

well with recent scholarship written by individuals directly involved in the museums and exhibitions under scrutiny.

In short, this is a book of interest to the field of public history because museological activity itself falls within its scope: it is the work of professionals who may be called public historians that the author appreciates, offering comments that suggest possibilities for improving their relationship with a sensitive topic, such as slavery. But the book goes beyond this immediate use. When considering the relationship between specific decision-making processes (here, resulting in displays of objects and collections) and the meanings they acquire when recontextualized, the book—in its incessant establishment of links between the parts and the whole—invites public historians to reflect on the impacts and responsibilities of their own individual work in the formation and transformation of a broader historical consciousness.

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Public in Public History edited by Joanna Wojdon and Dorota Wiśniewska.

Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2021. 294 pp.; 15 b&w illustrations, index; clothbound, \$124.00; paperback, \$35.96; eBook, \$35.96.

Public history is the subject of an increasing number of books, collections, and textbooks. Although most resources are still published in English, there is a noticeable internationalization of authors and examples. The book *Public in Public History*, edited by Joanna Wojdon and Dorota Wiśniewska—part of the Routledge series *Global Perspectives on Public History*—is a welcome addition to this international literature on the field. Composed of fifteen chapters and a conclusion, the book has its origins in two international public history gatherings: The Public in Public and Applied History and the Public History Summer School, both held in Wrocław, Poland, in 2019.

Outside North America, especially in Europe, public history has sometimes been seen as an approach that is (overly) pragmatic and lacking in thorough theoretical conceptualization. As David Dean stresses in the introductory chapter, “public historians, when asked what they do, often turn very quickly to talk about the sites of their work rather than speak of theories, methodologies or approaches” (12). Even if the strict opposition between pragmatic and theoretical public history is debatable, the book offers a necessary international discussion on the meaning, role, and impact of “publics” in public history. Far from a traditional definition of “publics” as mere passive audiences, the book rightly discusses “publics” as actors, initiators, commentators, or modifiers of public history. In the first chapter, David Dean sets the tone by theorizing the relationship between “public” and “history,” using and discussing Jürgen Habermas’s concept of the public sphere and its

critique by philosopher Nancy Fraser, who prefers to discuss “counterpublics.” Although the consideration of multiple publics is not new to public history—one only needs to look at the field of museums—the book provides an effective survey of “history for the public, by the public, with the public, about the public or in the public sphere” (1).

The book is composed of four parts built around “publics”: Museums and their Publics; Publics in *Commemorations*; Digital Publics; Publics in Public History Research. In line with the debates over shared authority and public history, the editors question “the acceptable or desirable extent of autonomy of the public history public(s) versus the responsibilities of professionally trained public historians as providers, facilitators, or controllers of public history projects” (268). For instance, in her chapter on the role of the public in shaping new collective memory(ies) in Ireland, Irish historian Caitlin White explains how public leaders have contributed to interpretations of the Civil War since the 1920s. The inclusion of a section on digital publics—although the term digital public history could be discussed in more depth—is an important addition. As the editors argue, digital public history facilitates the dual role of the public as both recipient and creator of public history. Ricardo Santhiago’s chapter on public reactions to the destruction of the Brazilian National Museum explores the many digital initiatives led by the public to help re-collect images of destroyed artifacts.

By definition, a multiplicity of publics entails a multiplicity of interpretations of the past. *Public in Public History* does not shy away from controversial topics and shows how competing publics can affect public history. Focusing on the United States, Linda Thomas demonstrates how one public (in her case, some white supremacists) can “seize” the history of another public (Native Americans) and present its distorted interpretation in broader frameworks. Thomas for the United States, White for Ireland, and Ewa Woźniak-Wawrzyniak for Germany address the issues of the public(s) “owning” history and making legitimate claims on its representations in the public sphere. Alexander Khodnev’s chapter “Public between the State and Academia: Cultural and Political Essentialism of Public History in Russia” appears particularly useful and timely. In a global context of renewed discussion on the politicization of history, Khodnev clearly exposes the long-held but now changing understanding of the term “public” in Russia, including issues of control and mistrust imposed by political powers on historians and civil society. He argues that the recent development of public history reflects a bottom-up reaction to state-controlled narratives of the past.

The international dimension of the book is impressive. Chapters showcase public history in Brazil, Canada, Croatia, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Poland, Russia, Serbia, and the United States. This helps readers to move away from the usual strictly North American focus of public history resources. For instance, Jakub Šindelář provides a very interesting study of *Valiant Hearts: The Great War*, a French video game that he argues was a worthwhile project in both commercial and historical terms. Although chapters can be taken on their own, the international

diversity of the examples and the need to provide lengthy contextualization to understand case studies can sometimes make reading difficult.

The book could also have benefited from short introductions to each section to better define the public history issues at stake. Several chapters focus on underdeveloped uses of public history, cultural memories, remembrance, and historical consciousness. Although these concepts are related, they are not interchangeable. For instance, some chapters adopt relatively descriptive approaches to representations of the past. In doing so, they reflect a long trend in memory studies in which “publics” were merely a source of analysis. Some academics and practitioners, especially in Europe, tend to associate public history with memory studies. Considering publics as sources of representation is merely one—and to me not the most essential—definition of “public in public history.” This approach may come from the fact that the majority of the authors are working in academia. A further step in the understanding of the “public in public history” should aim to combine different profiles, not only from academia but also from public history sites, institutions, and associations. This limitation—which is by no means specific to the book—does not outweigh the benefit and interest of such an international collection of chapters. The book raises many essential questions about international public history and how conceptions of the terms “public” and “publics” affect the overall practice of public history. An additional chapter on alternative approaches to the Western definitions of public, publics, and public space could serve as a useful complement to future international discussions. This book is a very rich and valuable source for public history scholars and represents an important addition to the international literature. It further demonstrates the pressing need to analyze the relationship between public(s) and history.

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Hidden Cities: Urban Space, Geolocated Apps and Public History in Early Modern Europe, edited by Fabrizio Nevola, David Rosenthal, and Nicholas Terpstra. London: Routledge, 2022. 258 pp.; illustrations, notes, bibliography, index; clothbound £120; Open Access content available on the publisher website.

The reviewed book was created in connection with a program, also called *Hidden Cities*, which combines activities in the fields of digital humanities, public history, classical criticism of historical sources, and various forms of historiographic narratives. The project began in 2013 and it is still being developed today. Its goal was to maximize the potential of portable devices with a GPS receiver (smartphones, tablets) to introduce the user to the realities of life in a specific early modern city. Fabrizio Nevola and David Rosenthal, in collaboration with the company Calvium,