



Reviews

Edited by Rosie Miles

Jennifer Wearden and Jennifer Scarce, *Decorative Textiles from Arab & Islamic Cultures: Selections from the 'Al Lulwa' Collection* (London: Paul Holberton, 2016), 200 pp., 140 colour illustrations, £40.00 pbk, ISBN 9781907372872.

William Morris greatly admired Middle Eastern textiles, but, within the context of his own manufacture, this book appears to have limited relevance based as it is on one specific group of textiles brought together many years after his death. The 'Al Lulwa' collection of textiles includes items from the Arabian Peninsula, the Middle East, North Africa, Iran and India, and was started just over thirty years ago by Altaf S. Al Sabah. The name Al Lulwa (which means 'pearl' in Arabic) was the name of the founder's grandmother to whom the collection is dedicated. Although including a few early examples, most of the collection is of comparative late date, largely comprising examples produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Despite this, the book has far more interest to followers of Morris's work than is initially apparent. The text provides an authoritative survey of the history, traditions and techniques of Arabian and Islamic textiles, one of the main sources of inspiration for nineteenth-century British artists, designers and manufacturers, not just for their

work but as decoration for their own 'exotic' interiors and occasionally for dressing up when attending fashionable themed parties. A Julia Margaret Cameron photograph of Holman Hunt, whose collection of Palestinian clothing is now in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, shows him posed in a very fetching silk kaftan, sash and skullcap. Apart from Hunt, G. F. Lewis and other artists whose work goes under the ambiguous title of 'Orientalism', others took a more academic interest in the textiles, with William Morris becoming one of the most knowledgeable experts in the field. He analysed why the patterns work so well, and recommended in many of his lectures that the tried and tested traditions of ancient production provided an important model for contemporary design. Furthermore, throughout the 1870s and 1880s Morris advised the South Kensington Museum (the present day Victoria and Albert Museum) on purchases, and was responsible for the museum's acquisition of some of the finest early examples of Persian and Turkish carpets and woven silks.

The two contributors to this book are both acknowledged specialists in this field. The Introduction, which provides a short but precise history of Arab and Islamic textile manufacture, is written by Jennifer Scarce, previously Principal Curator of Middle Eastern Culture at the National Museum of Scotland, and an expert on Middle Eastern culture. Jennifer Wearden, retired Senior Curator of the V&A's exceptional collections of Near Eastern textiles and carpets, has written the detailed catalogue entries for each of the seventy items she selected from the collection.

The collection includes textiles from a wide geographical area but each depicts what the authors claim is 'a shared vocabulary of ornament', and design is the overarching theme of the book. Traditional motifs and patterns can be seen throughout the various branches of the arts of the Middle East, whether calligraphy, architecture, painting, glass, ceramics, carpets or woven and embroidered textiles. Owen Jones in his groundbreaking design manual *A Grammar of Ornament*, published in 1856, separated these into four distinct groups: Turkish, Persian, Arabian and Moresque. All of these types are recognisable in the textiles of the 'Al Lulwa' collection. However, it is interesting to see how diluted many of the original forms and pattern structures became in order to appeal to western tastes during a period of mass tourism during the second half of the nineteenth century. Ironically, at the same time, British manufacturers were adopting traditional Middle Eastern patterns for the British market. The most western-looking example featured in the book is a late-nineteenth-century Ottoman bedcover sparsely embroidered in metal thread over a delicately-shaded pink weighted silk (a form of treated silk favoured by western dressmakers as it gave weight and lustre to the cloth). Decorated with ears of wheat, swags and bows in the French style, it would have graced many a lady's boudoir. It was almost certainly produced in one of the hundreds of professional workshops set

up in Istanbul, and chiefly patronised by European exporters.

Liberty is now credited as the main British retailer of such goods, whereas it was once just one of many businesses listed in London street directories as 'Oriental Warehouses'. Far more important in influencing the market were George Baker and three of his sons. By the early 1860s, within fifteen years of moving to Constantinople to become head gardener at the British Embassy, Baker took advantage of the widening of trade with the west by becoming an importer of a wide range of items such as bedsteads and pianos, as well as military waterproofs and galoshes. He also exported textiles such as Persian vestings, Turkish towels and Broussa velvets for sale in British shops. By the late 1870s three of his five sons had begun travelling around the Middle East commissioning textiles and carpets for export to London. Eventually, they settled in England, although they continued their trade importing carpets, their main outlet being the Oriental Carpet Manufacturers, an association of carpet dealers. Two of them founded the firm of G.P. & J. Baker, which survives to this day. Although this company produced British furnishing textiles many of their early patterns are heavily influenced by the patterns of the countries with which they had originally traded.

The book is divided into chapters according to pattern type: Floral, Geometric, Calligraphic (which includes most of the earliest and finest examples surviving in the collection), with a final section devoted to applied decoration. Pleasingly this includes twentieth-century ceremonial clothing from specific tribal areas of Yemen, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. From this we are able to identify a number of fascinating types of garment such as a Tegeira (a Tunisian headpiece), a Thobe (a long, flowing woman's net garment from the Arabian Peninsula) and a Havlu (a type of Turkish towel which, having fascinated Europeans since the seventh century, experienced a revival in production during 1851 when exhibited at the Great Exhibition).

The book is visually stunning. Textile photography is a specialist art, and it is a pity that the publisher has not given Stephanie McGehee greater acknowledgement for her work. Each textile or item of dress illustrated has a double page spread with some enlarged images included to show specific techniques or details highlighted in the adjoining text. The captions are both instructive and interesting, a balance not always achieved in such a serious monograph. Included is a useful glossary of textile and embroidery terms but no bibliography. As someone whose interest in the subject is coloured by its relationship to contemporary British production this is all for which I have could asked.

Linda Parry

Maureen Meister, *Arts & Crafts Architecture: History and Heritage in New England* (Hanover and London: University of New England Press, 2014), 288 pp., 21 colour plates, 112 b&w illustrations, \$45.00 hbk, ISBN 9781611686623.

In her previous book, *Architecture and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Boston: Harvard's H. Langford Warren* (1993), Maureen Meister provided a detailed and illuminating account of one significant figure. In this book she has expanded her range, and, as her publishers fairly claim on the cover, has produced 'the first full-scale examination of the architecture associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement that spread throughout New England at the turn of the twentieth century'. With the support of the University of New England Press, she has done this with impressive authority and in a very attractive visual form.

The book starts with a brief Preface, and an Introduction entitled 'Grappling with Modernity', followed by seven substantial chapters. In the space of this review it will not be possible to discuss every chapter in detail, and so I will begin by looking carefully at two chapters that establish the author's concerns and subject-matter. The first, 'Dramatis Personae: Twelve Architect-Leaders', gives an introductory account of the eleven men and one woman who formed the backbone of the movement in Boston, emphasising the importance of what Meister calls its 'Architect-Leaders'. On the political side, Meister remarks that 'American labourers never saw a counterpart to William Morris to champion their cause' (p. 4), since socialism made little progress in the United States; but the moderate Progressive Movement developed rapidly during the 1890s, aiming to bring about social progress through governmental intervention. While some intellectuals like Henry Adams argued that industrial society was innately soulless, the Progressive Era was confidently optimistic about the future. A highly significant event, during the spring of 1897, was an exhibition of the Arts and Crafts organised by the craftsman printer Henry Lewis Johnson. When the prospectus for the exhibition was circulated, it attracted thirty-seven supporting signatures, of which nine were those of architects, while another exhibition, on architecture, was arranged at the same time. We are shown that this was 'made possible by the widespread interest in Arts and Crafts ideas that had taken hold in Boston by the later 1890s' (p. 11). The Harvard lecturer Charles Eliot Norton and the distinguished architect Henry Hobson Richardson were among those helping the spread of the new outlook. Thus it was that the exhibition opened in Boston rather than in New York.

Meister provides full accounts of the twelve leaders of the movement, showing them all to have been people of energy and idealism. The best known to me were Ralph Adams Cram, Charles Donagh Maginnis (who worked mostly for Roman

Catholic clients) and Richard Crompton Sturgis, but we are shown that all twelve, including the remarkable woman Lois Lilley Howe, made substantial contributions. In her discussion of George Edward Barton, Meister reveals that while in England Barton became friendly with Sydney Cockerell, and on returning to America helped to put Boston Public Library in touch with him. After Morris's death, Cockerell acted as an agent for the library, purchasing for it several medieval manuscripts, two of which had belonged to Morris (p. 17). The second chapter, 'Arts and Crafts Advocates, Arts and Crafts Architects', gives a succinct account of the development of the movement in Britain, paying due respect to Ruskin and Morris, and drawing attention to buildings by Pugin, Webb, Butterfield, Norman Shaw, Bodley, Lethaby and Voysey. We then hear of the movement's crossing the Atlantic, and attention is drawn to buildings by Bryant and Gilman, Peter Bonnet Wight, H.H. Richardson, Gustav Stickley, Frank Lloyd Wright, Greene & Greene and Irving Gill, whose 1914-16 Dodge House in West Hollywood, with its emphatic 'simplicity' of style, seems in the illustration to bring us surprisingly near to Modernism (pp. 62-63).

The third chapter, with the inelegant title 'An Intellectual Stew: Emerson, Norton, Brandeis', considers three of the principal intellectual influences on the movement. The transcendentalist philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) was of an older generation, but his ideas continued to be respected, and the editors of the Arts and Crafts magazine *Handicraft* several times quoted his views as authoritative in the early twentieth century. One from his essay 'Art' offers a succinct version of an idea we would associate with Ruskin and Morris: '[b]eauty must come back to the useful arts, and the distinction between the fine and the useful arts be forgotten' (p. 67). But Emerson was far more optimistic than they were about contemporary civilisation, asking the question in his 'Progress of Culture': '[w]ho does not prefer the age of steel, of gold, of coal, petroleum, cotton, steam, electricity, and the spectroscope? All this activity has added to the value of life, and to the scope of the intellect' (p. 71). This confident American spirit evidently appealed to the editors of *Handicraft*, as did his suggestion that those living in New England should build from 'the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people' (p. 69).

The second figure considered is Charles Eliot Norton, the educationalist and correspondent of Ruskin and Morris. His recorded remarks about Morris will interest readers. In an 1868 letter to Ruskin, he called Morris a 'man of practical affairs, with the fine perceptions and quick fancy of the poet [...] so little of a prig'. But writing in 1899, after Morris's death, Norton was more critical, remarking – not unreasonably – that Morris was a man of Northern Europe, who failed to appreciate 'all Italy affords' (p. 75). Norton, a Dante scholar and enthusiast for Italian architecture, called on Boston architects to take inspiration from the Renaissance (*ibid.*). One learns that

by 1898 Norton had refined his idea of simplicity in a way that led him to criticise the books produced by Morris at the Kelmscott Press, for what Meister calls ‘their heavy, dark typeface and borders based on medieval manuscripts’. Far preferable were the books of fifteenth-century Venice, described by Norton as ‘simple, easy to read, and adorned with initial letters elegant in design’. Apparently the printer Daniel Berkeley Updike, with whom Norton co-operated, unsuccessfully, in trying to persuade Harvard to establish a university press, had adopted a lighter typographical manner, which appealed to Norton (p. 82).

The range of Meister’s thinking is shown in her choice of the third important figure, the corporate lawyer and prominent citizen of Boston, Louis Dembitz Brandeis. Brandeis was a practical man, deeply committed to the Law School at Harvard, who assisted the Boston Society of Architects when it needed legal advice. He supported many good causes, particularly in the educational sphere, and was appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States in 1916. In this context, Meister remarks that ‘Boston’s professionals’, like Brandeis, were concerned for the workers, but that ‘their sympathies were tempered by their inclinations as businessmen’. In 1903 the matter came to a head when Arthur Astor Carey, the second president of the Society of Arts and Crafts, attempted to get the Society to take a Morrisian position, but was thwarted, and resigned; his successor, Warren, believed that the strength of the Society lay in ‘keeping those questions entirely out of our midst’ and concentrating on the training of craftsmen (pp. 89-90).

The later chapters are organised chronologically, and offer a detailed account of the events of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Under the heading ‘An Arts and Crafts Movement Emerges in New England’ we are told, about Richardson’s friendship with Morris, that he ‘decorated his office with Morris textiles and promoted the use of Morris’s fabrics and wallpapers in many of his projects’, while in 1882 Catharine Lorillard Wolfe commissioned Peabody and Stearns to build her huge Newport seaside ‘cottage’, Vinland, with its decoration including stained-glass windows by Burne-Jones and Walter Crane: ‘Vinland’s decoration was widely publicised and presented compelling possibilities for the Arts and Crafts movement in New England’ (p. 99). We also learn that in his lectures at Harvard, H. Langford Warren referred his students to the windows by Morris and Burne-Jones installed in 1882 in Boston’s Trinity Church. The next two chapters, ‘Looking Backward: From Romanesque to Gothic Revival’ and ‘Looking Backward: Colonial Revival as Arts and Crafts’, survey the historical traditions which inspired the movement. The latter includes a section on ‘Preserving Architectural Monuments’, which draws attention to the devotion of the movement to ‘the cause of preservation’ (p. 177); reference is made to C.R. Ashbee, who had visited America in 1900 to draw attention to the

National Trust, founded in Britain in 1895, but, surprisingly, not to the SPAB. SPAB is mentioned favourably elsewhere, in relation to Morris (p. 41), to the Boston Society of Architects (p. 113), and to its ‘galvanizing’ influence in the Boston area from the 1880s (p. 170). The ‘Looking Backwards’ that appears in these chapter titles does not refer to Edward Bellamy’s 1888 book of that name that so exasperated Morris.

In the substantial Chapter Seven, ‘Looking Forward: Building for the Twentieth Century’, Meister draws attention to the achievement of the movement in the first part of the twentieth century, bringing out the contrast between Boston, consolidating its claims to be the intellectual capital of the country, with those of New York to be its commercial capital, and the effects of this contrast on architecture. She argues that, while the work of the Arts and Crafts architects differed markedly from that of the Prairie School architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, and the Californians like the Greene brothers and Irving Gill, they shared a desire for simplicity, in ‘reducing their designs to fundamental shapes’ (p. 189) – though to term this ‘A Reductive Approach’ seems to me too negative. Attention is drawn to the flourishing of the Shingle Style in New England during the 1880s, and to the fact that the architects, while committed to quality craftsmanship, were happy to employ new building materials like stucco, concrete and steel (p. 193). Meister produces examples of varied work using all these materials, including the cast stone produced by the Economy Manufacturing Company of New Haven, Connecticut. In the section ‘Modern Demands, Modern Solutions’, we are made aware of the architects’ concern to respond to modern needs, including those of churches now needing uninterrupted views of both altar and pulpit (p. 199). As far as housing was concerned, practicality was valued; Lois Lilley Howe is mentioned here as being particularly concerned about kitchens and pantries. At the same time, town halls and public schools proliferated, while several new building types emerged in the new century: apartments, private clubs for both men and women, garages, subways, gymnasia, public libraries, hospitals and veterinary buildings, bathhouses and social centres for the urban poor, wartime housing for workers and, at the other end of the social scale, places where altruistic individuals could meet and plan their philanthropic activities. The method was reform through legal processes, with cases argued in the courts over such issues as the height of city buildings. Meister concludes positively that ‘[w]ith an Arts and Crafts orientation, infused by the spirit of Progressive Era New England, the architects were crusaders’ (p. 220).

The book ends with a short ‘Epilogue: Confronting Modernism’. Meister tells us that she finds it difficult to establish an accurate measure of the architects’ influence in New England, but is certain that it was pervasive and extended beyond the state. By the late 1920s the impact of Modernism had become increasingly felt. In 1929

Ralph Adams Cram wrote an article for *House Beautiful* entitled ‘Will This Modernism Last?’ in which he drew attention to what he saw as the distortions and artificiality of Modernism, though finding some positive qualities in it. In his autobiography in 1936 he devoted a chapter to the topic, taking exception to the ‘horrid forms’ he found in it, and particularly criticising the apartment houses of Le Corbusier (p. 223). The situation was such that in the autumn of 1930 the Boston Society of Architects organised a conference on ‘The Influence of Modern Architecture on the Position of the Historic Craftsman’, at which several of the older architects defended the Arts and Crafts tradition, but others declared it to be no longer relevant. By the 1940s only Howe, Maginnis, Putnam and Sturgis were alive to see the triumph of the International Style. In 1945 Maginnis – whose 1920 house at Brookline, Massachusetts, appears attractively both as Plate 8 and on the book’s cover – spoke out against the lack of beauty in modernist architecture, while in 1950 and 1951 Sturgis wrote letters condemning the new buildings at Harvard, including Gropius’s Graduate Centre. By this time the movement was over, but its accomplishment had been remarkable. Meister concludes her book with an enthusiastic account and full-page illustration of the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts, 1909-12 by R. Clipston Sturgis, aptly chosen to represent the best qualities of the architecture she has been discussing: ‘[s]imple and sincere: the buildings at the Perkins School assert the optimism of the Arts and Crafts architects, their craftsmen collaborators, and their fellow advocates who lived and labored in New England in the Progressive Era’ (p. 229). The building is also shown as one of the Colour Plates (Plate 5), where we also see vivid evidence of the high quality of the craftsmanship of the stained-glass artists Charles Cormick, Donald MacDonald and Harry Goodhue, the wood carving of Johannes Kirchmayer and Hugh Cairns, and the ironwork of Samuel Yellin.

In her Preface, Meister shows the breadth of her interests, when she mentions that she has long been ‘awed by New England’s factories and their histories’. These buildings, ‘places of misery’, represent one of the ‘many topics I have not pursued in providing a context for this study’ (p. xiii). One wonders what area Meister may now be investigating, confident, in the light of the book reviewed here, that whatever it may be, it will be thoroughly and intelligently explored.

Peter Faulkner

Ruth Kinna, *Kropotkin: Reviewing the Classical Anarchist Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), v + 266 pp., £70.00 hbk, ISBN 9780748642298.

Kropotkin was born a Russian prince, but in 1871, not yet thirty, he broke with the established order and joined the revolutionary movement. By that time service in the Tsarist army and ensuing exploratory journeys in Siberia had led to his becoming a geographical thinker with an international reputation for hypotheses concerning Asian glaciation, desiccation and orography. His gravestone in Moscow's Novodevichiy cemetery, making no mention of his politics, describes him solely as a 'Distinguished Scientific Traveller'.

Kropotkin's membership of the Tchaikovsky Circle resulted in imprisonment in the Peter and Paul Fortress, followed by escape from a lesser St Petersburg prison in 1876 to Western Europe. Already a confirmed anarchist he spent a decade as an agitator in Switzerland and France, yet after release from a lengthy French sentence he sought sanctuary in liberal Britain, where he remained until his return to Russia on the outbreak of the February Revolution.

It was Switzerland which launched his voluminous political journalism and his first book, assembled in 1885 during his French imprisonment by a fellow anarchist geographer Elisée Reclus, was actually a selection of articles written for *Le Révolté* of Geneva. *Paroles d'un Révolté* was, remarkably, not translated into English until as recently as 1992, and one of the many revelations of Ruth Kinna's study is the quality of these early anarchist articles from which she quotes extensively.

In Britain, living in or around London – Harrow, Acton, Bromley, Brighton – Kropotkin conducted a dual career for forty years as an anarchist, participating in the founding of the long-running monthly *Freedom* on his arrival in 1886, and as a man of science. He continued to write profusely for the press of the international anarchist movement: as the principal exponent of anarchist communism, it was a politics associated with his name which supplanted both the mutualism of Proudhon and the French trade-union movement and the collectivism of Bakunin and the First International federalists. By the turn of the century, though, anarchist communism was being pushed aside with the emergence of syndicalism in France.

Alongside his agitational journalism and many pamphlets, Kropotkin wrote books admired outside the anarchist world. In his great *Mutual Aid* of 1902 he expanded Darwinian theory – contra Thomas Henry Huxley and Herbert Spencer – to demonstrate that the struggle for survival did not take place so much within species as between species. Those species which exhibited the most cooperation and mutual aid were the most successful, and the same, he showed, applied equally to human groups and societies.

Rejecting the division of labour, he was a forceful advocate of integral economics: the combination of manual and mental labour – which he practised in his own life as not only a writer and thinker but a carpenter and gardener – and, while not eschewing trade, regional self-sufficiency. He argued that the agglomeration of small units of production in ever larger factories co-existed with the continuance of workshops, which he presciently anticipated would flourish with displacement of steam-power by electricity. This early vision of ‘small is beautiful’ was completed by his conviction that market gardens were fundamental to agricultural productivity. These are the themes of *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1898), another major work.

The interest in Kropotkin’s life and originality of his thought are obvious, and it is baffling that so little has been written about him. Perhaps what daunts is his prodigious polymathy, ranging across politics, philosophy, geography, biology, zoology, history and literature. There are only two fully researched biographies: George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumović, *The Anarchist Prince* (1950), and Martin A. Miller, *Kropotkin* (1976). It is an oddity of Kinna’s book that, although she very frequently cites *The Anarchist Prince* in the notes, usually it is Woodcock alone she mentions in the text. This is unfair. Avakumović was certainly the junior partner, fourteen years younger than Woodcock – the two men had met in the bookshop of Freedom Press – but as a Serbian émigré it was he who was the reader of Russian and, studying at Rugby School and the Universities of Cambridge, London and Oxford, the trained historian. He was later to collaborate again with Woodcock on *The Doukhobors*, but became a respected academic at the University of British Columbia, producing single-authored histories of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and both Canadian communism and Canadian socialism. He died as recently as 2013.

Morris and Kropotkin admired and liked one another and their families were on visiting terms. Kinna probably goes too far in describing Morris as ‘anarchist-friendly’ (p. 128) since the anarchists of the Socialist League caused him much grievance, and – despite the proximity of his anti-parliamentary, libertarian socialism to anarchism – he was never any anarchist. Kinna’s first book was the fine *William Morris: The Art of Socialism*, and she is of course a member of the advisory board of this *Journal*; yet there are no more than half-a-dozen references, all slight, to Morris in her *Kropotkin*, and it is definitely not for those readers only interested in Morris.

The competition is admittedly limited, but Kinna’s new book is one of the best things written about Kropotkin, based on a deeply impressive mastery of the full range of his oeuvre, including numerous articles as well as manuscript sources in English and French (although not Russian). I regret that she has confined this within a straitjacket of academicism, aiming to refute his appropriation by ‘classical anarchism’, ‘new anarchism’ (of the 1960s) and the murky theorising of the

pretentious ‘post-anarchism’ (which is still anarchist in spite of its self-description). She quotes Kropotkin’s approbation of Bakunin because his work contained ‘for the thinking reader, more political thought, and more philosophical comprehension of history, than heaps of university and state socialist treatises, in which the absence of deep thought is concealed under foggy dialectics’ (p. 109). It is regrettable that she did not apply this insight to her own work.

These reservations apply principally to the introductory Part 1. The excellent Part 2, ‘Coming Out of Russia’, explores Kropotkin’s Russian origins by examining first his intellectual formation by Populism (which she resolutely names ‘nihilism’ throughout) and then the centrality to his thinking of his conception of and work within the discipline of geography. This latter seems an obvious approach yet has been neglected by previous writers. He knew and got on well with Oxford’s influential Halford Mackinder, but whereas Mackinder’s geography was statist and nationalistic – a geography attuned to the New Imperialism of the 1880s and 1890s – Kropotkin approached the issues quite differently. The premise of his ‘anti-statecraft’, Kinna explains, was that ‘the tendency towards the development of large political units was detrimental to human well-being [...]’. He outlined a history of domination that, by means of conquest, targeted assassination and trickery [...] drew groups of people into the orbit of controlling factions’ (p. 93).

The concluding Part 3, ‘Revolution and Evolution’, stitches in the French Revolution (of which Kropotkin wrote a history), utopian thinking, anarchist communism, Darwinism, anarchist ethics, syndicalism and finally World War One. In 1914 anarchists were astonished when Kropotkin came out in support of the Entente powers, Britain, France and Russia, in opposition to Germany and Austria-Hungary. In tracing the long-standing causes of this apparently paradoxical stance, Kinna is less original than she seems to think – Woodcock and Avakumović also provide a subtle treatment – but is indubitably stimulating and learned. Kropotkin esteemed the legacy of ‘the Great French Revolution’, as he called it, and had come to believe that the Third Republic (despite its imprisonment of him in 1883) was an exceptionally advanced state which it was necessary to defend against German barbarism. No advocate of ‘revolutionary defeatism’, he dreaded the prospect of Russia losing the conflict with Germany. But Kinna argues that ‘the key factor’ in explaining his stance was the manner in which German social democracy had diverted proletarian energies into reformism and statism (p. 177).

In Parts 2 and 3 Kropotkin is stripped of his reputation as a conventional and fairly fusty theorist, and revealed as much more various and relevant than one had lazily thought. He emerges as fresh, poetic, challenging and responsive to change. For example, in *Wars and Capitalism*, a Freedom Press pamphlet of 1914, he astonishes in

foreseeing the brute realities of contemporary warfare. Wars ‘no longer consist of a mere massacre of hundreds and thousands of men in a few great battles’. Instead they are ‘fought on a front [...] of thirty-five to forty miles’, with soldiers being fired on by ‘several hundred pieces of ordnance’ that would obliterate the landscape and drive them ‘to madness’. In trench warfare they would hurl ‘hand-grenades’ and guncotton at each other, and then confront successive waves of ‘attacking columns’, compelling them to engage in hand-to hand combat (p. 181).

Ruth Kinna has written an invigorating study, persuasive in its establishment of Kropotkin as a multi-faceted and original thinker, remarkably like Morris himself in not being limited to the nineteenth century but with a great deal to offer the twenty-first.

David Goodway

Sheila Rowbotham, *Rebel Crossings: New Women, Free Lovers, and Radicals in Britain and America* (London:Verso, 2016), 502 pp., £25.00 hbk, ISBN 9781784785888.

With *Rebel Crossings*, Sheila Rowbotham, a celebrated historian of feminism and socialism, has produced a sort of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century radicalism in Great Britain and the United States. Just as in Tom Stoppard’s play, in which hitherto minor characters occupy centre stage while more familiar dramatis personae briefly pass through, *Rebel Crossings* focuses on the complicated lives and multifarious political activities of six little-known figures who read, discussed and occasionally interacted with the radical luminaries of their era, including Edward Carpenter, Eleanor Marx, Emma Goldman and William Morris. Like an optical illusionist, Rowbotham reverses field and figure; the result is illuminating even for experts in the historiography of British and American radicalism.

The *Rebel* in Rowbotham’s title is obvious enough; *Crossings* signals her transatlantic approach. Five of the book’s six central figures are Britons who emigrated to the United States. Among its many accomplishments, *Rebel Crossings* powerfully demonstrates the value of transnational approaches to the history of this era. Helena Born (1860-1901), raised in Bristol, was radicalised by reading American poet Walt Whitman. When she, along with Bristol friend Miriam Daniell (1861-1894) and Miriam’s lover Robert Allan Nicol (1868-1956), emigrated to the United States in 1890, they settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts in large part because of its proximity to Concord, home of Emerson and Thoreau. William Bailie (1866-1957), an Irishman living in Manchester, also emigrated to the United States, where he gained

attention as biographer of the American anarchist Josiah Warren. Gertrude Dix (1867-1950), who gained prominence in England as author of the New Woman novel *The Image Breakers* (1900), won even more readers after she moved to California, married the afore-mentioned Robert Nicol, and began publishing short stories about the American West. The youngest of Rowbotham's central characters, Boston native Helen Tufts (1874-1962), was shaped by her friendship with British radical Helena Born. After her friend's early death, Tufts married Born's lover William Bailie, an acquaintance and admirer of William Morris; in the evenings, the two would read aloud from Morris's *Sigurd the Volsung*.

Crossings signifies transatlanticism, but it also suggests Rowbotham's other major theme, the mixed nature of her protagonists' politics. As she notes, all six came of political age before the split between socialism and anarchism was complete. Their careers reveal the era's creative tensions between collectivism and solidarity on the one hand and individualism on the other. Moreover, in their personal lives they 'struggled [...] to balance altruistic service and egoism, union and personal desire' (p. 6), and strove awkwardly to unite 'liberty, love and solidarity' (p. 7). Rowbotham's emphasis on the era's political crossings complements Anna Vaninskaya's analysis in *William Morris and the Idea of Community* (2010) of the socialist 'hybridity' of this period, as well as Terry Eagleton's witty observation that fin-de-siècle intellectuals 'blend[ed] belief systems with staggering nonchalance, blithely confident of some invisible omega point at which [...] Emerson lies down with Engels'. Rowbotham's analysis builds, most of all, on her magisterial 2008 biography of Edward Carpenter, promoter of the 'Larger Socialism' – a fluid, eclectic combination of politics, culture and spirituality. Even William Morris, a far more orthodox Marxist than Carpenter, combined economic and religious perspectives, insisting that 'the foundation of Socialism [...] is economical [...]. But this economical aim [...] must be accompanied by an ethical or religious sense of the responsibility of each man to each and all of his fellows'.

One of the pleasures of Rowbotham's study is her demonstration of her subjects' easy crossings between political, cultural and spiritual movements. Helena Born, for example, worked with socialists and anarchists, attended rallies for both Eugene Debs and William Jennings Bryan, and was active in the anti-imperialist and women's suffrage movements. She published essays in a Social Democratic Federation journal and in the Whitmanite *Conservator*, where she argued that Walt Whitman's ideal democracy embraced 'Socialism, Individualism, Communism, Anarchism, Egoism, Mysticism, Universal Brotherhood, Idealism, Sex Reform, Evolution, Revolution, etc.' (pp. 247-48). Rowbotham notes that the causes embraced by her figures included 'feminism, secularism, socialism, anarchism, mysticism, mycology, free love, health

foods, sex psychology and rational dress' (p. 5).

Rebel Crossings begins in Bristol, where Helena Born and Miriam Daniell lived in middle-class comfort. The two young women met in 1888 through the Bristol Women's Liberal Association, and quickly discovered their shared interests in advanced writers: Thoreau, Whitman, Ruskin, Carpenter and Morris. The next year Miriam visited Edinburgh, where she met Robert Nicol, seven years her junior, who was active in the Edinburgh University Socialist Society. The two became lovers. Daniell, who at nineteen had married a Bristol solicitor, somehow convinced her husband to allow Nicol to move into their home. Rowbotham speculates on his consternation at finding his house 'unpleasantly cluttered by an arrogant and beautiful boy' (p. 50).

Daniell soon separated from her husband, and she and Nicol set up housekeeping with Born. The three young people became trade union activists and members of the Bristol Socialist Society. They combined their defence of workers' rights with advocacy for women, seeing the two causes as inextricable. Daniell and Nicol wrote a pamphlet, *The New Trade Unionism*, that attempted to marry political and personal transformation, celebrating 'the greatest Union of all – the union of the Souls of Mankind in a perfect Love, out of which will emanate perfect and eternal Peace' (p. 80).

All the while they dreamed of a pilgrimage to the land of Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman, and emigrated to Cambridge, Massachusetts during 1890. They soon discovered that the streets of greater Boston were not paved with Transcendentalist gold. They struggled to make a living in Cambridge, fled to New York for a period, then returned to Boston. Less than three years after their arrival in the United States, the Financial Panic of 1893 occurred, plunging the nation into its worst economic crisis prior to the Great Depression. One friend characterised their life in the United States as a romantic bohemian adventure: '[t]hey had all turned their backs upon conventional society and conventional living [...]. There was much enthusiasm for ideas, much storm and stress, much material hardship, but it was all very beautiful' (p. 138). Another friend, however, took a more jaundiced view: '[t]heir coming to America was a reckless thing. They burned their bridges behind them; unused to poverty and hardship, they passed through the extremest kind of each. They always seemed to me like birds, flitting from one place to another' (p. 137).

In 1893 they abandoned the East Coast for a ranch in remote Placer County, California. The area had originally been settled by ranchers and miners, but during the 1890s it began to collect 'clusters of experimental lifers, seers, healers, mystics and bohemian misfits' (p. 145). In this atmosphere of 'rugged simplicity' (p. 144), Nicol corresponded with Edward Carpenter, asking him for copies of pamphlets by

Morris and Kropotkin to sell to the locals as well as patterns for the sandals popular in Carpenter's bohemian circle. Tragically, less than a year after their arrival, Miriam Daniell died at thirty-three, leaving behind the three-year-old daughter whom she and Nicol had named Sunrise.

Nicol remained in California after Daniell's death, but Helena Born returned to Boston, where she soon met William Bailie who, like Born, was associated with the Boston Anarchist Club led by Benjamin Tucker. The quietly remarkable Bailie, born into a working-class Belfast family, was apprenticed to a wicker workshop at age eleven. As a teenager, he discovered William Morris's socialist writings through the agency of a friendly Unitarian minister. Upon finishing his apprenticeship at eighteen, he moved to Manchester and quickly became immersed in the city's rich socialist culture as an activist in the SDF, the Socialist League and the Ancoats Brotherhood. Bailie helped arrange an 1889 Morris lecture in Manchester, and he treasured all his life the two brief but friendly letters Morris sent him on that occasion. Bailie also worked closely with John Trevor, the renegade Unitarian pastor who founded the Labour Church, a new religious movement uniting socialism and spirituality. Bailie fully embraced the millennial strain of socialism that was widespread in England's industrial North during the late 1880s. His principal fear was that the revolution would arrive before he and his colleagues had time to prepare the people for it.

Bailie enjoyed the heady atmosphere of socialist Manchester, but he found it difficult to support a family of five on his earnings as a basketmaker. Soon after his arrival in Manchester, the teenage Bailie had married another Irish immigrant and fathered three children in quick succession. In 1891 the Bailie family emigrated to Boston, where he established his own basket-making workshop while penning articles for Benjamin Tucker's anarchist *Liberty* magazine. Bailie met Helena Born after her return from California, and the two became lovers. Born gave him Edward Carpenter's radical, pro-feminist marriage manual *Love's Coming-of-Age* as a conduct book for their relationship, and her correspondence reveals that she considered Morris, Emerson and Whitman to be tutelary spirits of their love affair. The portraits of all three, she wrote to him from her temporary residence on a New Hampshire farm, were on her wall.

On her return to Boston, Born and Bailie decided to open the Pure Food Kitchen, an *avant la lettre* farm-to-table restaurant. The two idealists were certain they could do well by doing good, but the endeavour soon folded. Both the staff and the ovens donated by a local political reformer and inventor proved unreliable, and the clientele stole the crockery. A solace for both of them was the friendship of Helen Tufts, offspring of a family of Boston Brahmins fallen on hard times. Tufts, a decade younger than Born and Bailie, idolised her two friends. After Born's death in 1901,

when she was forty-one, Tufts collected her periodical writings, added an adulatory biographical introduction, and published the result as *Whitman's Ideal Democracy and Other Writings*. Born's essays reveal her hybrid political commitments and her complex union of socialism, individualism, spirituality, utopianism and feminism. Tufts shared her friend's radical beliefs, and she celebrated Born's life not only by gathering her essays for publication but by scattering her ashes at Walden Pond. Bailie came with her; their informal funeral ceremony involved readings from Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Born's death drew the two closer, and they soon became lovers, then husband and wife.

The 'Free Lovers' in Rowbotham's subtitle include not only Daniell and Nicol, Born and Bailie, and Bailie and Tufts but also Nicol and Gertrude Dix, the New Woman novelist. The two struck up an epistolary romance during the 1890s; in 1902 Dix abandoned her literary and socialist London milieu to join Nicol at his remote California ranch. Once there, she began writing Western-themed stories for mass-market magazines. As Rowbotham describes her transformation, '[s]he abandoned Hegel and psychological novel writing to join the ranks of writers churning out dramatic stories for a burgeoning popular market' (p. 320).

Rowbotham's detailed, comprehensive study follows the longest-lived of her subjects into their old age during the 1950s. However, her political narrative effectively ends with World War One, which disrupted many of the visionary radical movements that originated during the 1880s. The three decades covered in this study, when radicals in Great Britain and the United States re-imagined not only politics but daily life, would not be matched until the 1960s. In its close examination of previously obscure figures, *Rebel Crossings* offers an important new perspective on a crucial period.

Michael Robertson

Kate Nichols, Rebecca Wade & Gabriel Williams, eds, *Art versus Industry? New Perspectives on Visual and Industrial Cultures in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 280 pp., 50 b&w illustrations, £75.00 hbk, ISBN 9780719096464.

Art versus Industry is a collection of essays that grew out of a conference held at Leeds City Museum in 2012. The book engages with a range of media and discusses many of the central figures within the historiography of nineteenth-century design. Ruskin appears frequently, Owen Jones is discussed from a number of perspectives and William Morris and other Art and Crafts practitioners are discussed in several chapters. The introduction questions any facile opposition between art and industry,

and contests the idea that art is fundamentally in conflict with commerce and consumption. The collection gives the sense of aiming to contest the standard historiography of Victorian design that has its roots in ‘design reform’, the set of debates that are usually understood to have emerged from the Great Exhibition, the South Kensington Museum and the Government Schools of Design.

Lara Kriegel discusses how the history and practice of lace making can be seen as a counter-cultural discourse and a critique of industrial production. She explains how lace was used as a means of creating income for women in the late nineteenth century (‘lace rescue’) and how writings about lace and its history comprised a gendered historical narrative: ‘narratives about the English and Irish crafts of lace reveal a distinctly feminine world of rescue and revival, agency and alienation, and labour and loss’ (p. 24). By focusing on a specific craft and case studies in rural contexts she successfully redirects the story of politicised making towards women reformers and rural handicraft.

Gabriel Williams discusses the anaglyptograph – an obscure graphic technology that created engravings from low relief sculpture through a mechanical process. This subject stimulates a fascinating discussion of the differences between hand engraving and mechanical engraving, and how the relative merits of mechanical reproduction were presented in debates that anticipate commentary on photography in the following decades. The anaglyptograph was mechanical and so could not ‘lie’, unlike hand engravers who often operated with considerable artistic licence. Ultimately this chapter demonstrates that what constituted an ‘accurate’ reproduction was both highly subjective and hotly contested. Jasmine Allen discusses how the classificatory systems at *Expositions Universelles* raised a series of contradictions. Stained glass (the subject of the chapter) was normally classed as manufacture but often displayed as art, and thus highlighted a series of conflicts about distinctions between labour, art and various kinds of production. Allen provides some really interesting descriptions of the iconography of windows in the Paris 1855 Exhibition – a refreshing change from the normal focus on ecclesiastical iconography. Colin Trodd’s chapter adopts a history-of-ideas approach to a discussion of how the Arts and Crafts movement both popularised and appropriated the art and writing of William Blake. An intriguing drawing of William Morris as Blake’s allegorical figure ‘Los’ encapsulates this strange cultural mixture. Trodd focuses on Ruskin’s idea of the grotesque (art rooted in physical labour) and argues that this shaped the reception of Blake for the next generation. The grotesque acknowledged and embodied human imperfection, and was powerful because it articulated the struggle within this contradiction. For the Arts and Crafts Movement Blake ‘connects Romantic critique of industrialism and the socialist critique of capitalism’ (p. 96) and Blake’s illuminated books somehow

humanised manufacture by making it more personal and less mechanical. Nicole Garrod Bush considers the Kaleidoscope as a serious technology rather than the toy it became in an informative account of how Brewster's device was originally intended to be a visual research tool. In a reading of D.G. Rossetti's painting *The Blue Bower*, she argues that the artist used the kaleidoscope to create the unusual background to this image, an original and convincing idea.

Technical drawing and illustrations in the *Illustrated London News* and *The Graphic* form the subject of two chapters by Frances Robertson and Tom Gretton. The former proposes another way of decentring the discourse of design reform by considering draughtsmen as active agents that affected the 'invisible workings of the visual economy' (p. 121). She demonstrates convincingly how a wide range of stylistic influences fed into supposedly 'technical' drawing, and how reformers' complaints about the lack of drawing were actually a critique of the manner in which draughtsmen worked. Gretton provides a pertinent overview of the complex mediations between an original image and its publication in a periodical. Before the widespread adoption of the 'half tone' process in about 1890, periodical illustrations were often drawings made from photographs that were subsequently engraved. In working through the complex process of producing an illustrated periodical, he demonstrates how industry was not 'the other' of art but a key partner. Graeme Gooday and Abigail Marrison-Moore contrast two attitudes to the aesthetics of electric lighting: J.E.H. (Alice) Gordon's popular book *Decorative Electricity* of 1892 and the work of the Arts and Crafts practitioner W.A.S. Benson. Gordon's book discussed how to deflect, absorb and disguise electric light while Benson's designs for Philip Webb at Standen are notable for their lack of ornament. Benson emerges as a key link figure, an Arts and Crafts designer who embraced the machine.

Ann Compton demonstrates how those working within the building trades operated within 'a web of interconnected production practices shading between the handcrafted and the machine made' (p. 181). She then provides some fascinating details about the scale and structure of the construction industry in the Victorian period: it employed far more people than coal mining but was dominated by four major firms. She goes on to discuss the legislation and educational structures that supported collaboration and concludes that architect-craftsmen were a privileged group who had advantages over those with more limited training.

British attitudes to non-European art dominate the final chapters. Renate Dohmen argues that although the Calcutta International Exhibition of 1883-84 was eventually celebrated for the way that it engaged with Indian audiences, this was actually a rhetorical device that functioned to cover up the disappointing numbers of international visitors. Local British residents boycotted the exhibition in response

to the ‘Ilbert Bill’ that allowed senior Indian magistrates to rule on cases involving British nationals and the failure of the exhibition to compete with European events eventually led to the cancellation of the Bombay International exhibition, which had been planned as the successive event. Natasha Eaton explores how the category of colour could disrupt distinctions between art and industry. Design reformers showed concern that British art lacked an intuitive sense of colour but the idea that this could be remedied by studying Indian art provoked concern. She goes on to examine a range of attitudes to colour in Britain and India, and suggests that ‘ultimately colour was ungovernable’ a symptom of wider colonial tensions. Lara Eggleton discusses Ruskin’s opposition to the ornamentation of the Alhambra, the subject of Owen Jones’s famous publication from the 1840s. She suggests that Ruskin’s belief that great art originated in natural forms led him to see abstraction as unhealthy and misguided, an attitude rooted in a ‘distrust of industrial processes and the dangers these presented to manual craft and individual expression’ (p. 251).

The editors have done a good job: there is a convincing coherence to the collection and those interested in technology, architecture, design and art will all find something of interest. All the illustrations are black and white but most well enough reproduced to support the written analysis. This book is a welcome and thoughtful contribution to one of the central debates of the nineteenth century and an account that moves beyond the traditional focus on a handful of individuals and their careers. *Art versus Industry* has a lot to say about the Arts and Crafts movement and often from oblique angles, which at times produces striking and original analysis. Although positioned ostensibly as a revisionist account of Victorian design discourse, it is perhaps surprising how much time the collection spends discussing canonical figures within this movement. John Ruskin and Owen Jones are discussed at some length in several chapters, and even if authors are sometimes critical of their attitudes, they seem to have an uncanny ability to retain their centrality within this discourse.

Jim Cheshire

Julie Sheldon, ed., *The Della Robbia Pottery: From Renaissance to Regent Street* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), x + 108 pp., 12 illustrations, £14.99 pbk, ISBN 9781781382738.

Whereas the Pre-Raphaelites had praised and preferred the early Italian painters, in the second half of the nineteenth century there was a conscious swing towards the traditional view of the high point of Italian art. Walter Pater’s *The Renaissance* (1873) took a wider view than simply discussing painting, and included a chapter on Luca

della Robbia, who began as a sculptor in marble, and progressed to the manufacture of blue and white earthenware plaques:

The life of Luca, a life of labour and frugality, with no adventure and no excitement except what belongs to the trial of new artistic processes, the struggle with new artistic difficulties, the solution of purely artistic problems, fills the first seventy years of the fifteenth century.

Luca's new work was in plain white earthenware [...] [H]e added the further invention of giving them [his figures of baked earth] colour [...]. But in his nobler *terra-cotta* work he never introduces colour into the flesh, keeping mostly to blue and white, the colours of the Virgin Mary.

(1904 edition, pp. 70-71)

The works of the della Robbia family became well-known, as travellers returned from Italy and remembered the blue and white plaques. Ruskin tells us that he never 'passed near the market at Florence without looking at Luca della Robbia's Madonna' (John Ruskin, *Mornings in Florence*, 1875, quoted on p. 59). The new South Kensington Museum had made a number of purchases of della Robbia pieces; over thirty were believed to be genuine, and many others were described as 'School of Della Robbia'. Copies were made available and were proudly displayed by Walter Pater, William Holman Hunt and G.F. Watts. After this Luca became the most popular sculptor of the Renaissance in the eyes of the nineteenth-century public.

During the 1880s a young art student called Harold Rathbone, born in 1858, began to travel widely in Northern Italy. He came from a wealthy Liverpool family, and had studied at the Slade from 1878. In 1883 he became a pupil of Ford Madox Brown, and assisted him in the painting of frescoes for Manchester Town Hall. This led to a wider acquaintance. In 1884 he heard William Morris speak at Islington Hall, and visited him at Kelmscott Manor. Unfortunately Rathbone did not keep a record of these meetings, nor indeed of his travels, and some of the essays in this book speculate on what he found in Italy. But these experiences, and the absorption of Morris's ideas, led him to open a pottery in 1893. It was situated in Birkenhead, and called the Della Robbia Pottery.

There had been various ceramic factories in Liverpool before this time but the siting of this enterprise in Birkenhead might be considered unexpected. It was in the centre of the town at 2A Pride Street, and there were a number of advantages. The buildings were cheap to rent, there was red clay nearby in the Wirral, and there was a partly trained labour force available, as the local Art schools were producing students with no other prospect of local employment. Apprentices could easily be recruited.

But what is meant by a pottery? As Colin Simpson says:

The conventional history of the pottery industry saw a seamless line from the increasing industrialisation of the eighteenth century and the domination of Staffordshire as the source of most production through to the modern world of factory production. The line of 'craft' pottery has been perceived to bypass the industry altogether and be a fresh, between-the-wars invention of Bernard Leach, with his Oriental-inspired hand production, and then Michael Cardew with African inspiration.

(p. 17)

Rathbone must therefore be seen as somewhere between the two. He was operating a conventional factory, but one based upon Arts and Crafts principles and the educational ideals of John Ruskin and William Morris. He divided the business into two areas: 1.) The production of architectural decoration in earthenware, i.e. blue and white plaques and larger size for the outside of buildings. (Look up when you are next in the South Court of the Victoria and Albert Museum to see the effect of this, though this example predates the Della Robbia Pottery). 2.) Domestic pottery, using the local red clay. The pots were thrown upon the wheel, then dipped in white slip; the design was scratched through the white, using the technique called 'sgraffito'. The next step was to paint on coloured slips which would produce striking results after firing. Individual potters, including the apprentices, could mark pieces with their own initials. The principle, 'inspired by Morris, was the elevation of the hand over the machine' (p. 13). As Julie Sheldon says, 'he wanted his workshops to consist of guild workers engaged in handicraft, seeing the finished product through the stages of production without undue division of labour' (p. 67).

The products of the pottery were well received and seen at exhibitions. There were forty-five pieces shown at the Pottery and Porcelain Exhibition in Glasgow during 1904, and there was in fact a distant link to the work of the Mackintoshes. See figure 11 of Sheldon's book, where the elongated designs on the tall jugs are by Cassandra Walker and Alice Jones. Cassandra had been trained by Herbert MacNair, who was Charles Rennie Mackintosh's brother-in-law.

The Della Robbia pottery finally closed in 1906, partly because of a cash-flow crisis, and as Colin Simpson says, '[t]he styles had often been adapted by manufacturers who could turn out similar products much more cheaply. The self-evidently handmade products produced in Birkenhead had become too clunky to sell' (p. 16). Nevertheless, this was a magnificent example of the experience of putting Morris's ideals into practice. In the book under review there are seven essays, two of

which explore the Italian sources of Rathbone's designs. There is a valuable discussion of 'The Arts and Crafts Movement and the Crafting of Culture' by Colin Trodd which compares other experiments of the time. The last essay, by Juliet Carroll and Julie Sheldon, gives an account of the distribution of the pottery in London stores; Della Robbia was on sale at Liberty and at William Morris and Company in Oxford Street. Finally, visitors to car-boot and similar outlets should read the paragraphs on collecting by Colin Simpson (pp. 18-23). Unfortunately the very few illustrations provided in this book do not give us enough visual information to go by.

John Purkis

Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Modern Painters, Old Masters: The Art of Imitation from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 286 pp., 130 colour and 30 b&w illustrations, \$75.00 hbk, ISBN 9780300222753.

In the Introduction to this challenging book, produced to the very high standards of Yale University Press, Elizabeth Prettejohn explains that her focus will be on 'how artists and viewers create relationships with other artists and viewers, both near and distant in time and space' (p. 4). She will draw her examples from nineteenth-century Britain, when the question first came into prominence, but argues that the approach is of the widest application. Using such terms as 'allusion' and 'intertextuality', this approach has become prominent in the study of literature. As long ago as 1973, the American critic Harold Bloom argued in his influential book *The Anxiety of Influence* that poets are always aware of their predecessors, and the major poets emerge by asserting their visions against those that precede them. This attention to predecessors has not been so prominent in the study of art. Prettejohn propounds no fewer than fourteen questions relating to 'imitation' with which she wants her book to engage, and then offers as a preliminary example the ways in which Ford Madox Brown's well-known *The Last of England* (1855) can be seen to engage with the history of art. This combination of the general and the specific is typical of this fascinating book.

The first of its five substantial chapters is 'The Victorians and the Masters'. In it, Prettejohn invites us to 'forget, for a while, the prejudice in favour of originality' (p. 16), and to consider Turner's *Regulus* of 1828 as a response to Claude's much earlier *Seaport with the Villa Medici*. Both paintings show lines of buildings and shipping receding towards a blazing sun, but Turner translates 'the visual armature of the scene into his own brushwork, pulsating with light', and introduces the story of the Roman general captured by the Carthaginians, who cut off his eyelids to make him look straight at the sun. Turner thus creates an 'imitation' more powerful, if less

elegant, than the original. In his art, Turner also produced paintings that ‘outshone’ works by Cuyp, Vandervelde and Ruysdael, operating in a mode that is here described as having ‘a distinct flavour of masculine aggression about it. This is about antler-locking’ (p. 19). Another term for this is ‘competitive imitation’. However, Prettejohn wants to concentrate on a different kind of imitation that developed later during the nineteenth century. She terms this ‘generous imitation’, and argues that it is a mode to be welcomed, and to which twentieth-century art criticism has been unduly hostile, confusing it too easily with plagiarism. She offers as an example Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s *La Donna della Finestra* of 1879, in which Rossetti produces a version of a painting by Botticelli that Rossetti owned at the time, with Jane Morris serving as model in place of the model seen in many of Botticelli’s works. Rossetti is not trying to outshine Botticelli but to explore sympathetically what kind of artist Botticelli was. Rossetti is a key figure, whose subtle theory of translation is worked convincingly into the argument.

Prettejohn draws attention to Frederick Leighton’s important presidential *Addresses* to the students at the Royal Academy, published in 1896. This was the great period of the growth of museums: the British Museum was founded in 1753, the Dulwich Picture Gallery in 1811, the National Gallery in 1824 and the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) in 1852. Those interested in art no longer depended on being able to travel widely; all these institutions were in England. Thus Leighton addresses his students as the ‘fortunate but bewildered heir[s] to a boundless inheritance of artistic treasure’ (p. 29); the bewilderment was due to the numerous and extraordinarily diverse works known to the students. How in these circumstances can they choose an appropriate approach for themselves? The main Victorian painting discussed in this chapter is Frederick Sandys’s powerful *Medea* (1866-68), which is said to be convincingly realistic as well as ‘imitating’ the half-length female portrait mode favoured by Rossetti. The chapter ends with the convincing claim that, by the end of the nineteenth century, there is no longer ‘a single standard of taste, and the field is open for all manner of innovation’ (p. 57), a situation that clearly pleases Prettejohn, if it worried Leighton. It is one that must continue to challenge artists today.

There is clearly no possibility of reviewing the rest of the book in such detail, and as we have already encountered discussion of Rossetti and his ‘generous imitations’, I will conclude by concentrating on the parts of the book that focus on Burne-Jones and William Morris. Burne-Jones is of course a pervasive presence. His name appears frequently in the index, along with references to some twenty of his paintings. Moreover, *The Fifth Day*, from *The Days of Creation* (1875-76), provides the powerful front-jacket illustration. Prettejohn tells us that Frederick Burton had bought *The*

Nativity by Piero della Francesca for the National Gallery in 1874, and that Burne-Jones had responded very quickly to it in his series of watercolours called *The Days of Creation*, exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877. ‘The bare feet and solid stance, so unlike the willowy figures in other works by Burne-Jones, as well as their impassive faces, immediately recall Piero’s music-making angels’ (p. 173). Piero’s *Nativity* is illustrated on p. 174, opposite the Burne-Jones painting, and a detail from it appears on the back cover. Another work by Burne-Jones, *The Wedding of Psyche* of 1895, features in both endpapers and in a smaller but complete form on p. 176. A late work, it shows how the artist ‘expanded the range of precursors from whom his own age could learn’, and ‘passed that learning on to numerous students and more distant disciples, in England and abroad, as his work appeared to great éclat in the international exhibitions of the late nineteenth century’ (pp. 174-76).

Morris appears most distinctly in the account given of ‘the massive Victorian programme of church restoration and church building’ which made possible the establishment of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. in 1861 (p. 120). Although the decoration of churches remained mainly in the hands of commercial firms (whose work was often of high quality), some creative artists began to offer their services, particularly in relation to the creation of altarpieces. One striking example given by Prettejohn is the altarpiece at Llandaff Cathedral, a commission obtained by the young Rossetti in 1856, and completed in 1864, consisting of three substantial panels of the Nativity. Prettejohn argues interestingly that there is a democratic spirit about the work, which is to be seen in the presence, on equal terms, of one king and one shepherd in the central panel; moreover, while the left side panel shows David as a king, the right side panel shows him as a shepherd. She points out that this important work has attracted little attention from scholars, and wonders whether this is because it is in ‘a difficult-to-find church just north of Cardiff rather than in a major public gallery’ (p. 121). At all events she considers it to be a major work, showing ‘a thoughtful new exploration of the traditional subject-matter’ (p. 124). Overlapping with Rossetti’s work at Llandaff, Burne-Jones was commissioned during 1860 to paint an altarpiece for St. Paul’s, Brighton. The central scene is also the Nativity, this time with both shepherds and kings; Jane Morris was the model for the Virgin, William Morris for the first king, and Swinburne for one of the shepherds; Burne-Jones himself appears at the back. The altarpiece, now in a private collection, is shown on pp. 126-27. During his long career, Burne-Jones is said to have shown a wider range of influences than did Rossetti, including Fra Angelico, Tintoretto and Jacopo Bassano, and in this to be representative of later generations.

Prettejohn moves to her conclusion with a statement to the effect that we live in a period which privileges ‘the present, and its way of seeing, over the past, and its

ways of seeing', and that this hierarchy has become tyrannical in its insistence on 'relevance' (p. 236). 'Alternatively, it might be argued that old works of art can show us the way to a better politics or a better morality. William Morris believed something of the kind, and it is a noble ideal' (p. 237). But she does not accept Morris's view entirely, because what art offers, for her, is not to be reduced to the political or the moral; it is aesthetic, a matter of beauty. The value to us now of the art of the past is that it can 'jolt us out of what Pater' – a critical hero of the book – 'called the "stereotyped world"'. This is of the greatest importance as 'in today's global art market the contemporary arts are increasingly homogenized' (p. 237). *Modern Painters, Old Masters* is a timely and important book. I hope it will be widely read and debated.

Peter Faulkner

Michael Drury, *Wandering Architects: In Pursuit of an Arts and Crafts Ideal* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2016), 308 pp., numerous b&w illustrations, £35.00 hbk, ISBN 9781907730535.

This is a revised edition of the excellent book first published in 2000. When Malcolm Sinclair reviewed the first edition in the Summer 2002 issue of this *Journal*, he recommended it strongly 'to anyone interested in this short-lived, restricted, but vitally important link in the history of buildings of the Arts and Crafts movement'. His only criticism was that 'confusion is sometimes caused because the same size of print has been used for the extensive number of quotations in the text and for the many notes to virtually every page', and this remains true of the new edition. However, the use of a smaller size of type for the inset quotations in the new edition makes for greater clarity.

The text remains largely the same, with additions where further information has come to light about the seven featured architects – Detmar Blow, Alfred Powell, Herbert North, Basil Stallybrass, Randall Wells, Harold Falkner, Philip Tilden and William Weir. In his 2015 Preface Drury notes that since 2000 monographs have appeared on Falkner by Sam Osmond and on North by Adam Voelcker, but that 'the central character, Detmar Blow still remains in relative obscurity [...]'. This revised edition makes no attempt to redress the balance, concentrating as it does on his early career' (p. ix). Blow was to 'die in disgrace at the hand of the richest man in England', the second Duke of Westminster (p. ix). Drury wonders whether the fact that Blow has not received the attention he deserves may be related to 'there still being a reluctance to upset the sensitivities of the family and/or the Grosvenor Estate' (p.xi). It would be good news if Drury himself would undertake the task.

The titles and general content of the eleven chapters remain the same, although the subtitle of the final chapter, 'The End of the Road', changes from 'Detmar Blow's Career, 1906-39, Conclusions' to 'The Cult of Authenticity: Detmar Blow and the Devil's Buttons'. This allows the author to strengthen his account of the commitment to authenticity shown by Blow and the man who for a period before the Great War became his partner, the Beaux Arts architect Fernand Bellerey, and to add to his account of the difficult relationship that developed between Blow and his employer the Duke. As an example of Blow's casual handling of money, Drury quotes an unpublished letter to Philip Webb concerning a small debt that Blow owed to Webb in 1892: '[y]ou will at length have received the thirty shillings! The laxity and ill temper of my memory with such affairs seems beyond control, as though He wouldn't have me play with devils [sic] buttons' (p. 278). Drury adds that '[t]he Duke's money became the devil's buttons for Blow and when they came undone, so did he' (p. 279).

The main change in the new edition is an increase in the number, and particularly the quality, of the numerous photographs. Apart from the cover, where the colour of the stone at Blow's Hilles House changes quite dramatically from brownish to grey, all the illustrations are in black-and-white. Many appeared also in the first edition, but they are clearer here, although that of Blow, dressed in a wagoner's smock, standing by the farm cart he decorated with willows and vine leaves as a hearse for William Morris's funeral, remains less than sharp. The number of full-page photographs is roughly doubled, with several showing teams of workers employed by the architects. Striking double pages show some twenty workers at Wilsford Manor in 1905 (pp. 142-43) and thirteen at Heale House in 1910 (pp. 268-69). The frontispiece is changed from a 1910 portrait of Blow by Neville Lytton to a group at Stonehenge in 1901, showing Blow with Sir Edmond Antrobus and his son Edmund, and the archaeologist Dr. William Gowland. The Lytton portrait appears later (p. 146), opposite a surprisingly different-looking portrait by Augustus John in 1913. The most striking improvement is in the quality of the reproduction of John Singer Sargent's painting of 'The Wyndham Sisters', now given a full page; the painting by G.F. Watts of their mother, Mrs. Percy Wyndham, hard to see in the earlier edition, now emerges from the darkness of the background. The final – now full-page – illustration is appropriately of the gravestone and the small roofed building (built from a design by Oliver Hill) that marks the burial place of the Blows near Hilles House, on a hill overlooking Gloucester. Drury tells us that the building, '[p]art memorial, part lychgate, part wayside shrine and part belvedere' (p. 286), was erected by Winifred in memory of her husband. It sounds well worth visiting.

It is good to have Drury's illuminating book, which consistently emphasises the influence of Ruskin, Morris and Webb on this remarkable group of architect-builders,

back in print in this attractive form. Their contribution to the Arts and Crafts movement deserves to be acknowledged and admired. Our thanks must go to Michael Drury and to Shaun Tyas for making this possible.

Peter Faulkner