

Strawberry Hill is significantly more complicated than how Walpole presented it'. He was at pains to say that the early influence of the architect William Kent and the pattern-books of Batty Langley had been rejected in favour of a more historically informed vision of Gothic style. As Lindfield's examination of drawings by Chute, Bentley and Walpole himself suggests, however, elements of Kent and Langley persisted far longer than Walpole cared to acknowledge. In spite of claims to a new-found antiquarian purity of style, Walpole continued to accept a certain hybridity, as we see in the designs of the professional architect Robert Adam in the late 1760s for the chimney-piece in the Round Drawing Room, which have both Gothic and neo-classical components. (Adam's initial design for the chimney-piece was in fact *more* Gothic than the finished product.) At the same time, it is true that Walpole and his friends moved from a 'whimsical', unscientific conception of the Gothic (which Walpole associated with Kent and Langley) to a more precise understanding based on observation and research – although one that Lindfield rightly calls an 'applied antiquarianism' that could take an imaginative approach to the source material.

The design of the house did not slavishly reproduce its stated historical models. Walpole claimed that the ceiling of the Tribune was modelled on that of the Chapter House at York Minster, and Chute's early designs bear that out – but the actual ceiling derives from Chute's more complex reworking of other sources, including the 'Heart of Yorkshire' window at the Minster. While Walpole's instructions for the chimney-piece in the Library were to produce something based on the tomb of John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall, in Westminster Abbey, what resulted is a hybrid of that (partly as misapprehended by Bentley from an engraving of the tomb) and the designer's own musings for other, unrealised projects.

The central argument of the book is that there is no single 'Strawberry Hill Gothic'. The house evolved and accreted over time, and the influences on its design were more various than Walpole would have had one believe – including the much-disparaged Kent and Langley. As Lindfield observes, Strawberry Hill was an 'antiquarian project undertaken when the understanding of medieval design was vague' and thus a work that was continually in progress.

There are some wonderful discoveries in the book, which previous studies on Strawberry Hill have tended to overlook because of their focus on the house as it was built rather than on how it might have been. One rejected design by

Walpole, 'just recently come to light' in the holdings at Farmington, is for a panelled chamber with forty-one heraldic shields of his ancestors (mostly on his mother's side). New to this reviewer were Bentley's delightful and rather rococo designs for a columbarium, with niches for cinerary urns, and Chute's proposal for an artfully fake ruined gable on the north front of the house. There is a good section on the Chapel in the Wood that Walpole added to the grounds of his estate in 1772. Through Sir William Hamilton, Walpole bought large fragments of a tomb from Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, which were assembled with other materials to form a shrine-like Gothic confection, surmounted by the Walpole arms, that was placed in the Chapel. Lindfield's photograph of the interior of the Chapel today shows the tomb's replacement, an 'off-the-peg' statue of the Virgin Mary that dates from the period when the house and gardens were owned by a Roman Catholic college. Lindfield does not explain what happened to the tomb, which was auctioned off in the Strawberry Hill sale of 1842. The tomb seems to have disappeared from sight not long after the sale, although a few pieces of it ended up in the *pasticcio* church of St Mary & St Nicholas, Wilton. Walpole, a 'Protestant Goth', would surely be dismayed by the pious bad taste of the substitution. *Unbuilt Strawberry Hill* is also good on the links between the Castle of Otranto in Walpole's novel of the same name with the actual Strawberry Hill, noting that they are not exact architectural counterparts. (Late eighteenth-century illustrations of *Otranto* are considered in a brief appendix.)

Lindfield's book is beautiful to look at, clear in conception and lucid in description. *Unbuilt Strawberry Hill* is a valuable contribution to our understanding of a house we thought we knew.

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doi:10.1017/S0003581523000070

*British Women and Cultural Practices of Empire*. Edited by Rosie Dias and Kate Smith. 225mm. Pp xiii + 273, 11 col pls, 27 figs. Bloomsbury Visual Arts, Bloomsbury, London, 2019. ISBN 9781501332159. £102 (hbk).

Dias and Smith's edited volume is a very welcome addition to more material- and visual-based approaches to understanding the everyday experiences and workings of European

empires with a focus on the role of women and their cultural practices. *British Women* is structured through three sections on ‘Travel’, ‘Collecting’ and ‘Administering’, with a thoughtful and detailed introductory chapter by the editors to articulate their vision for the volume. The introduction indicates that the volume does not aim to be comprehensive but rather ‘seeks to begin the work of exploring practices at the disposal of women through which they expressed their responses to imperial sites in Indian, the Caribbean, America, Canada, Australia and Zanzibar’ (p. 3) and in doing so it aims to interrogate a range of sources that exist beyond the colonial archive. Given this volume is published under Bloomsbury’s Visual Arts division, there is a strong emphasis on art historical approaches and creative methodologies in dissecting white women’s collecting and musing on their experiences in various colonial contexts. The chapters’ focus on material ranges in date from Coltman’s discussion of a journal describing a journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina and Portugal (1770s) through to Filor’s study of Mina Malcolm’s cottage from the 1790s to 1970s, and so deftly deals with the enduring material nature of empire.

The volume takes a case-study approach to its subject by allowing each chapter to explore particular colonial contexts – such as Longair’s study of professional women’s lives in 1930s Zanzibar – or particular material forms – such as Jordan’s discussion of colonial women’s sketches of Aboriginal people in nineteenth-century Australia – and in doing so reveals a rich array of subject areas and material approaches. The volume explicitly rejects what they see as previous problematic approaches of portraying white women as either solely victim or aggressor or downplaying the role of race in how they, and by comparison colonised women, navigated the colonial world. This nuanced approach is welcome and has resulted in a number of extremely interesting chapters that reveal that in moving beyond the colonial archives of the traditional historian we are able to reveal ‘interconnection, permeability, mobility and hybridity’ (p. 5) to better understand not just people but collectives and place in the colonial world.

This volume engages meaningfully with the material remnants of women’s cultural practices and reveals that they often imbued meaning through negative comparisons to the imaginary of ‘home’ and their ideals of domesticity that contrasted with the colonial spaces they lived in and travelled through. The inclusion of contextual insights regarding degrees of privilege due

to class, connections and ability to navigate specific colonised spaces ensures that the chapters do not absent the colonised people who were often the background and backdrop of these white women’s cultural products. In this way the volume acknowledges the specificity of status, time and place in shaping white women’s experiences alongside highlighting the power imbalances that often left colonised people as the misrepresented and obscured subject of the women’s colonial gaze.

While this collection does not aim to be comprehensive, its case-study approach does leave some unavoidable gaps and skews that may have been touched upon in more detail in the introduction. For example, the ‘British’ women who make up the bulk of the chapters are English or Scottish, with little reflection on whether Welsh and Irish women had different experiences, although there is a fleeting reference to Lady Dufferin (p. 33). There is also little explicit consideration of the role of women in Empire who were associated with gendered religious institutions – such as missionaries or nuns – nor those white women who may have been forcibly moved as working-class women and children to provide manual labour and possible offspring to white men. While enduring material outputs probably survive in more quantity from the upper classes, absences or skews due to the case-study approach would have been usefully articulated in order to indicate where future work could most productively focus. Overall, *British Women* is a fascinating and rich collection that provides a range of material culture-focused approaches that allow us to better understand colonialism and its legacies through a gendered lens. The volume allows for deep and detailed engagements with specific contexts, which are important studies in their own right, but also provides inspiration for further extending material-based approaches in future.

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doi:[10.1017/S0003581523000082](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003581523000082)

*Robert Adam and His Brothers: new light on Britain’s leading architectural family.* Edited by COLIN THOM. 280mm. Pp ix + 269, 184 figs (many col). Historic England, Swindon, 2019. ISBN 9781848023598. £65 (hbk).

This rewarding and attractive book is the first comprehensive appraisal of the work of Robert