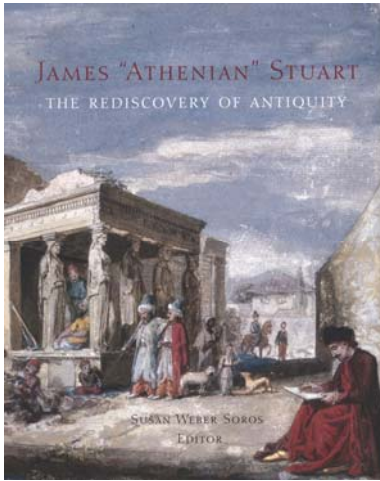


James "Athenian" Stuart, 1713-1788: The Rediscovery of Antiquity / Edited by Susan Weber Soros.—New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, in association with the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture, January 2007.—672 p.: ill.—ISBN 0-300-11713-2: \$100.00.



James Stuart (1713-1788), known in his lifetime as "Athenian" Stuart, is the traditional impetus to the Greek revival in western European architecture. Bankrolled by the Society Dilettanti, he set out in 1751 *on spec* with the architect Nicholas Revett (1720-1804), measuring and drawing the architectural monuments of Greece, certain to make a profit on a series of books carefully documenting the mother architecture. But Stuart was a procrastinator and the French academician Julien-David Le Roy (1724-1803) beat him to publication in 1758. Stuart didn't get his volume one out until 1762, but the effect on English architecture was more immediate than in France and Stuart's book longer lasting.

Though technically an exhibition catalog for a show at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture, Bard College, this book is actually an encyclopedia of everything connected with Stuart. The majority of the text are individual essays by scholars on aspects of Stuart: his life, his myth, the buildings he spawned, and his posthumous impact.

The most unique essay, the one on Stuart's legacy in the decorative arts, is by the editor, Susan Weber Soros. Stuart's impact on the decorative arts has long been under-studied, overshadowed by his architecture; Soros' chapter alone makes the book's purchase a requirement for any museum library whose institution holds eighteenth- or nineteenth-century furniture. "Design arts" is actually covered throughout the book and in every essay: the catalog is rich with photographs of meaningful architectural detail (fireplaces, escutcheons, etc) and drawings. Senior architectural historian David Watkin of Cambridge University avoids reprising his 1982 monograph on Stuart in the catalog's epilogue. Instead, he connects Stuart's work to the architecture of Latrobe, Schinkel and Strickland. M. G. Sullivan's thoughtful essay on the relationship between painter and sculptor in Greek revival is innovative and Kerry Bristol's social history of Stuart's time will reward undergraduates or museum docents seeking to set the Greek revival in a broader context. This is a book whose scope is an entire age of art history. Its essays are certain to be cited and its topic of endless value.

Lee Sorensen, Art Librarian, Lilly Library, Duke University Library, LSLILLY@duke.edu

Copyright © 2007 ARLIS/NA