

# THE BVRLINGTON MAGAZINE



A visit to Titian's studio | Borromini in Siena

The rediscovery of Palmyra and Baalbek | Whistler paints Henry Irving | Switch House at Tate Modern

Ancient Sicily | The Altenberg altar | Turner and colour | Winifred Knights | Black Mountain College

Hockney portraits | Painters' Paintings | Bruce Conner | Lukas Duwenhögger

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climate in Britain before the War, the impact of the Festival of Britain in 1951 in introducing the public to architectural modernism, and the structure of local government and the role that it played in determining so much architectural production.

All in all the book reaches over seven hundred pages and nearly five kilos in weight. It is hard to imagine it being surpassed in comprehensiveness; the brief architects' biographies at the end of the book alone are an invaluable resource. It is a shame, though, that the scope does not extend to the rest of Britain. There seems no logical reason to treat England separately other than this being the limit of Harwood's professional remit and that of her employer. The upside of that, however, is the availability of photographs taken by Harwood's colleague at Historic England, James O. Davies. These lavishly produced images help make wonderfully apparent the extraordinary variety of the architecture of a period that is often noted for its supposed conservatism. Thus, the chapter on 'Higher Education' encompasses buildings as diverse as the classical Cripps Hall at the University of Nottingham by Donald McMorran (1937–59) and the sculptural modernism of the Houses for Visiting Mathematicians at Warwick University designed by Howell Killick Partridge & Ains (1967–69), while the chapter on 'Commercial Buildings' includes Alison and Peter Smithson's Brutalist Economist Building in London's St James's (1962–64), and Foster Associates' proto-High-Tech Willis Building in Ipswich (1972–75).

Despite this being, essentially, a reference book, likely to be dipped in and out of rather than read in its entirety, it is far from non-partisan – and to be fair to Harwood, she makes this clear, stating in the introduction how 'The values of the Welfare State formed me and I grew up believing that they would last forever'. Thus the social – if not always architectural – failures of many of the housing projects discussed get relatively little attention, as does the destruction of so much of England's Victorian heritage that made way for this brave new world. But these are minor quibbles. The overriding spirit of this book is ultimately one of optimism and generosity, of Harwood taking a lifetime's knowledge and passion and making it available to the general reader in a book that will remain the standard work on the subject for years to come.

## Publications Received

*I patriarchi di Venezia e l'architettura: La cattedrale di Venezia nel Rinascimento.* By Giampaolo Guidarelli. 293 pp. incl. 75 col. + b. & w. ill. (Il Poligráfico, Padua, 2015), £25. ISBN 88-7115-808-9.

The site of the former cathedral of Venice, S. Pietro di Castello, literally 'isolated' on an island on the far eastern tip of the city, seems at first sight to suggest a deliberate marginalisation of ecclesiastical authority. After all, throughout its history, Venice struggled to retain its independence from the Papacy. From the ninth century, when the Republic acquired the relics of the Apostle Mark, civic devotion centred on the church

of S. Marco, the ducal chapel and shrine for the saint's remains, located at the heart of the city.

Nevertheless, such an interpretation does not reflect the true history of S. Pietro, as Guidarelli's magisterial book explains. The island of Olivolo, later known as Castello because of its castle, was one of the first of the lagoon islands to be settled around the fifth century. Its position, facing the main maritime entrance to the lagoon from the Adriatic, was strategic and far from marginal. Rebuilt after a fire in 1120, the cathedral remained in use until its eventual reconstruction in its present form five hundred years later. The magnificence of the medieval cathedral, together with its baptistry and episcopal palace, must have been striking, as the author's careful reconstruction indicates.

Guidarelli's lucid, eye-opening account demonstrates the crucial role of the individual patriarchs (bishops) in the architectural development of the site. The development that determined the future history of S. Pietro was the suppression of the patriarchy of Grado in 1451 and its replacement by the new patriarchy of Venice, centred at S. Pietro di Castello. The first incumbent, Lorenzo Giustinian, was later canonised, and his legacy inspired much of the later artistic and liturgical transformation of the cathedral.

Mauro Codussi's innovative cladding of the campanile in white Istrian stone in 1482, under the patriarch Maffeo Gherardo, provided both a landmark for the city and a beacon for seafarers entering the lagoon. Palladio's design for a new façade was his first major commission in Venice, although the death of the patriarch Vincenzo Diedo in 1559 led to the project's abandonment until it was resumed in 1596 by Francesco Smeraldi.

Behind the new façade the rebuilding of the cathedral itself was begun in 1623 by Giovanni Grappiglia under the patriarch Giovanni Tiepolo. Provoked by the derelict state of the medieval cathedral, the initiative is seen here in the context of Counter-Reformation ideals in the aftermath of the interdict of 1606. Seeking simplicity, transparency and luminosity, the new church also became a shrine for the relics of Lorenzo Giustinian, anticipating his canonisation in 1690.

Guidarelli's book is concise, but rich in new ideas. Not only does he provide an illuminating account of the cathedral's evolution in terms of architecture, urban space, ritual and religious reform, but he also considers the developments at S. Pietro in relation to those of other religious institutions in the city. Relevant documents are published in the appendix. Above all, Guidarelli offers an authoritative account of the ways in which the patriarchs influenced the island's architectural and urban transformations, seen against the background of politics and religious history. This admirable book rescues S. Pietro di Castello from the margins and reinstates it as a site of innovation and influence.

DEBORAH HOWARD

*Le Spoglie della Corte: il museo di una Granbottega al servizio del collezionismo a Roma nel Seicento.* By Natalia Gozzano. 136 pp. incl. 20 col. + 76 b. & w. ill. (Campus Editore, Rome, 2015), €40. ISBN 978-88-98429-15-5.

This book is a welcome addition to the growing literature on the organisation of the social, official and artistic life of the seventeenth-century Roman palace. It focuses on the role of the 'museo di una', 'la sua della corte e del "Granbottega"', who, while less elevated than the *signori*, was the key administrator, supervising other functionaries and bearing overall responsibility for the multifarious activities of the palace. Gozzano, an art historian, is above all interested in whether, and how, the *museo di una* may have influenced the taste of his patron.

Gozzano's sources lie in the many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century treatises devoted to the 'museo di una' and other palace officials, with emphasis on Cesare Evitacchiano's *Dialogo di Museo di Casa* (1605). Here we read of an ideal courtly life, where virtue is united with grace; more surprisingly, the *museo di una* has to have ready money to lay out on his patron's behalf if required. Many charming illustrations, taken from

contemporary books and manuals on comportment and on smoking and carving, are highly evocative of this structured world, in which every detail is carefully controlled and structured. Complementing these treatises is a wealth of material from artists' biographies and letters, wills, inventories and account books, all studied with exemplary caution and skill; they suggest an unexpected degree of autonomy in making purchases, and the power, in the absence of the prince, to take initiative in the supervision of artists.

But it is the final section, where Gozzano publishes the wills and inventories of a group of eminent court officials, that raises the question of artistic taste. Much has been written about two of these men, the exuberant Neapolitan Girolamo Mercurio and the melancholic Niccolò Simonelli. Simonelli was celebrated, the first *guardaroba* to be described as a connoisseur or dilettante; he verbally advised the Chigi family on art, and his portrait by Pier Francesco Molli hung in Flavio Chigi's museum of curiosities. There, among an array of strange and precious objects, Simonelli looks grandly out at us, though he himself owned the gallery. He and Girolamo Mercurio, *maestro di casa* of Cardinal Flavio Chigi, were leading trends of salient taste, and played a role in promoting his *città*. Mercurio's inventory is already known, but Gozzano, usefully, publishes it more fully, and includes his unusual library. This inventory is exceptionally rich, and mentions up to a highly cultivated man, who participated in the intellectual life of Rome at every level, suggesting his wide interests in theatre, art, music, classic and contemporary literature, the new science and exotic foods; his paintings convey a personal taste, in landscape and still life, and in Neapolitan art. But his array of clothes was odd, including an old hat, and 'not male robe' (its old parts of points), in sharp contrast to those of Niccolò Foresta, *maestro di casa* of the Colonna, who had fewer weeks of art, but a fine collection of clothes and draperies, among them, unusually, twelve pairs of shoes, a sign of great wealth. Different again is the case of Giovanni Carlo Vallone, who was, initially, a member of the *Virtuosi del Pantheon* and a key player in the formation of the *Accademia di San Luca*; a collector of his patron, the marchese Cristiano Duglio Angeli. Both Vallone and the *maestri* had collections of paintings mainly by artists associated with the *Virtuosi*.

These inventories are fascinating, and add to our knowledge of the material life of seventeenth-century Rome, a subject that has attracted much recent scholarship. Yet, as Gozzano says, both Mercurio and Simonelli, so central to the art world, were exceptions, and what was true of them was not true of other *maestri di casa*. Contemporary treatises say nothing about the role of the *maestro di casa* in forming an art collection, and, despite the wealth of interesting detail presented here, it remains unclear how commonly they filled this role.

TERESA A. LANTIERO

*João de Ovídio e a Jernima da Baixa Portuguesa.* With essays by Joaquim Oliveira Castro, António Filipe Parente, Vítor Serra and others. 244 pp. incl. 194 ill. (Museo Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, 2015), €24.95. No ISBN.

This book accompanied an exhibition of the same name held at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon (closed September 2015). Both show and catalogue revivified the career of João de Ovídio, who is arguably the best-known figure of seventeenth-century Portuguese painting, and also placed the Portuguese Baroque within a wider Iberian and European context. The volume is limited to the seventeenth century, even though the Baroque in Portugal often extends to after the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. Important English-language studies of the period, by George Kubler, Robert C. Smith, Jay Levenson and others, have made significant contributions to the art history of this politically complex period (Portugal was under Spanish rule from 1580 to 1640). All the scholars of the present volume are Portuguese, and together they constitute the most important current voices in this field. There is not an English-language version, which is unfortunate.