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Book Review

**Giuseppe Dardanello, Susan Klaiber,
Henry A. Millon (eds.)**

Guarino Guarini

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The long awaited, monumental volume dedicated to Guarino Guarini, edited by Giuseppe Dardanello, Susan Klaiber and Henry Millon is all it was hoped to be. Resulting from the 2002 seminar on Guarini held at the Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio in Vicenza, the present volume is the successor to the two-volume proceedings published in 1970 of the international conference that took place in Torino's Accademia delle Scienze in 1968. The list of scholars present at the 1968 conference was star-studded, including Rudolf Wittkower, Franco Borsi, Werner Mueller, Werner Oechslin, Manfredo Tafuri, Paolo Portoghesi, Henry Millon, Richard Pommer, Christian Norberg-Schulz and many others. The resulting collection of papers represented the latest word in Guarini scholarship up to that point. Now with the publication of this new book, Guarini scholarship – having in the meantime been enriched by the monographs of H. A. Meek (1988) and John Beldon Scott (2003) – is once again brought up to date, taking advantage not only of new information gleaned from the ongoing study of archives, etc. (and the dubious silver lining of the 1997 fire in the Chapel of the Holy Shroud, which made it possible to learn things about the Chapel which would otherwise have remained unknown), but also of new methods of investigation that have been developed over the intervening thirty-six years.

The volume is organized into five major sections: Part I, an introduction to Guarini; Part II, discussions of his intellectual and professional figure; Part III, an examination of his built and unbuilt works, which is actually two sections, the first a collection of photographs and reproductions of drawings and engravings, and the second, a substantial group of papers; Part IV, dedicated to the diffusion of Guarini's ideas throughout Italy to Europe and abroad. These major sections are followed by the scholarly apparatuses of bibliographies and a comprehensive index of names and places.

Of the scholars who contributed to the 1970 volume, only Henry Millon is present in the new volume to provide continuity.

The large format of this work makes it possible to accommodate a particularly rich graphic program. The central sections of splendid color photographs of Guarini's still extant works by Pino Dell'Aquila, together with reproductions of drawings and engravings compiled under the direction of Giuseppe Dardanello could almost form a monograph by itself. These images are of signal importance to understanding the various aspects of Guarini's architecture discussed in the text.

As far as the discussions of the more mathematical aspects of Guarini's architectural thinking is concerned, which will be of greatest interest to *Nexus Network Journal* readers, the 1970 volume includes treatments of Guarini and stereotomy by Werner Mueller, of Guarini and perspective by Corrado Maltese, and a very important discussion of Guarini's use of geometry by Henry Millon. However, the talk by Guglielmo De Angelis d'Ossat on proportional schemes and geometry did not result in a paper for the volume, and the laconic paper by Francesco Tricomi on Guarini as mathematician only whetted the appetite for more. Still, one of the fascinating aspects of Guarini's work is the prominence of mathematical – especially geometrical – ideas and even a paper such as Gianni Carlo Sciolla's on Guarini's treatise on fortifications opens the way to a study of the geometry inherent in it.

The papers in the new volume that deal with Guarini's mathematics are an important follow-up. Regarding theory, Marco Boetti's paper on the geometry of the vaults and interwoven arches provides an in-depth catalogue with dimensional and geometrical comparisons of eight of Guarini's dome structures in sacred buildings, while Edoardo Piccoli undertakes an examination of the vaulting in his civic architecture, placing the structures in the context of geometry and stereotomy. Aurora Scotti Tosini's discussion of the relationships between text and images in Guarini's written works makes evident parallels between illustrations in his *Euclidis Adauctis* and *Architettura Civile*. John Beldon Scott, discussing the changing tendencies that have characterized studies of Guarini's oeuvre provides a brief but instructive overview of studies on the geometric bases of Guarini's design process.

In the group of papers dealing with individual architectural projects, several papers are noteworthy for their attention to geometry. Giuseppe Dardanello's discusses Guarini's transformation of Castellamonte's oval plan for the Chapel of the Holy Shroud into a rotunda. Franco Rossi looks at Guarini and stereotomy. Andrew Morrogh's discussion of the plan of San Lorenzo uses both geometry and proportions as analytical tools. Henry Millon's examination of the church of the Immacolata Concezione in Torino tells how Guarini modeled space "not only with structures set up with circles, ovals and other curvilinear forms, but also schemes composed of triangles, squares, pentagons, hexagons, octagons and polygons in general." Gerd Schneider's analysis and reconstruction of Guarini's design for a church in Ceva includes geometric diagrams of the proportions of the facade, the major and minor axes, and the plan.

All papers in this book are impeccably documented. The comprehensive index of names and places – so often lacking in volumes such as this which are collections of papers – is a very important addition to rendering the book even more useful to scholars. The bibliography is ordered chronologically – good as a device for understanding the unfolding of Guarini studies, but less helpful as a tool for hunting down references than one ordered alphabetically (try finding the reference for Meek's monograph on Guarini if you are uncertain of the date of publication).

The innumerable references in all the papers of this present volume to those of the 1968 conference proceedings is confirmation of that collection's enduring value. This present book is destined to become equally valuable, and the editors are to be congratulated for having accomplished such an important task.

About the reviewer

Kim Williams is editor-in-chief of the *Nexus Network Journal*.