becomes a canvas on which many interpretations are posited.

Estelle Leutrat, in her contribution, discusses *Vues d’optiques* (1551) as a poetics of space. Finely drawn views are rendered in perspective, with small figures adding picturesque details. Vast architectural settings compose the mise-en-scène for religious and mythological episodes. Light effects emerging from dark ambiances lend an air of mystery to these prints. In ruins, the role of nature is reduced—no trees or vegetation disturb this purely mineral and timeless world.

In a perceptive essay, Monique Chatenet examines three ensembles of engravings from *Logis domestiques* (late 1540s), *Premier Livre d’architecture contenant les plans et dessains [sic] de cinquante bastiments tous differens* (1559), and *Livre d’architecture* (1582). She also includes the Mansfield album, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, five sheets of Paris monuments, and the Morgan and Vatican albums.

Part three also includes a 1988 article by David Thomson, “France’s Earliest Illustrated Architectural Pattern Book: Designs for living à la Française.” In this work, Thomson examines a compilation of engravings in the 1540s. Du Cerceau sought protection of copyright for these works in a petition to Francis I in 1545. Because no pattern book had been published in Europe at that time, this work was noted for its novelty. As Thompson illustrates, Chateaux A to F are hardly “Petites Habitations”; rather they are country houses for wealthy aristocrats, or “Grands demeures signeurials” (221). The most striking feature of the schemes is the ample amount of space for servants and service rooms with special functions.

Du Cerceau’s role as a disseminator of architectural styles is the topic of Claude Mignot’s essay. From the beginning of his career, Du Cerceau was fascinated by the motif of the triumphal bay façade of Lescot’s Louvre. In an inventory Du Cerceau is cited as “proutrayer,” that is, someone who only made drawings, as compared to architects who worked on buildings. Mignot raises the question: Was Du Cerceau an architect or just a builder/engraver on paper and vellum or a mere copier? Thomson believes that only his son Baptiste was a true architect. Yet, it is undeniable that Du Cerceau was a master of architectural and related activity—cartography, typology, and ornament.

In a perceptive contribution to the volume, François Boudon explores Du Cerceau’s grand opus *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* (2 vols., 1576–79). She examines twenty-seven royal chateaux built between 1528 and 1571, and other landmarks of the kingdom. This unparalleled anthology is marked by the consistency and clarity of its organization with each building represented in plan, elevation, and perspective view. Architectural and topographical information and personal observations serve as a primer for historians and builders. The text includes measurements, construction details, materials employed, and topographical commentaries. Among the many modes of representation are speculative aerial views—e.g., Fontainebleau from its surroundings. Extraordinary images appear in the large-format drawings in the British Museum, such as the axonometric rendering of Montargis showing both the interior and exterior (with gardens and landscape).

Returning to Paris in his later years, Du Cerceau focuses on the renewal of French architecture and on imaginary edifices. Studying the royal chateaux, Du Cerceau contemplates the publicity that accrued to their glory, as in the new wing of the Louvre. Following Serlio, he produces two didactic works on perspective and the orders. He concludes with the restoration of Roman monuments and an inventory of architectural patrimony, “des sins a plaisir.”

Fuhring’s conclusion to the volume, with its multiple cross references, is truly Herculean. Beginning with a catalog of prints, each entry contains a description, commentary, and bibliography—and a catalog and summary of Du Cerceau collections, with notes on techniques, inscriptions, dimensions, bindings, provenance, and analysis, and, not least, clearly captioned illustrations. The abundance of archival material makes re-evaluation difficult.

This lavishly produced volume is marked by a degree of redundance. Still, there are surprises, such as the introduction of the “Precursor” and the discovery of the Lyon manuscript. Future researchers will find a rich font of scholarly references here. We owe gratitude to the institutions responsible for the exhibition and weighty publication—the Musée des Monuments Français in Paris and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

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Notes
3. In an email correspondence of 26 Sept. 2011, Guillaume noted that since this book was published, an archival discovery by Guy-Michel Leproux, in *Documents d’histoire parisienne* (Paris: École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2010), 11: 18, has revealed that Du Cerceau was around seventy-three years old in 1584, fixing his date of birth ca. 1511, nine or ten years earlier than had been thought. This discovery obliges the authors to correct certain aspects of their work: a part of the oeuvre dating from the years 1540–45 must be assigned to the previous decade; the medallion that depicts the artist at age forty must no longer be attributed to the end of his Parisian years but to the close of his sojourn in Orleans.

Robert Bork, William Clark, and Abby McGehee, editors

New Approaches to Medieval Architecture


Ashgate, 2011, 258 pp., 66 b/w illus. $119.95 (cloth), ISBN 9781409422280

New Approaches to Medieval Architecture bears a somewhat misleading title, as the methodologies employed by the authors are not new in the broad sense of the term; most papers included in this collection—drawn from conference presentations...
at the International Medieval Congress between 2007 and 2009—could be described as positivist, relying on site-oriented, object-based examination. But if the methods themselves are not entirely new, the problems to which they are applied—and the means by which they are applied—stretch the boundaries of the field, questioning standard truths and opening exciting directions of exploration. The authors, who include both emerging and senior scholars, demonstrate how fresh eyes and new technology can upend even the most deeply-entrenched conclusions.

The editors organized the papers under four headings: master narratives of the field, patronage and institutional context, workshop practices, and new technology. Nicola Camerlenghi begins part one with “The Longue Durée and the Life of Buildings,” questioning our emphasis on a building’s moment of conception as the moment deserving study. He instead introduces the idea of four-dimensional study to medieval buildings, noting that time-based study can reveal changing attitudes about the past, the effects of the past on the present, and the lasting significance of sites or structures. His work is followed by that of Vasileios Marinis, who challenges the notion that liturgical function determined form in the ground plans of Byzantine churches, suggesting instead a more complex scenario accounting not only for function but for convenience, aesthetics, practicality, and change at each site. Next, Ellen Shortell convincingly reinterprets documentary sources for the construction of Saint-Quentin’s Gothic choir and supports her position with an analysis of the stained glass, concluding that Saint-Quentin, usually described as an imitative offshoot of Chartres, is instead its contemporary. Along the way, Shortell highlights the difficulty of using assumptions about an artist’s stylistic development as a means of dating. This section of the book concludes with Stephen Murray’s “Back to Beauvais,” in which Murray notes evidence supporting his theory of the location and causes of the Beauvais choir vault collapse of 1284. Murray contradicts the notion that the Beauvais collapse could be attributed to simply exceeding the limits of the Gothic system, pointing out instead the role of local errors. He turns the medieval disaster into a foil for the current state of Beauvais, where braces installed in the 1990s have arrested all movement. The work is preserved for the time being, but we are prevented from gathering any further information on the building’s movement, leaving us without an understanding of how the building will behave when the “temporary” supports are removed.

Part two begins with William Clark and Thomas Waldman suggesting new dates for Suger’s work at Saint-Denis. Of all medieval sites, Saint-Denis’s dating has always seemed the most secure—we have Suger’s writings, after all—but Clark and Waldman, proposing to “follow the money” (68), study these writings from a new perspective, pointing out evidence that Saint-Denis was financially preparing for building in the 1120s and that the west end likely followed this preparation in the early 1130s. They also note that the east end was substantially underway by the time the cornerstone was laid in July 1140, as Suger indicates that the raising of the eastern part of the Carolingian crypt and the alterations to Hilduin’s chapel were complete by this point. As these were adapted to support the new chevet, Clark and Waldman conclude that the chevet plan was already determined.

Carl Barnes follows with an essay on another canonical figure, Villard de Honnecourt, delving into the question of how Villard’s drawings were meant to function—they depict architecture, but not only architecture, and without always reflecting an architect’s understanding of structure. Taking dates, subject matter, accuracy of specific drawings, and connections with Hungary into account, Barnes suggests that Villard may have been an agent of the bishop or chapter of Cambrai, although he does not clarify in what capacity. Were Villard’s drawings meant to offer different possibilities for design to the Cambrai chapter? Given the singular survival of Villard’s notebook, his specific role may always be difficult to ascertain. Part two ends with Matthew Reeve’s look at the English great hall, connecting this new architectural form with an increased concern about appropriate behavior and courtesy in the thirteenth century. Reeve points out that the hall is often described in contemporary writing as the setting for courteous behavior, and as such behavior may have emerged from an ecclesiastical model, so may the great halls of Henry III’s palaces have derived from halls within bishop’s palaces, as at Canterbury and Lincoln.

Janet Snyder’s work on jamb figures begins part three, which focuses on workshop practice. Snyder discusses the standardization of portal design in the 1130s–1160s: the width of the jamb figures was limited by the available thickness of luis de Paris (the layer of limestone most prized for sculpture), and transportation costs would further have encouraged cutting at the quarry. Her study of the dimensions and postures of such figures reveals that they could all be derived from three basic rectangular “blanks.” Snyder suggests a sequence of work involving an ymagier (sculptor) and assistants working on the same figure in turn; the idea of stone roughly shaped at the quarry and finished onsite questions the traditional hierarchy of a master entirely responsible for the appearance of the finished product. The next three papers all study the relation between geometry and medieval design. Nigel Hiscock relates variations in pier spacing to geometric planning, and compares Benedictine and Cistercian pier spacing, tentatively suggesting that Cistercian design relied on the square and did not incorporate pentagons or equilateral triangles as architecture of other orders did. Stefaan Van Lijfferinge’s study of the Saint-Denis chevet reveals a design based on circles, but notes the ability of medieval builders to accommodate geometry, aesthetics, and practical requirements of the site. This section concludes with Robert Bork’s examination of Villard de Honnecourt’s Laon tower drawings, in which Bork shows that the elevation, usually dismissed as impressionistic and inaccurate, actually reflects the general geometric scheme of the tower and may have been based on at least some knowledge of the workshop.

The final part of the book includes the greatest number of papers, all centering on the uses of technology as a tool for
over time in a way traditional drawing cannot replicate—brings us full circle, referencing Camerlenghi’s call for incorporating time into our study of architecture. The short format of these papers, derived from their original function as conference presentations, does mean that their potential impact on the field beyond a given site is at times suggested, rather than explored at length; for instance, how will a redating of Saint-Denis affect the concept of Saint-Denis’s role in Gothic design? In terms of impact on the field, increased diversity in terms of geography, date, and function within this volume would also have been welcome, especially as an opportunity to indicate how conclusions drawn from French Gothic ecclesiastical building—dominant for so long—would compare to situations outside that context. But the volume’s most significant limitation lies in its illustrations. In some cases, as with Hiscock’s descriptions of geometric planning or Paul et al.’s work on GPR, larger, color illustrations would clarify the authors’ points. In other cases, the constraints of traditional publication become obvious. Titus notes that reproducing his vault survey on a small scale eliminates the visual cues that allow him to connect particular vaults; to clearly indicate these cues on a publishable scale, he would have to distort the image. Scale and color are not the only issues: three-dimensional interactive digital models, such as those described in the Southwell Minster project or referenced by Michael Davis, do not translate to the printed page. To effectively represent the kinds of research demonstrated here—chronological exploration, spatial experience, comparison between past and present—we need to expand our notion of what publication means.

However, throughout the volume, the authors collectively show how much more we can learn about even the most extensively researched sites, so long as they are approached with a willingness to question assumptions.

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Stefan Muthesius
The Poetic Home: Designing the 19th-century Domestic Interior

The Poetic Home is a major contribution to the literature on the history of design of the domestic interior. Initially, the book’s appearance might suggest a visually driven survey. Large-format and heavily illustrated, it is a beautifully produced volume of high quality. Yet immediately on opening the work, it becomes apparent that its author has a more ambitious agenda. With its dense and detailed exegesis, The Poetic Home promises to join a growing number of standard references on the formation of the designed domestic interior for scholars of the decorative arts, architecture, and design, as well as the cultural history of nineteenth-century Europe, for years to come.

Fueled by interests in feminist history, anthropology, material culture studies, as well as the social history of architecture and design, the domestic interior has become a hot topic for interdisciplinary scholarship over the past twenty years. In this sense, The Poetic Home adds to a field originally defined by Mario Praz (1964) and extended by Peter Thornton (1984) and Judith Neiswander (2008), among others.1

Muthesius’s study provides readers with an in-depth study of the definition, development, and, in his view, demise, of the central concept of the book: the poetic home. In the author’s words, “this book . . . concentrates on the design of the interior as a whole, and deals with what the designers, the makers and their spokespeople postulated themselves during the 19th century” (9). This was a period, he suggests, when “[t]hey placed a new emphasis on the textural and colour effects of fabrics, wood or metal objects as attractive in themselves, and they evolved a new, more

- The Medieval Design Process at Southwell Minster
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