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Olivia Muñoz-Rojas, *Ashes and Granite: Destruction and Reconstruction in the Spanish Civil War and Its Aftermath*. Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2011. Pp. xxv, 223. ISBN 978-1-84519-436-9.

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This highly original book joins a growing subfield of scholarship on the urban aftermath of wartime bombings. While other works have highlighted memory or commemoration,¹ Olivia Muñoz-Rojas (Univ. of Westminster) draws on her knowledge of architecture, urban studies, and Spanish history to assess the Franco dictatorship's attempts to wed reconstruction to ideology at sites in three cities affected by Spain's Civil War (1936–39): the Montaña de Príncipe Pío in Madrid, eight bridges in Bilbao, and the Plaça Nova in Barcelona.

Chapter 1 describes the author's urban approach, then chapter 2 gives a terse and evenhanded overview of the Civil War itself.² The heart of the book, chapters 3–5, on Madrid, Bilbao, and Barcelona, evince an impressive control of archival materials in Spanish and, to a lesser extent, Catalan. A sixth and final chapter, "History, Discourse and the Built Environment," recaps the main arguments.

Francisco Franco's dictatorship rested upon conciliating several right-wing political factions, all of which had qualms about the Republic. The Falange—the only ideologically fascist faction—Franco entrusted with managing the symbolic aspects of reconstruction, given his emphasis on unity, discipline, honor, and hierarchy. After all, "The Falange's preference for sober, classical monumentalism, specifically seventeenth-century Spanish architecture, is most visible in the largely unaccomplished project for Imperial Madrid" (34). Moreover, the dictator's initial high expectations for Nazi Germany's eventual victory informed his approach to reconstruction. By 1943, he was forced to reconsider his architectural influences and turned to Carlist and church ideals.

Significantly, Franco considered cities to be decadent (pro-Republic, liberal, anti-clerical, anti-militaristic) and preferred agrarian Spain as better suited to the renaissance he envisioned (rural, religious, traditional in architecture as well as outlook). As the nation's capital, Madrid fared somewhat better in this regard than Bilbao or Barcelona. The Falange published considerably on the question of what defines Spanish architecture and found historical inspiration in Juan de Herrera, the sixteenth-century architect of El Escorial, whose design was highly valued for its ideological connections to Rome via the Renaissance and to German purity through the ruling Bourbon house. Franco wanted to revive the aura of Spain at its imperial height. But in the end, especially in the case of Bilbao's bridges, he favored the rationalist style that had emerged in Fascist Italy.

In all three cases under consideration, the regime's reconstruction plans gave way to the private, local, often piecemeal planning so typical across Europe after World War II, with results far removed from their ideological beginnings. The voice of the Falange was muted as other stakeholders weighed in. To be sure, the regime consistently whitewashed its own part in the wartime destruction of cities, blaming instead the Republic, which it always cast as communist and aggressive.

The chapter on Madrid is bookended by a fascinating interpretation of Goya's *El tres de mayo de 1808 en Madrid*. Muñoz-Rojas's focus here is the former Falange headquarters, site of the failed July 1936 coup that erupted into civil war. The space now holds the Temple of Debod, a pharaonic monument given by Egypt's

1. E.g., Dacia Viejo-Rose, *Reconstructing Spain: Cultural Heritage and Memory after Civil War* (Portland: Sussex Acad Pr, 2011) and Stefan Goebel and Derek Keene, eds., *Cities into Battlefields: Metropolitan Scenarios, Experiences and Commemorations of Total War* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pr, 2011).

2. Given her focus on urban destruction caused by air raids, Muñoz-Rojas relies heavily on Josep Maria Solé i Sabaté and Joan Villarroya, *España en llamas: la Guerra Civil desde el aire* (Madrid: Ed. Temas de Hoy, 2003).

Gamal Abdel Nasser to recognize Spain's help in the UNESCO-organized campaign to Nubia in 1960, when the Aswan dam threatened to inundate a number of architectural treasures. The story of how a memorial to the coup gave way to ancient Egyptian artifacts is set within a larger discussion of the building of greenways through the capital to circumvent the slums surrounding the historical entrance to the city center. The city's three main axes—the Vía de la Victoria, Vía de Europe, and Vía del Imperio—were rebuilt (and named) to represent the route to Franco's victory, its connection to Europe, and its historic Portuguese, African, and Latin American connections. The placement of various official buildings throughout Madrid rounded out the plan. Despite this construction of an apparent legacy, "the Franco regime was as successful in abandoning the Falange's dreams of a grandiose, imperial post-war Madrid as it was in burying the uncomfortable memory of the Falangists' early defeat—and by default the memory of the fierce resistance of the Republicans who remained in the capital city and fought against the Liberation Crusade for three years" (80). The second Goya bookend follows:

The dramatic clash between rebel mutineers and popular militias that took place on the Montaña de Príncipe Pío on the dawn of 19 July 1936 oddly conjures the events of 2 May 1808. It is not a coincidence. Among Spanish historians and intellectuals, the understanding of the trauma of the 1936 military uprising and the ensuing civil war has in some ways been rooted in the interpretation of the trauma of the Spanish War of Independence. The apparent dilemma between a culturally self-sufficient Spain and a culturally modern Spain, between a genuine and a foreign Spain, emerges forcefully in the War of Independence and haunts Spanish society over the course of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth.... [T]he 1936 military uprising seemed to set in motion the kind of fierce, revolutionary sentiments that animated the Spanish guerrilla in 1808 in their [sic] fight against the French invader. (80)

Turning to Bilbao, Muñoz-Rojas recounts how the retreating Basque Republicans destroyed their own bridges in hopes of slowing down the advancing rebel army. Franco held up the destruction as emblematic of "red-separatist barbarism" and made immediate reconstruction of the bridges his top priority. Six of the resulting structures—built by the American firm Babcock & Wilcox under a prewar agreement—replaced the original architecture with rationalist designs named after Franco and his officers (General Sanjurjo, Colonel Ortiz de Zárate, and General Mola) as well as one saint (San Antón) and the victory itself (La Victoria). The San Antón was the closest to its original design, but its buttresses are now adorned with the fascist eagle and yoke along with Roman Catholic iconography. The chapter ends with a discussion of the Franco regime's bombastic, self-congratulatory memorializing at the opening ceremonies for the new bridges (before their full completion); one "subversive" note was sounded by an architect with Republican sympathies who had not been purged due to his professional expertise, in short supply at the time.

Barcelona's Plaça Nova, the present-day open space in front of the city's medieval Cathedral, was made possible by wartime destruction. Muñoz-Rojas explains how the exigencies of total war, Italy's long-term bombing strategy, and Franco's rearguard urban bombing policy devastated both the physical Barcelona and its citizens' psyches. In the aftermath, exposure of the city's Cathedral served the regime's purposes. The surrounding neighborhood, the Barri Gotic, had been the city's center in the Middle Ages, a period the regime sought to downplay because of its association with Jews. It was also the era of the independent Catalan state under the King of Aragon. The regime much preferred to evoke ancient Roman history. By chance, the Italian bombardment during the Civil War had begun the process of clearing the buildings to reveal the walls of the Roman-era fortifications of Barcino. Plans to open up this space had existed since the mid-nineteenth century, when the city's medieval walls had been completely removed (they are detectable today only in the course of major avenues).

The reconstruction or "disencumbering" of the Cathedral as the regime stated it, was financed by the Bank of Spain, which opened a new branch nearby. When the six-hundredth anniversary of the plaza was observed in 1955, Catalans used the occasion to celebrate their history and (officially banned) language. The regime permitted this subversion in the name of regional diversity. The final piece in the plaza's reconstruction is Joaquin Busquet's 1961 building across from the Cathedral. It is adorned with Catalan friezes depicting not only the native Catalan dance (*sardana*) but also the banned regional flag (*senyera*).

As she does for the other two urban metonyms, Muñoz-Rojas elucidates the practical considerations that thwarted earlier falangist ideological aspirations: “The problem was that it was difficult to ground modern economic growth on agricultural production in a country that had undergone few changes to its predominantly quasi-feudal system of landownership. And the conservative landowners who had supported Franco in his Liberation Crusade were unwilling to give up their age-old privileges. Without economic growth from which to extract public funds, notwithstanding the exaction of resources from the vanquished, few of the other principles could translate into practical results” (166). The handling of these historical intricacies is most impressive, but, as the author herself hints, more work remains to be done on this subject.

The book is rich not only in scholarly documentation, but in supporting graphics, including seventy-three historic and contemporary photographs and maps (and an illustration of the Goya painting), not to mention cover art.³

Muñoz-Rojas has produced an innovative and perceptive investigation of prewar planning, wartime architectural casualties, postwar reconstruction, and the contours of dictatorship in modern Spain. Her book is a valuable addition to an emerging historiography on the aftermath of war from the viewpoints of urban reconstruction and the ideological aesthetics of dictatorships.

3. Especially valuable are juxtapositions of older and more recent images to clarify historical changes. And, in one case, an earlier photograph of the shrine of San Roque in one of the Plaça Nova’s Roman towers is particularly helpful, since the statue is now encased in protective plastic. Given the large number of graphics in the book, it is understandable, if regrettable, that close-ups of, e.g., the San Antón bridge buttresses had to be forgone. Only one graphic (figure 4.15, of the Victoria bridge, a “harmonious view of the embankment”) is seriously impaired by low-quality reproduction.