

**Herschel Levit, *Views of Rome, Then and Now: 41 Etchings by Giovanni Battista Piranesi and Corresponding Photographs and Text* by Herschel Levit. New York, Dover, 1976. xxvi pp., 82 illus., \$6.00 (paper)**

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depiction of the childlike faces have been regarded as a flattened, English interpretation of the style of the St. Louis court atelier. It is possible, however, that this process of simplification had already taken place in France, and that the *Cuerdon Psalter* reflects the antecedents of the *cenier*-Acre style. If so, it takes us back yet another decade.

A Paris manuscript of 1250 confirms that the flat, simplified style does indeed have French roots. In the *Vie et Histoire de Saint Denys* (Paris, B.N., MS. fr. 1098),<sup>8</sup> such details as the figure proportions, the pen-drawn faces, the settings — and the positioning of the figures within them — foreshadow these items in the work of the Hospitaller Master. Some of its figures are clad in garments arranged in stiff, flat, elongated panels, having a certain similarity to the Master's depiction of folds. Other examples of drapery in this manuscript are not unlike the slightly more modelled forms of the Master's associate, responsible for the *Histoire Universelle* (B.N., MS. fr. 20125). In fact, the latter book displays an even closer concurrence with the *Vie de St. Denys*, confirming its artist's independent derivation from earlier Paris styles of illumination.

Once the possibility is admitted that the *cenier*-Acre style was not unique, and that not all of the manuscripts showing its traits are necessarily by one hand, other attributions to this hand also come into question. The most important of these is the fragment with drawings of Joinville's *Credo*, incorporated into B.N., MS. lat. 11907. Folda admits that the usual test of workshop qualities does not apply here, since the vellum and ink are different, and that the poses are more graceful and the figures more monumental. He ascribes these and other dissimilarities to the natural differences between a drawing and a finished painting. If we accept that the style of the Hospitaller Master was more widely distributed than Folda has allowed, the ascription of this work to the Master is questionable.

Folda bases many of his conclusions upon iconographic arguments. Sometimes his reasoning is convincing, as when he demonstrates that the Hospitaller Master first completed an edition of the *History of Outremer* begun by another illuminator (B.N., MS. fr. 9084) and then used it as the model for his own complete version of the same text (Boulogne-sur-Mer, MS. 142). It is also true, however, that certain of his discussions of iconography betray a methodological weakness. For example, the two examples noted above of "quotations" from the Master's work by the second French artist in Acre do not stand up: the motifs which he has noted as links between the two illuminators — a king enthroned with crossed legs, and the gestures of the mourners around a bier — are universal, occurring often, for example, in the Morgan Picture Book.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the gestures of the mourners in the two Acre manuscripts are quite dissimilar.

Examination of iconography in a wider context, that of the transmitted traditions of entire cycles, also is not entirely satisfactory. The treatment of the *Histoire Universelle* (B.N., MS. fr. 20125) is a case in point. The author disagrees with Buchthal's contention that it was made in

Paris; his proposal of Acre as the place of origin is acceptable, in the light of the codicological and stylistic evidence. But then Folda goes on to suggest that the manuscript resembles certain other Acre books because it has been influenced by three of them simultaneously, as well as by a common model. Most of the examples proving interdependence are unconvincing. Surely the greater part of the coincidence between the three versions of the *Histoire Universelle* discussed by Buchthal and the additional example introduced by Folda can be explained by the common model.

Folda's text is clearly written for the most part, despite a tendency to obscure the main point with a profusion of detail. The book is well presented and abundantly documented. Each manuscript is listed in a catalogue of admirable thoroughness, and almost all of the miniatures are reproduced. The plates are carefully labelled, so as to facilitate ease of consultation. Despite the criticisms noted here, the book is an important contribution to our knowledge of Crusader life and art, and of French late-thirteenth-century illumination, and it will undoubtedly take its place as a standard reference work in these areas.

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HERSCHEL LEVIT. *Views of Rome Then and Now: 41 Etchings by Giovanni Battista Piranesi and Corresponding Photographs and Text by Herschel Levit*. New York, Dover, 1976. xxvi pp., 82 illus., \$6.00 (paper).

The prints of Giovanni Battista Piranesi combined the archaeologist's passion for accurate observation with a love of grandeur, mystery, and fantasy. Herschel Levit chose forty-one plates by Piranesi, largely from his *Vedute di Roma* (1748 ff.), and photographed the same views in order to contrast eighteenth-century Rome with the contemporary city. The etchings and the photographs are reproduced side by side with comments by the author. They are introduced by a brief biography of Piranesi and notes on his style and methods of work.



FIGURE 1. G.B. Piranesi, *Temple of Vesta*. From Levit.

<sup>8</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Manuscrits, *Vie et Histoire de Saint Denys* (Paris, n.d.).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Cockerell and Plummer, *Miniatures*, 141 (fol. 29v) and 69 (fol. 11v).

Rome's magnificent architectural heritage is recorded in the large and excellent reproductions. Piranesi's etchings, based on direct observation, contain minute details of the monuments and demonstrate his love and knowledge of ancient Roman structures. At the same time, his inclination to infuse the scenes with a sense of fantasy and grandeur is equally evident in his modifications of the scale of the buildings. Vignettes of everyday life give a sense of the pace of the city: people are seen in the streets and buildings, conversing, working, and, in a delightful view of the Temple of Vesta (Fig. 1), hanging newly-washed clothes on a line attached to the structure.

Levit's photographs and comments complement the early views, revealing both the continuity and the changes that have occurred since Piranesi's time. While modern excavations and restorations have cleared many of the sites shown by Piranesi, modern incursions have replaced the eighteenth-century washerwomen: the ever-present car appears throughout the photographs, driving past or parked next to the old monuments. Despite these intrusions, the reproductions and the brief histories of the monuments reveal the ability of the beauty and heritage of Rome to survive through history.

The quality of the reproductions and the modest price make this book a useful introduction to historical and contemporary Rome for the general reader, but a few problems must be noted. A topographical rather than a chronological organization might have been more valuable in providing a sense of the various quarters of the city, particularly since the views often contain buildings begun in one era but often substantially modified in subsequent years. There are minor inaccuracies and oversimplifications in the historical accounts. These are, however, minor problems in a book devoted to providing high-quality reproductions with a limited text. In general, the book is to be commended for being yet another contribution to the series of reissues of major works of graphic art being published by Dover.

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GEORGE B. TATUM. *Philadelphia Georgian: The City House of Samuel Powel and Some of its Eighteenth-Century Neighbors*. Photographs by Cortland and Van Dyke Hubbard. Middletown, Conn., Wesleyan University Press, 1976. 187 + xvii pp., 65 illus., \$17.50.

In *Philadelphia Georgian*, George B. Tatum focuses on the design, construction, renovation, and restoration of a typical Middle Georgian town house in Philadelphia — the Powel House (Fig. 1) — and describes the eighteenth-century families who occupied it. Not content to concentrate on the Powel House as a unique manifestation of colonial ingenuity, Tatum commits himself to exploring the larger issues of architectural design and practice in pre-revolutionary Philadelphia.

Tatum divides his study into two parts: "The Owners" and "The Fabric." In the former, the author presents a tightly woven history of the two families most involved with the Powel House — the Charles Stedman family, for whom the house was built in 1765–66, and the Samuel Powel family, who purchased the house in 1769 and subsequently renovated it. Both Charles Stedman (1713–1784) and Samuel Powel (1738–1793) were Philadelphia gentlemen whose wealth and position necessitated a style of life which found suitable expression in the house at 244 South Third Street. Samuel Powel, as Tatum demonstrates, was the wealthier of the two; this, coupled with his prominence in the community, would help to explain the extensive renovations that he made.

In concluding this part of the book, Tatum briefly discusses the later owners of the house. One, Wolf Klebansky (an owner from 1904 to 1931), sold the interiors of the two principal rooms on the second floor. The rear room was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1917 and the front room was purchased by the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1925. The Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks, which was formed to purchase the Powel House in 1931, still owns and maintains the property today.

At the beginning of the second part of the book, Tatum offers a concise and knowledgeable history of the Georgian style in America. The author illustrates his commentary with key examples of Philadelphia architecture. He designates Mount Pleasant (begun 1761), Woodford (begun ca. 1759), and Cliveden (begun 1763) as "the extant country seats that parallel Charles Stedman's town house on Third Street and together with it represent the best domestic examples of the Middle Georgian style in the Philadelphia area."

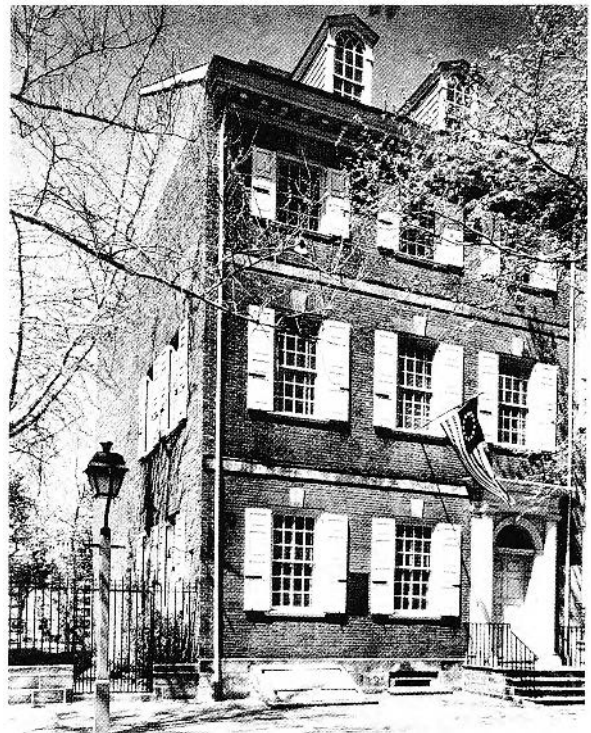


FIGURE 1. The Powel House. Tatum, frontispiece.