

Historiography and Architecture II

STANFORD ANDERSON, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

THE FOLLOWING PAPERS WERE ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN A SESSION OF the annual meetings of the Society of Architectural Historians in Boston in March 1990 and have been edited by Stanford Anderson with the collaboration of Martha Pollak. A first group of these essays appeared in the previous issue of the *Journal of Architectural Education*.

Here, Réjean Legault examines a premiated article by William Curtis in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* as a test of the argument that, beyond primary sources, there is another "source" of historical accounts: discourse and rhetoric. His paper may be fruitfully read in conjunction with that of Mitchell Schwarzer, which appeared in the May issue of this journal.

The essays by Anthony Vidler and Dell Upton share a concern that the history of architecture not be narrowly conceived. Vidler's activity and advocacy encourage interdisciplinary research, rightly insisting that such work opens fruitful reciprocities. The history of art and architecture have much to offer, even as they are enriched by cross-fertilization.

In the introduction to the earlier group of these papers, I hypothesized an increasing divorce between the discipline of the history of architecture and the discipline of architecture. Here, Upton argues

that "architectural history suffers from captivity to analytical assumptions that were invented in the nineteenth century to justify the claims of the architectural profession," and proposes the alternative of a "landscape" approach to architectural history. Are Upton and I, then, on opposite sides as to the desirability of an intimate relation of actors in the worlds of architecture and history of architecture? I think not; the matter turns around my insistence on *discipline* as opposed to the narrower concept of profession. As already noted, by *discipline* I intend what should rightly be inclusive enterprises: the potential concern of every person with all aspects of our physical environment. This view embraces Upton's definition of *cultural landscape*: "the fusion of the physical with the imaginative structures that all inhabitants of the landscape use in constructing and construing it." It is precisely an informed commerce between construction and construal, a commerce that exists both within and without the profession, which the disciplines of architecture and history should enhance.

¹Due to time constraints at the meeting, only six of the papers now published were actually presented in Boston. The paper by Mark Jarzombek is the exception.