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John Archer, *The Literature of British Domestic Architecture 1715-1842*. Cambridge, Mass., and London, England, MIT Press, 1985, xxvi + 1087 pp., 11 illus., $140.00 (cloth)

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domaine. Parallèlement, le répertoire des enseignes de graveurs, éditeurs et marchands de la rue Saint-Jacques, complété par deux plans, nous permettent de visualiser l'emplacement des boutiques tout au long de la rue, entre 1660 et 1690 environ, puis en 1700.

En bref, *Le commerce de l'estampe à Paris au XVII^e siècle* nous apparaît donc comme un des ouvrages marquants sur l'histoire de la gravure du XVII^e siècle. Il s'agit bien sûr avant tout d'une étude très spécialisée et destinée à une diffusion restreinte. Cependant, la lecture de cet ouvrage, écrit dans un français aussi précis qu'élégant, ne saurait laisser indifférents les historiens de l'art et les historiens des mentalités intéressés à l'évolution d'un art qui est en voie de regagner ses lettres de noblesse.

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JOHN ARCHER *The Literature of British Domestic Architecture 1715-1842*. Cambridge, Mass., and London, England, MIT Press, 1985, xxvi + 1087 pp., 11 illus., $140.00 (cloth).

John Archer's recent book, which has the thickness of a metropolitan telephone directory, provides a significant tool for the further study of British architectural literature. It is by no means an inexpensive tool, despite the paucity of illustrations. In fact it is so costly as to fall beyond the limits of many university libraries' blanket ordering systems. Therefore scholars working in the British field, and the closely related one of North American architecture, must make a point of ordering it for their reference collections if not for themselves. It will be an immediate boon to everyone on this continent reliant upon limited library resources. Already booksellers are using it in preference to the Avery, Fowler, and British Library catalogues. It is clearly destined to set a new standard. But it is not entirely without recent parallels, nor is it likely to remain the last word on the subject.

Johannes Dobai's exhaustive, three-volume *Die Kunstlerliteratur der Klassizismus und der Romantik in England* (Bern, 1974-77) formed an exacting precedent for Archer to emulate and surpass. Archer has advanced scholarship in two ways. First, by concentrating specifically on illustrated architectural books, he has been able to go into greater depth than Dobai. Second, the less discursive text focuses not only on the content of the books themselves but also on their variant editions, for which sample library locations are provided. As a matter of personal interest, I compared the two authors' entries on the publications of Sir John Soane. Dobai has 47 pages of general discussion, including a long analysis of Soane's theoretical lectures, which did not appear in print until nearly a century after his death. By contrast, Archer's eight and a half pages restrict themselves to the architect's printed writings, and indicate where copies might be found.

It is curious that neither Dobai nor Archer comes out of the time-honoured British bibliographic tradition. Could their foreignness be the reason for the somewhat lukewarm reception their books have received in Britain? According to rumours in scholarly circles in London, a new bibliography is soon to appear there that will supersede the others. It would be a pity if scholarly judgments were drawn partly on chauvinistic grounds. Archer's work ought universally to be applauded for contributions already made to the state of knowledge. One suspects that Archer had not made his project widely known to architectural historians in Britain. Their names are absent from his otherwise generous acknowledgment section. Were they a bit taken aback when *The Literature of British Architecture 1715-1842* was released by the MIT Press? Archer's period of investigation covers the heyday of British architectural production, from Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1715) to the *Report of the Committee of the Cottage Improvement Society for North Northumberland* (1842). These titles also hint at the variety of sources consulted: from aristocratic folio volumes down to provincial tracts bound in boards. The phenomenon of more than 450 titles produced during these years was unequalled anywhere else in the world. How can this unique achievement in Britain be explained? No doubt the well-known bibliophilism of British architects played a major part. Architects have traditionally been writers, users, and lovers of books. Their publications create a built-in readership consisting of other architects, builders, and a large body of connoisseurs who cultivate an awareness of the polite arts.

I noted earlier that Archer is less discursive than Dobai, but this distinction needs to be qualified. Archer's bibliography is prefaced by a well-written three-part introduction. Actually it has the character of a series of carefully faceted little studies strung together, with the fascinating topic of book production as the common thread. To the best of my knowledge, the mechanics of writing, making, and selling architectural books has never been delved into to such an extent. The first two essays deal with publishers, press runs, royalties, subsidies, types of printing, latest book trends—all the things in which any published author takes an interest.

In Archer's excellent discussion, I was surprised that he did not produce as evidence the several letters that have survived from architect/authors to their publishers. For example, Soane's well-known letter to Isaac Taylor depicts a typical instance of a first-time author overrating his potential appeal with the public. Taylor whittled down his initial list of plates and his proposed folio format to a modest number of engravings in octavo. Similarly, this reviewer possesses a letter to Isaac's brother and successor, Josiah Taylor, from the architect John Plaw. In an almost jaunty tone, Plaw addressed to his publisher a note containing the preface for his forthcoming book, *Sketches for Country Houses*. The manuscript draft defines the contemporary term "cottage" much more pithily than the printed version dared. Plaw went on to express his impatience at not receiving the latest batch of proofs and his hopes that the platemaker would do a neater job with them.

Archer himself has something to say about cottages in a section of his introduction devoted to theory and design. He is representative of the younger architectural historians who are turning more attention to specific building types. As his title implies, Archer does not

consider books devoted to designs for non-domestic structures such as prisons and asylums unless they are mixed in with townhouses, cottages, or their grander country cousins called "villas." The discussion of villas is particularly helpful, although Archer vainly attempts a quantitative definition (p. 62) based on cost factors and square footage. The fact remains that size mattered little to early users of the word "villa," which was an elastic term, to say the least. With regard to theory, Archer notes a certain predilection for what might be called architectural primitivism in the writings of Sir William Chambers and others (the name of Robert Morris should have figured here too). Archer is, however, drawn to the correct conclusion that British architects shied away from theory. Hence the dearth of real treatises and the plethora of practical "cottage books" to suit every taste and purse. This English pragmatism ought to be contrasted with the contemporary situation in pre-revolutionary France. French architectural books were relatively few in number compared to those in Britain. The French, however, excelled in theoretical and critical writings in stark contrast to the neglect of those fields across the Channel before 1800.

Where Archer's investigation of theory really shines is with the concept of "character." He first studied this aesthetic notion in his Harvard University dissertation and has pursued it in subsequent writings. Archer's brief but copiously footnoted discussion (pp. 46-56) is recommended reading for anyone interested in the origins of form/function thinking in architectural literature. I would suggest, nevertheless, that the key and early role of Robert Morris does not emerge fully for reasons that have to do with the limitations of Archer's study. A full picture of Morris can only be conveyed by *all* his writings taken collectively. But his unillustrated poems (except for *The Art of Architecture*) fall outside Archer's scope. So we get a fragmentary view of this subject, especially in the complete absence of manuscript sources. Much the same observation might apply to the introduction as a whole. Archer's nomination to a Guggenheim Fellowship should permit him the opportunity to synthesize the disconnected insights presented in his introduction.

The body of the book presents a massive bibliographic accomplishment. No doubt there are errors and omissions; it could hardly be otherwise with so many entries. So it is in the interests of accuracy and not as a criticism that I put forward a couple of suggested improvements. It recently came to my attention that the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal, has acquired a title which I was unfamiliar with and which Archer, like other bibliographers, omits: William Edward Rolfe's *Miscellaneous Sketches of Designs in Architecture*. It raises the legitimate question of whether we are dealing with a book in the full sense, because no date or place of publication is given. Apart from an elaborate title page there are only six lithographic plates. The plates, however, are of considerable interest, betraying as they do influence from the Bank of England and other structures by Soane, with whom Rolfe had studied between 1801 and 1804. An 1822 watermark provides a *terminus ante quem*. One wonders whether the CCA's copy is a unique survivor of a lost publication.

In addition, my interpretation of Isaac Ware's treatise entitled *A Complete Body of Architecture* (London, 1756) is slightly different from Archer's. The description of this book fails to point out that Ware clearly states he brought it out in weekly installments (cf. p. 314 of the 1768 2nd edition). A serial form of publication was not unusual in the literature of the time: take for example John Carter's fascinating *Builder's Magazine*. Seen in this new light, Ware's massive text loses some of its awesomeness, but gains by association with Carter's periodical, or Morris's *Lectures*, which were delivered weekly before going into print. Indeed, it is a tribute to Archer's research that Ware, Carter, and Morris emerge at long last as a trio of significant popularizers, regardless of how much or how little they actually built.

In conclusion I ought to note my major reservation about *The Literature of British Domestic Architecture*. The individual entries have too much the character of a synopsis and not enough analytic content. In an introductory discussion of practical planning features, Archer notes the mid-eighteenth-century preference for "views." The result was a fondness for houses with rounded or three-sided projections to facilitate such "views" through greater expanses of window. Elsewhere I have called these the *bombé* fronted houses, and have drawn attention to their increasing popularity from around 1750 onwards. It would have been easy enough for Archer to have followed up his own insight by mentioning the appearance of such *bombé* plan types in the books he was describing. But he failed to carry out an analysis on this formal level, thereby missing an extremely widespread stylistic trait. Using Archer's own statistics, it was possible to survey in a preliminary way 77 architectural books published between 1674 and 1802. The result was a total of 242 designs for buildings featuring one or more *bombé* façade projections. By any token this is a large enough number to constitute a major trend. The origins of the trend are still obscure, and its full extent remains to be investigated. Even so, such information would have added a welcome thrust to Archer's at times unfocused cataloguing of book contents. Be it said, however, that his work greatly facilitated a survey such as I carried out. In this sense, his bibliography could be likened to a *bombé* façade in that it has opened up to exciting vistas a subject that was somewhat two-dimensional.

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LILLY KOLTUN *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada/1839-1940*. Markham, Ontario, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1984. xv + 333 p., 50,00 $ (relié).

Nearly all the greatest work is being, and has always been done, by those who are following photography for the love of it.
—A. Stieglitz (1899)

Cette phrase, mise en exergue à la préface de *Private Realms of Light*, a servi de guide dans le choix fait par l'équipe de la Collection nationale de photographie aux Archives publiques du Canada pour faire connaître la photographie d'amateur au Canada, celle qui a été faite « for the love of it ». Point de départ audacieux, et qui va