responsibility for their family. The women fought their brothers, brothers-in-law, uncles, and even their own sons. (In one case a son tried to sue his mother for spending too much money on his wedding, thereby dissipating his inheritance.) Each dispute generated notarial records, account books, inventories, and letters. These, along with a very small number of surviving buildings, images, and objects, give McIver the chance to reconstruct the Pallavicina women’s complex lives and their relationships with the buildings they constructed and the goods they owned.

Although McIver focuses primarily on three women—Laura Pallavicina-Sanvitale, whom she characterizes as a matriarch with patriarchal tendencies; Giacoma Pallavicina, who used her wealth to support the poor, particularly indigent women; and Camilla Pallavicina, a pawn in family matrimonial negotiations—the book is not organized as a series of biographies. Instead, McIver provides case studies that illuminate gender relationships, public and private space and patronage, and women’s relationships with material culture. But the archivally recorded disputes do not always fit neatly into her categories, and this leads to some lack of focus and confusing organization. For example, the chapter on the Renaissance palazzo as a public voice for women does not deal with any of the three main protagonists, but with another relative, Ippolita Pallavicina-Sanseverina, who built her own palace in Piacenza. Reconstructing that building, which was completely transformed in later centuries, is an impressive act of archival archaeology using contracts and payment records. But this has to be put to one side in the next chapter when we move into the palazzo interior, which McIver characterizes “as a private voice for women.” Here she assembles an impressive range of inventories for women’s palaces; Laura Pallavicina-Sanvitale’s home is analyzed, alongside those of her numerous female relatives, in extensive detail. But having seen how Pallavicina-Sanvitale’s voice for women “is analyzed, alongside those of her numer-

Salmon de Caus (1576–1626) is a typically Protoen Renaissance figure. Among the many fields in which he was expert he was active as garden designer, hydraulic engineer, and perspective theorist, and his places of work were as widespread as his interests. His biography traces a path from what were probably artisanal origins in Normandy through a journey in Italy, to the courts of the Archdukes Albrecht and Isabella in Brussels, of King James and Crown Prince Henry in Britain, and of the Count Palatine Frederick of the Rhine, the future “Winter King of Bohemia,” in Heidelberg. He designed important gardens for all of them.

As Luke Morgan notes in the introduction to this closely argued book, De Caus has however remained an elusive historical figure. Previous literature on him reveals wide divergence of opinion. De Caus has been regarded as a madman, a Protestant martyr, a magus, and, in contrast, a forerunner of the Industrial Revolution who invented the steam engine. Morgan refutes all these interpretations, finding their roots in the thickets of earlier scholarship. He provides instead the first comprehensive account of De Caus’s life and work, which carefully reconstructs his career. Morgan reads De Caus’s work in the light of his publications. A more sober picture results, in which De Caus emerges as a pragmatist.

In Morgan’s view De Caus is a thinker and writer for whom utility and functionality were principal criteria. Pragmatism characterized his penchant for hydraulic engineering. His publications lack arcane significance, and so do his garden designs, in which a coherent narrative structure is absent. De Caus’s gardens are rather full of what Morgan calls familiar topoi. Hence the major importance of De Caus consists in his transmission of Italian ideas of garden and grotto designs to the north.

The title of Morgan’s book expresses...
the principle said to govern De Caus’s approach: nature as model. This means that De Caus subscribed to the idea that “his own varied activities” represent a “comprehensive attempt to reveal nature’s order through art rather than to make nature submit to art” (189). Morgan’s interpretation thus has broader implications: it explicitly undermines the view that De Caus’s gardens could suggest that man masters nature. It thus rules out an interpretation that his designs represent a hermetic or occult vision of man’s control of the macrocosm, and accordingly that a prince might symbolically control the world through its reflection in his garden.

Morgan thereby takes issue with what has become a well known reading of the Heidelberg garden as possessing occult significance; he ties this interpretation to later twentieth-century beliefs. Yet his own views may also be related to other recent currents of interpretation. First is the general reaction against iconographic readings, particularly against finding programs in works of art. Morgan’s approach also coincides with a widespread tendency to reject the theses of Frances Yates, especially her later emphases on occult traditions, including arguments expressed in her Rosicrucian Enlightenment of 1973. There Yates first advanced a Hermetic, occult interpretation of the Heidelberg gardens, which several authors, most notably Richard Patterson, have subsequently elaborated or endorsed. Finally Morgan’s emphasis on De Caus as a practitioner and engineer openly relates him to artisanal practice and the “makers’ knowledge tradition,” exemplified by Bernard Palissy and Cornelis Drebbel, that has become a topic in the history of science. De Caus is said to offer an important expression of a “mechanical” point of view which is however to be differentiated from more sophisticated natural philosophy.

While some of Morgan’s arguments may be well taken, much remains open to discussion nevertheless. It may well be that iconographic readings were pushed too far by Panofsky and his followers, and that coherent narrative programs are especially difficult to associate with garden designs. But to say that gardens present topoi rather than programs does not end the possibilities for further readings: after all, much Renaissance poetry, including that of esoteric character, involved the deployment of a stock of topoi. Though not cited by Morgan, Hanns Hubach has in fact more recently read the Heidelberg garden together with its Sibylus as a new Parnassus and home of the muses.1 Regardless of the validity of any particular interpretation, the assumption of Italianate models in gardens and grottoes may even in itself be regarded as presenting representational significance: a prince might suggest his prestige through having such a modern garden.2 Certainly gardens were places seen on “state visits,” when they served not only for entertainment, but to impress important visitors. Furthermore, as one of the most famous descendents of De Caus’s designs, the gardens of Versailles, suggests, gardens may not only be thematically coherent but may present a political message as well.

More may be said about the esoteric interpretation of gardens, too. While Yates and her followers may have been wrong in assigning the origins of Rosicrucianism to the Heidelberg court, her scholarly instincts lay in the right direction; it is just that she got the particular Calvinist court wrong. Heiner Börggreffe has convincingly demonstrated that the Calvinist landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, Moritz der Gelehrte, was probably responsible for the first Rosicrucian tracts.3 Moritz, who was fascinated with alchemy, to which he devoted himself after he abdicated, also drew buildings and gardens. He labeled his garden at Eschwege with planetary designations, thus suggesting that it had an alchemical or occult, significance, and, indeed, program.4 The court of another Calvinist ruler, James I, for whom De Caus designed gardens, also possessed profound interests in magic and the occult; Vaughan Hart has argued forcefully that its gardens also reflect this interest.5 While the bases for earlier interpretations of occult elements in the Heidelberg gardens may be problematic, it is thus still worth entertaining this possibility for other reasons. Though not specifically addressed by Morgan, some of the sculpture found in the Heidelberg gardens that Yates and others mention, including De Caus’s recreation of the legendary statue of Memnon, which became animated when struck by the sun, certainly still invites a Hermetic interpretation.

Morgan’s characterization of De Caus as a pragmatic artisan-engineer is also debatable. Heinrich Schickhardt was another such architect-engineer with whom De Caus had contact (59). Like De Caus, Schickhardt had visited and made drawings of things he had seen in Italy; he also served a Protestant German court (Württemberg), for which he designed gardens and machinery as well as buildings. Unlike De Caus, whose bookshelf remains merely hypothetical (157), the contents of Schickhardt’s library are known, and they include books on alchemy and astronomy (which included astrology) along with many other subjects.6 This engineer-architect with poly-mathic interests including alchemy and astronomy (and De Caus’s expertise in the latter subject is also known) thus appears to fit the image of late Renaissance Vitruvianism proposed long ago by Yates rather than the pragmatic vision proposed by Morgan, and it is worth reconsidering De Caus in this light too.7

In any case, two other figures with whom Morgan does briefly compare De Caus, Drebbel and Palissy, may hardly be described as possessing a merely mechanical or pragmatic world view. William Newman has recently emphasized the importance for the emergence of natural philosophy in the seventeenth century of Palissy’s sort of vitalist philosophy, and its relation to the alchemical aim to perfect nature.8 Similarly Vera Keller has demonstrated the importance of the reception of Drebbel’s machine-based but non-mechanical, indeed Hermetic, natural philosophy. Drebbel was much involved with hydraulic machinery, not just in his failed perpetual motion machine, and, as Keller shows, his natural philosophy was also important for De Caus’s Raisons des Forces Mouvantes.9

Aristotle himself had distinguished between mechanical arts, which use dead material and through quantities merely
imitate nature, and the perfective arts, which draw on the living qualities of nature to intervene in and perfect natural processes. While alchemy may be the most familiar of the perfective arts, De Caus and Drebbel also may be said to have practiced these arts when they used the qualities of air and water to power machinery, notably in gardens. Conceptions of nature as model, and the imitation of nature, take on a different meaning in this context. Rather than being a form of mimetic imitation, as Morgan implies, artistic imitation may moreover resemble nature in being like it in its processes of creation: art may imitate nature in perfecting what nature has created, as Aristotle says in the *Physics*. This perfective sense of imitation seems more apposite to De Caus’s creation of grotoes and gardens.

These themes, and many others, including De Caus’s interest in music, harmony, geometry, and related subjects, need further consideration before a more fully satisfying characterization of De Caus can be obtained. Morgan has brought together much information, but the nature of De Caus may still have eluded him.

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Notes
2. This would also certainly seem to be case with the Coudenborg palace of the Archdukes Albrecht and Isabella in Brussels, and its gardens, as demonstrated by the research of Krista de Jonge, on which Morgan relies. It may be remembered that Albrecht was also brother of the "Hermes Trismegistus" of Germany, Emperor Rudolf II, and connected in many ways with the Empire (see Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, "Archduke Albrecht as an Austrian Habsburg and Prince of the Empire," in *Albrecht and Isabella: Essays*, ed. Luc Duerloo [Turnhout: Brepols, 1998], 15–25), so such interests are not excluded.
4. For Moritz and alchemy see, in general, Bruce T. Moran, *The Alchemical World of the German Court*. Occult Philosophy and Chemical Medicine in the Circle of Moritz of Hessen (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993), for Moritz’s design of a garden with planetary sections and probably an occult significance, see Moritz der Gelehrte, 274–76, cat. no. 302b, ill. p. 275.
10. I am grateful to Vera Keller for discussing with me this point and its relevance for De Caus and Drebbel.

Jeffrey Karl Ochsner

LIONEL H. PRIES, ARCHITECT, ARTIST, EDUCATOR: FROM ARTS AND CRAFTS TO MODERN ARCHITECTURE


Lionel ("Spike") Pries (1897–1968) was an artist-architect who spent most of his career in Seattle, where he was an influential architectural teacher at the University of Washington. Pries’s career from the 1920s to the 1960s is particularly revealing because, as the title of Jeffrey Ochsner’s book indicates, it spanned the transition from Arts and Crafts ideology and Beaux-Arts method to postwar modernism. As a polymath who taught, painted, etched, collected, and designed buildings, interiors, and even some landscapes, Pries as presented in this striking book will appeal to several intersecting audiences: historians of the Beaux-Arts, Arts and Crafts, and American modernist movements; readers interested in the history of twentieth-century architecture and design in California and the Pacific Northwest; and those wishing to learn more about the history of architectural education.

The book makes an additional social and moral contribution. One reason Pries has until recently received less than his due is that, as a gay man caught out in a compromising situation in 1958 and dismissed by his university on grounds of moral turpitude, he was largely erased from history. One gets a sense here of a debt long overdue being paid, and that may partly explain the lavishness of the publication. The book is a splendid production, a full-dress architectural biography by a scholar of fair judgment and great thoroughness; it is richly illustrated, with many color plates, extensive and interesting discursive notes, a comprehensive list of Pries’s buildings and projects, and a guide to archival sources. Color views—complementing floor plans—of interiors of Pries’s complex and fascinating houses are especially welcome. At nearly 400 admirably researched pages, the book is a scholarly tome, yet easy on the eyes and even entertaining. Ochsner argues persuasively that Pries should be viewed as important, not just to Seattle and the Northwest, but to the increasingly complex narrative of how modernism entered North America and was variously inflected.

The disappearance from campus, over a weekend in late 1958, of a popular and highly effective senior teacher long went unexplained, and Pries’s reputation fell under a dark shadow. Memories of him began to re-emerge, however, in the late 1970s as more complicated attitudes to modernism surfaced and as gay liberation blossomed. He came to be seen as just the sort of hybrid teacher and designer, striving to reconcile modernism and traditionalism, who then appealed to many people.

University of Washington professor Grant Hildebrand once wrote that when he had arrived in Seattle from the Midwest, he was struck by the “rich quality” of Seattle’s smaller-scale design, and he attributed that in large part to Pries’s influence (307). For himself, Ochsner says the penny about Pries began to drop when writing the volume *Shaping Seattle’s Architecture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994); he took note of Pries’s wonderful drawings and began to interview the man’s surviving friends and colleagues. Pries went to his death feeling ambivalent toward his former employer, and it is possible that his heir, Robert Winskill, would never have turned over archival material.