

REVIEW

## Reviews Fall 2020

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Kaminer, T. A Review of George Barnett Johnson, *Assembling the Architect: The History and Theory of Professional Practice*. London: Bloomsbury, 2019.

Bernstein, M. A Review of Maile S. Hutterer, *Framing the Church: The Social and Artistic Power of Buttresses in French Gothic Architecture*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019.

Fitzner, S. A Review of Werner Oechslin, Tobias Büchi, Martin Pozsgai, *Architekturtheorie im deutschsprachigen Kulturraum 1486–1648*. Basel: Colmena Verlag, 2018.

Williams, R. J. A Review of *Global Architectural History Teaching Collaborative (GAHTC)*, <https://gahtc.org/>.

### After the Gilded Age: Consolidating Architectural Practice

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George Barnett Johnston, *Assembling the Architect: The History and Theory of Professional Practice*. London: Bloomsbury, 2019, 295 pages, ISBN 978-1-350-12686-2

George Barnett Johnston's recent book, *Assembling the Architect: The History and Theory of Professional Practice* (2019) (Figure 1), is a careful reconstruction of American architecture in the 1900s. Johnston's ambition is to place issues surrounding the running of the architectural office back into their historical trajectory. Rather than a standard work of archival historiography, the book is embedded in a sociological approach that privileges 'the situated actions of individual agents joined together in constructive practices' (183). In a sense, this history runs against the grain, shunning the architectural canon, and focusing on the everyday architectural practice at the expense of the Louis Sullivans and Frank Lloyd Wrights.

*Assembling the Architect* highlights the concerns of architects in that era: the relationships with clients, contractors and engineers; developing standardized contracts to manage these relations; office administration and layout; competitions; fees. The book describes the efforts made by architects to develop pragmatic and suitable responses to changes in the building industry, and to balance efficiency and quality, profit and respectability, while operating in a transforming, uneven terrain. Johnston's detailed and colourful vignettes are a rigorous work of reconstruction, drawing upon architects' letters, industry

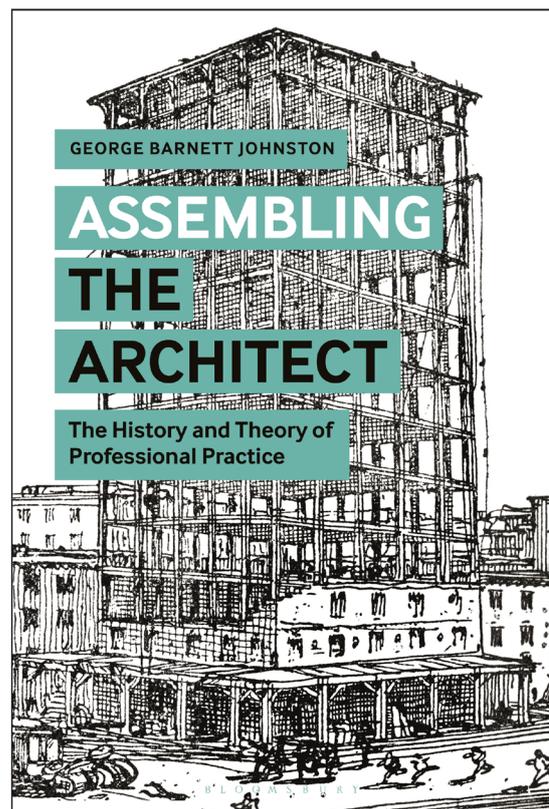


Figure 1: Cover of *Assembling the Architect: The History and Theory of Professional Practice*. Photo credit: Bloomsbury.

journal articles, architecture school yearbooks, exhibition catalogues, and more.

The book is populated by diverse protagonists, ranging from builder William Sayward to Frank Miles Day's *Handbook of Architectural Practice* (1920–). It drifts

seamlessly from discussing the satirical publication *Architectonics: The Tales of Tom Thumbtack, Architect* to a study of the career of its author, architect Frederick Squires to a review of its illustrator (and Squires' ex-classmate), Rockwell Kent to an examination of the latter's employer and collaborator, the architect, author, and critic George Chappell. When one protagonist moves to the fore, others take a step back. The return to protagonists from the early chapters later in the book provides cohesion and narrative continuity. The ease with which the text glides from one protagonist to another (think of Richard Linklater's 1990 film *Slacker*) provides a rewarding reading experience. This 'drift' is enabled by the web of relations that existed among the New York architects of that era.

The book's overall framework is not discussed in much detail. Johnston stresses the specificity of American architecture (xvii, 119) and argues that its development was mostly independent of European academic architecture. The American architect emerged, he asserts, from the interstices separating craftspeople and clients around the mid-19th century: 'Early membership in the architecture profession in this nation was drawn from the ranks of both owners and builders, not from pre-formed vocation' (145). This process of professionalization and elevation of architecture from the crafts, it is suggested, took place in the period in question, 1870 to 1920.

These arguments conveniently overlook the parallels in disciplinary development between Europe and the United States: the dominance of craftspeople and the absence of architects in the terrain of housing, until the exponential growth of commissions around the mid-nineteenth century; the related scaling up of developers and the economy of housing; and the novel involvement of architects in such housing projects. These American and European processes appear well synchronized, as the pressures then faced by architects — economic, social, technological, technocratic — would have been similar in form in New York, Manchester, or Paris around the 1850s, even if different in their specific manifestations. The British periodical *The Builder*, first published in late 1842, demonstrates the similarities in interests and concerns of the British building industry.

*Assembling the Architect* also disregards the early emergence of a modern discipline of architecture in the centuries since the Renaissance, a process in which architecture was severed from the crafts, systematic drawings codes were developed, and academies were formed. It was, in effect, a process of professionalization that shaped the conditions of architectural practice in the 19th century. The existence of a professional elite before the era in question is presumed by Johnston to be irrelevant to the processes he describes (145, 183, 209). Yet such an elite, feeble as it was in the United States, necessarily steered the development of architectural practice, even if from afar, by articulating a trajectory to social respectability and by providing a horizon towards which the professionals involved in home building should progress. A key source for Johnston's argument, an article by David Brain (1991), does not ignore this. Indeed, Johnston admits that by the 1900s,

the ambiguities of architects' social and vocational origins had been largely forgotten or elided. Instead of rising out of the building crafts ..., 'real architects' of recent memory were assumed to have all been artists, dilettantes, and gentlemen steeped in their discipline but aloof from both the messy practicality of building and the ethical morass of business. (13)

The American architects of the early 20th century described by Johnston appear to be related to European academic architecture, whether this be in their education (Chappell had attended the Beaux-Arts), their everyday practice, or in their social standing. The process in which 'architecture' annexed a vast territory of 'housing', an area that was previously the domain of craftspeople, came to fall under the control of the architect, is a fascinating and important one that requires more study and elaboration.

The book aims to construct a 'macro-history' via a series of interrelated 'micro-histories'. As such, Johnston's framing is neither the book's main interest nor its major contribution. Instead, his book provides a portal into the world of American architects a century ago, a very different era than the present day, yet one occupied by many of the same concerns that continue to animate architects. The book contributes to a growing body of work that escapes the iron grip of dominant narratives foregrounding architectural movements, design, and key architects. Instead, this emerging body of scholarship focuses on the institution of architecture, 'infrastructures', and bureaucracies: the implicit systems, processes, and tools that shape the discipline 'under the radar' (see, for example, Cupers 2013; Easterling 2014; Lloyd Thomas 2016; Moravánsky and Kegler 2017). *Assembling the Architect* describes the relations of production within the building industry and suggests that agency exists in the forms in which these relations materialize. It thus provides an in-depth look at an era in which many of the institutional apparatuses that determine American architecture today came into being.

### **The Iconography of Structure: The Social and Aesthetic Dimensions of the Flying Buttress**

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Maile S. Hutterer, *Framing the Church: The Social and Artistic Power of Buttresses in French Gothic Architecture*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019, 207 pages, 978-0-271-08344-5

Flying buttresses are workhorses of Gothic architecture. Inextricably linked with the gigantism of 13th-century French cathedrals, they facilitated the innovations linked with the style, namely taller, unified, light-filled interiors (**Figure 2**). While scholars have devoted considerable attention to understanding them technologically and tracing their development, Maile Hutterer's innovation is to



**Figure 2:** Reims Cathedral, chevet from the northeast. Photograph before 1914. Photo credit: Foto Marburg/Art Resource, New York.

consider them culturally and iconographically. In her book, *Framing the Church: The Social and Artistic Power of Buttresses in French Gothic Architecture*, Hutterer leaves to one side the structural analysis of flying buttresses. Instead, the aim is to address their ‘aesthetic and social significance,’ admitting that it is ‘unorthodox to discuss a structural element in the absence of structural analysis’ as, by its very nature of being a support, the ‘consideration of structure almost demands a prioritization of the structural over the social and the aesthetic’ (10–11). Yet, as her study proves, there is more to these forms than engineering alone. Beyond eliminating the structural function of buttresses, Hutterer also delimits her study geographically to encompass the French royal domain, from the 12th through 16th centuries. A map of its extent, marking the sites discussed, would have been a welcome addition to the book, particularly to signal those structures that lie beyond this border. (For example, it is only toward the end of Hutterer’s analysis of Narbonne, a major case study in Chapter 4, that we learn of its location outside of the French royal domain).

*Framing the Church* opens with an examination of the stunning optical effects of flying buttresses. In ‘Visualizing Buttressing and the Aesthetics of the Frame’, Hutterer emphasizes the considerable risks undertaken by masons in their quest for aesthetic gain. The dangers presented by the fashionable openwork flying buttresses, which had been invented at Chartres in the mid-13th century, were well known by masons. For example, in spite of the evident troubles faced at Troyes Cathedral, Martin de Vaux, the master of Saint-Jean-au-Marché in Troyes

– who had himself worked on the cathedral – still chose to employ the openwork flyer design. Although medieval textual sources are virtually silent on the topic of flying buttresses and their aesthetic and special impact, they were frequently represented in art of various media. The second half of the chapter calls attention to contemporary graphic and plastic depictions of buttresses, drawing upon an extraordinary body of material. Buttress forms are traced in stained glass panels and manuscript illumination, and likewise appear as objects of microarchitecture in metalwork shrines and sculpted stone work. The objects considered, which include stained glass windows from Reims and Chartres, the Psalter of Saint Louis, the rood screen from Sainte-Madeleine in Troyes, and the Shrine of Saint Gertrude of Nivelles, are rich enough to warrant their own chapter.

Chapter 2, ‘Negotiating Buttress Spaces’ is, to this reviewer’s mind, perhaps the most innovative of the book’s four chapters. Here, Hutterer analyzes the uses of the so-called interstices of flying buttresses, the three-walled spaces formed between the buttress piers on the exterior of a church. These spaces ‘did not have a predetermined use but instead developed their utility as the support system became increasingly externalized’. Varying in scale, ‘they were eminently adaptable to local communities and social practices’ (64). Hutterer shows that these uses differed according to the particular circumstance of their location, but included spaces for commerce, ecclesiastical purposes (as vestries, for example) and use as workshops, and perhaps they even functioned domestically. Unfortunately, the structures created using the buttresses and exterior walls of cathedrals were ephemeral.

However, as Hutterer shows, graphic evidence is revealing. An illumination from the Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal, for example, shows a dedication of the church being performed, while vendors sell goods from two stalls set up in the buttress interstices (64). The flexibility of buttress interstices is emphasized with examples from cathedrals, most notably Paris, where buttress interstices that were difficult to access from the exterior were profitably ‘interiorized’ with the creation of chantry chapels between the buttresses, accessible from the outer aisles of the church. Beyond simply achieving its stated goals, this chapter offers a better understanding of cathedral precincts in medieval Europe, most of which survive today stripped of the cadre of subsidiary buildings that once surrounded them, ranging from ephemeral storage facilities to grand episcopal palaces. This chapter contributes to a small but expanding body of literature, including, for example, Roberta Gilchrist’s *Norwich Cathedral Close* (2005).

The final two chapters concern the sculpture adorning buttresses and cathedral exteriors. Hutterer argues that beginning with the fabric at Chartres from after the 1194 fire, flying buttresses provided a ‘new location for sculptural embellishment ... ideal for presenting key messages to the wide viewership that could see the sculptures from some distance’ (90). As opposed to the biblical or hagiographical narratives found within the cathedral portals, the primary zone for figurative sculpture, the sculptures

on buttresses typically presented bishops and angels inside niches and under canopies, frozen in liturgical processions and expressing ecclesiastical authority. Even the more fantastical sculptural creations – the celebrated gargoyles – signified spiritual protection. In the book's fourth chapter, the author advances the argument that these mythical creatures functioned within a spiritual framework that encompassed the transition between the profane world on the outside, and the consecrated space on the inside of the cathedral (160). Hutterer's study of the gargoyles in conjunction with the presence of crenellations and other hallmarks of military architecture in church exteriors is ambitious in its scope. She argues that, physically paired together on the church exterior, the gargoyles and crenellations made a statement about the protective qualities of the church and underscored the unity within this institution between the sacred and the profane.

*Framing the Church* is ambitious and experimental: much like the masons who designed daring and dramatic openwork flyers in spite of the challenges they knew they would face in doing so. In some places, the arguments seem to push the available evidence beyond its limits, and the reader wonders whether the case studies chosen (sometimes well-known cathedrals like Paris, Reims, Chartres and Laon, and other times more obscure examples such as Narbonne and L'Épine) are representative. Finally, while it is generally accepted in today's scholarly field that the flying buttress originated in Northern France, one would have liked to see some comment passed on its spread beyond the region into England, France, Germany, and beyond. Now the reader is left wondering whether Hutterer's observations hold true as the form makes its way through Europe, and if French modes of building, decorating, and using buttresses were subverted. However, as in the development of flying buttresses themselves, cracks and repairs are necessary and instructive; they expand knowledge and enable us to push ever further. This clearly written and beautifully produced book tests a model for examining a single architectural feature from many angles and provides much-needed context for the study of cathedral exteriors beyond portal sculpture.

### Mapping Architectural Theory: A Celebration of Early Modern Books on Architecture

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Oechslin, Werner, Tobias Büchi, Martin Pozsgai, *Architekturtheorie im deutschsprachigen Kulturraum 1486–1648*. Basel: Colmena Verlag, 2018, 744 pages, ISBN 978-3-906896-05-2.

This volume, *Architekturtheorie im deutschsprachigen Kulturraum 1486–1648* (Figure 3) is the first publication to provide an overview of printed books dedicated to architectural theory in the German speaking area



**Figure 3:** Cover of *Architekturtheorie im deutschsprachigen Kulturraum 1486–1648*. Photo credit: Colmena Verlag.

(‘Kulturraum’) between 1486 and 1648. A review of this 744-page publication is a challenge in and of itself, not least because of the scale of the project. The book is a splendidly designed, brilliantly printed, linen-bound volume in folio, with numerous image reproductions and two red and three blue bookmarks. The larger challenge, however, lies with assessing the product of a ‘lifetime’ of research; a review is probably not the most fitting genre to appreciate the passion for such a project.

Since 1985, the project has been based at the famous architectural library of professor emeritus at the ETH Zürich Werner Oechslin, in Einsiedeln and received financial support from the Schweizerischen Nationalfond, the ETH Zürich, and the Bibliothek Werner Oechslin itself. As the *spiritus rector* of this *herculean* project, Oechslin composed the volume together with Tobias Büchi and Martin Pozsgai. In addition, Michael Gnehm, Thomas Hänslı, and Lothar Schmitt contributed catalogue entries. In 2018 the volume was finally published, as part of the jubilee series in honour of Oechslin’s seventieth birthday.

The volume is divided into two main parts. The first is an extensive introductory text by Oechslin entitled, ‘*Quae sub humanum intellectum, oder: Was das Nachdenken über Architektur betrifft*’ (‘As for thinking about architecture’) (11–141). This is followed by a catalogue, which assembles numerous books on architecture in chronological order (143–700). The book concludes with five different indices of names (authors, publishers and printers, draughtsman, engravers, and general names), an invaluable addition for navigating this *opus magnum*. Unfortunately, there is no index of either places or subjects. Architectural historians

might also wish that the catalogue be made available as an open access database, which would facilitate keyword searches.

The catalogue includes almost all known books on architectural theory that were initially printed between 1486 and 1648 in the German-speaking *Kulturraum*. The decision to not use the term Renaissance is not explained in detail and unfortunately there is no precise definition of the given alternative, *Kulturraum*, which itself is not without methodological difficulties. However, Oechslin does address the problematic concepts of cultural boundaries. The catalogue's chronological span is guided by two assumptions. The year 1486 marks the first printed architectural book of the German-speaking *Kulturraum* – Matthias Roritzer's book on the design of pinnacles. The latter date, by contrast, is not at all architectural, but rather marks the end of the Thirty Years' War, an event that is generally considered to end this historical epoch (7).

In full, the catalogue presents no fewer than several hundred architectural books, including those of multiple editions, which were composed by 66 different authors – trained architects, engineers, painters, cartographers, princely dilettantes, humanists, medics – and printed anywhere between Alsace and Nuremberg (Figure 4). The reader finds here Walter Ryff's famous translation and commentary on Vitruvius, as well as the mostly neglected reflections on architecture and perspective by Martin Waldseemüller, published in the 1508 *Margarita philosophica nova*. The catalogue obviously includes many books about columns (Hans Blum and Pieter Coecke van Aelst); fortifications (Albrecht Dürer, Daniel Specklin, and Adam Freitag); measuring and drawing instruments (Andreas Albrecht); and perspective (Salomon de Caus and Samuel Marlois). Although extensive, the catalogue is not comprehensive. The project's authors were selective in what texts of architecture to include. The preface

makes clear that it was not their aim to produce a mere 'Bestandskatalog', or inventory catalogue, of all recorded architectural theory. Instead, the catalogue is intended to present the most significant printed books, including translations, as a Plutarchian 'quasi corpus unum,' so as to illustrate a more or less 'total impression' of architectural theory in this period (6). Thus, the 1616 print series of castle Aschaffenburg was explicitly excluded (7). The catalogue also omits the very rare treatise about gardens by Johann Peschel (1597), which lays down geometrical designing processes. In certain instances, the authors' assessment of which texts were significant enough to merit inclusion seems somewhat arbitrary. We find, for example, that *In mechanica Aristotelis problemata exercitationes* by Bernardino Baldi is included, while the important German translation of Guidobaldo del Monte's *Mechanicorum liber* (1577) written by Daniel Mögling in 1628 is not (although the catalogue entry to Baldi does reference Mögling's translation). A further example: the unique *Kunstammer* of Johannes Faulhaber (1641) is excluded, while the more generic advertising catalogues of the contemporary architect and engineer Joseph Furttentbach the Elder are given several pages. The selective scope of the catalogue is further signalled by the fact that 'architectural theory' in this period was also transmitted in handwritten manuscripts or drawings. The many preserved yet still largely unstudied manuscripts connected to printed books of Furttentbach are just one example of this.

The documentation of the catalogue follows the 'highest standards' (144), as established by previously published architectural catalogues of note, including the *Fowler Architectural Collection of the John Hopkins University* (1991) and the *Early Printed Books 1478–1840* (Nash, Savage, et al. 1994–2003). Each entry outlines the main aspects of a book's contents, providing information about the context of its production, its author(s),



Figure 4: 'Composita' (Vredeman de Vries 1617).

and different editions. The object introductions are complemented with short bibliographies, which mostly cite a selection of 'standard works'. There are longer entries, including one concerning Heinrich Vogtherr's early pattern book ('*Musterbuch*'), and another on the various editions of Hans Blum's famous books on columns. A very short entry is dedicated to Hans Schmuttermeyer's so-called *Fialenbüchlein*, a brief book on so-called late-Gothic design. Within the catalogue, the reader finds helpful overviews of the technical and mathematical aspects in military treatises, as well as descriptions of drawing and measuring instruments and perspective. Lucid, discerning commentaries reflect the history of research in detail, like the entry to the *Martin Waldseemüller*. This material is followed by a detailed documentation of the publication itself, which is based on the consultation of original printed versions conserved today in Einsiedeln, Zürich, Berlin, München, and Wolfenbüttel.

Without question, this catalogue is an important and useful tool for historians, librarians, and collectors of rare books, who can find here information on publication dates and authors' biographies, and can compare variations in title pages, counter wood cuts, prints, and pages, and trace missing parts in preserved volumes. In addition to a reproduction of the title page of every edition of each book, the catalogue provides title transcriptions or printer marks, as well as details of architectural framings, ornamentation, or allegorical imagery. The inclusion of additional reproductions highlights the salient characteristics of the different books. The images are printed in high resolution (probably in frequency modulation) on the bright and pearly white Munken polar, resulting in more or less haptic qualities of the reproduced title pages, prints, and wood cuts.

Taken as a whole, this astonishingly accurate and thorough catalogue provides a starting point with which to interrogate the different genres, texts, and images of architectural theory, and to explore the networks of printers, readers, and patrons integral to the production of these books. The prominently reproduced title pages in the individual catalogue entries invite further research into the function and aesthetic of these images. While similar attempts to deal with these topics are represented by the *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit* (see Erben 2005), *Architekturtheorie im deutschsprachigen Kulturraum 1486–1648* might be celebrated as the most relevant source dealing with architectural theory in this period. This said, the reader might legitimately wonder why Oechslin did not seek in the book's introductory text to provide a more comprehensive discussion of research on early modern architectural theory. Despite all of its thoughtful observations (and lots of exclamation marks), the text lacks a critical discussion of the complex relationship between theory and the built environment. The very important discussion of the terms '*deutsch*' and 'Renaissance' is more or less a historiographic reading of these concepts in the 16th, 19th, and 20th centuries. Here, the project's authors might have benefitted from recourse to recent publications that confront the formal apparatus and concepts of so-called Renaissance architecture between North and South or East and West (*Stil als Bedeutung* (Hoppe, Müller, and Nußbaum 2008);

*Anachronic Renaissance* (Nagel and Wood 2010); *Le Gothique de la Renaissance* (Chatenet and Mignot 2011); *Renaissance Gothic* (Kavaler 2012); *Artistic Innovations and Cultural Zones* (Chatenet and Mignot 2011)). More recent works delving into this topic include, amongst others, Robert Bork's *Late Gothic Architecture* (2018) and Karl A. E. Enekel and Konrad Ottenheim's edited *The Quest for an Appropriate Past in Literature, Art and Architecture* (2018). But importantly, Oechslin does indicate that architecture and art of the 'Renaissance' should not be simply divided into North and South, nor was the 'Renaissance' simply transferred from Italy into the North (125). In this sense, the introduction upholds the appeals of Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann (*Court, Cloister and City*, 1994) and Peter Burke (*The European Renaissance*, 1998) to strengthen ideas of cultural transfer and exchange (125).

As a whole, the strengths of Oechslin's introduction, and the ambitious project it outlines, far outweigh the omissions. The extensive text lays down the philosophical conditions for the concepts of theory and practice in architecture in detail. It also discusses the important mathematical foundations of architecture, highlights architectural drawings, provides a glimpse of the book collection of the architect Heinrich Schickhardt (1558–1635), deals with printed images in the books, and interrogates the evident problems in dealing with a so-called German architectural theory and the question of nation. In truth, the extensive introduction might be considered as five separate essays, which is in fact how it has been catalogued by the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte.

*Architekturtheorie im deutschsprachigen Kulturraum 1486–1648* is groundbreaking in having compiled, examined, and documented architectural books in the German-speaking area. It gives the reader a reliable standard for information on printed works. Thus, this impressive volume provides an important foundation for continued research on early modern architectural theory; this review, I hope, provides a glimpse of how advantageous this undertaking is and its enormous potential.

### Expanding and Enriching the Global Survey

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The *Global Architectural History Teaching Collaborative* (GAHTC) is a web portal of teaching materials for the history of architecture (Figure 5). Founded in 2013 with major funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, it is housed at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and it is now well into its second phase. It exists in response to a familiar problem in the humanities: how to make a truly global history in response to an increasingly globalized world (of which architecture, you might say, is unusually symptomatic). For first generation 'Old World' departments of art and architectural history, the traditional solution was always to bolt on the teaching of the 'Other,' enhancing the



**Figure 5:** Logo of the *Global Architectural History Teaching Collaborative*.

provision of non-Western material while leaving the core curriculum essentially unchanged. That approach arguably reached limits in the 1990s, as throughout the humanities postcolonial theories recast relationships between the western and the non-western, whether in terms of Orientalism, subaltern approaches, or hybridity (to name three concepts). The implications for architectural history included rethinking the assumption that the West has consistently been in the forefront of innovation, whether stylistic or technical. Those implications lay behind an editorial published in 1996 in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, arguing for the need to globalize the discipline, while expressing concern about how it might be done. It didn't offer many solutions, but it did show the discipline at least struggling with the problem.

How the curriculum might be globalized has become a bit clearer since then. There have been experiments with new kinds of kinds of resources, including new web-based ones. Among the precursors of GAHTC was the UK-based GLAADH (Globalising Art and Architecture and Design History), which had public funding from AHRC and ran in the early 2000s, directed by historian of Chinese art, Craig Clunas. Like GAHTC, it was an attempt to enable the globalization of a discipline by providing the materials it (Gieben-Gamal 2005). The discussion has moved on significantly since then, and the practical resources increasingly include textbooks, such as Kathleen James-Chakraborty's *Architecture Since 1400* (2014), perhaps the first attempt in recent times to write a world architectural history. Her introduction juxtaposes a 1950 modernist house designed by Lina Bo Bardi in São Paulo with the temple of Gur-i-Mur in Samarkand, neither central to conventional Eurocentric architectural histories. We should not forget the foundation of EAHN in 2005 either: the 'Europe' of its name notwithstanding, its mission has from the start been a global one (and its name has, from time to time, come under question).

GAHTC was founded by two architectural historians, Mark Jarzombek of MIT and Vikramaditya Prakash of the University of Washington, both of whom had already made a significant contribution to the globalization of architectural history. Prakash's important work on Le Corbusier in Chandigarh, for example, explores the precise exchange between European and Indian architectures in that project of the 1960s. Along with Francis Ching, Jarzombek and Prakash were responsible for *A* (2017), *Global History of Architecture*, originally published in 2006, a book that is even larger and more comprehensive than James-Chakraborty's.

GAHTC's mission statement starts with the question of the survey course, and how to teach it in a rapidly globalizing context. It emphasizes 'cross-disciplinary, teacher-to-teacher exchanges of ideas and material', and aims to offer inspiring teaching to the next generation, focused

on material for survey courses in our 'ever expanding' contemporary world. The banner image above the statement is a good one, incidentally: the columns of the Great Mosque-Cathedral at Córdoba, Spain, one of the world's great hybrid buildings, the result of a civilizational clash. The site itself contains well over 300 lectures by academics in architectural history and cognate disciplines. These may be downloaded at no cost by registered members of the Collaborative. As stated on the website's mission page, 'GAHTC's approach draws on that of *A Global History of Architecture*, which is extraordinary in its geographical and temporal scope, occasionally overwhelming for anyone working in the Euro-American tradition. The lectures therefore describe a history in which the West is only a part. It is hard (like the book) to encapsulate, ranging as it does from Iranian-Armenian churches, West African modernism, Hindu temples, medieval Japan, and the public spaces of Mesoamerica. The range is wide and expanding, and it straightforwardly provides content in global areas for instructors needing a grounding in them. As a resource, it is reassuringly wide-ranging. In recent months, the GAHTC has also been impressively responsive to external events. Beyond its web resources, it has hosted a 'Zoom-posia' on race in architectural history, and has put forth new material on pandemics and cities – topics that could scarcely be more current.

The GAHTC's approach does another important thing as well, which is to write history from a global perspective. GAHTC's lectures locate Venice as a prototypical global city; Brussels is framed as a partially African one. These quintessentially European cities are read in broadly postcolonial terms. Cities are a good place to do that kind of global history, as are terms such as modernity (Prakash's particular interest), or the Gothic, or in infrastructural questions such as communications, water management, or the architecture of wars and ports. As GAHTC shows, thematic explorations are one clear way of being, or doing the Global.

A useful series on *The Global History of Architecture and Climate* (Daniel Barber, Rachel Lee, Ola Uduku, and others) has an exemplary lecture by Jiat-Hwee Chiang on environmental controls that begins with the Anglo-American critic Reyner Banham but makes clear how much of these technologies, from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, derives from global encounters: how much, to put it another way, histories of power and empire are bound up in those technologies. Chiang's slide of a punka-wallah fanning a European merchant says it all. Half a century ago, Banham understood how architectural technologies might be inscribed with the politics of social class; what the team here do is show how they might equally be inscribed with imperialism.

I was also impressed with the series *Scales of Modernity* (Ayla Levin, Ginger Nolan, Diana Martinez, Jonathan

Massey) which found transnational connections in modernist approaches to regional planning, anywhere from Ghana to Manila to Moscow to Rome; in a few slides they show how you can reasonably reconstruct these global post-war conversations, how the Western and European elements were part of much larger conversations, and how easily they can be accessed. There were some surprises too: Jordan Kauffman's lecture series on global architectural representations shows that if you looked widely enough, traditions of architectural model-making stretch back several thousand years.

In terms of its interface and organization, GAHTC is user-friendly. Most materials are fully formed, with images and properly referenced texts, and clear arguments. Searching for material is straightforward and effective. Browsing in general categories is well signposted, and specific searches are cross-referenced well enough to reflect content. A search for 'Beijing', for example, presents a spread of fifteen lectures, not all of which are at first sight about China but contain references to it. GAHTC's graphics are not quite so of the moment, bringing back nostalgia for 1995-vintage web browser graphics. On the homepage it is not a building that dominates, but a slowly rotating globe, in which pins drop wherever your search lands. This, and the format of the lectures themselves, all in PowerPoint, text and content-heavy, may need some updating in due course, along with a general visual refresh of the project.

But these formal points are relatively minor given the generosity of the exercise and its usefulness as a starting point. Rather than the content per se, or the lectures themselves, GAHTC provides multiple ways to think about doing a global architectural history, and is as good an entry point to that problem as any.

### Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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#### ***Assembling the Architect: The History and Theory of Professional Practice***

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