emphasized his importance and distorted his work (most of which is much smaller in scale than realized), but Braham seems to have gone to the other extreme by devoting only seven pages, including illustrations, to him. Even so, the short section may well be the fairest one in print concerning that architect.

Ledoux, the other major 'revolutionary' architect, is the sole subject of Part III. Incredible as it seems after all that has been published on this artist, Braham finds a great deal new to say while correcting many false preconceptions. The thorough, perceptive, and above all, sane essay on this *major* architect – and Braham is very convincing on this score – is a significant contribution to the subject and must share the honors with those on Soufflot and de Wailly. A map of Paris situating many of the buildings discussed (as well as a few hardly mentioned) is particularly valuable in helping to clarify the chapter on the *barrières*. Here as elsewhere Braham provides a wealth of biographical and historical details, including travellers' accounts, remarks by Horace Walpole and Mrs. Thrale, and even paintings related to the discussion.

The fourth and final part is devoted mainly to two major architects: Brongniart and Belanger. Various minor figures such as Lequeu, Thomas de Thomon, and Robert Mique, however, are presented in a wide-ranging essay on Paris and the country at the end of the century. The last chapter on theory and practice before and after the Revolution is an excellent if unexciting summary.

Two aspects of the production of the book deserve comment. One is the very complete captions and comments under each of the illustrations. Even if the reader only looked at these, he or she would get an excellent summary of the book. Therefore this study may also serve as a useful quick reference work. The other, less pleasing, feature is the absence, in the text, of numbered references to footnotes. At the back of the book there are excellent notes arranged by part, chapter, and page; however, the reader must search them out. Is it too difficult for printers to insert numbers?

One looks almost in vain for omissions or minor faults. The most obvious of these may be the lack of discussion of the first use of *grotteschi*, which Fiske Kimball thought to be the basis of the Louis XVI style. Perhaps Braham felt that too much had already been written on this problem or that *grotteschi* were not the crucial element Kimball though them to be. However, since he does illustrate many such panels one could have wished for some discussion of this problem, including the difficulty of dating early examples. Also, this reader takes exception to Braham's description of the painted chapel in the church of Ste-Marguerite (Paris) in terms of unappealing, heavy, fake architecture. These, however, are but minor points in a work which represents scholarship at its finest.

Throughout the book one is impressed by Braham's exceptional sensitivity to works of art, by the eloquence of his prose, and by his ability to characterize buildings.

THOMAS J. McCORMICK
Wheaton College
Norton, Massachusetts

JOHN UNRAU *Looking at Architecture with Ruskin*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1978. 180 pp., illus., $15.00.

John Unrau's study of Ruskin's visual appreciation of architecture lends validity to the assertion made by that dominant figure in nineteenth-century criticism: 'the errors of affection' are preferable to 'the accuracies of apathy.' He supplies the art historian with a refreshing view of the breadth and sophistication of Ruskin's commentaries on architecture which balances the more academic and categorizing analyses published by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner and Dr. K.O. Garrigan (respectively, *Ruskin and Viollet le Duc: Englishness and Frenchness in the Appreciation of Gothic Architecture*, London, 1969, and *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford, 1972; Garrigan, *Ruskin on Architecture: his Thought and Influence*, Madison, 1973). Unrau, justifiably, reveals the limitations of these and other books that were intended to 'place' Ruskin's writings in context and to provide an orderly summary of his ideas. For, though Unrau does not propose this, the major problem with Ruskin is that he was, perhaps, the greatest of the proverbial English amateurs, an unscientific, if an exhaustive, student, given to generalizing but really fascinated by the particular (as in his minute examination of decorative detail on San Donato, Murano, with illustrations almost worthy of a nineteenth-century pattern book), and, above all, subjective and partial while wishing to be objective and consistent.

In his 'extended introduction' Unrau in effect seeks to prove R.F. Jordan's contention that the twentieth century 'has attributed to him opinions he never held' (*Victorian Architecture*, London, 1966, p. 170). It is a further outcome of a lengthy acquaintance with Ruskin's daunting corpus of creativity, the first fruit of which was 'A Note on Ruskin's Reading of Pugin,' *English Studies*, 48 (August 1967), pp. 335-37. He demonstrates how Ruskin's enthusiasms and inconsistency mask much perceptive and subtle observation on the nature of architecture by rescuing habitually overlooked quotations, and unearthing others previously unpublished, which compensate for such sillier but oft-repeated declarations as 'ornamentation is the principal part of architecture.' He also reproduces an admirable series of Ruskin's drawings and comparative photographs. Indeed the former offer an excellent extension to Paul Walton's *The Drawings of John Ruskin* (Oxford, 1972), and confirm Ruskin as one of the most remarkable illustrators of architecture, at best managing to depict form, ornament, spatial relationships, and those more evanescent qualities, atmosphere and character. The literate and engaging text is served by a thorough bibliography, including a list of unpublished writings by Ruskin, well disciplined notes and a useful index. The one complaint which might be voiced by the uninitiated Ruskin reader is that many of the quotations are only identified by volume and page reference to the Library Edition compiled by Cook and Wedderburn. The book is pleasing to read since the typeface is clear and the presentation attractive.

Through these persuasive means the contemporary reader can better comprehend the intensely emotional yet widely ranging and acute nature of Ruskin's vision: 'I should like to draw all St. Mark's,' John Ruskin confided in a letter addressed to his father in 1852, 'and all this Verona, stone by stone, to eat it all up into my mind touch by touch.' He can also better understand the regard in which his pronouncements were formerly held. Perhaps more importantly, this survey will entice – or shame – the student of architecture into braving what Unrau, somewhat colourfully, describes as the 'intoxication, and occasional nausea, which the ethical, religious and prophetic harangues of *The Seven Lamps* and The *Stones of Venice* [and other writings] so easily induce.'

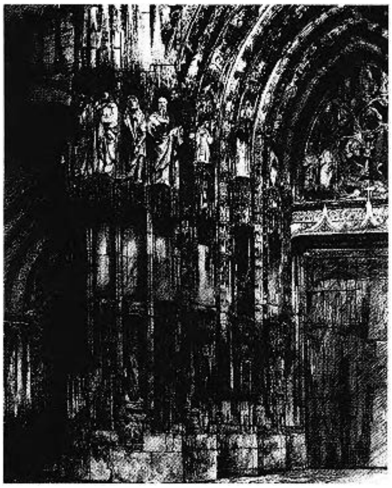

FIGURE 8. Ruskin, Central Doorway of West Front of Fouen Catheral. From Unrau.

In that sentence Unrau betrays a measure of the ideological prejudice which may explain the castigatory reaction to Ruskin of most twentieth-century critics; Ruskin's moralizing and dense prose conflicts utterly with the austere secularism inherent in the Modernist aesthetic. Explaining in the Preface that he will spurn such potentially negative material, Unrau proceeds to question the current conventional wisdom concerning Ruskin's view of architecture. The first misconception to be redressed is Paul Frankl's proposition (in *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries*, Princeton, 1960) that Ruskin failed to 'see the significance of ribbed vaulting because he is not properly aware of the three-dimensional interior; his interest always remains fixed on the two-dimensional surface.' Unrau, with the grace of an urbane counsel, cites effective evidence, especially from *The Bible of Amiens* (1880: only one volume completed), to prove that Ruskin was fully aware of the spatial and structural importance of the vault. Moreover, he quotes Ruskin's remarks on the factor of position in visual experience to indicate how he anticipated the examination of the psychology of vision undertaken by Rudolf Arnheim. Similarly, Joan Evans (author of *John Ruskin*, London, 1954, and of an edition of his diaries) is courteously chided for failing to acknowledge that Ruskin looked at buildings in terms of their construction, while the reader is reminded that he was a passionate observer of individual buildings rather than a pluralist fact-gatherer. The difference between Ruskin and the orthodox architectural historian or critic is obvious in his ridiculing those who would 'form their judgement by seeing much art of all kinds' when they 'merely make themselves as incapable of judgement as a worn-out dictionary [possibly a reference to James Fergusson, who wrote the first international history of architecture].' No less a distinction, of course, was his superb talent as a draughtsman (Fig. 8).

Unrau then embarks on the main part of his apologia by arguing that Ruskin's writings reveal a greater awareness of fundamental assumptions about the constituents of architectural design as adopted by twentieth-century theorists than has been supposed. Thus, among the passages he recites after Pevsner's definition of the history of architecture as 'a history of man shaping space' is that famous one from *The Stones of Venice* about the interior of St. Mark's, a stunning evocation of that fabulous and mysterious space. Further quotations are marshalled to display Ruskin's sensitivity to the architect's ability, or failure, to create spatial effects by adjustments in the disposition and proportioning of masses and of ornament, recalling that Ruskin, Garrigan's denial notwithstanding, deemed the former to be a prior consideration for the most rudimentary of aesthetic responses: '*all* art, and all nature, depend on the disposition of masses.' His appreciation of two-dimensional composition forms the subject of the second chapter, one which, incidentally, he could apply to buildings outside the Gothic such as Sanmicheli's Casa Grimani in Venice. Equally interesting is the account of Ruskin's dissection of the sophisticated articulation of, among other façades, the Duomo at Pisa, expressive of his conclusion that the 'eye is continually influenced by that it cannot detect; nay, it is not going too far to say that it is most influenced by what it detects least' – a statement, interestingly, compared with one taken from a recent article on subliminal perception by A. Ehrenzwig.

Perhaps the chief area of confusion regarding Ruskin's views on architecture, ornament, is surveyed in chapters 3 to 7, which are divided into a series of sections corresponding with the spectator's gradual movement towards a building. Instead of endeavouring to justify those aphorisms which have perturbed many other commentators, Unrau directs the reader to Ruskin's reasoned statements. The most telling appeared in *The Stones of Venice* and indicate that he assessed the success of ornament on the basis of its integration with the structure and relationship with the viewer to it or, in his words, 'the especial condition of true ornament is, that it be beautiful in its place, and nowhere else, and it aid the effect of every portion of the building over which it has influence.' Herein, too, are contained snippets of Ruskin's humour, as his terse dismissal in 1872 of the decoration of the Houses of Parliament in London as 'eternal foolscap in freestone.' Besides criticizing various of the balder assertions of, in particular, Garrigan, Unrau underlines Ruskin's keen eye for successful improprieties and surprisingly liberal taste as in his praise of Flamboyant Gothic decoration. He also shows how Ruskin's sense of the 'visual importance of ornament to the integrity of every building, whether mediaeval or modern' caused him to castigate O'Shea's carving for the Oxford Museum and to despise the majority of contemporary restorations.

The last chapter addresses Ruskin's pronouncements on the place of colour in domestic architecture. Unrau notes that this aspect of design has often been overlooked, even by such masters of the art as Pevsner. Furthermore, he argues that Ruskin, by reference to Venetian and Northern Gothic examples, explained its value as well as its frequently crude use in nineteenth-century design. And Ruskin's remarks on the limitations of photography in recording the appearance of buildings remain a timely reminder to the professional and amateur student of architecture of the complexity of visual experience. Ruskin's comprehension of this truism as manifest in both his writings and drawings is reiterated in broader terms through the conclusion, and exemplified by Unrau's comparison of a sentence describing the 'strange *disquietude* of the Gothic spirit' from *The Stones of Venice* and a pencil-and-water colour sketch of St. Wulfran, Abbeville, 1886.

While there exist certain deficiencies consequent upon Unrau's concentration on the more positive of Ruskin's statements – a tendency to gloss over Ruskin's inconsistencies, to be as partial in quoting from his writings as those scholars he faults, and to skirt the development of Ruskin's thinking (an approach which R. Hewison has applied successfully to Ruskin's writings on art in *John Ruskin: the Argument of the Eye*, London, 1976) – neverthelss the book is a valuable contribution to the literature on Ruskin.

R.W. LISCOMBE
The University of British Columbia

STANISLAUS VON MOOS *Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis*. Cambridge (Mass.), MIT Press, 1979. viii + 379 pp., 222 illus.

This book was first published in German in 1968 and a slightly modified French version was published in 1971. The author's preface to the French edition begins with a quotation from Roland Barthes's *Mythologies* (1957): 'We sail incessantly between the object and its demystification, powerless to render its totality: for if we penetrate the object, we free it but we destroy it; and if we leave it its weight, we respect it but restitute it still mystified.' In fact, Stanislaus von Moos had steered magnificently between these two horns of the dilemma to produce the finest objective study of Le Corbusier so far published: a concise survey of all the relevant factual material fully supported by documentary references.

It is distressing, therefore, that in this new English edition, the author now deplores the obsolescence of his original text, and asserts that he has rewritten certain parts to correspond better, he says, with his present outlook. Whereas the 1971 edition is a brilliantly clear-sighted analysis of Le Corbusier's writings and buildings, the 1979 edition gives the distinct impression of having been deliberately watered down and distorted to correspond with current Post-Modernist orthodoxy. For example, the revised descriptions of the 'Domino House' of 1914, and of the genesis of *Vers une architecture*, are at their worst mendacious, and at their best guilty of sins of omission which reduce them to anodyne publicity blurbs.

Correlation of these two texts is a fascinating and intellectually rewarding exercise. Limitations of space in these columns preclude demonstrations, since these require juxtaposition of the two versions, with accompanying glosses commenting on the variations. But all those interested in the topic can do it themselves. Just make sure that you procure a copy of the French edition before it goes out of print.

PETER COLLINS
McGill University
Montreal

STUART WREDE *The Architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund*. Cambridge (Mass.) et Londres, MIT Press, 1980. 259 + xviii p., 204 illus., $25.00.

Rares sont les études sur l'architecture du xx^{e} siècle qui ont réservé une place à Gunnar Asplund. Après Morton Shand, Bruno Zevi fut un des premiers critiques non scandinaves à s'intéresser à son architecture en lui consacrant une petite monographie en 1948. Il est un de ces rares auteurs qui ont reconnu l'importance du rôle joué par l'architecte suédois dans l'évolution de l'architecture contemporaine. Les trois œuvres d'Asplund qu'il a retenues dans sa *Storia dell'architettura moderna* (1950) sont celles qui sont demeurées les mieux connues jusqu'à ce jour, quand elles ne sont pas tout simplement les seules que l'on connaisse : les pavillons de l'exposition de 1930 à Stockholm, la maison qu'Asplund a construite pour lui-même et le Crematorium de Stockholm.

L'Institut des Architectes Suédois avait rendu hommage au talent d'Asplund et reconnu sa place dans l'architecture nationale en lui consacrant une monographie trois ans seulement après sa mort. Venu à l'architecture à l'époque où florissait dans son pays le Romantisme national, Asplund avait conservé de cette importante phase de l'architecture suédoise un sens profond de l'individualisme en même temps qu'un souci du détail et un goût pour le pittoresque. Quand le Romantisme national céda la place au Classicisme après la première guerre mondiale, Asplund se distingua comme le plus sensible et le plus libre des protagonistes de ce courant. Plus tard, avec ses pavillons pour l'exposition de Stockholm, non seulement introduisait-il le Style international en Suède, mais il l'enrichissait d'un aspect plus humain et plus souriant pour l'animer d'une vie nouvelle, comme le faisait également à partir de cette époque le Finlandais Aalto. C'est ici que les critiques de l'architecture ont commencé à s'intéresser à Asplund. Bruno Zevi, on ne s'en étonnera pas, se réjouissait de remarquer dans ces pavillons le début du triomphe de l'architecture organique sur l'architecture fonctionnelle. Malheureusement, la démolition des pavillons après l'exposition, l'évolution subséquente d'Asplund qui est apparue comme un détournement du modernisme et enfin sa mort dès 1940, au moment où il avait atteint sa maturité, expliquent sans doute que son rôle ait été oublié au profit de son ami d'Helsinki à qui on attribue surtout d'avoir humanisé l'architecture de Style international.

Tout au long de cette évolution de Gunnar Asplund, les critiques, tels que Zevi et Eric de Maré, ont identifié une continuité bien affirmée, et c'est grâce à cette fidélité à lui-même, qui, comme chez