

SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

THE JOURNAL OF THE CAPE, NATAL, ORANGE FREE STATE AND TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL INSTITUTES
OF SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTS AND THE CHAPTER OF SOUTH AFRICAN QUANTITY SURVEYORS

CONTENTS FOR AUGUST 1950

RESIDENCE DONEN Cowin & Ellis, Architects 172

THE NATURE OF BAROQUE—

1. THE ARCHITECTURE OF EXCAVATION, by Heather Martienssen,
B.Arch., M.A., Ph.D., Lecturer in Fine Arts 176

THE CROCK OF GOLD—

- ART AND ART HISTORY AS AN ACADEMIC SUBJECT IN SOUTH
AFRICA, by John Paris, B.A., B.Litt., Director of The National
Gallery of South Africa 183

INCIDENTALLY 189

NOTES AND NEWS 191

E D I T O R VOLUME 35

W. DUNCAN HOWIE

ASSISTANT EDITORS

UGO TOMASELLI

GILBERT HERBERT

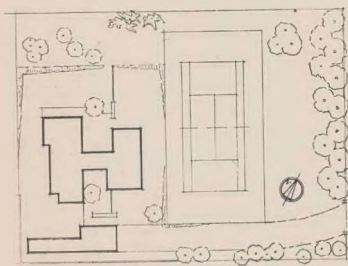
8

The Editor will be glad to consider any MSS., photographs or sketches submitted to him, but they should be accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes for return if unsuitable. In case of loss or injury he cannot hold himself responsible for MSS., photographs or sketches, and publication in the Journal can alone be taken as evidence of acceptance. The name and address of the owner should be placed on the back of all pictures and MSS. The Institute does not hold itself responsible for the opinions expressed by contributors. Annual subscription £1 10s. direct to the Secretary, 612, KELVIN HOUSE, 75, MARSHALL STREET, JOHANNESBURG. PHONE 34-2921.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: G. J. McHARRY (PTY.), LTD., 43, BECKETT'S BUILDINGS, JOHANNESBURG, P.O. BOX 1409. PHONE 33-7505.

RESIDENCE DONEN

EFFECTIVELY

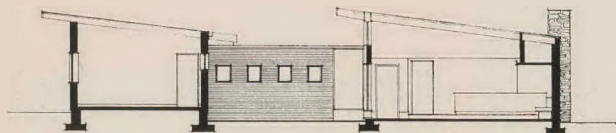


SITE PLAN

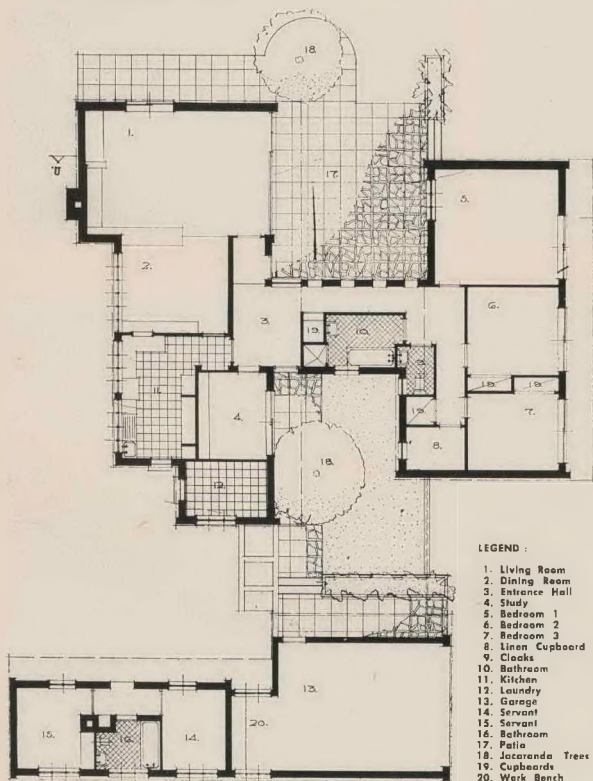
ARCHITECTS: COWIN AND ELLIS

The house is situated in Waverley, Johannesburg, on a site of approximately three-quarters of an acre. Having been developed originally as a garden, and although in a neglected state, the area contained a number of well-established trees and a tennis court which it was desired to retain in the final scheme. Although it is clear that these features must have imposed considerable restrictions in the planning of the dwelling, yet the architects have succeeded in integrating the scheme in an orderly and charming manner. Not only are these elements

USES A RESTRICTED SUBURBAN SITE IN WAVERLEY, JOHANNESBURG



SECTION A-A



LEGEND :

1. Living Room
2. Dining Room
3. Entrance Hall
4. Study
5. Bedroom 1
6. Bedroom 2
7. Bedroom 3
8. Linen Cupboard
9. Cloaks
10. Bathroom
11. Kitchen
12. Laundry
13. Garage
14. Servant
15. Servant
16. Bathroom
17. Patio
18. Jacaranda Tree
19. Cupboards
20. Work Bench

skillfully embraced in the composition but desirable aspects and orientation of the various rooms is achieved. The approach is punctuated by the Acacia on the east, the entrance court embraces the Jacaranda, the patio and living rooms share the shade of the second Jacaranda, and the large Blue Gum on the north provides a strong vertical accent.

The imaginative relationship between house and garden makes provision for indoor-outdoor living of a degree of comfort and privacy and amenities not often encountered in the smaller suburban house to-day.

The house is simply organised into two elements or wings including respectively the sleeping and living accommodation, each having a galvanised corrugated iron monopitch roof. These wings are linked by the entrance hall-bathroom unit, having a flat reinforced concrete roof.

Finishes externally include the "Slato" stone walls at the visible ends of the two wings, with the other walls carried out in stockbrick. The latter have raked horizontal joists up to window heads with plaster above.

The plinth is finished Indian red, the walls generally are silver-grey colourwash, the eave soffit is pale blue with white rafters and fascia, the whole giving a bright and cheerful effect.

The wall of the living room flanking the patio is built up of timber with fixed plateglass windows, having louvered openings below. Ventilation is controlled by the hinged wood panels behind the louvres. The windows in the living room, the study and in the bedrooms are of sliding plateglass in Kiaat frames with louvered ventilating panels. Elsewhere the windows are standard steel sections.



LEFT: Detail of the entrance court; defined by the white concrete beam on steel supports painted Indian red. The study window and the entrance door is seen beyond the Jacaranda. BELOW: The entrance hall looking towards the living room. The wall on the left is painted maroon on plaster, that on the right is faced in 3 inch Kiaat boarding, the others being painted silver grey.



View across the living room from the external door. The fireplace is carried out in "Slato" stone with panel of 3 inch Kiaat boarding above, flanked by a surface of reed matting. The fitting, which includes a built-in radio, is in Kiaat, and the wood block floor is of the same material. Walls generally are painted ivory. The ceiling is of stained Oregon faced plywood, between exposed rafters.



RIGHT : General view from the north looking towards the Patio. The end walls of the two wings are built of "Slasto" stone. This view shows the charming integration of house and garden. BELOW : A detailed view of the Patio, showing the plateglass windows and louvred ventilators of the living room. These are painted white and the end wall is painted grey, plinth is Indian red.



A view across the living room, showing portion of the glass wall flanking the patio, and the dining room. The east wall of the dining room is of stack brick with raked horizontal joints, the remaining walls being plastered. The colours being ivory in each case. The ceiling is a continuation of the concrete slab over the link between the two wings.

Photography : E. Robinow.

THE NATURE OF BAROQUE

By HEATHER MARTIENSSEN, B.Arch., M.A., Ph.D.,
Lecturer in Fine Arts, University of the Witwatersrand

THE ARCHITECTURE OF EXCAVATION

It seems man learned to burrow before he learned to build. His first shelter from the elements was the cave, and it is conceivable that his first efforts to provide protection for himself lay in the direction of extending the amenity of a natural shelter. His earliest experience of shelter must thus have been a totally "interior" experience, arising either from the discovery of an already weathered niche, or from laboriously hollowing out earth and rock for his own comfort and security. True he seems to have had no formal attitude to his surroundings, and even the elaborate excursions into pictorial art that stem from the Old Stone Age show no architectonic aspect whatsoever. The rough surface of the rock is either completely ignored or made to serve for the swellings and recessions of the painted animals, but there is no sign that the cave paintings are conceived as relating in any way to the shaping and defining of the cave itself.

Formality appears to develop with construction, and from the most primitive stages of building a clear perception of formal relations is apparent, which develops in proportion to the development of structural skills. The burrow continues to develop side by side with the structure, though now it serves in most regions to house the dead, and though the formality derived from structure invades the province of the excavator this "architecture of the burrow" preserves throughout certain qualities of the cave, while from time to time this excavator's viewpoint seems to have shaped an interior created by nominally structural means.¹

Throughout history the type of interior suggesting the cave is found least often in those styles in which "interior" and "exterior" are least differentiated, and where the shapes of architecture allow most interpenetration: where in fact interior and exterior are simply different faces of the same structural form, or may even be analysed as being essentially the same face. Contemporary architecture, where the wall is at one extreme a perforation for the infiltration of outside space, or a frame for experiencing it, and even at the opposite extreme merely a limiting screen, is a lucid example of the art when most removed from the cave-man's vision. The peristylar definition of space in Greece suggests itself as another; the

traditional architecture of Japan, and the traceried successions of Muslim building are other examples which came immediately to mind. But even those styles based on vault and dome—the Gothic, the Byzantine, and the Roman and its derivatives—are by no means "excavation architecture". Their curvilinear volumes are the result of structural necessity, or conversely, the structure, implicit outside the building, serves and determines the space-shapes within. No, the cave man's interior is entirely other than these, and seems to find its clearest expression in Europe, in certain buildings of the 17th and 18th centuries in Italy. But let us look back into the building of antiquity to observe this character first in a more obvious form.

One of the most elaborate versions of the excavated tomb is the rock-cut cemetery of the Valley of the Kings at Thebes. Here the determining factor was evidently the need for safety, which moved the kings of Egypt from their inviolable-seeming pyramids to the more certain protection of tombs hewn into the solid cliffs. The labour of excavation naturally imposed considerable restriction on the forms and relations of the various chambers, though there is no evidence to suggest that the Egyptians were prone to use complex relations even in their "free" constructions. Indeed, the resemblance between their constructed and excavated tombs and temples is one of the most interesting aspects of Egyptian architecture.

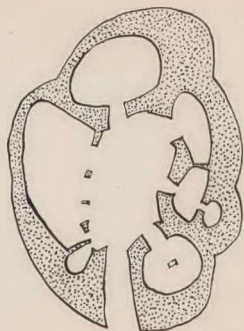
The tomb in Egypt—as in many other places—seems to have begun simply as a pit or well for the sarcophagus, with some kind of a defining mound piled over the spot. This developed in the course of time into the mastabas of nobles and the pyramids of kings. The mastaba, which represents the type of Egyptian tomb, usually comprises two main parts—the well or pit sunk into the earth, intended to contain the body itself, and a chamber or chambers above the level of the ground for the reception of funerary offerings. Since a mastaba consists for the most part of a solid pile of masonry or brick presenting a regular, more or less unbroken, outer form, these chambers read, in plan and section, rather as an excavated than as a constructed series. The tomb of Ti at Sakkarah(2), dating from the Ancient Empire, presents an extremely interesting succession of apartments. The solidity of the masonry mass and consequent absence of the need for an enclosing wall system results in a lucidly articulated group of chambers linked by short narrow passages. In this case a roof light serves the inner chamber, but in many tombs the only natural lighting comes from the single entrance.

¹ Illustration (1) shows an early example of a structure which is internally remarkably like a cave.

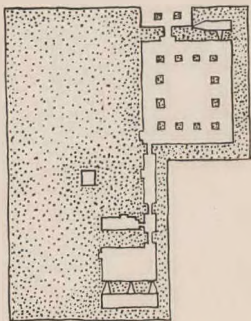
This system of building in a solid geometrical block, which gives the freely articulated chambers the character of excavation was not confined to the tombs themselves. There is an early instance of a temple constructed according to this system at Gizeh. This so-called *Temple of the Sphinx*(3) forms externally a solid, almost square block of masonry. The two main entrance vestibules, and the long corridor which leads to the pyramid-temple, penetrate the interior as though laboriously excavated. The flat roof — for the most part simply the upper surface of this masonry platform — is supported where it crosses the wider chamber by a series of granite piers, and the whole interior is lined with carefully dressed alabaster. It is of interest to observe that though the sequence of apartments is not entirely symmetrical, this want of symmetry [which refers chiefly to approaches and lesser apartments] is apparent only on our artificial reconstruction of its plan. Within the main apartments themselves a heavy symmetrical balance governs the arrangement, while externally only the simple rectangular form rises from the ground. This trick of "excavation architecture" to present an apparent symmetry in its internal volumes will be seen again in buildings of a later period.

The rock-cut tombs themselves, which often show an entrance portico evidently modelled on that of the mastaba, [4, 5] follow it further in the arrangement of their chamber sequences, even at times to the sinking of a "well" at some point in this complex. Piers are left standing to support the main volumes, while the surrounding rock is hewn away.

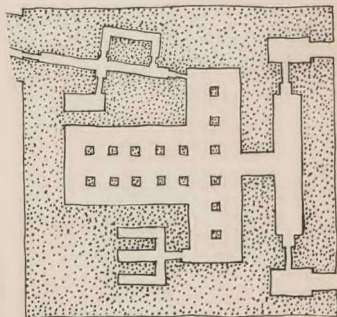
The great Pylon Temples make their appearance in the New Empire, and though the girdle wall here follows the contours suggested by the internal ordonnance, these are kept to such simplicity, and the ratio of solid to void is so low, that the character of excavated volumes is not entirely absent. This becomes even more apparent when we turn to the *speos*, or rock-cut temple, which appears contemporaneously with the Pylon Temple in the Nile Valley.¹ The *hemi-speos* of Garf Hussein is relevant in this context(6). Here we are confronted in the first place by all the formality of the free-standing Pylon Temple. Steps lead from the river to an approach flanked by the typical sphinxes and statues. Next comes the Pylon entrance, the open court, and even the Hypostyle Hall. It is only now that we have reached the rock-face, into which the sanctuary and its supporting apartments is cut. It may be remarked that the sequence of higher floor levels, narrower flanking walls, and graduation of light to the almost total darkness of the sanctuary, follows logically here from the nature of the site and construction, unlike its artificially induced counterpart on the open plain. This tempts one to inquire (though in the absence of sufficient archaeological data to assure the validity of such a query) whether the *speos*-type of temple preceded the open pylon type by long enough to dictate its character.



1. Plan of a Prehistoric stone dwelling at Chysaister, near Penzance, Cornwall.



2. Plan of the Mastaba of Ti, at Saqqara.

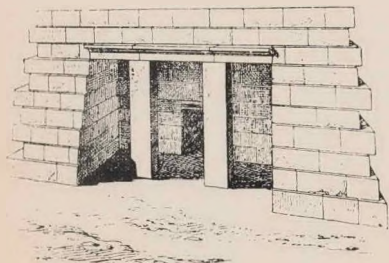


3. Plan of the Temple of the Sphinx, or Valley Temple of Khafren, at Giza.

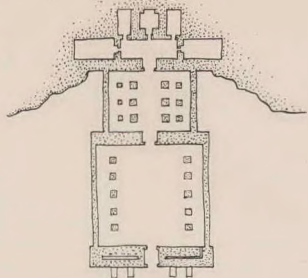
1. i.e. during the 18th Dynasty.



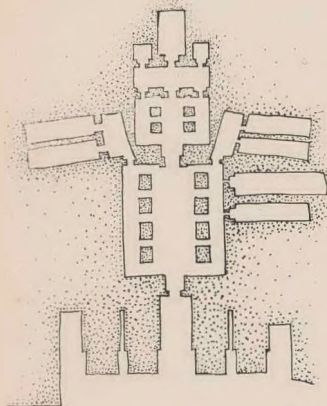
4. Entrance to the rock-cut Tomb of Amenhotep III, or Amenemhat, at Beni-Hasan.



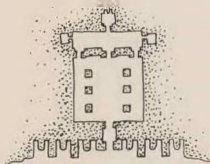
5. Entrance to a Mastaba at Saqqara



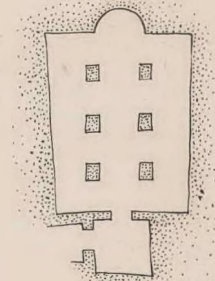
6. Plan of the hemi-speos of Gorf Hussein, showing a reconstruction of the avenue of sphinxes, the pylons, and open court



7. Plan of the Great Temple at Abu Simbel, fronted by the Colossi of Ramesses II.



8. Plan of the smaller Temple at Abu Simbel, or Temple of Hathor. The drawing shows the high-relief carvings at the entrance.



9. Plan of the so-called "Basilica" of Porta Maggiore, Rome, a subterranean Early Christian Church.

The secrecy necessary for tomb excavation did not apply in the case of temples and most of the latter, even of the complete spoons type, have impressive entrances, sometimes formed by colossal sculptured figures of the Pharaoh, almost in the round. The "facade" thus imposed on several of the rock-cut temples bears no architectural relationship to, nor in any way reflects, the system of excavation to which it forms an entrance.[7, 8, 10]

It will be understood from the foregoing that the approach to what I have designated "excavation architecture" is that, very broadly, of designing a building in terms of its interior volumes with little or no reference to external masses and their elevations. Where the excavations are actual this method of planning evolves logically. Where, however, the mass of the building is in fact constructed, the excavation-character assumes a special interest. In Egypt, as I have suggested, the two types of architecture co-exist in an extremely interesting, possibly unique, fashion. In later times we usually find examples of one or the other. Among the more elaborate excavations proper we may recall rock temples in Mesopotamia and the far East, the Etruscan "Cities of the Dead", and even certain early Christian Churches in Rome.[9] But our business is not with these, and we may now without further ado consider the churches and palaces of the 17th and 18th centuries in Italy, particularly in Rome, for which I have claimed the character of Excavation Architecture.

No doubt the congested nature of the city centre at this date was at least in some measure responsible for the "closed" sites available to builders, and the consequent character of the building. But even on open sites there is much in the arrangement of Baroque churches to support a theory that the traditional relationship of interior to exterior of a building, as the reverse side of a coin to its obverse, was no longer adequate to satisfy the emotional intention of the architect. Cortona's S. Luca, for example, though occupying a partly closed site, makes scant use of the remainder to express its plan externally. The symmetrical cruciform plan, with its splayed corners and rounded apses, is completely concealed by filling out the plan to form an approximate square. Where a curve is displayed on the main facade, it bears as little relation to the internal shape as the entrance front of the rock-cut temples of Rameses II bore to the excavated shapes within.[12] One of the most striking examples of internal symmetry imposed upon an irregular enclosed site is Borromini's S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane.[11, 13] Here the concave and convex internal walls have no reference to the shape of the building as a whole, while symmetrically placed openings lead to irregular chambers and chapels, and in one case a stair, none of which in their turn are related to the building line. The ruthless symmetry of the main interior volume is reinforced by the symmetrical facade, plastered, as it were, on the street elevation. One result of this lack of relation between internal and external walls — or

of the total absence of external walls — is that churches of this type cannot use natural lighting below a certain level. Only where the domes and vaults raise themselves above the level of surrounding building can openings be pierced to admit light, which thus usually filters in at a high level, often from almost directly above. For the dome is one architectural feature that continues to express itself externally, and though it is seldom visible from the main entrance, it is given additional emphasis in several cases by the addition of sometimes fantastic spires and lanterns. The dome however, except in isolated examples (such as the Salute church in Venice) no longer dominates and defines the plan form externally. In S. Agnese, of Borromini and Rainaldi, the plan, which virtually consists in the space presided over by the great dome, is so closed in by surrounding building that it finds complete expression on none of the three free elevations.[14] The entrance, indeed, seems especially designed to mislead, and though the dome is in this case visible to one standing before it the total impression prepares the visitor very little for what he will see within.

Examples of these churches on enclosed, and semi-enclosed sites could be multiplied almost indefinitely. It may suffice to refer finally to one or two chapels, which, having often no external expression at all, perfectly typify the excavator's architecture. The little *Capella Cornara*, of Bernini, in S. Maria della Vittoria, is a perfect illustration.[15] So are the variegated chapels surrounding Borromini's S. John Lateran, while the most explicit example is probably Guarini's *Chapel of the Holy Shroud*, at Turin, a near equivalent to the Egyptian Temple of the Sphinx at Gizeh in the inexpressive square that forms the lower part of its external bulk.[16] Even the entrances recall the corridor entrances "penetrating" to the interior of the Egyptian temple; though here it must be admitted that the full expression of the dome, in spite of its strange form, does define in great measure the "buried" ground plan.

The forcing of internal symmetry upon basically dissimilar structural elements is not confined to churches, but occurs in a most interesting fashion in the Baroque Piazza. One of the earliest examples is the *Piazza di Campidoglio*, where the three facades presented to the Piazza itself suggest a symmetry not at all echoed in the planning of the buildings. A more striking example is the *Piazza S. Ignazio* of Raguzzini, where the buildings opposite the church have been most ruthlessly shaped to present a symmetrical series of concave walls.[17, 18] A sketch for Cortona's *della Pace* church in the Vatican library shows a proposed Piazza, in which existing buildings are evidently to be demolished and provided with new facades just to the extent necessary to create his rather arbitrarily shaped Piazza.

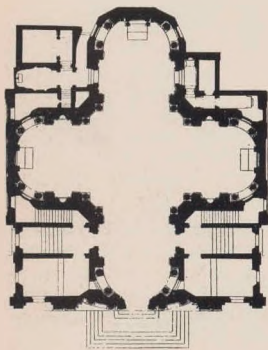
For this shaping of interior volumes according to the Baroque spirit is an affair of complex geometry. No longer is a volume defined and static, but difficult to apprehend, pulsating, and tending often to induce in the spectator a movement from one



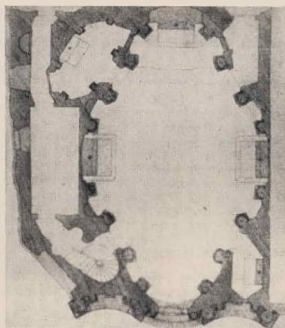
10. The Colossi at the entrance to the Great Temple of Abu Simbel.



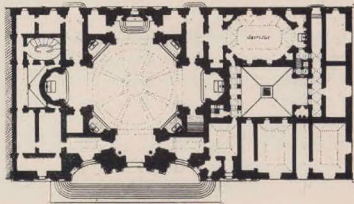
11. The facade of S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (Borromini).



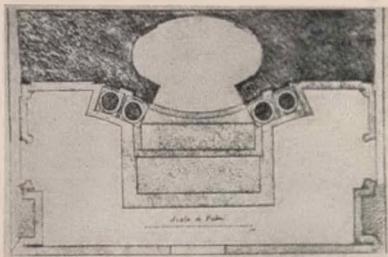
12. Plan of S. Luca (Cortona).



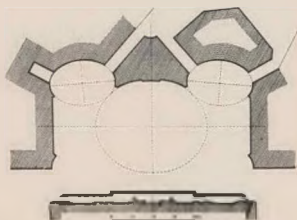
13. Plan of S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (Borromini).



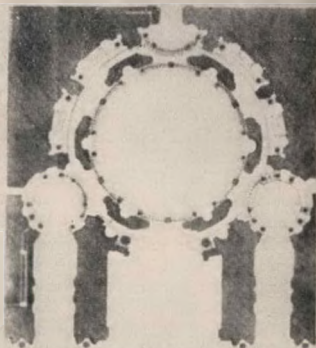
14. Plan of S. Agnese (Rainaldi & Borromini).



15. Plan of the Capella Cornaro, S. Maria della Vittoria (Bernini).

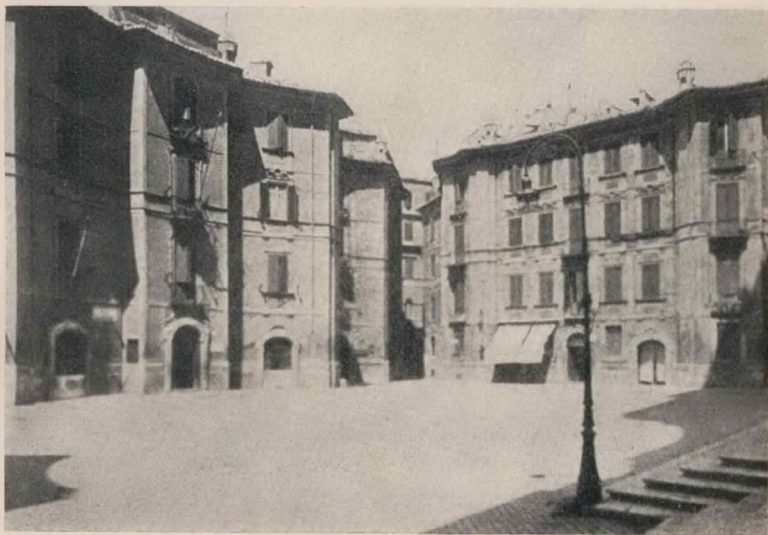


17. Plan of the Piazza S. Ignazio (Raguzzini).



16. Plan of the Chapel of the Holy Shroud, Turin (Guarini).

18. The Piazza S. Ignazio (Raguzzini).



volume to another. This finds expression too, in the secular architecture of the time. All through the Renaissance the town house, true descendant of the classical type, has tended to face inwards upon its court, as well as (or in the case of an enclosed site, instead of) outwards upon street or Piazza. But the static forms surrounding the court of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries give way in the sixteenth century to a plan arrangement in which the inner court has become a volume in a succession of volumes, often terminating in some accent such as a fountain, so that stolidity and repose have given way to movement and change of focus. The *Sacchetti* and *Caetani* palaces are simple examples in which this metamorphoses has taken place.[19] Apart from successive courts we may notice in many palaces a change in the character of the various apartments. No longer is the central court a placid nucleus onto which all rooms simply face. Now, on both closed and open sites we find rooms arranged *en suite* according to an asymmetrical system, while the oval or a derivative is a particularly popular shape in hall and stairway, having both the axial qualities of the rectangle and the spatial indeterminacy of the circle. The *Barberini* and the two *Pamili* Palaces at Rome, and the *Carignano* at Turin exemplify these changes in planning.

Perhaps strangely, the full possibilities of this shaping of rooms from within, and without reference to exterior were explored in England in the eighteenth century where the town house again offers the architect the challenge of the closed

site. Here the garden front provides an alternative to the inner courts of Italy, and the architect's ingenuity in planning over the whole enclosed rectangle is fully exploited. The usually rectangular series of rooms of the earlier Palladians flowers in the age of Adam into suites of rooms, the shapes of which are the product of the whims and sensibilities of the architects, regardless of functional determinants or the exigencies of site or structure. Adam's own designs for Lord Derby's house in Grosvenor Square and the house of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn in St. James' Square are brilliant examples of this virtuosity under the most unpromising, but possibly therefore just the more challenging, conditions for the sites of both are extremely long and narrow in the proportions of about 4:1.[20] But Adam's contemporaries were not far behind him, and in the town houses of Sir William Chambers, for example, the same preoccupation with interior shaping is evident. The elaborate modelling of these interiors extends to the far more open planning of many of the great country houses of the day, where their "excavated" character tends to be lost by freer contact with the open air.

We have in fact apparently moved a long way from the cave man's "architecture". The analogy — like all analogies — must not be pressed too far. It has served its purpose if it has emphasised for us an important constituent in the nature of Baroque design.

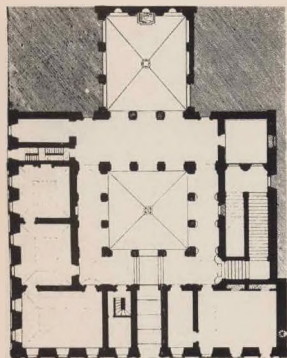


Fig. 19. Plan of the Palazzo Caetani (C. Lippi).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS:

Fig. 1 is re-drawn from, and figs. 4 and 10 reproduced from *The Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, by Edward Bell, London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1915.

Figs. 2, 3, 7 and 8 are re-drawn from Baedeker's *Egypt*, 1929.

Fig. 9 is re-drawn from *An Outline of European Architecture*, by Nikolaus Pevsner, London, John Murray, 1948.

20. Ground Plan of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn's House in St. James's Square, London.



Fig. 6 is re-drawn, and fig. 5 reproduced from *A History of Art in Ancient Egypt*, Vol. 1, by Perrot & Chipiez, London, Chapman and Hall, 1883.

Figs. 11 to 19 are reproduced from *Roman Baroque Art*, by T. H. Fokker, Oxford University Press, London, Humphrey Milford, 1938.

Fig. 20 is reproduced from *The Age of Adam*, by James Lees-Milne, London, B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1947.

THE CROCK OF GOLD

ART AND ART HISTORY AS AN ACADEMIC SUBJECT IN SOUTH AFRICA

By JOHN PARIS, M.A., B.Litt., *Director
of the National Gallery of South Africa*

A PUBLIC LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG, ON TUESDAY, 20th JUNE, 1950.

I speak to three audiences: to the people of the town, to the University staff and to students. Each of you will want to hear something different. The people of the town will ask: "What is all this art for? Why should it be so important to us? Of what kind is our particular need for it?" And, if my plea convinces them, they may very well add: "And what can we do about it? How shall we help you?" This indeed is what we hope they will ask. The University staff will say: "This is all very well. We want to know how you are going to do it." They will want facts and details such as might find their way sooner or later into statutes and regulations for study. They may even resent some of the pleading.

The students will say: "But what is going to happen to us? What is the meaning of our studies? How are we to carry them out? What do you expect of us?"

I fear, therefore, that this lecture is going to be somewhat diffuse, because I shall try to speak to all three audiences at once. You must take what you want from it and think about it and use it as a basis for deliberation, leading I may hope to definition and possible action. This is not a recipe for a department, but the presentation of the material for three recipes.¹

Now this word Culture, that we hear so much about, not infrequently spelt with a K, carrying a sometimes sinister under-meaning, really I suppose it means conditioning. A South African artist, who has absorbed the meaning of the old world and thought deeply about it and returned enriched by it and with knowledge of how to use it for the making of art in South Africa, spoke to me of the curious conditioning which even walking in good well thought out streets, old streets or new streets, but streets with a mind and a mood behind them effected within her. South Africa needs this conditioning; still needs the hand of man to overcome the hostilities of the hills, the arts of man making a conscious environment, one over which man has power, for it is out of his power that he makes

his arts, and in the making of self-conscious arts renews his power over the world.

Here in Johannesburg a miracle happened in 1886. Gold was discovered in its heat, the red fire out of the earth. It burned the foot-soles of those who walked here, rising like fire into their veins. It built a city all too fast, and filled the people with a wild and precious restlessness. Even to this day, now they have done drinking and fighting over it, they are looking, longing, waiting for something in a passion of themselves; they seek to come to terms with themselves, to tame life into themselves. They are filled with the restlessness of being intensely themselves, intensely people called by their names. And you can see already in their streets here the making of a character, the beginning of a metropolitan environment.

And so they built a University to fathom their gold, to find out the secrets of health and well-being; the most independent and vital university in the country, made out of an immediate and urgent necessity. "This University of the Rand," they say, "this body of learned men and fresh students, shall consider and answer our questions. Find us the secret of rest, the meaning of stillness, our terms of reference for being, justify our work and our craving. Tell us what we shall do with our Gold!" They seek a definition of reality, furiously running everywhere, ready for anything, any adventure in finding, seeking environment. There is a strange contrast. In Cape Town they say that once upon a time in the seventeenth century, a gentleman of Holland, one Van Riebeeck, came there and planted the Garden of Eden, and it is said that there can be no history before the Garden of Eden. The old Dutch house decays. Already it is a monument. Here in the Transvaal history is in the future. This is a land and here a city of youth, of the future. Even the old feel young in these altitudes. What shall we do with ourselves? Whom? What shall we worship? To what shall we devote ourselves? The University is like a chapel of being, a place where men seek and find themselves before going out to 'make' themselves. Here in the University which is ours and for all men of all creeds and all kinds, the meaning of life shall be made clear. We seek an understanding; and those who have paused here these years of youth, to examine the world and themselves living in it, should be the understanders, the teachers, those who know

¹ There are two important Cambridge lectures to which you may care to refer dealing with specific aspects of my subject. Roger Fry: *Art History as an Academic Subject*, C.U.P. 1930, deals chiefly with the difficulties of aesthetic appreciation, and W. G. Constable: *Art History and Connoisseurship*, C.U.P. 1938, deals chiefly with the materials and scientific systems of study. My chief concern here is the justification of the subject and its peculiar application in South Africa and more particularly in this University.

This lecture is confessedly special pleading. It is intended to demonstrate the very special value of my subject as part of University studies, and to make certain suggestions as to its application here in South Africa, where there are peculiar difficulties to be overcome and peculiar circumstances governing the possible methods of teaching which can be adopted. It is argued by some, that, owing to lack of material of our galleries and collections, the subject cannot be adequately and profitably studied here. But I hope to show that, in some respects at least, the lack is even an advantage, and that it is not impossible to overcome the disadvantages one by one.

But first let us decide what a University is, and then let us consider whether our subject is a university subject. Shall we say what a University is not? It is not a technical college, however much it may be concerned, as it undoubtedly is, with techniques. It is not primarily concerned with teaching a trade, though, to be sure, it is teaching men and women to be tradesmen of life, skill and purpose. Perhaps it should think of itself as a body of learned men come together to do their own work. Having the knowledge and the leisure for study they have also a moral obligation to perpetuate it, to impart it. This is where the students come in. Please will you bear with me a moment, while I quarrel with the idea of students? Here the word Student all too often implies a passive embryo, a person in becoming, not to be respected until, by a few weeks' swatting, he writes sufficient second-hand facts on paper to acquire that dubious distinction of diploma or degree, which for a moment's effort or a moment's folly he bears as a class on his back for the rest of his life, to rest for life on his laurels or live out a life to expunge his failures. But I would suggest to you that the idea is wrong. There is, in fact, no such thing as a 1st. or 3rd. year student. They are men and women at various stages of being living people, and at all the stages are valuable, all are living, the bad as well as good. In the School of Fine Arts, they do not become artists because of a degree, accredited from that moment, but from the first moment, from the first day. Bad artists perhaps, becoming better, or not becoming better, but makers from the first day, gradually living into their subject, and being slowly corrupted into being better at it. I would see a school in which art is made and thought about from the first. Not imposed, like an ideology, but freed out of the lives of the students. To take an analogy with sculpture, not modelled but carved. One doesn't rightly model students. One carves them. They are, in the hands of the lecturer, material to be realised. Form is only imposed on clay and upon clay people, an intellectual form, having meaning only from the intellect and will of the man who imposed it. But in carving form is found in the stone and the wood. The stone and the wood, like the student, grows here in South Africa, asking for the form in its very nature to be freed. A piece of stone in the studio, and a student in the university lies around for months in inviolable being, until one day the form latent

within it cries out in its own name; "I am here. Set me free. I am!" And the artist, or the university lecturer, takes his hammer and bright tools, and cuts away the meaningless stone and wood and bad early education, to find that thing which cried out in its resistless growth, in its very own nature. Sculpture and free men are born in this way.

"But there are very few," they say. "How many will make great artists? What's the use of teaching those without talent? Will you ever get a school of artists worth so much trouble and expense?" That isn't quite the issue. All students are valuable living beings, potential artist material. We all breathe, we all talk and breed. We cannot all express form, understand the form of the world we live in. Why not? Long before people could write words they could record an image, make a weapon, enrich their lives with choice and possession of things they had made for joyful use. Give back a different world and a shapely one to the world they looked on. This is a wonderful country. Great art, great sculpture needing to be given meaning by the mind and hand of man, shouts at you out of the mountains; in the changes of climate there is all the sensuous splendour of great painting, and in the tongues of the leaves a poetry. Here is the material of the greatest knowledge of reality, the formal order of the material Universe in which we take our functioning places. This sort of reality is to the artist what truth is to the philosopher.

This thing of art is not an isolated phenomenon. It is an embodiment of a physical and spiritual necessity. Men are born to be makers. We must not cease to realise that the most unhelpful student is a living being with an aura, a circle of contacts in which he or she moves and grows and becomes gradually. Let us remember the thousands of Raphaels who went to make the ONE who is now remembered, the thousands who tried to be and are forgotten. For one name remembered, hundreds are lost into oblivion because they failed to be inventors and masters; but they contribute to the living pulse of the age, culminating like the parts of coral dying upon coral, in the Raphael of a time. Would there ever have been a Raphael thrown up in the world if it had not been for the spirit of the forgotten thousands who made the age? In art history, as we study this Raphael we study the age of this Raphael, the age of these thousands of living beings culminating in a transcendent achievement. The arts which we study of whatever age are always contemporary with us. Pompeian fresco is NOW. The artist who made it lives in his work in MY time. I do not live in his. The contrary is the archaic fallacy. Art is an eternal religion, always near, investing everything with awareness, consciousness of being, the form and the meaning of made objects impinging upon us always as we are living our lives in an eternity among them. That then presents the setting for my subject. What is its nature; what is the nature of art history?

We study history and the events of history, a battle, a bill and a consequence. But in art history we study objects which continue to exist, always ready for reference, so that all the history of man exists in every valid work of art, and every invention in the arts alters history and modifies knowledge and being by just so much as itself and forever. Pictures and books are made out of paint and people. The acts of points made by people are there for all time because of certain historical and human reasons, problems solved on demand, engineering feats too, discovering the technical means out of the needs. Minds change and grow; the wisdom of the world is full of discovery. There are only these few things in the modern world of being, the same as ever; doing, making, knowledge purpose, the understanding of the directed purpose, the knowledge of self and the understanding and use of this self in the waiting world. Sooner or later, unlike the ostrich, every student stands at bay, and must face 2,000 or two billion years of it, all fully present in the history of artifact, to be studied and known at leisure and by all.

If what I have been saying is true, and it is, what better subject of university study is open to us, than the one in which the evidence of the things themselves is always before us, for enjoyment, estimation, re-estimation, enlightenment and re-enlightenment?

W. G. Constable in his *Art History and Connoisseurship* defines art history as "the history of man as a maker of material things into which an aesthetic element enters". It objectifies and incorporates the mind of man moving about in the material world, of man with a conscious being selecting and making for joy and need. In this sense it is that art expresses BEING, and it is as strange and inexhaustible as being, outside all families and fads as being is; concerned with choosing, selecting for reasons. It enters all existence, honouring or dishonouring it. The gestures of men have no meaning until they fall into the pattern of a dance. Chronology lies in a table of dates and means nothing by itself. But the material acts of art make up a body of affective elements at work in the world forever, and all history here lies open to interpretation. The written history of art is a transposition into words of a series of plastic acts conceived and carried out by humanity as a whole, its periods form an unbroken series of seasons, of germination, flowers, fruit, fall and seeding. Our job as historians is to make clear the big issues and larger events, to discern, arrange and deduce a story from a mass of lived and made details, remembering always that the single expressive act of a man or woman, a whispered word, a supreme and positive expressive act like a good painting, is worth the whole *opus* of theories.

Our materials of study are the things themselves, and we must always refer to the things. It is not a question of heresy about a Bunkers Hill or an Agincourt, for we have the thing itself, the very acts of history. Here is the passionate narrative of man's curiosity and education, his meeting with objects in

relation to himself. But we have not the objects in South Africa as yet! I am coming to that shortly.

The old type of historian and the archaeologist find original sources, collect, arrange a sequence, define analogies. All that, or all but a little of that, is done already, except in the byways of as yet special research not possible here. At any rate there is already a vast material to go on with. The art historian I see re-animates the fact in terms of the day. His work will never be done. He studies them in relation to his own being till they mean perhaps himself THE MAN, l'homme, mensch, ME, You! Affirming by degrees the features of a god, the portrait and bare likeness of man and woman. These works of art arise out of need and the coincidence of needs, joyful whole, sensuous, inevitable, unless thwarted, ACTS OF CHOICE. "Why were they chosen?" says the art historian "How?" He sees civilization as a lyric phenomenon, a game or a song always continuing. Tools, technical tools, do not make up a civilization, nor does the invention and wonder of them, nor do machines used for material interests; but only the deep emotional forces arising out of the full use of the tools of a time arrange for a new song, a state of civilization. For the meaning of our own day in this sense we shall need to live 10,000 years to know. Our inventions, our tools, add to our means, but not to the stature of the game itself, and for that matter the embrace and the song made out of it in a taxi is no better a thing than the embrace in a field of Bion.

It is even possible that Egypt of 2,000 years ago through the solidarity, unity, controlled variety of its arts and the long sustaining of them held a greater civilization than any after. These things the art historian seeks and tests against his own experience, ever widening it, never abandoning the testing and re-testing. He finds the style of an age as a particular equilibrium in various pertaining elements in the time, the material and the men he studies, and discovers that the triumphs of art are important moments of being which have been conquered out of the incoherence of nights and days of hesitation and fumbling with half-understood, half-realized things. His study is of the process also. And the history of art is the story of such moments arranged in the order of happening, by which we know now what we have become, and may become by the choosing.

Art history and art criticism is essentially a collective work, which goes on like art itself from age to age, modifies, grows, is cut down, thickens like a tree, seeds, spreads, bears new fruit, multiplies, decays, falls, is re-made. I submit, therefore, that this fact also enhances its value as an academic subject, because it is the history of man within community, man alone with the adventure of himself, a full, free, choosing creature; man collective in the cage of politics, cults, economics, frustration; Man in magnificence

This history is also a creative thing, because it is always being written, re-written, always re-orienting itself against the positive demonstrative acts of the artists, the acts of paint making aware. It is even a medium for the understanding of the man writing and learning the history. Its ramifications are endless.

If my plea so far is not enough to convince you, let me add that there is no study which so enriches the whole life of a university in that it needs the help of so many arts and sciences, and must needs liberalize them all in return, the most austere and specialized of them even. Its needs and interests are immense; archaeology, anthropology, religious history, classics, philosophy, political history, economics, social sciences, psychology, literature and the many languages in which books have been written about it, to say nothing of those scientific aids for the examination of its artifacts required from the physicist and the chemist, concern it. The materials of art history in return, the artifacts, form no small part of the materials of other studies, whether of the archaeologist, anthropologist, philosopher, classical scholar or political historian, who seek from the art historian conclusions denying and confirming his own. Our subject can go just as far as a "liberal" university is prepared to take it, and is implied at once in every act, look, stroke of the brush, which every first year student makes under wise supervision of lecturers and professors knowing these things. The thing must be told and lived and made, and the teaching is of the living and the expression of living. The meaning of the thing should emerge in a really functioning department, made clear in a gesture, when they stand up together in gowns and show themselves as themselves, for those who really study the arts inhabit a life far greater than their own, which is the life of all ages present in things made, and by it all they are conditioned to the wholeness of MAN.

But the creative impulse of the artist is concerned in terms of and finds expression in a specific material. The conception of a work of art is not the same thing which finds its final shape in the abstract world of ideas, like philosophy, and is then embodied in a material chosen arbitrarily for it. If an artist attempts to paint an idea he strikes at once against the substance of his material and the idea as such is annihilated by it. Idea and material react upon each other, idea working the material, and the material responding with a form peculiar to itself. The artists sets out not to express an idea, but to make a thing. This thing no doubt has a spirit arising from the depths of his metaphysical nature, but it is not made to express his metaphysical nature. Meanings are not painted as they may be written or spoken. In a work of art we are left with a thing which IS, in its own nature, apart from the idea, apart from the artist, haunted perhaps with a fathomless spirit, but all apart and inviolate in its own being. A new material or a scientific invention may provoke a new idea, a new idea discover the potentialities of a new material. A work of art is an

actual THING, an actual piece of material, evidence of an experience, and ideas and words and philosophy will never adequately explain its actual nature. Our study then is a work of actual physical examination of a series of objects, the reasons for them, their relationship to one another, their significance among themselves and in relation to the time at which they were made and to our time in which we experience them. We extend our understanding as it were with a sixth sense, vastly enlarging and cross-checking by actual physical experience the other means of obtaining knowledge open to scholarship, reading, thinking, hearing, comparing, deducing as we do in the other arts faculties. So that the study and comparison of artifacts may indeed be regarded as an extension into the actual physical world of those speculative arts with which the University in its study of life and the history of man is amply concerned elsewhere.

Having posited the physical entity of a work of art, having the actual events of our history before us in all their substance, or reproductions of the substance, we must remind ourselves of the thinginess at all times, return at all times from supposition and speculation to contemplation of the things themselves. Never as we teach our history, must we permit the student to forget that it is an object which he contemplates and not just what is said or written about it. Certain historical facts are given to set the scene and prepare the mental mounting for it, certain arrangements of facts made to tell a story and construct a coherent sequence of events, but the events remain always for study. Often the facts could as well be arranged differently: the picture and the sculpture remains the same under scrutiny except for the changes wrought in its condition by time and ill-treatment, and in the persons who contemplate them in a different age. Never must we forget that the work of art in itself is the act, the cause and purpose of our whole course of study. Dates and historical facts other than technical facts are check points. A birth or a death date matters to us only because it proves whether the work could have been made by that particular artist at that particular time, the improbability or probability of certain supposed influences upon him. Could he have seen this or that before he made it?

Technical facts on the other hand are necessary knowledge, vital information without which the thing itself cannot be made or fully understood. White from the tube is meaningless as more than white paint; but our knowledge says that white is the sum of all colours, it is also the negation of all colours. How then to animate this dead stuff, charge it with meaning? "You can place this on top of this, or this beside this," says the lecturer, "for this reason or for that, and your result will be now this now that in a hundred years' time." This is technical knowledge; life ensues in the material. Apart from the making of professional artists, this alone is simple justification for the practical study of art in our Faculty, and I would even go so far as to declare that the serious study of art history

is impossible without the technical knowledge, setting it first in the requirements of the school. The University art school above all is concerned with the teaching of sound technical processes, not only those in our time, but also those as far as they are known or can be discovered by research of the old masters: and the knowledge applied by the art historian to the consideration of his artifacts becomes academic knowledge and fittingly part of his academic study, different in kind, purpose and extent to the recipes and tricks of trade which are admittedly part of the stock in trade of the technical school. I see then a degree course in such a school as this framed so as to specialise after the first year, on the one hand towards the training of the artist, and on the other towards the production of the art historian and critic, and, not least, of the appreciator, of the man and woman of deep culture and understanding, who shall make the free spirit of this age and this land articulate, just as in the school of language emphasis may, as the course evolves, be laid either upon linguistic study, or upon the study of the literature of the language and the practical business of reading, writing and thinking in it.

But I have been talking so much of the objects themselves and the necessary reference to them that you will perhaps wonder how the subject can be studied here in their absence. It is here that our difficulty lies, because there is not enough being made well-enough here to form even a basis for direct study, and we have to fall back upon reproductions and photographs. In time, if the public galleries are enabled to do all they should do and are better endowed and enriched by gifts, there may be (as in America) great study collections here. Meanwhile, from good photographs and reproductions used properly, it is at any rate possible to study content, general character, even something of method; in fact all those things which can be described and communicated by books and lectures, all those basic and necessary facts which go to make up historical understanding. What is not possible is direct physical contact with the things themselves.

Now I believe it to be true that the real meaning of a work of art cannot be communicated or described, it can only be lived in the senses, experienced by nature or induced by long contact.

But then also it is impossible to examine in these things, and at this stage the experience passes out of the range of academic study and at this point becomes part of life itself. The best criticism of all amounts only to a series of grunts giving notice of that inward shout of joy which a great work of art occasions, or noting its absence or attempting to discover the reason for it. A bad picture can be described more often than not because its character lives outside the painting and is somewhere akin to words. But the goodness of a picture in its material and affective nature cannot be described. We might instance Goya's horrors of war for our point here. They are etchings, legitimate communications with a literary purpose,

illustrations in fact, as etchings well may be. The art content is incidental and happens to be good because Goya was a good painter, but without this they could affect their purpose of pleading.

We might say perhaps that knowledge necessary for the understanding of art history, all that can be taught by speech can be more or less sufficiently conveyed by photographs through a teacher who has seen and experienced. We lack only the physical presences from which, even had we the works, the students would need to teach themselves. A student may be prepared here for seeing, armed with the facts, examined on this as far as it is possible to examine anyway, and provided at some time we can bring him into contact, or he brings himself into contact with the things themselves, all will be well.

Again, practical work in the studios, even for the historian, can be used to some extent to induce the actual sensation of the things, and I would submit that here in South Africa it becomes even an essential part, for this reason, of the academic study. The studios are laboratories and provide a sort of physical initiation into the material nature of the things studied in the photographs. The underlying structure of our course then might rest upon a double purpose: 1. The understanding of the art of making, technical knowledge; 2. The study of the history of made things. From the first the student must learn technical methods, the characteristics and limitations of his materials, the method of making. Alongside of this he studies the history of artifacts, using whatever illustrations are available, relying perhaps more than his fellows would in the old world upon the energy and understanding of well stored and experienced professors. Then, some time or other, even perhaps in the last stages of his studentship, he must be given some means of access to the things themselves. For this we must insist on our galleries for what they have, and urge and help them to get more; on the goodwill of private collectors, who may give access to their possessions to accredited students, or make them available sometimes in loan exhibitions in the gallery or in the university itself. On the other hand, I see no reason why it should not be possible in the course of time to obtain bursaries and grants for controlled study overseas, which could very well be small, provided arrangements could be made for attachments to galleries and museums, either as a final half-year for students who show themselves fit or likely to proceed to first or second-class honours and would be of service in these galleries, or as a post-graduate course leading by thesis to a higher degree. So many South Africans go abroad anyway now, and I do not believe that this difficulty of seeing is insuperable if we consider it this way. But the actual work of art is not really born out of galleries, it is not born out of history, it may be born out of the land and the use of the materials of the land, and your laboratories and workshops of art make it possible for the university also to assist at the birth even of a South African art.

Let this student from the Free State, and this other from Natal, bring back stone from their Province and carve it, farms from their farms, and know them fully. This student, who conceives a desire to make something, often let him fetch the material for it from its source. As he seeks the material, studies the forms of his land, he may very well realise a new art which shall add South Africa to the history other students learn. Let him learn his craft here and practice it, and then he will know what he wants from the world at large, and you shall help him to fetch that too. The University department is there to help him to be and to show him how to do. Let him draw from models for knowledge of models; teach him techniques and methods, and the possibilities of materials, and let him work at home also, work everywhere and always, go wisely seeking on wise advice. Then let him bring his work, his life, his own secret and living being back into the University, which is his spiritual and intellectual home, and show it to you, you teachers. Help him then out of your knowledge and experience, your own work, your own seeking and finding, discarding and acquiring. He works with you and beside you and under you, because it is your job to know. The student in such a school will produce; you aid and advise and explain. He does it! You approve it if you can. You do not read books, think thoughts and be for him. You bring him to the place of vantage for finding, with thumbs in the places of reference. He does the work and becomes by the doing.

There is a passion to escape from first-hand problems these days, to work at second hand. No cheap bought canvas replaces a prepared and chosen ground. There are a billion years to face here, and the inscrutable faces of the Drakensberg.

History, and art history here is in the making, though as yet there is not much of it. Here we must avoid that divorce of scholarship from life which came with the meticulous German art historians who scrounged and ordered so carefully the facts of so much for us now to use. Even remember that the precious data of Doerner is meaningless until put to its purpose. You could make a Faculty here in South Africa to which students would flock from the ends of the land, which could in fact be the greatest achievement of its kind, the living heart of this liberal University, something which has never been done yet in the old universities, a thing conceived and carried out from the beginning, from the earth of a land. In the old world, everywhere else, things have already happened. Here they are about to happen. Even already in Cape Town things are "preserved." Cape Town has assumed a preserving function. Now in Johannesburg let things be made as they are already in industry. This dynamic energy, this diffuse restlessness, if, as in an enlightened Greece, it is canalized into a great public effort a public passion for the arts can make in your midst a powerful positive university, serving in this creative thing all South Africa.

Great artists do not yet grow in this land because there is, as yet, no suitable breeding ground for them. That indeed is what the university is for, a breeding ground no less. Your Fine Art Department can so easily become the most significant thing that has happened in this University, and, by its results, in South Africa, for that matter. Let you gather together the best teachers, the best understanders, the most vital and dissatisfied students. Canalize this passionate restlessness of yours, and set going the heart of a limitless University. Develop it here and give it the means to grow. The whole mind of South Africa is like a train gathering momentum, and unless we jump aboard and control it from the Universities it will be going too fast and we shall find it a hundred years from now puffing in a siding.

To return to the conditioning idea. If one lives long enough among good things, or even with the knowledge about the good things one should live among, one is conditioned by them, so that even the great-grandson of an emigré, who has never seen his land of origin, will carry something of the spirit of it in his veins and show a strange understanding. This is a deep thing and slow becoming and long lasting and the glory of thinking man.

I see the growth of a culture as something like this. Here, where we started if you like, the finding of gold in 1886. Shelters are built, any shelters, protection against sun and storm. Money is made. A city, and the industries which provide for its urgent needs develop. It prospers and grows very rich. Great fortunes are amassed. Those then who made the fortunes bequeath them to sons who by then acquire also a new and precious leisure conducive to thought and speculation. They build better houses and refine upon their needs to make needs into pleasures; buy pictures and things made for joy by the hands of man who understood the need and the joy. They buy bad pictures at first. But their sons born among pictures and conditioned by the presence of pictures become aware and begin one day to choose among them and to say: "What pictures ought we to buy?" A critical process sets in, and a high civilization begins at this point. Now it is knowledge that they need. It is a slow process. Here the University steps in.

But civilization can be bought to some extent; bought quickly as the Americans have bought it. Very quickly. Here the Galleries step in.

As soon as the need arose in America, all those descendants of so many nations went to the places of their origin and bought and brought the things of their origins to live with them to condition themselves and the new land they lived on. Indiscriminately at first and with vulgarity, but furiously, in order to have, because they were in a hurry for that thing which they wanted badly, and which it was not possible to make for themselves hurriedly.

And now from the first displays of vulgarity, the initial attack of kleptomania, they are recovering. The great treasure hoards are beginning to condition the people. The things themselves are beginning to be examined and sorted and pondered. A great civilization begins. It is now even becoming difficult to study the arts of Europe thoroughly without visiting America.

South Africa has not done this. It talks about culture. People talk about art and make a sort of aristocracy out of the artists. But there has been no real acquisitiveness. Rather a sad isolation. There is no real canon of criticism. Always we must remember that opinion is not criticism. In our attitude to the real meaning and value of the arts we are a very backward nation

I submit that we have two great needs therefore:

1. To get things and get them fast.
2. To awaken the desire and the understanding and to acquire sound knowledge.

The first makes a demand for galleries and museums and good ones. The second need calls out for universities and liberal ones. Galleries make the standards, hold the objects themselves in trust. Universities make the people and hold the thinking and the understanding of the people. The people make the universities by a people's decree. And so we return to the University as our first most vital need as I believe. Here is your Crock of Gold. Use it wisely and well.

INCIDENTALLY...

By GILBERT HERBERT

LANDMARK:

"But yes," said the man at the Cook's office, brushing aside a pile of travel folders, and revealing a map of the city, "of course I know it: le grand habitation le Corbusier. Take a number 22 tram from the Prefecture, here," stabbing at the map with his finger, "to the Boulevard Michelet, and ask the conductor to put you off."

This was in reply to my rather tentative questions about "the large block of flats now being put up in Marseilles." I hadn't really expected an adequate answer: why should a travel bureau have knowledge of one building in a very large city? But to the man behind the counter I could mean only one thing, the building which has been taking form for the last two years, and the like of which Marseilles has not seen before. Not yet fully complete, the vast apartment building has already become a landmark in the Marseilles scene.

NO ADMISSION:

From town, the building is approached down the Boulevard Michelet, a tree-lined avenue, shadow-dappled, and flanked by two service roads. In the distance, the hills around the city can be seen. Suddenly, through a break in the trees, a grey wall of concrete is glimpsed, there on the right, to be lost sight of in the flurry of getting off the tram, to be seen again walking back from the tram stop. The grey mass looms up once more, a rectangular block set splayed at an angle to the road. Lengthen your stride, quicken your pace, approach the gate eagerly—a visit to any Corby building is an event, and this is the latest and perhaps greatest opus of the master. Unlimber your camera, hasten through the open gate. . . . but No! Irate French voices raise up, and an unseen notice on the gate-post is drawn emphatically to your attention. Scanty reserves of French vocabulary are summoned from some dim recess of the

mind, and one gathers, by a process half translation, half intuition, that "access of the public is forbidden." The world crumbles around you. Have you travelled several hundred miles for this? But look, there is something more: "Visitors should gather between 3.00 and 3.30, when they will be conducted over the building." My goodness, a conducted tour! to this half-finished building already taking its place with the great churches and galleries as a must on the itinerary of the tourist? Are we to see, at 3 p.m., a horde of trippers pouring out of the upholstered interior of one of those luxury buses that "tour the city"? Joking aside, though, it is encouraging to see that the great works of modern architecture are receiving sufficient attention (though, I fear, primarily from architects) to warrant special arrangements being made to visit them. The residents of Highpoint, the Tecton flats in Highgate, London, were so plagued by visitors that a special day has had to be set aside for the inspection of the building. At the Cité Universitaire in Paris, the privacy of the occupants of the Swiss Pavilion is assured by a notice on the stairs forbidding access by visitors to the upper floors. And here at Marseilles, one joins the tail of a crocodile, like a Cook's tour "doing" St. Peter's.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Seeing a building with which one is familiar by photographs is a pleasant experience. It is like visiting an old friend, or walking through paths across familiar fields. One of the joys of an architect in travelling is suddenly, unexpectedly, to come across a building in a strange land, and to say "Oh, look, I know that place." One must, in parenthesis, admit that one learns in addition how very much one doesn't know, and at times longs for a Banister Fletcher at hand to refresh the

memory. It is true of most of the modern buildings in Europe, however, that they are in some measure already familiar even when seen in actuality for the first time. Of course, photographs can be misleading, and at time, the image needs correction. On seeing the Swiss Pavilion in the flesh my first reaction was: "But how small it is!" Dramatisation by photograph had managed to convey the impression of a far larger building; and I remember a friend writing, on first seeing the Peter Jones Store in London: "But who would have thought it was green."

Seeing the Marseilles building for the first time, however, was to obtain a genuine first impression, rather than the confirmation or correction of a previous conception. Plans and elevations which I had seen, while giving some indication of the complexity of the design, had actually been completely inadequate in enabling the mind to form a picture of what the building was to look like. The first impression, then, was a picture stamped onto a blank sheet—and this made the impact of the building so very much the greater.

STRONG MEAT:

First impressions—magnitude, ruggedness, and an overwhelming impression of strength. What a forthright, strong, virile building this is! One looks at it; and gasps; inarticulately, but with deep feeling; one looks, and receives a tremendous emotional impact; one looks, and says: "This is big, meaning not big in size, but something large in significance. This architecture may not be to everyone's taste, for it is strong meat, but it is as broad and as sweeping in concept as a statute by Michael Angelo or a Beethoven symphony. For a few minutes, while waves of that first vital impression pass over one, powers of analysis and criticism seem stunned. One cannot say, at the outset: "I like this building, because..." One just knows, instinctively: "This is very, very good."

WHYS AND WHEREFORS:

Excitement subsides, and one can examine the building more critically, and try to see what factors give it strength. Firstly, I think its strength lies in the simplicity of its basic shape, which fundamentally is a rectangular slab of marked horizontal proportions, like a skyscraper lying on its side. This block stands free of the ground, on pairs of linked and tapered columns, set splayed, like the braced legs of a circus strongman holding a great weight. The surfaces of this slab are unbroken by any predominant vertical feature, except on the east facade, where the lift tower rises. The gymnasium on the roof, and projections such as flues, have freely curved shapes, following the precedent set by the Ministry of Education building in Rio, where the soft curves of all roof protuberances do not detract from the fundamental rectangular shape. The simplicity of this extremely large mass of the building, then, is the first element which gives the block its character.

Secondly, it derives its strength from the extreme boldness of the patterning of the facade. Now, it is a commonplace of architectural treatment, perhaps because it is the most logical

thing to do, to express the beam and column structure as a grid on the facade. While this may provide an interesting surface pattern for a building say of the size of the Twentieth Century building in Johannesburg, yet when applied to a very much larger structure the scale of subdivision would become mean, small. The solution of the problem of, on the one hand, expressing beams and columns, while on the other creating a pattern based on a unit larger than a single bay, is not easily come by. In the Marseilles building, Corbusier has inserted into the grid a vertical series of alternating single floors and duplex rooms, with balconies to the single floor unit and the lower portion of the duplex, and a large horizontal brise-soleil bisecting the duplex window above. The rhythm achieved is bold—balcony, balcony, window, balcony, balcony, window, and so on—and while the indication of floor lines on elevation is maintained, a unit of sub-division greater than one floor height patterns the facade and forms the bar, to use a musical simile, in which there are two short beats followed by a long one. By this method, a pattern is achieved which in itself is broad, and which is in scale with the magnitude of the facade. However, it must be said that because of this larger vertical unit of subdivision, and because floor to ceiling heights are lower than one usually sees in large buildings, and parapets are higher, and because in places windows run through two floors in height, it is difficult at first glance to read the true scale of the building, in relation to the human figure. Because of this, the facade of the building, with its intricate patterning, becomes abstract, and a little divorced from life. To make a huge building strong and virile, and yet to keep it human, is a problem which has not altogether been solved in Marseilles.

Thirdly, for its character the building depends on the use of rather unsophisticated materials. Concrete work is left unplastered, with the pattern of the shuttering, a deliberate pattern, still showing. Walls are faced with precast concrete slabs, uncoloured, with the aggregate worked to the surface. Balcony balustrades are also in precast concrete, pierced with square holes. I believe that all this is going to remain uncoloured, in its natural concrete grey. I discussed this with one of the architects on the site, and he said (freely translated: he spoke German, of which I have a few words, not very adequate for long technical discussions, but better than my French, which is not adequate for anything): "It is better not to paint the building. This way, after all, it is natural." And that is the impression that one does get through this use of almost crude materials, an impression of a structure with all the strength of a work of nature. This is a cliff-dwelling, a mountain.

While the surfaces are to remain uncoloured, it seems from the demonstration flat, the only portion of the building so far to be completed, that the reveals and soffits to beams and slabs externally are to be painted, not in timid pastel shades, but in vigorous reds, deep greens and bright unsullied whites. Whether these bright patches of different colours are experimental, or whether the whole building is to be decorated in this

fashion I cannot say; but if the latter course is adopted, a result as vibrant and as exciting as an early Léger canvas may be expected.

ACROSS THE BORDER :

The finishes are rough almost to the point of crudity. I believe that this very crudity plays a great part in creating the striking character of the building. Yet, it is open to question whether this sort of unsophisticated finish is appropriate in a large building which is the product of a highly mechanized building technique. Lack of refinement in detailing is a matter, I believe, of deliberate architectural policy : but in addition lack of precision in execution leads to doubts, not only of the building technique, but ultimately of the architectural policy itself. This lack of fine workmanship is especially obvious after a visit to Italy.

Three days prior to seeing the Marseilles building, I was fortunate enough to be taken over "Montecatini" in Milan, an office building housing the three thousand workers of a large chemical industry's administration staff. This is a fine building, though, with all due deference to architect Gio Ponti, it has none of the grandness of conception that one finds at Marseilles. Yet, if Marseilles is an architectural tour de force, Montecatini is an object lesson in refinement of detail, precision workmanship, and a standard of finish at which I for one was amazed. After seeing so many fine buildings, both in Europe and South Africa, which have deteriorated badly through lack of upkeep, it is a pleasure to see a building which requires little or no maintenance, and yet remains as fresh as ever. Monte-

catini was built ten years ago : it looks as if it were completed yesterday. Materials are durable : windows, doors, grilles, are in aluminium; external wall surfaces are sheathed in marble or mosaic; internal office partitions are of aluminium and glass; floors are of marble or synthetic resin tiles; roofs are covered with aluminium. All materials are integrally coloured, easily cleaned, easily maintained; all workmanship is machinelike, precise; and the whole vast building has a sleekness and a sophistication harmonizing well with our present-day civilization.

TAKING THE ROUGH WITH THE SMOOTH :

Of course it may be argued that such smoothness and such polished efficiency, while in sympathy with the administrative functions of a large industrial combine, nevertheless would fail to give an adequate environment for the very human functions of everyday life. It is not advocated here that the machined finish of Montecatini should have been applied to the Marseilles flats. One cannot live in a chromium and glass box: and Corbusier has travelled far from the time when just that criticism was being levelled at his houses. But it is possible that he has gone just a little too far. In the work of Lloyd Wright there has always been the recognition of the basic function of the home as a shelter, and it is said, for instance, that the living room of "Falling Waters" is more cave than room. In this his latest work Corbusier approaches very close to Wright, but on a scale which is perhaps incompatible with this more rugged approach to architecture. If Lloyd Wright has designed a cave, Corbusier has designed a cliff dwelling. Perhaps a world seeking shelter from the horrors of atomic war may develop a new race of troglodytes, to live in its serried cells.

NOTES AND NEWS

ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION.

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL

The Reconstruction Committee invite architects who are British subjects practising in the United Kingdom, the British Commonwealth and Eire to submit designs in competition for a proposed new Cathedral, Chapel of Unity and Christian Service Centre to be erected on a site in the centre of Coventry.

The Royal Institute of British Architects have nominated Sir Percy Thomas, LL.D., D.L., P.P.R.I.B.A., Mr. Edward Maufe, R.A., M.A.(Oxon), LL.D., F.F.R.I.B.A., and Mr. Howard Robertson, M.C., A.R.A., F.R.I.B.A., S.A.D.G., to act as Assessors. Premiums of £2,000, £1,500 and £1,000 will be paid to the authors of the designs placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively.

The Schedule of Conditions and particulars of site, etc., will be ready for issue about the beginning of October, and in the meantime intending competitors should make application to Captain N. T. Thurston, M.C., Secretary to the Reconstruction

Committee, 22, Bayley Lane, Coventry, enclosing a deposit of two guineas, which will be returned upon receipt of a bona fide design or upon the return of the Competition documents within one month of receipt of the Answers to Questions.

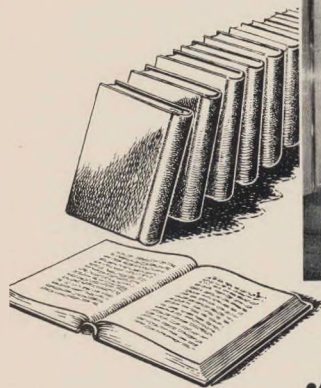
The latest date for application for the Conditions is October 30th, 1950, and the closing date for the receipt of designs the 2nd July, 1951.

VEREENIGING MUNICIPAL ELECTRICITY BY-LAWS

Owing to difficulties which have arisen in the past by failure of Electrical Contractors not registered in the Vereeniging Municipal Area to comply with the provisions of Section 28(a) of these by-laws, the relative section is drawn to the attention of members. It reads as follows:

"No person shall contract to carry out any new electric wiring installation which is intended to be connected or the modification or extension of any existing electric wiring installation which is connected or intended to be connected to the Council's electricity supply mains, unless he is in possession of a current Electrical Wiring Contractor's Annual Licence issued in terms of these by-laws, permitting him to perform such work."

DESIGN



for BOOKS

by SAGE



Juta's new Johannesburg Book Store. Shopfronts in stainless steel and bronze. Interior fixtures in White Birch. Designed, fabricated and installed by :

FREDK. SAGE & CO. (S.A.) (PTY.) LIMITED

Shopfitters and Metal Craftsmen

Box 777

10, HEIDELBERG ROAD, JOHANNESBURG

Phone 22-7555

Journal of the SA Architectural Institute

PUBLISHER:

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

LEGAL NOTICE:

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the Library website.