

words, and typographical errors. These can all be remedied in the future paperback edition, for which there will surely be a call.

The British Academy

C. R. BOXER

Building the Escorial. By GEORGE KUBLER. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. Notes. Illustrations. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 185, plus 123 illustrations. Cloth. \$40.00.

Few of the tourists who have visited Madrid in the course of the last four centuries have failed to make the forty-mile journey into the foothills of the Guadarrama Mountains in order to visit the Escorial. This enormous structure—a basilica, monastery, palace, royal pantheon, college, and seminary rolled into one—was built at the direction of King Philip II, beginning in the year 1561. Philip's intentions varied. Although he may originally have conceived of the Escorial as a monument to his victory over the French at San Quintín in 1557, by the time the first stones had been laid he also intended it to serve as the final resting place for his illustrious father, Emperor Charles V, who until then was inappropriately buried in the isolated Jeronymite monastery at Yuste. With this aim in mind, it was inevitable that Philip would become deeply involved in every aspect of the Escorial's construction, starting with the initial selection of the site in 1558–59 and ending, at least in a metaphorical sense, with its dedication in the summer of 1586 and the transfer of the emperor's body to a crypt situated deep beneath its main altar. Philip was also instrumental in selecting the "plain" or *desornamentado* style in which the Escorial was constructed, a reflection, so it is often said, of his own, rather *desornamentado* character and style of life.

The story of how Philip's initial conception of this building was finally translated into granite and mortar is the subject of this magnificently illustrated and printed volume. The author, one of this country's foremost authorities on the history of Spanish (and Latin American) architecture, has surely written the definitive account of the Escorial's architectural history, a history that, as the author reminds us, continues right up to the present, thanks to a series of recent restorations. Drawing upon archival materials previously unpublished, Kubler begins his concise and crisply written study with a fascinating survey of how the Escorial has fared over four centuries of changing architectural tastes. What follows is a detailed inquiry into how the Escorial came to be built—we learn about the building's architectural precedents, the architects and contractors who participated in the project, how the work force was organized,

and even the manner in which building materials were gathered and assembled at the construction site. Many of these pages are intended primarily for architectural historians and readers of this journal may wish only to skim the sections devoted, for example, to fenestration or to the building's "basements and cisterns." On the other hand, they should not overlook the epilog, a brilliant reconstruction of the Escorial's supposedly hidden meaning. Rejecting the hypothesis that the building was little more than the incarnation of the Hermetism to which the king and his principal architect, Juan de Herrera, have been said to subscribe, Kubler believes that the Escorial had more to do with a resurrection of classical Augustinian ideas on architecture than with Renaissance ideas on magic and the occult. Equally valuable are the appendixes, one of which estimates that the Escorial cost Philip a total of more than 1.2 million ducats. This represents a lot of money, but one should remember that in the 1570s and 1580s, the decades in which more than two-thirds of the Escorial was constructed, royal receipts from the Indies averaged well over 10 million ducats a year.

Building the Escorial, in short, is a superb example of classical architectural history written at its best, and for this reason alone it deserves a wide audience. Yet it is also true that this particular approach to a building's history has its limitations. While it provides a wealth of details about a building's style, stages of construction, and so forth, it offers relatively little about its interior decoration, the kinds of activities that took place within its rooms, and the relationship between these activities and the building's overall design. In other words, now that Kubler has succeeded in building the Escorial, still required are studies of the kind that would help bring this magnificent building to life.

The Johns Hopkins University

RICHARD KAGAN

Origins of Pre-Columbian Art. By TERENCE GRIEDER. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 241. Cloth. \$19.95.

The question of the origins of the ancient civilizations of the Americas has long been debated. That settlers of the Americas came across a Bering Strait land bridge is accepted by most modern scholars; but questions remain about what sort of cultural baggage they brought with them, how much of American culture was imported and how much developed in the Americas, and the length and pattern of migrations.

In *Origins of Pre-Columbian Art*, Terence Grieder speaks to these