

Wenige Kapitel, vor allem das über die Münzen, sind herausragende Ausnahmen. Freilich würde man sich als Kunsthistoriker dabei auch wünschen, daß die Numismatiker manchmal ihre knappe Definition aufgäben; so wenn auf S. 454 bei Nr. 32 nur steht „Hand, links und rechts ein Stern“. Da es die aus den Wolken ragende Hand Gottes ist und die Münze für einen Grafen Adolf II. von Berg geprägt wurde, ergäben sich doch sehr interessante Fragen.

Es muß in diesem Zusammenhang aber auch in aller Deutlichkeit gesagt werden: Wenn einer Ausstellung solche Kostbarkeiten anvertraut werden, dann hat die Ausstellungsleitung die Verpflichtung, nicht nur konservatorisch, sondern auch in wissenschaftlicher Hinsicht für die Objekte zu sorgen. Auf die Dauer wird der Wert einer Ausstellung dieser Größenordnung nach ihrem wissenschaftlichen Ertrag, nicht aber an der Besuchermenge, die heute mehr denn je über den Massentourismus steuerbar ist, gemessen. Ausstellungen können Marksteine der Forschung sein, diese ist das nicht geworden.

Hermann Fillitz

Rezensionen

JAMES S. ACKERMAN, *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses*. Princeton, Princeton University Press; London, Thames & Hudson 1990. 304 pp. 213 illus.

The book under review marks a return by its distinguished author to a theme which has been central to his career. From his earlier studies of Palladio and the sources of the Renaissance villa, James Ackerman has embarked on a more ambitious survey of the nature of villas from classical times to the twentieth century. Conceived as lectures, the chapters do not attempt to document all manifestations of villa architecture; instead they focus on the cross-fertilisation from one age to another and on a quintessential element of fantasy which, the author reminds us, „is impervious to reality“. A general introduction treats the typology of the villa, the agricultural estate versus the *Lusthaus*, the villa conceived as an extension of the landscape or in opposition to its surroundings, the gradual democratisation of the villa in the nineteenth century, and the mythology of villa life. Subsequent chapters are devoted to Roman villas, the villas of the Medici, Palladio's villas and Palladianism in England, Thomas Jefferson and American villas of the nineteenth century, and final chapter dealing with Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier.

The word *villa* was notoriously imprecise from Roman times to the nineteenth century and often applied to radically different types of domestic architecture. Ackerman gives his own definition at the outset of his book, and it explains his approach to his task: „A villa is a building in the country designed for its owner's enjoyment and relaxation. Though it may also be the center of an agricultural enterprise, the pleasure factor is what essentially distinguishes the villa residence from the farmhouse and the villa estate from the farm ... The

villa is typically the product of an architect's imagination and asserts its modernity (p. 9).“ This emphasis upon the architect's role and the luxury status of the villa allows Ackerman to deal with only the top stratum of buildings and throws a bridge over what could otherwise seem a heterogeneous selection. His approach functions well enough in the earlier chapters where a survey of Roman villas like those of Hadrian and Pliny the younger leads naturally into the Renaissance rediscovery of the antique villa and its culmination in the career of Palladio. Ackerman is very good on the gap between the actuality of antique villas and the attempts of Renaissance architects to recreate them in terms of symmetry and regularity of designs. He has read widely in villa literature and furnishes an extremely useful survey of contemporary research into Roman villas.

The discussion of Renaissance villas has become controversial in recent years, with arguments turning on whether villas represent an imposition of urban ideals on the countryside or develop from vernacular architecture (The divergent approaches have been well summarised by K. Forster in his review of M. Kubelik, *Die Villa im Veneto: Zur typologischen Entwicklung im Quattrocento*, in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XXXVIII, 1979, pp. 189–91). This is regrettable because the two categories are not mutually exclusive as Palladio's villas testify. Though Ackerman is attuned to the socio-economic background of Renaissance villas, his approach tends to align with the idealists. In his discussion of the fifteenth century, two Medici villas, Lorenzo il Magnifico's Poggio a Caiano and Giovanni di Cosimo's at Fiesole, are singled out as turning points in the development of a modern villa ideology. Both were built without battlements, the former to a rigidly symmetrical plan and with a temple-portico frontispiece, the latter on a difficult but prominent site and enjoying spectacular views over Florence. Both were examples of conspicuous consumption and followed Albertian precepts on domestic architecture. We know little about the interiors of the villa at Fiesole, but the glazed terracotta frieze and Filippino Lippi frescoes at Poggio suggest an ambitious programme of decoration was intended by Lorenzo before his untimely death. Here the fantasy element of the villa reemerged in modern architecture, and the author holds that the Medici villas served as a touchstone for Palladio's Villa Rotonda or Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye. Indeed, he makes much of Fiesole, seeing „Michelozzo's simple arcaded cube [as] the first modern villa designed without thought or possibility of material gain“ (p. 78); however, Amanda Lillie's important thesis on fifteenth-century Florentine villas, which Ackerman cites, has demonstrated that the Medici villa at Fiesole was an agricultural holding, like virtually every other villa of its period (*Florentine Villas in the Fifteenth Century: A Study of the Strozzi and Sassetti Country Properties*, Ph.D. thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1987, esp. p. 405, n. 124. Lillie points out that the 1492 inventory of the villa at Fiesole refers to servants' quarters and storage space for farm equipment and produce were built into the basement. The agricultural nature of the Medici villa at Fiesole has been confirmed by further archival research and will be the subject of a future

publication). This is not to say that aesthetic considerations played no part in its design—far from it—but to emphasize that this one element at the expense of other factors can distort the picture of villas and their place in rural building types.

The sixteenth-century villa in the Veneto occupies the middle section of the book, with a chapter on Palladio and his predecessors and an extremely helpful survey of the image of country life according to manuals and dialogues of the day (Important earlier discussions can be found in B. Rupprecht, „Villa: Zur Geschichte eines Ideals,“ *Probleme der Kunstwissenschaft, II: Wandlungen des Paradiesischen und Utopischen ...*, ed. H. Bauer, Berlin, 1966, pp. 210–50; and R. Bentmann, M. Müller, *Die Villa als Herrschaftsarchitektur: Versuch einer kunst- und sozialgeschichtlichen Analyse*, Frankfurt a.M., 1970). Ackerman gives a good picture of the variety of Palladio's villas, from the „Romanized“ Villa Maser to the humbler Villa Saraceno at Finale. The Rotonda also figures here although it is a moot point whether its creator believed it was a villa (he placed it among the palaces in the second book of the *Quattro Libri*). Ackerman has previously argued for close links between Palladio's villas and those of the ancient Romans via Byzantine proto-types, and here he subscribed to an influential thesis of Swoboda, who believed the classical *Portikusvilla mit Eckrisaliten* was the fore-runner of Venetian palaces and, ultimately, Palladian villas (K.M. Swoboda, *Römische und romanische Paläste*, Vienna, 1924, esp. pp. 77–132; see also J. Ackerman, „The Sources of the Renaissance Villa,“ *Studies in Western Art: Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art*, Princeton, 1963, II, pp. 6–18. Ackerman's thesis has been challenged by M. Rosci, „Forme e funzioni delle ville venete prepalladiane,“ *L'Arte*, 2, 1969, pp. 27–58; H. Biermann, „Lo sviluppo della villa toscana ...,“ *Bollettino del Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio*, XI, 1969, esp. pp. 36–37; and K. Forster, „Back to the Farm: Vernacular Architecture and the Development of the Renaissance Villa,“ *Architettura*, I, 1974, pp. 1–12. Ackerman's original article has been republished in a collection of his essays, *Distance Points*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Ma., 1991, with a postscript). This theory has come under criticism in recent years, and Ackerman has modified its formulation; yet it remains to be asked whether too much emphasis is being laid on similarities more apparent than real. In a recent study of the communal buildings of Parma, J. Schulz concisely summarised the problem: „The facade system of the Venetian [palaces] is usually considered unique to that city and is always traced to late-antique and Byzantine sources, a theory comforted by the byzantinism of their details. This is not the place to enter into the difficulties of the proposed filiation (late-antique or Byzantine buildings quite like the Venetian ones have not been found, and the avenues by which their putative influence reached Venice remain unexplained). But the Podestà's Residence of Parma shows that the system was more widely known ...“ („The Communal Buildings of Parma,“ *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XXVI, 1982, p. 294). Nevertheless Ackerman is surely right in regarding Palladio's study of Roman antiquity as „the architectural equivalent of the humanists' study

of ancient literature“, and it was the convincing nature of Palladio’s results that have given his buildings such moral authority ever since.

The impact of Palladio’s works and his treatise meant that villas and country houses in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries bore some trace of his style, nowhere more clearly, perhaps, than in England and America. This could be defined as an aspect of Palladianism rather than the continuation of a strictly villa culture, and here the differences between villas and country houses raise issues which the author does not address. Villas in the Roman and Italian Renaissance worlds were occasional houses where the patron enjoyed a respite from city life and the *otium* which was the opposite of urban *negotium*. English and American country houses of the eighteenth century were essentially the principal residence of their owner and the latest manifestation of a feudalistic society. Built for a family and its host of retainers, English country houses of the period tended to be larger than their Italian counterparts, and scale must be taken into account when comparing different uses of a common architectural language. Ackerman tries to avoid this problem by eliding villas and country houses in the sub-title of his book, but not all country houses are villas nor are all villas country dwellings. The problem of scale is also worth considering because in the eighteenth century, villas were considered secondary and generally suburban dwellings as when Robert Morris’ referred to „the cottage or plain little dwelling“. By the same token, when Burlington introduced Palladian elements into the extension of his Jacobean house at Chiswick, it was not really a villa; Kent, who published plans of it in 1727, simply referred to it as a „building“ (See J. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530 to 1830*, London, 1989, pp. 374–78. Summerson notes that Chiswick was not considered a villa but occasionally refers to it as such). Characteristic of the differences between the Palladian villa and the English country house are the changes which Colin Campbell introduced into Mereworth, his tribute to the Villa Rotonda: the frontage was considerably enlarged over its prototype and two of the four porticos were suppressed in order to accommodate a gallery and other state rooms required by an aristocratic household. A grander scale inevitably removed English and American country houses from the ever-receding Palladian original, and the distinction was well put by the early nineteenth-century writer, Joseph Gwilt: „The villas at Foot’s Cray and Mereworth, imitators of Palladio’s Villa Capra ... are the maxima of villas: beyond this the villa becomes a mansion, and must be treated as one on a scale more or less grand, as the means of the proprietor allow the architect to provide for his wants“ (J. Gwilt, *Encyclopaedia of Architecture*, London, 1851, p. 818, nos. 2999–3000).

These difficulties multiply in the nineteenth century when the distinctions between villas and cottages became blurred, and both types of house were detached from their agricultural origins. Theorists like John Claudius Loudon and Andrew Jackson Downing mirror this state of affairs in their writings on domestic architecture. Loudon defined the villa as „a country residence, with land attached, a portion of which, surrounding the house, is laid out as a pleasure

ground; or, in other words, with a view to recreation and enjoyment, more than profit" (p. 226). Downing, to whom Ackerman devotes a fascinating chapter, was an influential designer and employed the concept of villa almost as an empty vessel which could be filled with a wide range of potions. Indeed, Downing's remarks about villas were often contradictory, veering from republican simplicity to mansion status; for him the villa was first and foremost a picturesque house and clearly, as Ackerman would say, impervious to reality.

From the picturesque villa to Frank Lloyd Wright's houses is a relatively small step, and Ackerman's treatment of Wright and Le Corbusier is among the most engaging portions of the book. With these two architects, the polarities of the villa as an extension of its surroundings and the villa in opposition to nature are sharply delineated. In particular, Wright's projects for the McCormick residence on Lake Michigan and his own house, Taliesin, seem to recapture the spirit of Roman villas. Though Wright and Le Corbusier had divergent concepts of country houses, they were faced by the same problem: how to design a house constructed on an open plan but with provision for servants (at Fallingwater, Wright had to design a satellite structure for servants and guests). As for Le Corbusier, it was one of the many ironies associated with his career that his projects for popular housing were only realised for wealthy clients „whose interest in abstract art and other aspects of avantgarde culture predisposed them to the forms of his work" (p. 268).

One would expect the author to bring his survey up to the present by examining postmodernist country houses, but Ackerman feels, rightly, that the age of the villa is over. The long association between house and land is a thing of the past, and the conjuring tricks of contemporary architects cannot disguise the fact. In a few sentences, he weighs postmodernism and finds it wanting:

„It has seemed on first sight (and the impression has been fostered by many of the architects themselves) that postmodern architects intended to return to classical forms, but I believe that, nonbearing Doric columns and Palladian plans notwithstanding, this architecture has resumed the postures of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century promoters of association and character. In a sense it is picturesque as well, though this time the pictures don't exist. It represents, in short, a new romanticism, an escape from the ideals and social commitments of the modern European masters and from the grave intensity of Wright. Also, because true romanticism is not possible these days when every tradition is being diluted and a plausible return to past craftsmanship is unachievable, it is practiced with irony. Irony is our form of self-protection" (pp. 284–85).

James Ackerman has produced a very stimulating book, one written in the thoughtful, elegant prose which is his hallmark. It can be argued that what he has defined on these pages is not so much a survey of the villa as the idea of the villa, a kind of fantasy architecture of the very rich that can easily part company with reality. The difficulty lies in making his definition of villas apply to the wide range of such structures built over two millennia; it works best from the eighteenth century to the time of Le Corbusier and Wright but sits uneasily on

earlier villas where the agricultural component was a significant, indeed dominant consideration. It is also a pity that examples of the fantasy villa which would have served the author's case far better than Michelozzo and Palladio – the Belvedere and Villa Madama in Rome or Schinkel's Charlottenhof in Potsdam – were not brought into discussion. But having said that, one must admire the view from the author's veranda and feel that the price of admission was well spent.

Bruce Boucher

VALENTIN HAMMERSCHMIDT UND JOACHIM WILKE. *Die Entdeckung der Landschaft. Englische Gärten des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt 1990, 215 S., DM 178,00.

Das im Schnittpunkt mehrerer Disziplinen angesiedelte Thema des englischen Landschaftsgartens findet seit einiger Zeit viel Beachtung. Angesichts der zahlreichen Veröffentlichungen ist es verständlich, wenn eine Neuerscheinung schon von ihrer Namengebung her auf sich aufmerksam machen möchte. Der anspruchsvoll gewählte Titel *Die Entdeckung der Landschaft* erfüllt diese Funktion durchaus. Wenn es überdies auf der Rückseite des Einbandes mit Autoritätsgebärde heißt: „Der Landschaftsgarten ist der bedeutendste Beitrag Englands zur europäischen Kunstgeschichte. In diesem Band werden seine Entstehung und Entwicklung im 18. Jahrhundert erstmals in deutscher Sprache umfassend dokumentiert“, dann darf man eigentlich ein Buch von grundsätzlicher analytischer Bedeutung mit entsprechendem Erkenntniszuwachs für die Forschung erwarten. (Adrian von Buttlars Monographie *Der englische Landsitz 1715-1760. Symbol eines liberalen Weltentwurfs*, Mittenwald, welcher zumindest im deutschen Sprachraum nicht nur zeitlich der Vorrang gebührt, hatte aber bereits 1982 der Forschung wichtige neue Impulse gegeben.) Diese Erwartung kann der vorliegende Band nicht wirklich einlösen. Zwar wird im Vorwort eine monokausale Erklärung für Aufkommen und Entwicklung des englischen Landschaftsgartens zu Recht abgelehnt und statt dessen ein „Überlagerungsmodell“ in Aussicht gestellt, „das von Dominanz- und Unterordnungsverhältnissen bestimmt wird“ (S. 7), doch wird eben dieses methodische Versprechen nicht eingehalten. Obwohl im selben Zusammenhang angekündigt wird: „Die politisch-gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen nach 1688/89 finden deshalb ebenso Berücksichtigung wie der Einfluß der Naturwissenschaft, der ‚natürlichen Religion‘, der Literatur und Philosophie oder der Reiseerfahrungen“ (S. 7), unterbleibt eine zusammenschauende Untersuchung der verschiedenen für die Revolution der Gartenkunst verantwortlichen Faktoren trotz Hierarchisierung derselben (vgl. auch S. 9). Als Anglist kann der Rezensent nicht umhin zu bemerken, daß die unbestimmte Stellung der Literatur in dem vorangegangenen Zitat Indiz dafür ist, daß die Leitfunktion der Literatur als Medium, das verschiedenartige genetische Aspekte zu einer zeitge-