
H-France Review Vol. 15 (November 2015), No. 166

Lorenz E. Baumer, Frédéric Elsig and Sabine Frommel, eds., *Les Années 1540: Regards croisés sur les arts et les lettres*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2015. 260 pp. Figures. \$85.95 U.S. (pb). ISBN 978-3-0343-1132-8.

Review by Robert J. Hudson, Brigham Young University.

Aptly defending its thesis which posits the decade of the 1540s as one of the most vibrant and culturally significant in early modern Europe, this collection of essays examines the intellectual effervescence, thriving print culture, and relative diplomatic tranquility of the period, while maintaining its primary focus on vital evolutions in art and architecture, particularly between France and Italy. Amassed from academic addresses originally delivered at a 2011 joint art history/classical archaeology colloquium held at the University of Geneva, the offerings are comparatively light on the literary perspective that the volume's subtitle might suggest. However, the essays treating architecture and the visual arts propose a wealth of new observations and historiographical clarifications pertaining to the chief figures of this rich decade, establishing the work as an important benchmark for scholars studying Serlio, Alberti, Vasari, Goujon, Lescot, or any of the other participants in the dynamic transalpine aesthetic exchange of the mid-sixteenth century.

Upon a preliminary leafing through of the pages of this text, one is immediately struck by the beauty and precision of the generous images and photographs reproduced in the volume's almost ninety figures, the quality of which is remarkable, especially for a monochrome edition. Particularly impressive are the stunning facsimiles of pages from the Turin manuscript of Jean Martin's French translation of Vitruvius' *De architectura*, as well as the detailed replications of Jean Goujon's theoretical work and artistic creation. Indeed, the initial perception is that this is a handsomely crafted and well-designed edition.

Shifting focus to the actual written content, between the essays, three languages are used: French is predominant but there are also two lengthy contributions in English as well as an epilogue in Italian. And, with regards to length, these articles vary significantly in both word count and physical printed space (i.e., number of pages and figure dimensions), providing a general sense of unevenness to the volume on the whole. For example, to consider the extremes, the longest essay occupies an imposing forty-three pages, whereas the two briefest count a mere six. Likewise, this lack of balance carries over to the book's two sections, the first of which "L'architecture et sa représentation" features five articles spread over 161 pages and the second section "Les modèles de la sculpture et de la peinture" gathers four articles across some fifty-two pages.

Despite these inconsistencies in length, however, the sequencing of articles is exceptional, as they are organized in a manner that allows each essay to build upon and enter into dialogue with those previous to it. In fact, the editorial structure of the volume is one of its greatest strengths. To wit, the first essay, Howard Burns's "The 1540s: a turning point in the development of European architecture" (both an English-language offering as well as the longest text featured in the collection), decidedly justifies its amplitude as its first ten pages set the socio-cultural stage upon which all other essays elaborate. Burns discusses the production of illustrated books and architectural translations in Venice, Lyon, Paris, and

Basel; sketches the intellectual landscape of the Rome of Medici pope Leo X, as well as the propitious diplomatic situation between the various kingdoms, duchies and principalities of the Italian peninsula and their international allies at this time; and, finally, prepares the discussion of the diffusion and implementation of principles of the Italian Renaissance, especially in the domain of architecture. Clear, concise and completely engaging, this introduction to Italy in the 1540s could very well be assigned reading for an undergraduate course in art history, early modern history, or the humanities. Burns follows this introduction with a sweeping overview of the prevalent theories and architectural treatises (Serlio, Tartaglia, Alberti, Philandrier) that dominate the Italian 1540s, before building to the emergence of a new regime style, one that he argues would standardize the Italian Renaissance architectural brand to be exported throughout early modern Europe. With this substantial study, consisting of fifteen figures and ninety footnotes, Burns introduces the reader to many of the names, themes, and concepts to be explored in the articles to follow.

The subsequent four articles that complete the architectural section of the collection are far more focused in scope. Picking up on the discussion of architectural treatises in the 1540s and the efforts of Jean Martin, the French translator of Vitruvius mentioned by Burns a few pages earlier, Francesco P. Di Teodoro examines the Vitruvian heritage on the architecture of the 1540s before advancing fresh perspectives and clarifications on the text and illustrations included in the Turin manuscript of Martin's translations of *Architecture ou Art de bien bastir*. Di Teodoro ultimately suggests that the document reveals the existence of a workshop of architectural innovations for which Serlio and perhaps Lescot were chief authorities. One of the collection's editors Sabine Frommel follows Di Teodoro with a focused examination of Jean Cousin, le Père, and how his architectural ideals, derived largely from Serlio, appear in the fictional landscapes of various tapestries from the period. Richly illustrated with twenty-two figures, Frommel effectively demonstrates how antique prototypes come together to combine with aspects of Christianity in 1540s France.

Next, Gaëtan Bros examines the urban architectural figurations in the twenty-three frames of Champenois regional artist Jean Duvet's *Apocalypse* in order to reveal complex allegorical interpretations in this unique work of the 1540s especially relating to Duvet's complicated relationship to the French crown, the Church, and his region. Yet again with Bros, Serlio is evoked as a preeminent influence on Duvet. (In fact, so ubiquitous are references to Sebastiano Serlio as an architectural beacon in this first section—and even in the next—that one could easily image the subtitle “the decade of Serlio” for the entire volume.) Finally, even as it draws on Vasari, Brunelleschi, and Bramante and further nuances Burns' idea of diffusion or even an early form of “globalization,” Christoph Luitpold Frommel's treatment of Renaissance and Ottoman religious buildings does still feel like something of an interloper in a section so determinedly focused on Italy, France, and Europe. All the same, this beautiful analysis of pre-1540 Turkish mosques, illuminated with photos and floor plans, does ultimately offer ties to Western Europe and may well be, at least in my estimation, one of the most fascinating articles of the entire collection.

From the grandiose, image-laden essays of the first section, the imbalance is felt quite perceptibly in the second, which proposes to examine models of sculpture and painting. In less than six (albeit succinct) pages, Jacques Chamay examines the Greek models of anecdotes and theories that influence Vasari's *Vite*. And, in another concise, six-page essay, volume editor Frédéric Elsig argues that the lack of a Vasari equivalent in France helped contribute to what he sees as the dominant trend of Franco-Italian painting in the 1540s, something he conceives in terms of the “swing of the pendulum” (*le mouvement du balancier*) between artistic theory and pictorial creation, a sort of back and forth between national/regional traditions and schools. These two brief essays are followed by a magisterial, thirty-page text on French sculpture of the 1540s and the world of Jean Goujon, co-authored by Marion Boudon-Machuel and Pascal Julien. Identifying Goujon as instrumental in instigating the new wave of Renaissance architecture in France, once more citing Serlio as his chief Italian model, the authors of this essay remain perhaps the closest to the ideals seemingly espoused by the volume's title, in that they cite

French poets Du Bellay and Ronsard, highlighting a true intersection between arts and letters in the progressive literary theories of the Pléiade and the architectural visions of Goujon, Martin, and Lescot. Examining exemplary sculptures in both Paris and province (Champagne, Toulouse), they deftly support their thesis of Goujon upholding the primacy of France and Frenchness through his innovative/imitative artwork. Finally, the remaining volume editor Lorenz E. Baumer continues with Goujon and his models from Antiquity, focusing however on two specific, canonical works in Paris: Goujon's Fontaine des Innocents and Tribune des Caryatides of the Louvre ballroom. Examining adaptations between sketches and the finished sculptures, modifications he links to subsequent exposure to antique models, Baumer extends his reach to also include Egyptian prototypes as well as the legendary beauty of royal mistress Diane de Poitiers as models for Goujon.

As an epilogue, Gian Mario Anselmi's Italian-language exposition on literary and political culture in *Cinquecento* Italy, which focuses on Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and Castiglione, appears to endeavor to bridge the gap between art/architecture and humanistic letters—although this is a difficult task, as the former are consistently given more attention throughout the volume. All the same, Anselmi's comments on the bearing of political authority and magnanimity on Renaissance ideals of *sermo*, *urbanitas*, and *civilitas* certainly merit reading and do smooth away some of the rough edges or potential disconnects between the various articles in this volume. This would seem to be the same objective of Sabine Frommel in the volume's conclusion, which at long last does outwardly recognize the omnipresence of Serlio on both sides of the Alps as she revisits and makes connections between the included essays, stressing and reconfirming at the end the extraordinary proliferation of artistic and literary innovation in the 1540s.

Aside from a sparse few typographical errors and the overall unevenness discussed above, this collective volume ultimately holds up as the solid, rigorous academic endeavor that its alluring appearance would suggest. The contributions of Burns and Boudon-Machuel/Julien stand out in their scope, breadth and execution—and could be easily assigned to advanced undergraduates or graduate students; however, many of the remaining, more narrowly focused articles will certainly appeal to specialists. Were this volume to have an index (as is, the final page of printed text is immediately adjacent to the back cover), it would be a far more useful tool for researchers—especially those working on Serlio, Martin, Vasari, Goujon, and other key figures explored across multiple articles. Likewise, a page or two of back matter identifying the employing institution, area of training, and key publications of the contributing authors would have been most welcome. In the end, from a pleasure standpoint, this was a very enjoyable read and well conceived project. The imagery is magnificent, the articles stimulating and the implicit invitation to draw one's own interdisciplinary connections quite persuasive.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Lorenz E. Baumer and Frédéric Elsig, "Introduction"

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Howard Burns, "The 1540s: a turning point in the development of European architecture"

Francesco Paolo di Teodoro, "Le texte de Vitruve dans les années 1540. Autour d'un manuscrit de l'Architecture ou Art de bien bastir: le De architectura de Vitruve traduit par Jean Martin"

Sabine Frommel, "Jean Cousin le Père et l'architecture fictive: sa contribution à l'évolution des langages à l'antique en France dans les années 1540"

Gaëtan Bros, “Fonctions et représentations de l’architecture dans l’Apocalypse de Jean Duvet: une figuration particulière de l’architecture dans la France de la fin des années 1540”

Christoph Luitpold Frommel, “Sinan and Bramante: analogies and differences in the evolution of Renaissance and Ottoman religious building”

Part II: Les modèles de la sculpture et de la peinture

Jacques Chamay, “A propos de Giorgio Vasari. Essai”

Frédéric Elsig, “Entre théorie et pratique: le mouvement de balancier des années 1540”

Marion Boudon-Macheul and Pascal Julien, “Autour de Jean Goujon: ambitions et inflexions de la sculpture française, royale et provincial”

Lorenz E. Baumer, “Jean Goujon et les modèles antiques: observations archéologiques sur la Fontaine des Innocents et la Tribune des Caryatides”

Gian Mario Anselmi, “Epilogue Machiavelli, Guicciardini e Castiglione: gli anni di svolta nella cultura letteraria e politica del Cinquecento”

Sabine Frommel, “Conclusion. Une décennie qui innove sans oublier”

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ISSN 1553-9172