

Matthew M. Reeve, ed., *Tributes to Pierre du Prey: Architecture and the Classical Tradition from Pliny to Posterity*, London: Harvey Miller Publishers/Brepols, 2014, 288 pp. 129 b/w illus., € 100 cloth ISBN 9781909400122

C. Cody Bartet

Volume 42, numéro 1, 2017

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1040844ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1040844ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

ISSN

0315-9906 (imprimé)

1918-4778 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Bartet, C. (2017). Compte rendu de [Matthew M. Reeve, ed., *Tributes to Pierre du Prey: Architecture and the Classical Tradition from Pliny to Posterity*, London: Harvey Miller Publishers/Brepols, 2014, 288 pp. 129 b/w illus., € 100 cloth ISBN 9781909400122]. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 42(1), 82–84. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1040844ar>

comes to be identified by and through specific populations, natural and human-made sites and landmarks, forms of social, cultural, and commercial interaction and exchange” (8). These colonial landscapes, she argues, become cultural representations steeped in race and empire.

Along with her use of the methods of postcolonial geography and art history, she is concerned with contesting the erasure of Blacks from Canadian history and from the study of Canadian slavery. She argues forcefully for Canada to be remembered as part of the African Diaspora. In support of this position, she deploys landscape art as a means to reevaluate Canada as a colonial power and its relationship to the Caribbean. She states explicitly, “this book then explores the selective erasure and emplacement of racialized subjects within the landscape of Montreal and Jamaica as they functioned to embed and police fragile and emergent alignments between landscape and belonging which shored up British imperial discourses of racialized possession and colonial entitlement” (11).

The book contains an introduction and eight interlocking chapters. In chapter One, Nelson considers geography as a representational practice implicated in ways of knowing place. Chapters Two through Four look closely at slavery in Montreal and its relationship to the production of landscape art. Chapter Two provides an overview of slavery in Montreal under French and then British rule. Chapter Three investigates two images, François Malepart de Beaucourt’s *Portrait of a Haitian Woman* (1786) and George Heriot’s *Minuets of the Canadians* (1807), providing in-depth analyses of the representation of the enslaved African in Montreal. Chapter Four considers how the British used maps and landscapes of Montreal to impose an imperial vision on their newly acquired settlement. Chapters Five through Eight focus on the

colonial landscape and depictions of slavery in Jamaica. Similar to Chapter Four, Chapter Five explores the “landscaping” of Jamaica in order to understand the British imperial imaging and imagining of the island. Chapters Six through Eight engage and interpret images from William Clark’s *Ten Views in the Island of Antigua...* (1823) and James Hakewill’s *A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica...* (1825) to understand the ways in which Jamaica and its production of sugar were visualized. Nelson argues that Hakewill erased black bodies and slave labour from the tropical landscapes in his illustrations, creating a sanitized, pro-slavery discourse. To counter this erasure, she examines the “material, social, and cultural realities of slave life in Jamaica that his images denied” (27).

At the heart of Nelson’s book is a critique of the disciplines of slavery studies and art history. She argues that slavery studies has not engaged with visual art in meaningful ways outside the human body, and that art history has failed to raise significant and consistent questions related to race, colonialism, and imperialism because of the “unsuitability of [its] dominant methodologies and practices” (2) to such discourses. Because of the focus on the human body in slavery studies and the resistance of art history to tough discussions related to slavery, land, and empire, Nelson deliberately and methodically excavates the meaning of slavery in these two colonial locations through landscape art. Chapter Six exemplifies her project: she offers a close reading of Hakewill’s *A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica...* and his erasure of the enslaved body from the land. At the same time in this chapter, she writes poignantly about white male sexual exploitation of black women in Jamaica and the astoundingly brutal nature of Jamaican slavery. She does this in order to challenge Hakewill’s vision of Jamaican sugar plantations as scenes of “picturesque tranquility” (235). Her comparative project signals her position as scholarly

activist and practitioner of a hybrid art history that incorporates a close attending to the visuals, a concern for what is seen and not seen, and a self-reflexivity concerning how the author positions herself. Throughout the book, one senses her outrage and indictment of the slavery complex as well as her commitment to telling a new story about the visualization and imaginings of slavery, geography, and empire in the nineteenth-century colonial world of Montreal and Jamaica. ¶

Renée Ater is a scholar of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art of the United States, whose research focuses on public monuments, race, space, and community engagement. —rater@umd.edu

Matthew M. Reeve, ed.
Tributes to Pierre du Prey: Architecture and the Classical Tradition from Pliny to Posterity

London: Harvey Miller Publishers/
Brepols, 2014

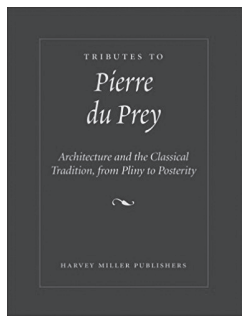
288 pp. 129 b/w illus.
€ 100 cloth ISBN 9781909400122

C. Cody Barteet

This anthology, dedicated to architectural historian Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey, consists of sixteen essays that are bracketed by an introduction celebrating the career of du Prey and a postlude written by du Prey on the importance of mentors. The essays explore the significance of the language, morphology, and replication of classicism in Western building practices. The chapters, more or less arranged in a chronological order, centre on the evolution of the classical tradition in architecture from antiquity to mid-twentieth century while also considering the conceptual influences of classical ideals on cartography and on the nationalistic agendas of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The essays have a broad geographical focus and address not only Western European

traditions, but also colonial South American and modern Canadian building programs. The scope of the text is reflected in the book's subtitle, *Architecture and the Classical Tradition from Pliny to Posterity*, which is derived from two of du Prey's important contributions to the study of architectural history: his online scholarly portal, *Architecture in the Classical Tradition*, and his book, *the Villas of Pliny, from Antiquity to Posterity*.

Before delving into this rich anthology, I will mention my lone criticism: the structure of the introduction, which centres on a lengthy tribute to du Prey. Although such a tribute is undoubtedly justified and could easily have been expanded, it



would have been better placed in a preface. As it is, it becomes the focus of the introduction, which leaves little room for a discussion of the organization of the book. The importance of the anthology's coverage and scholarly contributions, which include the first-time reproduction of four historical prints, is not made clear, and some of the truly significant findings of the chapters are not highlighted or contextualized, leaving readers to stumble upon them by chance. The anthology, nevertheless, is well rounded and will surely be enjoyed and used by generalists and specialists alike.

The book begins with a discussion of antiquity, moves on to the medieval and early modern eras, and ends with the modern period. The chapters in the sections on antiquity and the

medieval period foreground issues of style. In his exploration of historical orders, Mark Wilson Jones demonstrates that the Greeks did not share our perceptions of the orders as being finite in form and function, but were rather multivalent in application and meaning. Eric Fernie provides a historiography of the Romanesque that brings out both the positive and pejorative connotations affixed to the term. Like Jones, Fernie indicates that stylistic terminology and codification are frequently driven by later ideological influences that may or may not align with "period" practices. Between these two surveys are more specialized essays. Guy Métraux examines literary discussions of the Roman villa, going beyond the famed works of Pliny. Judson Emerick analyzes the Tempietto in Rome and suggests a methodology that recognizes the limitations of periodization and its disregard for the implicit heterogeneity of all eras. This diversity within the anthology tells a broader and more nuanced story of the built environment, while at the same time demonstrating that facets of the design and semantic content of certain motifs resonate across historical eras.

The discussion of the early modern period begins John Beldon Scott's analysis of the many classical forms that are manifest in the visual rhetoric of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles v, particularly his court's revival of triumphal processions. Recognizing scholarly precedents that have meticulously documented the changes to Rome's urban fabric under Charles v,¹ Scott effectively "reintegrates" lived experience into the archaeological composition of the city, in which the new ideological narratives about the classical tradition that unfolded conveyed the political ambitions of Charles as well as those of his followers in the subsequent centuries.

From Rome in the time of Charles's transformations, readers are transported to Spain's colonies in the Americas. The importance of the

classical tradition as filtered through ancient Roman practices is well known in Hispanic American studies, and as Gauvin Alexander Bailey demonstrates, classicism continued in eighteenth-century South America even as the Rococo was flourishing there under the influence of two architects: Giovanni Andrea Bianchi and Giovanni Battista Primoli. Bailey, like subsequent authors in the anthology, draws attention to the role of architects instead of focusing solely on patronage in the dissemination of the classical tradition.

With a global perspective in mind, Sally Hickson explores how the engraver Girolamo Porro, in his numerous engravings of antiquities and the ancient monuments of Rome, took account of the influx of topographic prints from the larger colonial world. Hickson makes an important contribution to classical studies as she transgresses the boundaries of our preconceived conceptions of classicism, which most often focus on architectural practices and not cartographic forms. Her chapter on Porro is the first in a sequence of five chapters that directly focus on early modern prints. In the following chapter, Una Roman D'Elia presents a meticulous study of the steps Claude Perrault took in his efforts to create a new classical order for the court of Louis xiv (Perrault designed an ostrich-feather capital, which despite winning a royal competition was never put into use). D'Elia carefully documents the significance of the architect's printmaking to the fostering and promoting of his intellectual ideas.

It is in this section that the anthology makes a particularly important contribution, with the first-time publication of prints, two associated with Giulio Romano and two with Giovanni Battista Montano. These four prints, all of which are in Canadian collections, will certainly be of interest to Renaissance scholars, and David McTavish's and Janina Knight's formal analyses provide a sound foundation upon which future

research is sure to develop. This section closes with John Pinto's study of prints of the ancient monuments of Naples by Giovanni Battista Piranesi and Hubert Robert. Pinto takes care to indicate the tension in the works of both artists as they attempted to balance interpretation with archaeological reconstruction, thus demonstrating that the prints contain fiction but also truths about the classical tradition.

Matthew Reeve's is the first of several essays that move beyond the classical tradition to examine the Gothic revivals at the dawn of the modern age, paying homage to du Prey's broad interest in architectural traditions. Recognizing that historically, the Gothic has been seen as the antithesis of the classical tradition, Reeve explores the tensions between the classical antecedents of Horace Walpole's villa at Strawberry Hill and the Gothic narratives of aesthetic and gender difference that question the spatiality of the classical villa and its psychoanalytic content. Reeve's theoretically informed approach offers an important counterpoint to the formalism of much of the book. Next, Peter Coffman examines the formation of group identity through the combining of classical ideas and Gothic aesthetics in Nova Scotia, calling attention to a geographical area that is marginalized within North American studies. Continuing with this Canadian focus, Luc Noppen adds further complexity to the politics at play in establishing group or national identities through an analysis of French-Canadian churches in Quebec. Like Coffman, Noppen, in highlighting Canadian architectural history, offers a fitting tribute to du Prey's promotion of the field of Canadian architecture. Both texts enrich the larger discourses of North American architectural history by providing a foundation for comparative studies of American and Canadian urban practices.

With issues of identity politics and their manifestations in the built form in mind, Sebastian Schütze returns to Rome and the Fascists' interventions of the early twentieth century. Schütze convincingly documents the processes through which art and architecture became political tools, as aesthetics were developed to sway the masses and shift understandings of history and fact. The last chapter, by Phyllis Lambert, offers notes on the classical elements of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's architecture. The volume closes with du Prey's reflections on mentors and students.

As shown by this brief overview, *Tributes to Pierre du Prey* is a wonderfully rich text that will appeal to a large audience while also making a substantial scholarly contribution. Take for example Jones's and Fernie's articles. As an educator who endeavours to provide my students with supplemental readings that expand upon survey texts, I see these essays as doing just this, in that they provide a snapshot of the current discourse concerning academic understandings of the historical orders and styles. These essays include engaging discussions of the ways in which our appreciation of art and architecture is often influenced by the social and cultural constructs of a given period, including those driven by nationalistic agendas.

The essays within this anthology, while loaded with facts, are accessible to a wide range of students and readers. Such accessibility is appropriate in a tribute to a scholar who recognizes the importance of sound academic research, but who is also committed to educating students through visually acute descriptions and anecdotal experiences that give a lively sense of an urban environment. Lastly, the anthology provides much insight into the evolution of the classical tradition in Western culture, all the while challenging academic conceptions of the classical tradition in the built form and in visual culture at large. Indeed, all those interested in the built

environment will enjoy the many significant discoveries of the text. ¶

Cody Barteet is Associate Professor in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Western Ontario. His research focuses on architecture and urbanism in the Atlantic world. —cbarteet@uwo.ca

1. Scott builds on works by several scholars and draws especially on the scholarship of Maria Luisa Madonna. See Madonna, "L'ingresso di Carlo v a Roma," in *La città effimera e l'universo artificiale del giardino: la Firenze dei Medici e l'Italia del '500*, ed. Marcello Fagiolo (Rome, 1980), p. 63–68; Madonna, "L'ingresso di Carlo v a Roma," in *La Festa a Roma dal Rinascimento al 1870*, ed. Marcello Fagiolo, 2 vols. (Turin, 1997), vol. 1, p. 50–65; and Madonna, "El viaje de Carlos v por Italia después de Túnez: el triunfo clásico y el plan de reconstrucción de la ciudades," in *La Fiesta en la Europa de Carlos v* (Madrid, 2000), p. 136–38.

Una Roman d'Elia, dir.
Rethinking Renaissance Drawings. Essays in Honour of David McTavish
Montréal; Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015
409 pp. 147 illustrations en couleur
\$125 relié ISBN 9780773546363

Fannie Caron-Roy

Pour souligner l'apport majeur de David McTavish (1943–2014) à l'avancement des études sur le dessin de la Renaissance, Una Roman d'Elia a commandé des textes à plusieurs auteurs, dont de nombreux étudiants de McTavish, afin de composer cet ouvrage collectif publié à sa mémoire. Le sujet de cette publication permet de mettre en évidence la relation entre maître et apprenti (voir notamment Stowell, Hochmann, Dickey et du Prey): un bel hommage des auteurs à leur défunt mentor. D'Elia est d'ailleurs professeure à l'Université Queen's, à Kingston en Ontario depuis 2002, où McTavish a lui-même enseigné de 1973 à 2013.

Canadien d'origine, McTavish a complété sa thèse de doctorat sur Giuseppe Porta, dit Salviati, en 1978 au Courtauld Institute of Arts de Londres, thèse qui fut ensuite publiée chez