religious orders often transcend geography. The volume's chronological definition is not uniformly appropriate throughout the peninsula. Some areas experience a long seventeenth century, as a certain kind of artistic activity continues well beyond 1700; in others it is a short century, as building diminishes; and in others a great hole appears in the middle because of economic depression and the plague of 1656.

Whatever the geographical or chronological boundaries, it is especially gratifying to see the results of recent (and often ongoing) resourceful archival work. Many authors have responded to the editor's desire “to focus on the professional qualifications of architects, on the development of the profession and the worksite.” We see the education of building professionals controlled by the state in Milan and Venice, inflected by religious vocation among the Jesuits and Theatines, inspired by the model of the figural arts in Rome, and conducted on worksites everywhere. We see a range of competencies among people called “architect,” from fortifications to stucco ornaments.

Much of the new archival work has implications for the issue of authorship, a topic fundamental to our discipline. There are documented cases of on-site collaboration among building professionals, a succession of professionals as a project extends through time, and significant instructions or critiques from the client (whether individual or corporate). Craftsmen too have something to do with the ultimate form. Who, then, is the designer? And how confidently can we assign a stylistic feature to a particular person even when his name is mentioned in a document? The desire to identify architects with distinct artistic personalities is seen throughout the book, most obviously in the chapters dedicated to individual masters, but also in many chapters on political/geographical areas: Ricchino in Milan, Fanzago in Naples, Bedeschini in L’Aquila, Zimbalo in Apulia. What do we look for when identifying a personal style? Proportion? Decorative motifs? Transformative ability? I would like to see more attention paid to planning, in particular in multiroom buildings like palaces; in this book, however, few plans of this sort are included.

What, then, about the larger question of style? Part of Wittkower’s task in 1958 was to construct a kind of stylistic tree with a trunk and branches. Scotti Tosini accepts the premise of the chronological framework of the series with its implication of a certain “concrete materiality and formal specificity.” Yet many (perhaps most) of the authors assume the existence of a coherent style called “baroque” that may be modified as prebaroque, late baroque, Neapolitan baroque, or even the “absent baroque” of Genoa. How is this style defined? By the summation of the architectural characteristics of those great masters who have received chapters of their own? Or maybe only certain of their works? Or the most prominent and celebrated commissions (St. Peter’s in Rome, Santa Maria della Salute in Venice)? Or the works not of the extraordinary few but of the majority of architects (those swept together in Curcio’s virtuosic chapter on Rome, the nameless designers of palaces in the density of Naples)? And can it be applied equally to all genres of seventeenth-century architectural production or even of a particular designer? Should we even call it “baroque”? Or do we set aside the problem and not use the word or simply accept it as a synonym for “seventeenth century”? If so, we as architectural historians are still left with the problem of understanding our material as designed by individuals in time. I think that Il Seicento, fifty years after Wittkower, should have confronted this question.

This question is in addition to all the other compelling issues that we, collectively, have been addressing in our work, many included in the worthy essays in this book and others of necessity set aside. The history of Italian seicento architecture is an ongoing project, as several authors have indicated with reference to their assigned topics. Even in a large book like this, with contributions by many authors, only a partial view can be given. We continue, happily, to be in the midst of a “vertiginous increase” of studies.

Charles van den Heuvel
‘*De Huysbou’: A Reconstruction of an Unfinished Treatise on Architecture, Town Planning and Civil Engineering by Simon Stevin*

Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen, 2005. x + 545 pp., 61 blw illus. €89 (hard cover), ISBN 90-6984-432-X

Architectural historians and theorists have been looking forward to this book for many years. Simon Stevin (1548–1620), the mathematician from Bruges famous for his numerous publications on arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and hydraulics, allegedly intended to publish a monograph on architecture but only left behind fragments and parts for this book. Several of these were scattered and became the property of his son Hendrick Stevin, the scientist Isaac Beeckman, and Constantijn Huygens. Charles van den Heuvel, who has written about the introduction of Italian urbanization and fortress building in the Low Countries, now presents what no one had dared to do: a reconstruction of Stevin’s missing treatise based on fragments, letters, and unfinished manuscripts, treated in a detailed and critically “scientific” way.
In the first half of the book, Van den Heuvel lays out, in eleven chapters, Stevin’s writings on architecture and the problems involved in reconstructing them. The hypothetical treatise itself follows in eight chapters, and extensive appendices then document further fragments and notes. Stevin deals with four main subjects: symmetry and order in architecture, building methods, the role of water, and the use of architectural representations. In chapter six, Van den Heuvel defines the contribution Stevin has made to the theory of architecture in the Low Countries and within the European context. In his view, Stevin pioneered anti-Vitruvianism, replaced classical authority with contextual specificity, rejected ornament in favor of strict functionality, and considered beauty a matter of custom and convention rather than ideal form.

Chapters eight through eleven investigate earlier attempts to reconstruct the treatise on De Huysbou (On Architecture). The first was by Beeckman in 1624, interpreting Stevin’s manuscripts as separate chapters of the same work, nine in all. Hendrick Stevin’s text totalled sixteen chapters in 1649, including other types of buildings such as churches and prisons. Van den Heuvel notes that Hendrick reached this division through intuition rather than reason, and conflicting subdivisions of this work were presented by various authors. To solve this problem, Van den Heuvel concentrates on the genesis of the work, reconstructing the successive chapters as accurately as possible.

The central section of this book is undoubtedly the most important because in it Van den Heuvel offers his own reconstruction of De Huysbou in eight chapters. Their titles reveal Stevin’s range of practical and theoretical concerns: “On the like-sidedness of buildings” (discussion on different meanings of symmetry), “On underground structures,” “On façades,” “On stairs,” “On ceilings and vaults,” “On roofs,” “On the layout of parts of the house,” and “On the layout of towns.” Whether Stevin intended to publish a complete treatise or only separate parts is a particularly important question for the section on city and urban development (chapter eight in Van den Heuvel’s reconstruction). This part was edited by Hendrick in 1649 in Materiae Politicae as “Van de Oirdenigh der Steden” (On the planning of cities) and provides us with the first published Dutch work on urban development as well as the map of an ideal city (laid out in uniform squares). If Van den Heuvel is right, Stevin’s treatise would have approached architecture and urban development as a single subject.

All texts in the treatise and in the appendices are given both in transcription and modern English translation (reflecting the deliberate plainness of Stevin’s Dutch). Appendices include Stevin’s texts on architecture that were not intended for De Huysbou; notes considered relevant to the reconstruction of the treatise; a list of all manuscripts, letters, and texts consulted; and a glossary of architectural terms as they appear in Stevin’s texts accompanied by their English translations. A detailed bibliography and index conclude the volume.

The merit of this work does not predominantly reside in the retrieval of new sources or texts by Simon Stevin, but rather in the interpretation and compilation of texts as a whole. For the first time texts by Beeckman, Huygens, and Stevin are presented together in English translation. Van den Heuvel shows that it is important to bring these texts together since they have greater meaning in relation to each other than in isolation; as Stevin said, the text “is like a wax model, with a head, arms and legs, which if melted are no longer limbs, but part of the same material” (2).

From a methodological point of view, this book is innovative because it highlights the critical way in which texts can be handled and brought into relation with each other. However, this approach is also the weakest element in Van den Heuvel’s argument. Based on his knowledge of the theory of architecture, Van den Heuvel attempts to reconstruct the consecutive volumes of Stevin’s treatise on architecture. We may assume that as a mathematician Stevin valued comprehensiveness and logic, but these elements are missing in the treatise as reconstructed by Van den Heuvel. There is no clear relationship between the eight chapters proposed. Stevin rejects Vitruvian categories and subdivisions, but it is not clear what replaces them. Certain principles are described as a fully independent volume (for example, the like-sidedness of buildings), whereas others such as use and function are not explicitly addressed. It might be questioned whether Stevin would have included his writings on infrastructural works (fortification and hydraulic engineering) as separate chapters in his treatise or, as Van den Heuvel does, as minor parts in the eighth chapter on the layout of towns. Stevin studied the connections among architecture, urban development, fortress building, and hydraulic engineering. His major talent was to survey the complexity of a structural problem and to situate each specific problem within its own context. Maybe Stevin never wanted to complete such a treatise because he would then have felt obliged to repeat parts of his former books in this new one. Van den Heuvel notes that Hendrick’s reconstruction of the treatise includes excerpts from his father’s works, such as “Van de waterschuyring” (About water dredging) and parts from Nieuwe Maniere van Stercktebou door Spilsheven (New methods of fortification using pivot sluices), without pursuing the implications of this repetitiveness.

The attempt to reconstruct Stevin’s “virtual” treatise integrates his writings on architecture and urban development into a broader discussion of treatises in the seventeenth century. In a previous publication, Van den Heuvel compared Stevin’s concepts with those of the French architectural theorist Claude Perrault. The meaning of symmetry as a system of proportional correspondence between the left and right sides, or mirror symmetry, has a significant role in this comparison since the Vitruvian definition of proportional symmetry is abandoned. Van den Heuvel extensively deals with this issue, as well as with concepts of beauty, proportion, and optical correction, and he even argues that
“the fact that Perrault’s ideas on architecture may have been indirectly derived from Beeckman and Stevin’s notes sheds new light on the dissemination of Stevin and Beeckman’s ideas” (123). However, this does not constitute the needed comparison with Stevin’s European contemporaries in the fields of architectural theory and urban development—Vredeman de Vries, Andrea Palladio, Vincenzo Scamozzi, Salomon de Bray, Pierre Le Muet, Louis Savot, Joseph Furtenbach, or even Rubens. This research will hopefully be launched in the coming years thanks to the numerous sources and insights offered in Van den Heuvel’s book.

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Notes
2. See Klaas van Berkel, Isaac Beeckman (1588–1673) en de mechanismering van het wereldbeeld (Amsterdam, 1993).

William Tronzo, editor
St. Peter’s in the Vatican

The theme of papal authority runs through the essays William Tronzo has compiled in St. Peter’s in the Vatican, and the book’s many authors illuminate how the successors of Peter have sought to establish, reestablish, and affirm this authority over nearly seventeen hundred years in St. Peter’s Basilica. The largest church in the world, built on inhospitable ground over the tomb of a fisherman who became Christ’s vicar on earth, the Vatican basilica stands as a testament to the enduring power of the Roman Catholic Church even as it reveals the changing nature of that power and the myriad concerns of the men who have ascended to Peter’s throne.

The book’s essays, some of which appeared previously in other contexts, discuss such discrete themes as patronage of the fourth-century structure; the use of spolia in the construction and decoration of Old St. Peter’s; innovative and propagandistic commissions for theapse and façade mosaics of the early Christian basilica; the radical decision to tear down the decrepit fourth-century church and build St. Peter’s anew; the succession of projects leading to the completion of the Fabbrica; the decoration of New St. Peter’s under Bernini; the way in which ephemeral decorations for canonization ceremonies reflect papal authority in the post-Tridentine period; and the architectural legacy of St. Peter’s in a variety of contexts from the sixteenth century to the present day. Contributors write candidly about the fragmentary nature of ancient inscriptions and the lost contexts of archaeological remains, the uncertain dates of monuments or documents, inconsistent units of measurement, the unreliability of prints, and the discontinuous and contradictory sources of evidence. A frequent caveat concerns the need to interpret written and visual data together. Authors marshal their evidence from relevant graphic, textual, numismatic, or archaeological sources, prints, paintings, sculptures, or drawings, frequently with a synopsis of divergent interpretations of the same evidence offered in the text or notes. In this the book serves as a valuable methodological resource even as it highlights one of the reasons we remain fascinated by the Vatican basilica: despite outstanding contributions by scholars over many hundreds of years to our understanding of the most important church in Christendom, there is still much we do not know about St. Peter’s.

The book begins with Glen Bowersock’s proposal that St. Peter’s, long held to be a Constantinian foundation, was built not by Constantine but by his son Constans, who ruled much of the Western Roman Empire after his father’s death in 337. The suggestion that St. Peter’s was founded by one of Constantine’s sons is not new, but it has not gained wide currency (a fact suggested by the other chapters of the book, whose authors persist in referring to Old St. Peter’s as Constantinian). Bowersock’s fresh interpretation offers fruitful avenues for future research, and what renders his proposal less than fully persuasive is not that his evidence is fragmentary and inconclusive, but that much of his argument is based on evidence of omission. This provocative chapter initiates a theme that runs throughout the book: the fact that, in many ways, St. Peter’s remains an enigma.

Chapters three and four discuss the early Christian basilica and its decoration. In her essay on spolia, Dale Kinney chronicles the material stuff of Old St. Peter’s and records the origins and values of the myriad types of stone used in its construction. Kinney demonstrates the ways in which the Vatican spolia were appreciated and used over the centuries, giving the reader a good sense of what the pilgrim to Old St. Peter’s would have seen and experienced. Mosaics for the apse and façade are the subjects of an essay by Antonio Iacobini, which appears here for the first time in English. Iacobini reveals how Innocent III fashioned himself as mystical bridegroom of Ecclesia, a union through which the pope received a power beyond that of any temporal ruler, a power passed to him through Peter from God (51–52). The author suggests that new decorations for the Apostle’s tomb alluded to episcopal power through the object of the pallium, a symbol of authority only the pope could confer.

Chapters five, six, and seven form a thematic group discussing New St. Peter’s and its decoration. In the first of these, Christof Thoenes chronicles the shift from conservation of Old St. Peter’s to the commission for a massive new church evoking the grandeur and power of the Roman Empire. In his discussion of Donato Bramante’s designs for New