

## BOOKS

Emperor Frederick Barbarossa who, in 1155, objected to a painting at the Lateran because of a similar misrepresentation of history, and asked that it be removed, so as not to 'become an authoritative utterance'. De Jong suggests that the lack of a similar response on the part of sixteenth-century secular rulers could be explained by the fact that in reality the popes no longer constituted a political threat. But he also reflects on the changing perception of the writing of history at the time, and on the expansion of printing, which meant that alternative narratives were emerging to challenge those of the popes.

Yet these monumental fresco cycles clearly did provoke more than indifference. De Jong himself relates that there was 'a serious political incident' in the seventeenth century, when an inscription in the Sala Regia was altered to downplay the role of Venice in one key episode. And the fact that the popes continued to commission these cycles throughout the period under consideration suggests that this kind of painted propaganda served them well enough. Indeed to judge by the reactions of visitors to these halls of state, as documented in this book, few went away unmoved. The overall impression on contemporary observers was one of magnificence and grandeur, with the specifics of the historical narratives perhaps taking a back seat. These were spaces where authority was forged through sheer scale and force of invention, where the visitor experienced the reality of tradition and continuity whether they believed in the details or not. This much is clear from De Jong's thoughtful analysis, even as he introduces us to the possibilities of more critical and nuanced responses.

**Van Dyck en España.** By Matías Díaz Padrón, with Jahel Sanzsalazar and Ana Diéguez Rodríguez. 2 vols. 416 + 511 pp. incl. over 800 col. + b. & w. ills. (Editorial Prensa Ibérica, Barcelona, 2012), €125. ISBN 978-84-87657-03-0.

Reviewed by GREGORY MARTIN

THIS PUBLICATION IS a monument to the indefatigable industry of Matías Díaz Padrón, whose catalogue of the Flemish seventeenth-century pictures in the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (1975), set a new standard in Spain for the study of Rubens and his cohort. The book here under review is an updated version of part of his unpublished doctoral thesis, completed in the following year, which surveyed in twelve volumes seventeenth-century Flemish paintings in Spain. The present work, very generously illustrated in colour and black-and-white reproductions, consists of a lengthy introduction covering most aspects of the story of Van Dyck and Spain, followed by 112 entries on accepted works (where some studio participation is admitted),



39. *Charles I in the hunting field*, by Anthony van Dyck. c.1635. Canvas, 266 by 207 cm. (Musée du Louvre, Paris).

131 entries on studio works and copies, ninety-five entries on documented works and 159 on copies whose whereabouts are unknown. The appendices are devoted to excerpts from the royal inventories mentioning Van Dyck's works, descriptions of the Escorial, travellers' records up to the early nineteenth century and entries from family inventories up to 1911. The content is buttressed by extensive footnotes, a full bibliography and a user-friendly index. Such are the ambitious proportions of this impressive undertaking, which, set out in this handsome publication, is a useful scholarly resource.

But there are reservations concerning the enterprise. Problematic is the requirement of Spanish residence for a picture to qualify for inclusion. Such chauvinism is understandable when applied to paintings that are part of the Spanish patrimony, such as the Prado's *Crowning of thorns*. But the heritage claim wears thin, as in the case of the double-portrait of the Marquess of Buckingham and his wife, here described as *Venus and Adonis* (private collection), which may have been housed in Seville for a few years in the 1830s when owned by an Englishman and was briefly in Madrid in 1976. Another less notorious discovery is deemed to qualify, although the residency claim is uncertain, as is the attribution. The Rubenshuis portrait of the young Anthony van Dyck is said to have come from Madrid some time before 1952, although no evidence is supplied. But, to bolster its Spanish claims, a much earlier sojourn in Madrid is proposed by its identification with an entry in the 1689 inventory of the marqués del Carpio's collection. This has some merit, but the entry was for a larger portrait by Van Dyck, and the Rubenshuis painting is usually attributed to Rubens.

Residency claims are advanced on questionable grounds for two important pictures. *Charles I in the hunting field* (Musée du Louvre, Paris; Fig. 39) may have entered the collection

of the comtesse de Verrue via an Antwerp sale of property indirectly consigned by Philip V's surgeon, Florencio Kelly. But the relevant letter does not support the notion that the painting had actually come from Spain. Similarly, *St Martin dividing his cloak* (Royal Collection) was reportedly seen in 1729–30 at the London house of the remarried widow of Daniel Arthur, 'a rich Irish merchant who died in Spain'. Díaz Padrón is only the most recent authority to assume from this that the picture actually came from Spain.

Much of the book's value lies in highlighting discoveries about provenance. Thus a résumé of the recent historiography of Spanish collecting would have been useful. Documentation for the Madrid career of the Tatton Park *Stoning of St Stephen* (first published by Elías Tormo in 1941,<sup>1</sup> and elaborated on in 1983)<sup>2</sup> is rehearsed again. As also recounted recently by José Juan Pérez Preciado,<sup>3</sup> the date of entry into the Spanish royal collection of the early *Brazen serpent* is brought forward to 1767. Published here for the first time, however, are early owners of the Rhode Island *Lords Newport and Goring*, who include the marqués de Salamanca and Bernardo Iriarte, Goya's friend.

Among the many familiar works there are newcomers, of which, judging from the reproductions, some are more welcome than others. Among the former is the *St Agnes* in Toledo Cathedral. She recurs in the Vicenza *Four ages of Man*, a variant of which, known in two versions, is introduced, as is a *Woman taken in adultery*, also in two versions. However likely are listings in early inventories, it is possible that not one of these will come to be generally accepted as an original, as could also be said for the *St Sebastian* in Palma de Mallorca.

One portrait advanced as autograph is the *Marqués de Aytona* at Valencia, which was listed in the Carpio inventory of 1651, but was dismissed by Horst Vey as a copy of the picture in the Louvre.<sup>4</sup> Long thought to be merely a copy of the National Gallery's equestrian portrait of Charles I, the Prado picture of similar size is now claimed to be of a 'qualidad equiparable'. Citing a letter from Ambassador Cárdenas of 1654, it is stated that the latter was available from Charles I's collection after the National Gallery picture had been sold. While the espousal of these two neglected portraits may be over-enthusiastic, there is material here of relevance for the new interest in replicas and/or studio copies.<sup>5</sup>

An early copyist was the Brussels court artist Salomon Noveliers (active 1618; d.1666), a series of whose works were listed in inventories of 1637 and 1642 of the collection of the marqués de Leganés discussed in detail in José Juan Pérez Preciado's online doctoral thesis of 2008, not mentioned here.<sup>6</sup> No.460 of these inventories is a portrait listed as by him of Ambrogio Spinola. This most likely is one of two full-length copies of an original believed by Vey to be lost;<sup>7</sup> Díaz Padrón considers both autograph, even that which is inscribed with the number 460, thus dismissing the evidence provided by the inventories.

The author is thoroughly conversant with Van Dyck studies, as is evident in the lengthy catalogue entries. Exceptional is the emphasis placed on the influence of classical sculpture, and welcome are the biographical sketches of such Spanish collectors as Haro y Guzmán, father and son, and Enríques de Cabrera, the 10th Almirante de Castilla. Cabrera's collection was even noted by the self-absorbed Maria Mancini (1639–1715) as she sought refuge after 1672 in Madrid from her husband, the great aristocrat Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, grandee of Spain and Viceroy of Aragon.<sup>8</sup> He acquired a large number of paintings between 1664 and 1679 for his Roman palazzo, among which was a bust, or half-length portrait by Van Dyck.<sup>9</sup> But this is part of the story not covered by Días Padrón's Herculean survey.

<sup>1</sup> E. Tormo y Monzó: 'El Centenario de van Dyck en la patria Velázquez', *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones* 44 (1941), p.164.

<sup>2</sup> I. Rose Wagner: 'Manuel Godoy Patron de las Artes y Coleccionista', unpublished Ph.D. diss. (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1983), II, part I, pp.121–23, under no.141.

<sup>3</sup> A. Vergara and F. Lammertse: exh. cat. *El joven Van Dyck*, Madrid (Museo Nacional del Prado) 2012, under no.26.

<sup>4</sup> S. Barnes, N. De Poorter, H. Vey and O. Millar: *Van Dyck: A complete Catalogue of the Paintings*, London 2004, under no.III 68.

<sup>5</sup> See *CATS Proceedings*, I, 2012; *European Paintings 15–18 Century Copying Replicating and Emulating*, London 2014, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> See [eprints.ucm.es/10555/1/T31085.pdf](https://eprints.ucm.es/10555/1/T31085.pdf), I, p.730; II, pp.339 and 896.

<sup>7</sup> Barnes *et al.*, *op. cit.* (note 4), no.III A25.

<sup>8</sup> G. D'Heylli, ed.: *Apologie ou les véritables Mémoires de Marie Mancini, Princesse Colonna*, Paris 1881, p.129.

<sup>9</sup> E. Šafarik: *Documents for the History of Collecting, Italian Inventories 2, The Colonna Collection of Paintings, Inventories, 1611–1795*, Munich 1996, p.125, no.78.

**The Building of England. How the history of England has shaped our buildings.** By Simon Thurley. 544 pp. incl. 542 col. ills. (William Collins, London, 2013), £35. ISBN 978-0-00-730140-9.

Reviewed by OWEN HOPKINS

THIS IS, by some reckoning, Simon Thurley's fifth 'big book' – no mean achievement even before one considers the eight smaller books he has written or edited, as well as numerous scholarly articles and essays. All this Thurley has managed while charting a professional career that has seen him move from Historic Royal Palaces, via the directorship of the Museum of London, to his current role as Chief Executive of English Heritage – and this is not to mention the considerable broadcasting career he has also sustained during this time. Thurley has brought all this accumulated experience and expertise to bear in tackling a survey as ambitious as 'a history of English

buildings [. . .] the history of the nation through what it has built'. The result is a meticulously assembled, wide-ranging and well-written book that displays all his talents in describing the social lives of buildings in a lively and engaging way.

Early on Thurley is at pains to explain why this is history of English, and not of British, architecture. Many studies have tackled the history of the whole British Isles, just as others have focused on the forging of Britain as a political entity. Meanwhile, architectural historians have been frequently guilty of conflating England and Britain, or even using them synonymously. A case in point is John Summerson's *Architecture in Britain 1530–1830*, which must surely have been one of the inspirations of Thurley's project. Given the book's title, Summerson begins rather incongruously and abruptly with a chapter on 'The English Renaissance'. (Scotland gets just an appendix; Wales even less). Thurley's specificity is, therefore, refreshing. Indeed, he takes great pains to include all of England, not falling into the common trap of giving too great a prominence to the architecture of London, the country house or the medieval cathedral. Chapter sections on such topics as 'Civic Pride 1350–1450', 'Keeping Clean and Warm' or 'Inland Transport' reveal the scope of Thurley's interests. 'High' and 'low', the work of famous architects and of comparative unknowns, are treated with relatively equal attention. This, of course, reflects the equivalent approaches of Thurley's professional career where he has garnered popular success, for example at Hampton Court, by 'dressing' both the kitchens and state rooms as they might have been. It is here, though, in this conjunction of Thurley's professional and academic careers, that his account begins to fray at the edges.

For all the trumpeting Thurley gives it, his social approach to architectural history is not strictly social history at all, but rather, one could say, a kind of 'social heritage'. In outlining his methodology, Thurley takes aim at the notion of style that he strongly argues has given a determinist slant to so much architectural history. Against this, he constructs what he sees as a broader architectural history that encompasses questions of function, technology and geography. But, today, this is a rather outdated argument; such questions are inseparable from the study of architectural history as it is currently practised. What Thurley means by 'social history', then, is really a consideration of architectural production that makes no distinction between the buildings and spaces of those of high status or of modest means. This is quite sensible, and clearly an advance when one compares this work to other equivalent surveys – but the claims for it being a distinctly social project are ambiguous.

As far as the book's intention of exploring the history of England through its buildings goes, major political, economic or demographic changes are outlined for their impact on architectural production, both what was built, where and how. Yet, the economic

and social forces and trends that drove those changes, often over considerable periods of time, get comparatively short shrift. Ultimately, for Thurley, England was – and remains – a nation of individuals. England's architecture, therefore, is the result of individual choices, whether by kings, aristocrats or wealthy merchants. This is, of course, only part of the story.

In many ways, one can see this work as a companion volume to Thurley's previous book, *Men from the Ministry* (2013),<sup>1</sup> where, in advance of English Heritage's forthcoming restructure, he explored the history of how the state has sought to preserve the nation's architectural heritage. (Indeed, the present book's focus on England clearly derives from Thurley's professional remit.) It is, though, this conjunction of Thurley's professional and academic careers and interests, which so shapes this book, that leaves one ultimately wanting more from it.

Early on, Thurley shoots down the idea of 'progress' as an anachronism. Yet, it is also an anachronism to compare, as he does, the medieval craftsmanship of, say, Henry VII's chapel at Westminster Abbey with a contemporary skyscraper in order to argue that there has been no absolute advance between the two. This odd suggestion of relativity derives essentially from the arguments that are used to form the notion of heritage. Once buildings or objects are deemed significant enough, by whatever criteria, to be preserved for the future they leave their respective times, places and social contexts to become 'heritage' – a separate, elevated category of cultural production to which a *common* set of assumptions (and legal protections) apply. From this derives Thurley's almost phenomenological assertion that 'what buildings of the past tell us is less important than the way they affect us now'. But this is to instrumentalise the past in a way that becomes determinist and, moreover, socially exclusive; different people – and, importantly, different social or cultural groups – see different things in buildings. Viewing the history of England's architecture through the lens of how these buildings 'affect us now' distorts the picture and ultimately and irrefutably competes with the analysis of buildings in their own historical contexts.

Thurley's overriding concern with his methodology, it seems, is to avoid the assumptions that questions of style bring to architectural analyses, as well as the established hierarchies of place and power and of the well-known architect versus the humble craftsman. But, in the end, the apparently neutral concept of heritage itself tends towards ideology; once the status is accorded it becomes unquestioned – even unquestionable. For all this book's qualities, wide scope, clear, lucid prose and conscientious attention to the often overlooked, it is in this originating idea where it unfortunately falls short; one can reveal how people lived and how they built, but it does not explain why.

<sup>1</sup> Reviewed by Chris Miele in this Magazine, 156 (2014), p.117.