performance studies have opened our ears to the sonic textures of these cityscapes.

Among Italian medievalists, De Blasi, Formentin, De Caprio, and Morosini have drawn attention to the voices of Neapolitan streets, the sounds of vernacular song, poetry, gossip, and unrest. Among anglophones, Bruzelius's research on aurality in religious space and Camille's on human embodiment and architecture have been fundamental.

Niall Atkinson's new study of soundscapes and communal acoustic strategies, chiefly in Trecento Florence, extends this work into the intersection of urban architecture,