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Michael Watt Cothren

Swarthmore College, mcothre1@swarthmore.edu

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The Stained Glass of Saint-Père de Chartres by Meredith P. Lillich

Review by: Michael Cothren

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supposes the existence of some authority among the masons powerful enough to induce the individual (who may have had family commitments) to leave the prospect of another year's work in a building site where funds were ample to seek uncertain work elsewhere. Moreover, how could the organizers of the fabric be sure of the arrival of another qualified team to continue the work? James describes the master of the crew of masons as a "feudal chieftain." Having commented that the conclusions relating to the organization of the construction of Chartres Cathedral could provide valuable insights into 13th-century society, James does little to defend or define this concept of authority over the masons, who, among the *corps de metier* in France seem to have enjoyed the greatest degree of freedom.

Perhaps if the numbers of the "crews" were reduced some, the theory might be more workable. A tightly knit group of half a dozen or so elite masons and their apprentices might, conceivably, have moved fairly freely, and could have had a great impact upon the buildings where they worked. But James is talking about a crew of some hundred artisans. This would enforce the credibility of the argument over the decorated plinth stones of the north transept porch, which might be the work of individuals, rather than "crews."

To demonstrate the presence of successive teams, and their occasional return, James might have presented the reader with a careful analysis of the work of the "Scarlet" group or some other in two or more different parts of the building. He suggests that a group might evolve its design procedures over a period of years; it would obviously be very difficult to control the extent to which two different corbel designs might result from evolution within the group, or from two different teams. Eight groups of corbel profiles are presented in the French edition (missing in the English version), each one involving variations on a theme. It is noted that several of the profiles could easily be transferred from one group to another. A careful presentation of the work of one of the Chartres teams in another building mentioned by James (Orbais, Essomes, and so forth) would also have provided valuable documentation of the peripatetic framework of the 13th-century mason's life, as postulated by James. Without this kind of demonstration, the possibility is left in the reader's mind that a mason of that time might learn (as an apprentice) the habit of thinking in terms of a variety of potential solutions to any given design problem, and that in a 10 or 20 year span, he might be inclined to apply more than one of them. Similar forms might appear in a neighboring workshop where masons had been trained in the same tradition.

While most rewarding in some respects, this book is also frustrating. The binding of the French edition disintegrated as the pages were turned. The English language version, while solidly bound, was characterized by an appar-

ent heavy inking of the type; the lines of some of the illustrations bleed into the surrounding area. There are missing and transposed paragraphs and misspellings (especially French terms, such as "pilier cantonne"). The English language edition lacks the photographs of the French version, but unfortunately, the photographs do not add much, tending to be poetic, rather than objective documentation.

The reader will find no general introduction to the monument—its historical background, plan, elevation, or significance in the history of architecture. The discussion of the historical framework is relegated to a single footnote, and texts of prime importance (for example, the poem of William the Breton) are treated summarily. We are asked to study the cathedral not to understand it as a supreme piece of architecture, nor as an expression of the personality of the master mason, with his sublime vision and gifts of stereoscopic speculation, but rather as the work of the contractors or constructors who translated the ideas into stone.

The tone of the book is at times poetic, chatty, or heavily didactic; the reader is reminded of the exhortations of Villard de Honnecourt. A troubling question relates to the character of the anticipated audience. The layperson will be lost in the pages of geometric explanations, while the specialist might have hoped for a more fully documented presentation. A theme of prime importance for James is the presentation of the building as a kind of object lesson: "If we can come to see their work without the prejudice of our times, and can accept that even one building can repay a life's love, we may find the inspiration to enrich the architecture of our own times."

STEPHEN MURRAY
Indiana University

Meredith P. Lillich, *The Stained Glass of Saint-Père de Chartres*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1978, 214 pp., 99 pls., 12 color pls., 15 figs. \$40.00.

During the past two decades, publication on major monuments of medieval stained glass has taken two forms. A series of carefully prepared catalogs consisting primarily of documentation have appeared under the auspices of the international *Corpus vitrearum medii aevi*. Other works have attempted to place individual monuments within their art historical context. Madeline Caviness's recent investigation of the early glazing of the Cathedral of Canterbury has been followed by Meredith Lillich's penetrating study of the windows of the abbey church of Saint-Père at Chartres, the neglected neighbor of the Cathedral. The appearance of two such monographs in two

years represents a significant advancement in an area of study that in Lillich's words is "barely emerging from a long infancy," and should be of interest not only to historians of stained glass but of medieval architecture as well. Since Suger's Saint-Denis, Gothic architects and glaziers had worked side by side. The collaboration occasionally produced monuments characterized by a delicately balanced dialogue between the architecture and its glistering decoration. Saint-Père is one of these monuments.

Lillich's study is divided into three parts. The first consists of a terse explication of the historical and architectural context of the original glazing and a survey of the documentation of its subsequent alteration or repair. This is followed by a stylistic analysis of each of the three major groups of clerestory windows: straight choir (ca. 1240–1250; reinstalled ca. 1270), hemicycle (ca. 1295–1300), and nave (ca. 1300–1315). Lillich concludes the study by identifying these programs as the "chief monument" of an expressionistic "Western School of Glass Painting" flourishing between ca. 1240 and ca. 1320 and as also responsible for stained glass at Le Mans, Tours, Sées, Vendôme, and Evron. The definition of this stylistic group is perhaps Lillich's most valuable contribution for the specialist in stained glass. An iconographic examination of the Saint-Père windows constitutes the final section of the book. After discussing the individual iconographic components in detail, Lillich defines a unified program. The Saint-Père clerestory depicts a history of the Christian church from the Old Testament prophets through the Incarnation to one of the earliest representations of the recently canonized Saint Louis.

Readers of this journal will be most interested in Lillich's treatment of the relationship between the stained glass window and its architectural framework. Saint-Père was glazed during a period when the design of the clerestory window was being reevaluated, a period between the saturated, full-color windows of the first half of the 13th century (Chartres and the Sainte-Chapelle) and the 14th century combination of color and grisaille known as the band window (Beauvais and Saint-Ouen at Rouen). Grisaille became popular in the middle half of the 13th century not only because it was less expensive than colored glass but also because it transmitted more light into the interior of the church to illuminate the delicate carving of Rayonnant architecture. Lillich charts a period of restless experimentation between the two standard formulas during which the glazier sought ways to combine grisaille and colored glass in the design of a single window. (See also her article on this in *Gesta*, IX, 1970.) The author's perceptive analysis of Saint-Père and its context allows the reader to understand the way the glazier of the second half of the 13th century responded to the chal-

lence of harmonizing these combinations of color and grisaille with the architectural framework. For example, in the nave of Saint-Père the early 14th-century artist who reglazed the mid-13th-century windows was even able to alter the appearance of the opening provided by the architect through such a combination. By designing his lancet in three vertical strips, he imparted a feeling of Rayonnant tracery to a High Gothic window and produced a "skilled variation on themes" of designs used in the earlier glazing of the choir and hemicycle.

The 12 color plates are an important feature of the book. They effectively reproduce the experience of encountering stained glass in its architectural setting. We are treated to faithful tonalities set into gently lighted architecture. The arrangement of the illustrations in clusters throughout the text is, however, inconvenient for the reader, making a coordinated study of text and plates quite difficult. In addition, there are mistakes in some of the labels: those for the plates following pages 88 and 140 are transposed; plate 68 is, in fact, a repetition of plate 32. The distillation of basic information into a series of reference charts, lists, and figures, and the inclusion of a plan that folds out at the back of the book are extremely useful.

This is not always an easy book to read. It is not intended for the casual reader (a knowledge of French is assumed), but for the serious student who will patiently consult footnotes and plates while carefully following the text. Because of the importance of Lillich's subject and the careful crafting of her argument, the rewards are great. The reader will have understood a monument of crucial importance not only in the history of Gothic stained glass, but in the history of Gothic architecture as well. Jean Lafond, to whose memory the book is dedicated, would be pleased.

MICHAEL COTHREN
Swarthmore College

Lionello Puppi, *Villa Badoer at Fratta Polesine, Corpus Palladianum*, volume VII, trans. by Catherine Enggass, University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978, 112 pp., 73 pls., 3 color pls., 50 figs. in text, 15 scale dwgs. \$30.00.

The Italian text appeared in 1972,¹ the English text with a copyright date of 1975 in 1978. *Villa Badoer*, like the other volumes in this handsome series, provides an unequalled photographic survey of the building, accompanied by measured drawings especially prepared for the purpose. In addition, this volume illustrates the newly restored frescoes inside the villa and includes a "Comparative Table of

Measurements given by Palladio, Bertotti Scamozzi, and the Centro Internazionale di Studi d'Architettura." An impressive list of manuscript sources and a lengthy bibliography document the scholarly foundations for the text of 63 pages including notes. Within this brief compass, dictated by the format of the series, Puppi brings together important archival research, and a specialist's knowledge of Palladio's works and of the social milieu of 16th-century Venice.

As James Ackerman has pointed out (*Palladio's Villas*, 1967), the villa Badoer is unique among Palladio's villas with curving porticoes as being the only one of that type of design to reach near completion. Before Puppi's discovery of a map of 1557 showing the villa site and its enclosing wall, it had also been one of the few works by Palladio almost totally lacking in documentary evidence for its date. The 1557 map and other archival material relevant to villa Badoer were first published by Puppi in 1966.² His discoveries were incorporated in Ackerman's study and in Zorzi's volume on the same subject (1973). The *Corpus Palladianum* volume, despite its later date, may be recommended for its accessibility, and for the better quality and quantity of photographs devoted to the villa Badoer. It is, therefore, ironic to note that the correct identity of the artist who frescoed the *piano nobile* of villa Badoer is the only new information to be found here. Puppi establishes that the artist who decorated the villa was not Jacopo del Giallo, miniaturist, but Giallo Fiorentino, a fresco painter and assistant to Giuseppe Salviati in work on the façade frescoes of Palazzo Loredan at S. Stefano. The chapter devoted to this discovery is the best in the book: the previous literature is reviewed in depth, the problem is succinctly stated, and new interpretation of the data is clearly and directly presented.

Those of us familiar with Puppi's work know him to be one of the most active scholars in Renaissance architecture. He characteristically presents his readers with a wealth of historical data brought together in a complex critical synthesis with a distinct Marxist bias. Hence, the suggestive allusions found throughout this book will be more meaningful to fellow scholars than to undergraduates and laypersons who may consult it.

The text of the *Villa Badoer* is divided into two parts. The first, devoted to the architecture of the villa, consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 documents the life of the patron, Francesco Badoer. It is revealed that Badoer's marriage to Lucietta Loredan was essential to his decision to build in the Polesine, for he inherited land near Fratta through the death of Lucietta's only brother Giorgio. Badoer's father had had

property in the province of Padua. In this chapter and in chapter 3 the reader must draw up his own time chart and family trees to appreciate the chronological and familial relationships being discussed. The author assumes his readers are familiar with the topography of the Venetian *terra firma*. Important distinctions, such as the difference between the province of Padua and the Polesine region, are not explained, and the location of frequently mentioned 16th-century place names such as "Bragola" and "Vespara" is never made clear.

Chapter 2 concentrates upon the sources for the scheme of the curving porticoes and the hierarchy of structures found at the villa Badoer. The *piano nobile* of the villa is raised four meters above the level of the forecourt where the curved porticoes stand. Puppi traces the evolution of the design for Fratta in a series of drawings connected with the villa for Leonardo Mocenigo to which he adds Palladio's plan of the villa Madama (R.I.B.A. x, 18) and two plans for the Temple of Hercules at Tivoli (R.I.B.A. ix, 7 and ix, 8).

Chapter 3 is devoted to the documentation of the Badoers at Fratta until their extinction in 1678 and the passage of the villa to the Mocenigos by inheritance. Post-Palladian alterations to the site and the building are discussed, the most notable of which is the extension toward the east of the service buildings hidden by the curving porticoes of the 16th-century structure. Puppi notes that the line in the masonry fabric marking the junction of the old and new construction is clearly visible. This is not illustrated here but is reproduced in his article cited previously. He argues that these additions to the villa Badoer must date after 1776 because they do not appear on the plates of Bertotti Scamozzi's book published in that year. The same reasoning should apply to the fountains in the forecourt at Fratta, which are also missing from Bertotti Scamozzi's plates. Puppi, however, dates the fountains in the first half of the 17th century.

The second part of the book is dedicated to the fresco décor of the villa. While the first chapter, in which the correct identity of the artist is established is exemplary, the second chapter, "Notes on the Iconography and Style of the Frescoes," is less successful. Here Puppi presents an interpretative key for the decorations. The choice of grotesques, illusionistic architecture, and mythological scenes in landscape settings is traced to Vitruvius, and the *Rape of Ganymede* in the large room on the right side of the villa is considered an expression in mythopoetic guise of Badoer's grief at the premature death of his friend and brother-in-law Giorgio Loredan in 1538.

An appendix provides a room-by-room description of the frescoes, omitted in the main text. This description is tied to a floor plan on which the rooms are numbered for ease of reference.

For the most part, the author may rejoice in his translator; she has made a coherent, if

1. Reviewed by Myra Nan Rosenfeld, "Corpus Palladianum, vols. I-VII," *JSAH*, XXXII, 1973, 335-338.

2. L. Puppi, "Appunti su Villa Badoer di Fratta Polesine," *Memorie dell'Accademia Patavina di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, 1965-66, 47-72.