

Johannes Kip: the Gloucestershire engravings. Anthea Jones, Ed. Hobnob Press (in association with Gloucestershire Gardens and Landscape Trust), 2021. 174 pp, numerous b/w and colour ill. Hardback, £20.00. [ISBN 978-1-906978-99-0.]

The London-based Dutch engraver Johannes Kip is best known locally for the series of 65 illustrations he provided for Sir Robert Atkyns' *The ancient and present state of Glostershire* (1712). Most of these depict gentlemen's houses; they are supplemented by three of the county town and its cathedral, and one of Chepstow castle, whose historic impact on our county permits its inclusion despite its glaring at us across the Tudor boundary. Kip's number 1, a map of the county probably derived from Morden's, is omitted in this edition, and replaced by an index map locating the other images.

Kip's one-point perspective bird's-eye engravings, or at least some of them, might be said to be too well known to need comment, but they constantly repay a revisit. They are a visual treat for the general reader, and I find I seldom view them without noticing details I had not spotted before (such as Kip's recurring signature coach-and-six in a rutted lane). The specialist historian of gardens, architecture and landscape (and their relationships) will derive even more from them, and find their labours significantly enhanced by the present book. Dr Anthea Jones' handsome new edition brings all the engravings together in one volume, and provides a description and historical commentary contextualizing each of them. Attention devoted to the engravings themselves has long been seen as desirable; as Jan Broadway noted in *'No historie so meete'* (Manchester University Press, 2006), they "provide a rich visual record not matched by [Atkyns'] accompanying text."

The format of the entries is consistent. The order and numbering of the plates mirror that in the earlier reprint of *Glostershire* (E P Publishing, in collaboration with the county council, 1974). Each double-page spread has a title taken from *Glostershire*, page references to it and a brief quotation from it about the ownership of the property, a subtle touch emphasizing the tangential relationship between fragments of the original text and the image. The heading also gives references to the *Victoria County History* (where published), a National Grid Reference, and a postcode for the satnav user wishing to visit the site. An additional feature is the provision of a north arrow to guide the reader's gaze further. Jones then provides a succinct informed and perceptive description of the site, a brief history focused on its ownership in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, an account of how the topography of the site relates to the surrounding landscape, and finally an account of what the visitor, with or without a satnav, can still see on arriving at the site today. There is generally an enlarged clip of one or more telling details from the engraving or from an estate map, and often a photograph carefully chosen to accentuate a point of relevance as opposed to a mere illustration of the house or a panorama of the site. The analysis of elements of the panoramas of Gloucester is particularly striking. The overall shape of the enterprise is very satisfying, and the text accompanying each engraving is insightful both historically and geographically. The editor clearly knows her houses intimately in their contexts.

Jones' 10-page introduction is highly informative and a model of lucid compression. She explains the nature of processes called "engraving", Kip's biography in the context of the

Glorious Revolution, the relation between his and Atkyns' work, his possible plan of campaign (allowing reasonably precise dating of the engravings), the place of the images in the broader context of Kip's achievements, and their relation to artistic and surveying practices in the 17th-century Netherlands.

Jones notes the occasional licence employed in representing a site (for instance in the orientation of the buildings at Berkeley), in some cases perhaps at the direction of the gentleman paying for Kip's services (Cirencester, Hailes, Henbury). She draws attention to surprising omissions from the roster of properties depicted (Stowell and Highnam), and presents a useful short catalogue of those houses which have been demolished (Shipton Moyne, Sneed/Sneyd Park, Westbury Court), replaced *in situ* (Alderley, Clearwell), or replaced with an adjacent new-build (Batsford, Tortworth). The introduction finishes with a note on the importance of the turn of the seventeenth century for housebuilding, and Kip's own importance in recording this architecturally pivotal time. As Jones declares, "It is always possible to say more about each individual engraving", but she has already given us a stimulating insight into their art-historical context, into the developing understanding of the relation between house, garden and landscape, and more widely into gentlemanly Gloucestershire around 1700.

Not even a book so meticulously planned and executed can escape the occasional drawback. Each entry is spread over two pages with the engraving itself occupying part of the verso and the whole recto (margins excepted). The image is carefully divided so that none of it disappears into the gutter. Mostly this leaves the house, understood as the protagonist in the image, safely on the recto, but it is divided at Kempford, where the squirearchical pairing of house and church and the centrality of the enormous tower of the church in the image make for a problem. The trick otherwise works, with the house occasionally grazed by the division; sometimes the ancillary buildings take the hit. It would be a dyspeptic reader whose enjoyment of the book is damaged by this. Departures from the two-page plan are sparing, and always useful; the extended feature on Westbury[-on-Severn] Court, for example, allows space for a brief account of Stoke Bishop and Sneed Park as elements within Westbury-on-Trym parish.

The absence of overlap with the buildings described in Tim Jordan and Lionel Walrond's *The Cotswold house* (Amberley Publishing, 2016) is striking, and perhaps deserved a brief comment as well as a mention of their book in the bibliography. Attention from Kip to Bibury or Blockley as buildings, for example, as well as Stowell and Highnam, would not have been surprising.

It is perhaps unreviewerly to omit mention of two misprints, but it would be churlish to draw attention to them.

The book's publication has the extra advantage of marking the tercentenary of Kip's death, and in so doing it offers a fine tribute to a man who has contributed, and still contributes, much to our present sense of Gloucestershire's history. Anthea Jones has served him well.

RICHARD COATES

Bristol