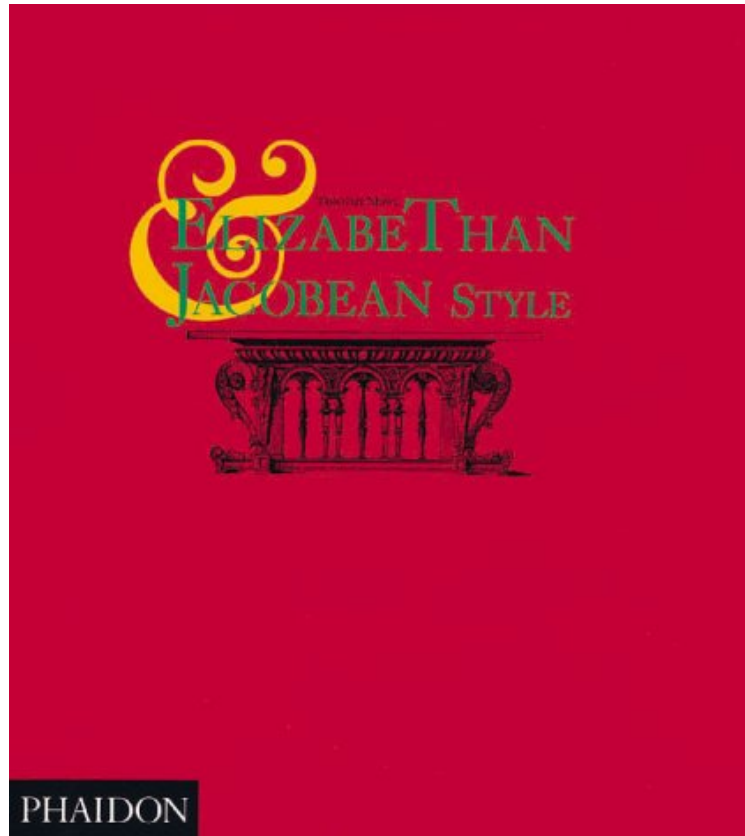


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Elizabethan and Jacobean Style

Timothy Mowl, Tim Mowl

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Timothy Mowl, Tim Mowl : Elizabethan and Jacobean Style before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Elizabethan and Jacobean Style:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An Excellent Overview of an EraBy A CustomerWith an emphasis on architecture, this book also covers gardens, furnishings and interior decoration of Elizabethan and Jacobean era country houses. Mowl explains how the houses were used, which in turn explains many of their stylistic elements. Mowl uses historic engravings and paintings as well as gorgeous color photographs to illustrate the text. There are also many interesting excerpts from period documents and literature. There is a fairly good glossary and an appendix of the addresses for the houses discussed in the book. I found that some of the terminology was a bit difficult but overall I learned a great deal about the aristocracy of the period by learning how they lived on and used thier grand estates.

During the age that brought the great flowering of the English language in the work of Shakespeare, Jonson, and the King James version of the Bible there also emerged a truly English style of architecture and decoration that has had a romantic appeal ever since. So strong was this appeal to the Victorians that they were to christen it `Jacobethan' and incorporate it into numerous houses of their own period in England and America. From the accession of Elizabeth in

1558 to James I's death in 1625, a delayed Renaissance swept England, and pervaded the domestic architecture and interiors of the day. Far from taking on a purely Italianate style, however, a peculiarly English form emerged, which was not only to be expressed in the great houses, the typical castle-palace of the period, but also in the smaller houses of town and country. This illustrated book shows not only the magnificence of the architecture through specially commissioned photography of Elizabethan and Jacobean houses, but also plunders the great pattern books of the time to show the roots of the often wild elaboration of the period. In architecture and in furnishings, classical detail was constantly fused with a Tudor vernacular, to create a style that has been enduringly popular up to the present day.

.com Architecture historian Timothy Mowl (*Architecture Without Kings, An Insular Rococo*) opens this excellent, elegant, entertaining defense of Elizabethan and Jacobean design, in all its gaudy excess, by comparing it to the two preeminent quill-dippers of its period: "Neither Shakespeare nor Ben Jonson was a 'Classical' playwright.... but the earthy richness of their imagery and the uninhibited gusto of their vocabulary has never been held against them." That's the kind of open mind Mowl would like us to bring to the churches, castles, townhouses, furnishings, and gardens of the era that began with Elizabeth I's accession to the throne in 1558 and ended with James I's death in 1625--an era whose architecture has traditionally been seen as a bombastic, busy melange of Tudor, timbered vernacular, and manic decorative strapwork until Inigo Jones's Whitehall Banqueting House of 1619 signaled a shift to "tasteful" classical purity. At opening our minds Mowl richly succeeds. Not that, if you're of a classicist or otherwise minimalist bent (like this reviewer), you'll end up liking the architecture of this period any more than you ever have. It's just that Mowl is such a playful, eloquent writer and an erudite social historian that he raises what might have been a prosaic overview to the highest level possible--an absorbing, detail-packed narrative of a fascinating era, as told through its church tombs and castle towers, tapestries and theater sets, knot gardens, armchairs, and tableware. Even as fine full-color photographs take us through the grounds and interiors of such sites as St. Mary the Virgin at Bottesford, London's Staple Inn (which, with its timbered Snow White stripes, couldn't look more like what we commonly call "Tudor"), and Kenilworth Castle (one of the queen's many playgrounds), Mowl is introducing us--through a fine array of excerpts from period books, plays, and letters--to a dazzling cast of characters including writers John Donne, Edmund Spenser, and Christopher Marlowe, plus several noblemen who built some of the great manors of the age. (A final chapter, on the "Jacobethan" revival of the 19th century, leads out into a glossary of terms, a directory of estates to visit in the UK, and a bibliography.) But certainly the figure that sets the dominant tone here is the remarkable Elizabeth. It was the shrewdness and mettle of this beloved "Virgin Queen" that brought strength and stability to England in the precarious wake of its split from Rome. But it was her love of music, theater, and all things grandiose and romantic, Mowl persuasively argues, that gave birth to an exuberant, eclectic architecture whose aim, in his words, was "to be unique, not correct." --Timothy Murphy "A handsome introduction to the world of Jacobean chic."-Sunday Telegraph "It is a marvellous book for two reasons. First, Mowl is that rare thing, an architectural historian who can write. Second, he is a man with a new thesis who challenges the orthodox view."-Financial Times
About the Author
Timothy Mowl is an architectural historian and Lecturer in the History of Art at the University of Bristol.