Die Kunsliteratur: ein Handbuch zur Quellenkunde der neueren Kunstgeschichte; La litterature artistique: manuel des sources de l’histoire de l’art moderne

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lently clear and the standard of photography and reproduction almost always good enough to distinguish between marks. In such a huge undertaking it would be surprising if there were no slips. The sheer volume of material has forced Curze to sample records, especially in the key areas of gazetteers and perhaps for this reason he has limited himself very largely to printed material. He does not, for instance, mention such sources as the Edward Spencer drawings at Goldsmiths’ Hall or the Bradbury Papers in Sheffield Library. Cross-referencing is sometimes weak, as in the Thomas Hamlet entry in which the Barnard Ledgers are located to the Victoria and Albert Museum and the main Barnard entry where they are not. The names of many registering craftsmen are indicated in the marks volume, but buried in larger entries in the biographical volume. One longs for a set of indexes (a third volume?) which would allow Culme’s text to be exploited to a degree it demands and deserves.

Harold Newman’s Illustrated Dictionary of Silversmiths is an attempt to cover in a single modestly-sized volume British and North American wares, decorative techniques, styles, leading designers and makers. The author is prone to invent his own nomenclature, surely an unfortunate trait in any lexicographer, especially one so poorly served by his illustrations. Greek fret, or key, appears, for instance, under both fret and key with different texts and no illustrations, but not under Greek. General histories of types are eschewed; instead the author cites certain well-known named historical objects and adds to them his own arbitrarily chosen and named canon of pieces, the most curious of which is probably ‘Harrods Replica’. It is illustrated. These faults critically flaw an otherwise serious text, albeit one extremely old-fashioned in its viewpoint.

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Another of Schlosser’s pupils, Sir Ernst Gombrich, has defined Kunstliteratur as ‘the earlier literature on art, that is, the technical manuals for artists, handbooks and guidebooks for connoisseurs, biographies of artists and the philosophy of art prior to the development of art historical scholarship (Kunstwissenschaft) as an independent discipline, as well as modern literature on art insofar as it is not purely scholarly (wissenschaftlich)’. Gombrich further notes that ‘scarcely any area of art historical scholarship has been more comprehensively investigated than the history of art, which possesses in Julius Schlosser’s book . . . a work which has attained the status of a classic’ (Das Atlantische Buch der Kunst: eine Enzyklopädie der bildenden Künste, Zurich [1952], p.653).

Schlosser’s remarkable apus is two books at once: a sweeping survey of the subject from the standpoint of a singularly well-informed representative of the Vienna school of art history, and a bibliographical compendium of the original sources in various editions of the period concerning them. Kurz took the latter as his province, ensuring that the bibliographical portion of his mentor’s masterpiece remained current. The text itself was and remains non plus ultra.

Twenty years after Otto Kurz’s final revision, we have a new, new edition, in French, complète et mise à jour! to 1st June 1983. Clearly an updated Schlosser is long overdue: the literature on the literature of art multiples daily. The new edition is graced with a perceptive preface by André Chastel and – an inspired idea – a French translation of Kurz’s memoir.

The bibliographical portions of the book and the latest revisions will, of course, be of paramount importance to scholar and librarian alike. Judged from this standpoint the new French version, which is marred by countless errors, leaves much to be desired. Misprints are legion, and proof-reading was evidently casual. To cite a single, particularly flagrant example, on p.145 we are directed (as it seems) to three articles on Giovanni Santi. Oddly, all three have the same title, and all turn out to be reviews of the same monograph which is itself nowhere cited; worse, the third review is attributed to the author of the monograph himself. The moral is clear: caveat lector.

Schlosser’s original bibliographies, produced under trying circumstances during and immediately after the First World War, were themselves in need of revision. Evidently neither he nor Kurz ever found time to commit the entire volume to a thorough examination with an eye to simple bibliographical accuracy. Yet in subsequent editions both Schlosser and Kurz made a real contribution, slowly correcting many, albeit by no means all, of the misprints and incorrect publication dates and misprints of the original. In his acknowledgements in the first Italian edition (1935), Schlosser thanks many experts who drew his attention to errors. By contrast, Kurz, with characteristic modesty, merely mentioned the outright errors he discovered in the course of his own editorial work on the editions of 1956 and 1964, without drawing attention to them. So perhaps the compilers of the French edition should not be blamed for failing to realise the extent of the problem. But it is nonetheless distressing to find that errors from previous editions are perpetuated here. Still worse are the misprints which are unrevised.

The entire bibliographical apparatus of a book of this scope obviously cannot be considered in brief compass; nor is this reviewer adequate to that task. Yet the charges levelled above should not remain wholly unsubstantiated. I therefore append below a selective list of the errors contained in a brief, seemingly representative section, the bibliography on Leonardo da Vinci, in Chapter V, pp.198-207. A further example in the preface to the new Schlosser are apparently due to the way the volume was produced. According to the publisher’s note, the translation and initial bibliographical update were done in 1974. Then, a decade later, an attempt was made by a different group of scholars to amend the bibliographies still more current. The lack of editorial continuity and control is painfully obvious. No editor or editorial board is named and the contrast with Kurz’s one-man job is especially telling.

Only thorough revision will correct these problems. Above all, the entire bibliographical apparatus needs to be checked, and the silent assumption that previous editions were completely dependable abandoned. No doubt we will have to wait years for such a wholesale revision. Meanwhile this unfortunately is not the new, updated Schlosser we need now.

On the heels of the new French version of Schlosser’s classic there appears a reprint of the original German edition of 1924. That its publisher expected to find a market for an unchanged reprint of a sixty-year-old reference book is food for thought: we are reminded that the book is not only a Nachschlagewerk, an up-to-date reference work to be consulted on any of a thousand specific points; it is also, as Gombrich remarks in his obituary of Schlosser published in this Magazine in 1939 (pp.98ff), ‘one of the few works in our subject to be both genuinely scholarly and readable’.

This raises fundamental questions about how future editions of the book might be approached. As the purely bibliographical portion of the book has expanded with each successive edition, Schlosser’s care and expertise balance between text and bibliographical commentary has been irrevocably altered. Not only has the text been progressively eclipsed but the bibliographical sections themselves have suffered. The army of parentheses, brackets and footnotes which successive editors have marshalled to distinguish the several editorial strata makes it virtually impossible
First, innumerable errors from previous editions are repeated. Publication dates are still all too frequently wrong: gerling's Disegni di Leonardo da Vinci (p.198) was published in 1784, not 1781; cardinali's complete edition of Del moto e movimenti dell'acqua was published in 1826, not 1828; the sarabekhkmp-flumani edition of the Codex sul volo degli uccelli (p.200) was published in 1893, not 1898. Titos, too, continue to be a problem. In a single paragraph on p.199, the titles of the 1830 edition of gerling, of the 1766 edition of hollar's engravings, and of marieette's Revueil of 1730 all still feature bibliographically significant errors. The title and publishing history of selig's excellent portrait of 1892 are still wrong (p.205). Surnames, too, continue to suffer. For example, gault de saint-germain remains 'ganet de Saint-Germain' (p.199). Errors previously corrected by karz are here re-instated. Thus the title of ferdinand's famous study of Leonardo has (p.204) again become 'kindheiterin-nerungen [plural!] des ladv.'- as if it dealt with Leonardo's memoir of his boyhood, an error corrected in the 1956 edition. Similarly, the title of duméril's fundamental Études sur le duc de vivci (p.203) is now wrong once again. The editors introduce new errors of their own. Thus instead of correcting the old misspelling of vanegensten's surname (pp.201, 205), the new editors misspell that of his collaborator fonan as well (p.201); and they still get the title wrong. It was not 'ezaard' (p.199) but 'erard' who did the engravings for the edition princeps of the trattato della pitura (1651).

Many recent prints of standard works are cited in the new edition, but the following important reprints are omitted: ettore Verga's indispensable Bibliografica Vinciana (1931; reprinted 1970); gauly's classic facsimile edition of the Codex Leicester (now Codex Hammer) (1909; reprinted 1980); his equally standard monograph on the manuscripts (1925; reprinted with an introduction by marioni in 1982); and panovsky on the Codex Huygens (1940; reprinted 1976). One is given no hint that solm's fundamental studies of Leonardo's sources (p.205), long available only in their original periodical form, were finally reprinted in one volume as his estes vincian (1976), along with his essay on 'la festa del paradiso' (p.204), and an important introduction by Sarn. McCurry's 1906 anthology of Leonardo's notebooks is cited, as is an early reprint (p.202), but the vastly expanded, still standard edition (1938, reprinted in 1956), is missing. Nor are those reprints which are cited immune from errors: neither the original nor the 1970 reprint of luddy's standard edition of the Trattato della pitura is 'pp.13-17' of the Quellenwerk für Kunst- geschichte bat, of course, volumes 15-17 of that prestigious series of documentary publications (p.199).

Important new publications are also omitted. Of more recent works, the monograph of keele-peretti corpus of the Windsor anatomical drawings (1978-1980) is missing, as is the first installment of predetti's own corpus of Leonardo's 'drawings and miscellaneous papers' at Windsor Castle, entitled Land- scapes, Plants and Water Studies (1982). Various articles by Martin Kemp are cited, but his excellent comprehensive monograph (1981) is omitted. Finally, mirabile dictum, Kenneth Clark's unassorted biography (1939, with rev. ed.) is still omitted although a paperback German translation does find a place (p.206).

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Edwardian Portraits is a readable interweaving of social information and aesthetic suggestion which probes beyond the 'opulence' of the sub-title to Gilman's Mrs Mouser, the least opulent subject in British portraiture in the book. Mcconkey is the king interpreter of all those French-derived movements, tribuneries and puddles which make up English art in the fin-de-siècle and Edwardian period. He has the art Journal and the Studio at his fingertips; he knows his Gissing or his James for astrotype quotation. The careers of la thangue and stanhope forges, Guthrie and holl are meat and drink to him and the menu he suggests is as nourishing as it could be. Each aspect of his subject has its chef's special - hors d'oeuvres by clausen and fred hall; the high game of Sargent or the 'supergresse' of da costa's walker sisters; the delicate desserts à la Harvey, shannon and mcEvoy; exotic fruit in Nicholson's The Viceroy's orderly or Fergusson's Minhon Chinsis; and the bitter coffee of Wyndham lemon's tyrus, as we move away from the table. The author is on less sure ground in Camden town and on later Edwardian developments and does not do justice to augustus John, whose portraits of his children - and there are many from which to choose - are among his finest accomplishments as this period. But the book is entertaining, informative and visually provocative on a still understudied and undervalued subject.

R.S.


Now that half a dozen of the New Bell's Cathedral Guides have been published, we can see how little editorial direction there is; the value of each volume wholly depends on the person who writes it. These four clearly reflect the main interests of their authors: Colchester gives abundant details of local wells history, spring talks at length about the spire of Salisbury, which he is currently restoring, Burman allows concern with the daily upkeep of impoverished church buildings to creep into his text, and Thomas writes on the politics, both old and new, surrounding Coventry Cathedral. Each makes a guided tour of the cathedral and its monuments, with background information giving the history, and setting the building in its liturgical context, both past and present. In the latter they all succeed very well. All except Wells separate the guided tour from the other material, which is better absorbed at leisure elsewhere; Colchester combines the tour of Wells cathedral with local history and anecdotes, which might make the book difficult for a first-time visitor to use.

These four groups themselves neatly into two: Wells and Salisbury, medieval buildings, once Catholic, adapted for Anglicanism; and St Paul's and Coventry, rebuilt in relatively recent times after disastrous dam- age, amid agonised discussion about their purpose, St Paul's confidently Anglican, Coventry showing all the uncertainties of late 20th-century religion. Studied together in this light they make fascinating reading.

Wells and Salisbury are the least satisfactory. Full though they are of interesting information, the art-historical material contains too many myths of the sort which beset art history at the popular level. These Guides should have provided the perfect opportunity to eradicate these myths (for example, that Wells is the first completely gothic building in Europe), and the series editor should have been more vigilant. It is perfectly possible to write accurately for unformed readers.

Country is an extremely interesting read, dwelling properly on the old cathedral, the bombing, the competition and the criticism. Those who didke Spence's building should look back at the picture of the Smithsons' competition entry and offer a prayer of thankfulness. But the star of this quartet is Burman's St Paul's. This is a truly excellent little volume, packed with valuable chapters on Old St Paul's, Wren and all his plans, the tour of the building and a comprehensive list of the monuments. Quotes from older sources and Hollar engravings are judiciously used. Burman sets Wren and the building in the context of baroque architecture in Europe, characterising Wren's style in contrast to Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh. His love of the building shines out, as he points to its details and examines it in its surroundings both medieval and modern. This volume is a winner. If only they were all like this. N.G.

Publications Received