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Designing Works in Sangallo's 'Circle'

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access to the architecture of the East, and the sources with which he was fluent, Hart proceeds to observe how he translated this into his design practice. Here the reader encounters well-known examples of Wren's architecture, such as the Gothic Tom Tower and St. Mary Aldermary, as well as less obvious connections. For example, the domes of St. Stephen Walbrook and St. Martin Ludgate – adopting cross-squares and octagonal Greek-cross systems – are associated with Byzantine and Ottoman prototypes. While the examples and visual analyses of these discussions are unquestionably the most original part of the book, this material is also inevitably the most speculative. Hart's conclusions frequently assume source material that cannot be explicitly traced. However, the argument is both plausible and believable thanks to Hart's detailed account on the sources for these models, as well as his emphasis on their larger political and religious significance.

In fact, one of the book's most profound contributions concerns the meaning of architecture and the degree to which it can be translated. Pivoting between Wren's study of Eastern architecture and his adoption of these forms in English design, Hart illuminates the historical, religious and cultural questions that arise from the reconciliation of formal and cultural models with foreign environments. In Wren's case, the Anglican, Stuart, post-Restoration and post-1666 context in which he operated was determinative. All the more problematic then is his treatment of the specific architectural vocabulary of the East in order to establish forms of national identity (Soo 2012). For instance, the colonnaded and domed structures he favored are traced to Jerusalem, Constantinople and the Eastern regions of the Roman Empire, as opposed to closer but more contentious Catholic models. Similarly, Wren justified his use of the unpopular and 'barbarous' Gothic by charting its origins to the Holy Land as an imported 'Saracen' style, thus perpetuating a sort of post hoc fallacy typical in processes of nation-building.

In mapping the complex system of cultural interpretation, adaptation and use that underlay Wren's formal appropriation of Eastern models, Hart also sheds light on the architect's substantially circumstantial approach to style and design, which was mediated by issues of context and largely informed by his empirical mindset. In fact, Wren often simultaneously adopted and used formal references derived from disparate geographical and historical contexts, for example in the long colonnades of the Greenwich Hospital, where Hart relates the overall design to Eastern models like Palmyra, but whose structurally efficient doubled columns also carry French undertones. This approach was not uncommon, as demonstrated for instance by the case of Nicholas Hawksmoor, pupil of Wren and another subject of Hart's scholarship (2002). Hart's book then successfully contributes to systematizing Wren's empirical design method within a wide cross-national and cross-temporal network of architectural referencing. Wren's contingent political and religious translation of Eastern architecture ultimately cements Tafuri's image of an architectural 'chemist', manipulating languages and forms as bottles and phials in a laboratory, as an endless combinatory experiment (1968: 140–142).

Designing Works in Sangallo's 'Circle'

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Maria Beltramini and Cristina Conti, eds. *Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane: Architettura e decorazione da Leone X a Paolo III*. Milan: Officina libraria, 183 pages, 2018, ISBN 978-88-3367-012-6

During his lifetime, the architect Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1484–1546) was also a carpenter, surveyor, engineer, contractor, urbanist, entrepreneur, devotee of the antique and director of a Sangallo architectural 'firm' that included multiple family members. His enormous output had an astonishingly broad typological range. In addition to his lifelong involvement at St. Peter's Basilica, Antonio designed other works with religious, residential, military, urbanistic and celebratory programs. Understandably, this vast range and volume has created research difficulties. These are compounded by scarce documentation for many modified or unbuilt works, which are mostly or only known from the drawings produced by Antonio or others in the so-called *setta Sangallesc*a. Antonio helmed that broader 'circle' of architects, sculptors, painters, builders and artisans for thirty years. Yet his exact role in the creation of most of its products remains opaque, even though many specific studies of Antonio's designs have appeared piecemeal over the past six decades, and two comprehensive surveys provide bedrock facts about his architecture. Gustavo Giovannoni's two-volume opus (Giovannoni 1959) examines the built work as well as related drawings and projects. Currently, a magisterial, three-volume catalogue of the Uffizi's architectural drawings of Antonio da Sangallo and his circle, conceived and edited by Christoph Luitpold Frommel, nears completion but still lacks the crucial final volume on palaces (Frommel and Adams 1994, 2000, –). These two indispensable surveys, which inevitably imposed boundaries and organizing strategies, gave precedence to building type in order to clarify chronology and authorship. Unfortunately, those choices have obstructed other avenues of inquiry, and have allowed the study of Antonio as maestro of a complex business to lag.

The volume *Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane: Architettura e decorazione da Leone X a Paolo III* responds to that situation (**Figure 5**). Its contents – fourteen individual essays on architectural and art history – result from years of cross-disciplinary inquiries pursued by a core group of faculty and students at Roman university campuses, supported by a broader Italian and international array of scholars. In June 2017, Maria Beltramini drew them all together for a 'Study Day' in Rome. The delivered papers are here revised, rearranged, augmented and published in a volume that provides a rich and coherent view of Antonio's entire 'circle' and its members' diverse activities. The book's essays, which address an audience already familiar with Antonio subjects and documents, are grounded in primary-source evidence – archival texts, treatises and commentaries, drawings and built fabric. To probe deeply,



Figure 5: Cover of *Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane: Architettura e decorazione da Leone X a Paolo III*. Photo Credit: Officina libraria.

Antonio's smaller endeavors are considered, because they best reveal how and why he deployed others in the performance of different tasks, at the various stages of these designs.

The individual essays are organized sequentially: the first and last essays address the shape and basic themes of Antonio's life, while the second and third essays pursue topics of general import, followed by case studies. In the initial essay, Barbara Agosti reminds us that many of Antonio's contemporaries expressed both envy and appreciation of his business skills. She peoples the three phases in Antonio's successful career – largely determined by papal reigns – with Antonio's artistic colleagues, including his early favorite, the painter Perino del Vaga, who after 1537 became a trusted business partner who recommended and supervised other artists and decorators. In

the topical essays, Serena Quagliaroli reports on the technical development of stucco and its use and stylistic variations between 1500 and 1560; then Anna Maria Riccomini analyzes Antonio's lifelong antiquarian interests. She convincingly identifies specific ancient objects collected by the architect and describes their display in his via Giulia home. Antonio's acquisitiveness and his Vitruvian studies were primarily driven by genuine interest, modified by hereditary pressures and concerns about status.

The ten case studies are arranged chronologically. They investigate Antonio's interactions with his subordinate collaborators and subcontractors, and question how they worked either hierarchically under Antonio, or in tandem with him or others. And although Antonio certainly always led the teams, his exact procedures varied substantially from job to job. In some cases, Antonio

dominated the design throughout multidisciplinary projects. A perhaps prototypical situation demonstrates how, in such cases, Antonio used both direct control and delegated authority throughout one project: the tiny, temporary Santissimo Sacramento chapel in the nave of Old St. Peter's, demolished in 1605. Antonio Labacco carved its wooden doors, previously known only from their depiction in an inaccurate drawing made from memory (BAV A 64 ter, f. 22r), a muddy fresco and Antonio's few, preliminary, partial sketches. Valentina Balzarotti proves that Labacco's recently rediscovered doors remain exactly as built, and that they were designed by Antonio the architect and their erection supervised by Perino the painter. By comparing the actual doors with Antonio's design sketches, Balzarotti renders a persuasive composite version of the chapel design as it was originally built. She describes Antonio's design through the eyes of a kneeling 16th-century supplicant who, although dazzled by candlelight refracted from the doors' 332 brass nailheads, could glimpse Donatello's tabernacle through one of the perfectly positioned oval openings in the door leaves. In similar fashion, the architect may have asked his chosen painters to echo an architectural strategy at the palazzo Baldassini, Antonio's first independent commission. In two linked essays, the palace's architecture and frescoes are shown to share a single overriding attitude toward structure and adornment, ground and figure. With impressive clarity, Francesco Benelli explains Antonio's understanding of Vitruvian theory and describes how the architecture's compressed elements recapitulate an ideal palace on the small, narrow site. Silvia Ginzburg then uses keen connoisseurship to assign the palace's frescoes to Perino and Polidoro da Caravaggio, and to bring their dates forward to pre-1518. This buttresses the argument that the paintings reprise the spatial illusions found in Antonio's architectural design.

Two essays demonstrate how Antonio sometimes relaxed his control over a design by giving responsibilities to other Sangallo associates. Examining the church of Santa Maria di Monte Moro, Paul Davies convincingly identifies two distinct construction phases and several associated architects who played subordinate roles. His meticulous study of details strongly suggests that this exemplifies one version of Antonio's usual workshop practices during the 1530s and 1540s. Dario Donetti, in a stunning report on the tomb of Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici in the rebuilt Montecassino abbey church, reconsiders Antonio's involvement. Attributing the architectural designs to Antonio, but the three large statues to Francesco da Sangallo, Giuliano's son, Donetti explains why Antonio chose this cousin for this mid-1530s job. In a penetrating analysis, Donetti accepts parallels previously drawn between Antonio's triumphal arch scheme at Montecassino and his contemporaneous Medici papal tombs in Rome; Donetti also emphasizes resemblances between the project for the Piero de' Medici tomb and the design by Giuliano da Sangallo for the façade of San Lorenzo in Florence.

More case studies round out the volume. Two find evidence that architectural works should be re-attributed to

Antonio rather than to others in his circle. David Hemsoll reconsiders the competing designs submitted in 1515 for San Lorenzo's façade and suggests valid reasons for connecting the Albertina drawing AZRom 808a with Antonio da Sangallo the Younger's design. Maurizio Ricci attributes the initial 1540 design for Angelo Ferretti's palace in Ancona to Antonio, rather than Pellegrino Tibaldi, whose involvement must have been later, and limited to the palace's frescoes. A scrupulous reading of physical, programmatic and urbanistic evidence lets Ricci reconstruct Antonio's design as it was built between 1541 and 1543. Three other essays focus on the decorative arts, and although it is less clear how Antonio steered those artists, the investigations turn up new information and challenge previous analyses of the architecture, frescoes and stuccoes in Rome's Serra and Cesi chapels (by Cristina Conti and Federica Kappler respectively), and in San Giovanni Decollato's oratory (by Michela Corso). To conclude the volume, Beltramini reiterates the book's themes through an overview of Antonio's religious projects. She then adds her ideas about Antonio's intentions by analyzing several unbuilt main altar designs and his planned use of multiple media. Antonio made the entire church spiritually and spatially coherent by manipulating elements at every scale, designing everything from the presbytery's walls and axial views, to the altar's baldachin and the mensa's ornaments.

Quality pervades this volume. The texts are meticulously written and edited, while a unified index of names facilitates the reader's own efforts at crossing boundaries to find, for example, the frequent but widely scattered references to Perino del Vaga. Lengthy endnotes provide informative details plus indispensable references to past, current and forthcoming publications, while thick paper enhances the many large, crisply reproduced images. However, numerous citations of Antonio's works and architectural drawings make handy access to Frommel's published catalogue volumes (Frommel and Adams 1994, 2000) almost a necessity.

In the long history of Antonio research, the current moment of change is emphasized by the recent loss of the great historian Christof Thoenes, to whom this book is dedicated. Soon, too, the final volume of *The Architectural Drawings* will be published, completing that survey. In contrast, the book reviewed here models future possibilities. Its cross-disciplinary approach, which looks up and down the production hierarchies in specific projects, demonstrates how Antonio's designs can be fruitfully re-assessed, and his entire career re-evaluated.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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