compositions in the Carceri series, but also identifies the contrast between Piranesi’s view of architectural invention, coming from the study of nature and ancient monuments, and Lodoli’s rationalist view.

Alvar González-Palacios’s essay in Piranesi as Designer provides a valuable overview of Piranesi’s accomplishments and influence in the field of furniture and decorative design. González-Palacios examines the furniture Piranesi designed for the Quirinal apartment of one of Clement XIII’s nephews, Giovanni Battista Rezzonico. Two spectacular side tables from this suite survive, the chimneypiece monopod supports of which may reflect discoveries made in Pompeii and Herculaneum. González-Palacios also has valuable observations to make about Piranesi’s legacy as a decorative designer, comparing his “furious and fantastic” schemes to Robert Adam’s more refined and measured ensembles, and noting the presence of Piranesian candleslabra in the work of Jacques-Louis David and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres.

Piranesi as Draftsman

Two essays in Piranesi as Designer examine Piranesi’s skill as a draftsman. In an incisive contribution, David Rosand examines what he considers to be Piranesi’s fundamentally graphic imagination, stressing the degree to which for him thinking and drawing were extensions of one another. Rosand argues that Piranesi’s aesthetic of the sketch, and in particular his use of drawing to generate new inventions, recalls Leonardo, who first applied the word “sketch” to the rapid notations of a draftsman. Piranesi’s own pithy formulation of this aesthetic, in the form of a motto lightly etched on to the frontispiece of a series of reproductive prints, is “col sparcar si trovo” (messing about, one finds).

Michael Graves provides an entirely different approach to Piranesi as a draftsman in his essay entitled “Drawing from Piranesi.” Through a series of apt comparisons between Piranesi’s prints and his own drawings, Graves provides revealing insights into Piranesi’s compositional strategies and architectonic vision. Graves pays particular attention to Piranesi’s definition of viewpoint, framing, emphasis (“what to draw or not to draw”), and the use of drawing to reveal underlying structure.

Piranesi’s Legacy

Both books under review illuminate Piranesi’s powerful influence on architecture and the design arts in his own day, as well as on later epochs, including our own. Wilton-Ely’s contribution to The Serpent and the Stylus explores the implications of Piranesi’s interaction in Rome with Robert Adam, and—a few years later—his brother James. By any standard, these encounters were a crucial moment in the history of Western architecture and led to important developments in Piranesi’s critical reception. Wilton-Ely reveals the ways in which both Robert Adam and Piranesi were consciously advancing their own agendas through their acquaintance. Wilton-Ely’s essay is particularly illuminating in its assessment of why Adam was so receptive to Piranesi’s genius and its exposition of the ways in which Piranesi’s influence continued to manifest itself in Adam’s work following his return to England.

Ronald De Leeuw examines Piranesi’s reception in Holland in an essay in Piranesi as Designer. The important role played by Dutch travelers in fostering exchange is evident in the handsome drawings Piranesi presented to Aernout Vosmaer for his album amico-rum. Perhaps the most striking examples of how Piranesi’s portable distillations of Roman monuments found new currency north of the Alps are the remarkable stucco reliefs inspired by his Vedute di Roma, eight of which adorn the great hall of Biljoen Castle in the Netherlands.

Terry Kirk’s essay in The Serpent and the Stylus examines an understudied aspect of Piranesi’s architectural legacy, his influence on Italian architects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, most of whom do not usually figure in the mainstream narrative of modernism. In light of this, the author’s reconstruction of a continuous thread of architectural response to Piranesi is all the more significant and illuminates the distinctive character of Italian architecture. Buildings such as Guglielmo Calderini’s Ministry of Justice and the work of architects such as Armando Brasini exhibit the rich diversity and range of Piranesi’s influence.

Piranesi’s vital legacy extends into our own day. He has repeatedly been viewed as a forerunner of modern and postmodern attitudes toward artistic license and resistance to the orthodoxy of canonical authority. The concluding portion of Piranesi as Designer is devoted to a series of five images by contemporary architects (Michael Graves, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Robert A. M. Stern, Daniel Libeskind, and Peter Eisenman) accompanied by short commentaries on the relevance of Piranesi to their work. The images speak more directly than the architects’ words, but together they confirm Piranesi’s currency, which is particularly evident in three broad areas: the exaltation of the fragment, the virtues of complexity and contradiction, and an emphasis on the expressive dimension of design. To quote Venturi and Scott Brown, “Viva Piranesi!”

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Costanza Caraffa
Gaetano Chiaveri (1689–1770).
Architetto romano della Hofkirche
di Dresda
Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2006, 332 pp., 90 b/w illus. €70, ISBN 8836606733

In February 1733 news spread through Saxony that Augustus the Strong had died. His son, Frederick Augustus II, would become the new elector, and in 1734 he would succeed his father as King of Poland. But in the winter of 1733 the royal title still lay in the future, and Saxons had more questions than certainties. Would their new lord continue to assert the power and place of the electorate within the shifting borders of Central Europe? Would he lavish the same
patronage on the arts? And how would he manifest his Catholicism? This last question was the most troubling for the staunchly Lutheran people of Saxony.

The confessional divide between the ruler and his subjects was recent. Augustus the Strong had converted to Catholicism only in 1697, and did so out of political expediency. As a Catholic he could be elected King of Poland, adorning his House of Wettin with a royal crown. To reassure the pope that his was not a conversion of convenience, Augustus sent his heir on a grand tour of the Catholic nations of Europe. During his travels Frederick Augustus converted to Catholicism, and soon after he married Maria Josepha of Hapsburg. The Wettins, once the protectors of Luther and "champions of the Reformation," now became hereditary Catholics.

Few probably felt the acute disappointment of the conversion as much as the music director of St. Thomas's Church in Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach. Born in the shadow of the Wartburg, the fortress where the Saxon elector had shielded Martin Luther from papal extradition, Bach's Lutheranism shaped his career. Thus we can imagine his dilemma as he sat down in the winter of 1733 to compose something to celebrate his new sovereign. How could he recognize Frederick Augustus's Catholicism without violating Lutheran traditions and doctrines? By summer he had arrived at a solution, a Gloria for a Latin Mass was not disavowed by Luther, their library swelled with volumes on saints’ lives. They closed all remaining Lutheran chapels in their residences, consecrating Catholic ones instead. In 1738 they took the daring decision to commission a grand new church for the court, the Hofkirche.

This palatine chapel and the Italian architect who would build it, Gaetano Chiaveri, are the subjects of Costanza Caraffa's scrupulously researched and lavishly illustrated book. Hers is the first book devoted to them since Eberhard Hempel's study of 1955. By making more ample use of documents and studying extant drawings with greater care, Caraffa has crafted an essential reference for those interested in baroque architecture in Central Europe. Moreover, her research leads her beyond the draftsman's site practices, and the confessional tension that determined how the church was designed and received. By foregrounding its political and religious message, Caraffa highlights the audacious move taken by both king and architect to build a symbol of Catholicism in Dresden.

Caraffa begins her chronicle by showing how Frederick Augustus and Maria Josepha conceived the commission. The Hofkirche was to replace the provisional court chapel in the opera house, and early designs share qualities with the previous structure. For example, Zacharias Longuelune, Jean de Bodt, and Johann Christoph Knöffel all kept the new church encased within planned additions to the royal palace. This followed Augustus the Strong's tact, hiding the chapel so that it did not offend the local population. But Frederick Augustus soon took the risk of building a free-standing church. In his mind this new temple could also help propagate the Catholic faith. And Caraffa seizes on Frederick Augustus's interest in the propagation fidei as one lens for analyzing the Hofkirche.

At first Frederick Augustus advanced his commission carefully, even covertly. During the initial phase of planning, the Hofkirche was vaguely referred to as "a certain building to be built in the royal residence of Dresden" (9). The court's daring, helped along by many Jesuit advisors, only became apparent when the site was selected. Facing the Elbe River and the Augustus Bridge, the church would be the first structure greeting a visitor that arrived in the old town from the north. This was the direction of Poland, the Catholic seat of the king's power. Though the court had to demolish part of the city walls and build a new quayside to ready the site, this symbolic significance overrode concerns about expense.

The architect the court selected would help make the Catholic message clear. Chiaveri is all but ignored in histories of baroque architecture. This is understandable because he left behind only two buildings: the Hofkirche and part of a structure in St. Petersburg called the Kunstkamera, which housed several scientific institutions. The rest of his career remains shadowy, and Caraffa thankfully devotes a chapter to reconstructing it. Born in Rome in 1689, Chiaveri began his career apprenticed to an unnamed "skillful master" who allegedly took the young architect to St. Petersburg. This master was identified as Nicola Michetti during Chiaveri's lifetime, but there is no documentation of their relationship. Regardless of how he got there, in 1720 Chiaveri was in the Russian capital, named in the czar's Imperial Chancellery of Construction. He mostly worked under the supervision of others until he was appointed architect of the Kunstkamera in 1724. Inheriting an earlier plan, Chiaveri...
distinguished this academy of science by inserting a three-tiered observatory tower at its center. Oddly, when it was almost complete the czar dismissed him. Chiaveri therefore returned to Rome with his wife, Anna Elizabeth Forman-desbach. After a tumultuous year during which his only child died and Anna abandoned him, Chiaveri returned north, this time to Warsaw. Here he designed a catafalque for the funeral rites of Augustus the Strong and made proposals for expanding the Royal Castle. In 1734 Chiaveri accompanied Frederick Augustus to Krakow for his coronation, and four years later the king called him to Dresden for the most important commission of his career.

Caraffa carefully charts the web of contacts in Rome and Dresden that helped Chiaveri rise to prominence. Her study is populated by powerful cardinals and ambassadors, as well as the Jesuit father Ignazio Guarini, whom she sees as the driving force behind Chiaveri's successful candidacy for the commission. She proves equally deft at stitching together the evolution of Chiaveri's designs from the surviving drawings, prints, and gilt tin model.

Before the architect began to draw he received dictates from the court. He had to include a bell tower, outfit the nave with a royal viewing balcony, and incorporate an ambulatory on the ground floor for religious processions. This latter requirement was crucial since leading Catholic processions through the streets of Dresden was still impolitic. The royal chapel at Versailles, which had both a royal balcony and ambulatory, provided the most important model. But Caraffa also stresses the influence of Filippo Juvarra’s designs for the Sacristy of St. Peter’s and ideal church plans produced for the competitions of the concorsi dementini in Rome. In particular she sees the methods of the concorsi, which challenged architects to meet a variety of functional demands, as crucial training.

Chiaveri demonstrated this preparation by resolving all of the requirements for the Hofkirche with remarkable ease. He divided the principal nave into two levels, with the lower one designated for the public and the upper one for the court and royal family. He then wrapped the lower church with an ambulatory and flanked it with two additional naves. The result was a five-aisle basilica plan easily legible on the exterior where the higher central nave seems perched like a precious box atop a broad base.

The bell tower façade was Chiaveri’s most original invention. Combining Bernini’s bell tower designs for St. Peter’s with Borromini’s curving exteriors, Chiaveri planned an oval tower that announces the church as one approaches across the Augustus Bridge. His Roman inspiration also triumphantly heralded the Catholic character of the building, a message carried across the rest of the exterior by Lorenzo Mattielli’s statues of saints. Caraffa devotes considerable attention to the sculpture, analyzing which saints were selected and where they were positioned. She reads the ensemble as a variation on Hapsburg propaganda used for the recatholization of Bohemia. In Prague the cult of Czech saints, such as St. John Nepomunk, helped encourage popular piety. On the roofline of the Hofkirche statues of local saints, such as Benno of Meissen, were part of a similar visual rhetoric that the king hoped would win over the populace.

Caraffa does not tell us if these efforts succeeded. She notes that in 1741 a pamphlet appeared that attacked the architecture and its message. Disparaged as Borrominian, the church was too clearly a product of a Roman architect and too openly Catholic for the anonymous author. History was equally unkind. Narrowly viewed as a counterpart to the Frauenkirche, it was never considered within the wider corpus of baroque architecture. Caraffa therefore closes her book by highlighting shared characteristics with structures in Russia, Prussia, Naples, and Sicily. Most of these connections are purely stylistic. But she claims that in Naples the Hofkirche resonated on a political level. Both states were headed by rulers that had only recently assumed a royal title, and both needed to consolidate their power in visual terms. To this end they commissioned buildings that communicated confidence and daring, among them a court chapel. At Caserta the king of Naples planned a chapel very similar to the ones in Versailles and Dresden. And though its architect, Luigi Vanvitelli, would have denied the debt, Caraffa highlights specific details that he took from the Hofkirche.

Caraffa’s arguments about how architecture communicated political legitimacy and religious confession could have been strengthened by better organization. Her love of detail leads her at times to sacrifice the continuity of her larger narrative. Indeed the footnotes constitute their own substantial text. But these minor criticisms do not diminish her accomplishment. Enlivened by considerable learning, her study foregrounds the Hofkirche as a monument of rare religious, political, and stylistic importance for Central Europe. Like the trumpets that open Bach’s Gloria, her research rouses us to consider one of the most important cultural accomplishments of Saxony’s confessional divide.

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Thomas U. Walter: The Lectures on Architecture, 1841–1853

Thomas Ustick Walter (1804–87) is not the only major American architect who has never been favored with a monograph; one thinks of Isaiah Rogers, Wilson Eyre, and the elusive Bruce Price. But the absence is particularly distressing in the case of Walter, the creator of Philadelphia’s Girard College and the United States Capitol dome, for his papers survive in almost their entirety. In 1982 the Athenaeum of Philadelphia acquired over five hundred architectural drawings from Walter’s descendants, along with diaries, letters, and other documents, amounting to some thirty thou-