commitment to action. Only at the end of the Fascist colonial reign—when colonial control (as well as metropolitan control) was completely centralized by the dictatorship in Rome—were the more stringent official urban policies, such as apartheid, implemented or attempted in the colonies.

Fuller observes that even though these events fall within the living memory of many Italians, a sense of amnesia precedes their discussion. One might reasonably fear that this presentation of Italian colonialism as less exploitative than that of other countries may bolster this lack of ownership by Italians of their shadowed past. That dark history is often pinned to the scapegoat, Mussolini, although many Italian colonial atrocities predate his rule by decades. This concern, however, is eclipsed many times over by the immense value of this book as a comprehensive catalogue of Italian colonial construction, augmented by the author’s nuanced analysis of Italian politics, society, thought, and perception in the first half of the twentieth century.

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Note
1. For the first idea, see Guido Zucconi, La Città Contesa: Dagli Ingegneri Sanitari agli urbanisti 1885–1942 (Milan: Jaca, 1999), 31ff, 182.

Maria Giuffrè
Photographs by Melo Minnella
The Baroque Architecture of Sicily

Maria Sofia Di Fede and Fulvia Scaduto, eds.
La Biblioteca dell’Architetto: Libri e incisioni (XVI–XVIII secolo) custoditi nella Biblioteca Centrale della Regione Siciliana

In his 1968 book Sicilian Baroque, Anthony Blunt wrote that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century architects from Sicily were experts in technical matters and prolific writers of treatises, publishing more than their mainland Italian contemporaries. He continued with an interesting qualification: “but, they were also Sicilian, and they used their intellect to produce buildings in which the energy and imagination of the south attained full and mature expression” (9). Blunt’s assessment of an exuberant baroque style that reached maturity and flourished in the late seventeenth and the whole of the eighteenth century in Sicily remains intact in two recent books on the architecture of the island. In these publications, a lavishly illustrated architectural survey and a catalog of a recent exhibition on print culture, Blunt’s understanding of an essential southern quality in Sicilian architecture, however, has given way to a more sophisticated and contextual analysis that looks beyond style to the cosmopolitan reality of early modern Sicilian society and culture.

Maria Giuffrè’s The Baroque Architecture of Sicily first appeared in Italian in 2006 and offers a synthesis of recent scholarship. Perhaps recognizing that doubts might be cast on a book measuring 32 by 27 centimeters and including 272 color illustrations, Giuffrè opens with a scholarly justification for the English-language edition. She argues that much of Sicily’s baroque architecture remains relatively unknown to nonresident scholars and that its complexity makes it difficult to comprehend. The variety of Sicily’s architecture comes through beautifully in the architectural photography of Melo Minnella, whose work also graces the pages of Salvatore Boscaino’s earlier writings on the subject (Sicilia baroca: Architettura e città 1610–1760 [Rome: Officina, 2nd ed., 1986; and 3rd rev. ed., 1997]). Giuffrè’s book is composed of four thematic chapters without footnotes. Each is followed by a sumptuous sequence of Minnella’s color photographs that complement the text but also stands alone as a visual essay. The book ends with a postscript and minimal bibliography, raising a question of the book’s intended audience in light of Giuffrè’s stated goal of sparking scholarly interest in her subject.

For Giuffrè, Sicily is “an island without frontiers, open to all the artistic currents flowing into it from across the seas, and yet stubbornly protective of its own genius loci” (8). Whether the topic is politics, architectural practice, or contemporary architectural theory, Giuffrè returns to the leitmotif of Sicily’s insular nature, which she contrasts with the cosmopolitan ambitions of the island’s foreign rulers as well as both native and foreign patrons and architects. The first chapter is a consideration of Sicilian places and provides a social and political context for the architecture. Following political divisions of the era, Giuffrè divides the island between west and east and considers the influence of the dual capitals of Palermo and Messina (until the latter’s fall from grace after 1674) on their hinterlands. The chapter also considers the devastation caused by the 1693 earthquake that destroyed twenty cities and led to substantial rebuilding in the Val di Noto in the southeastern portion of the island. By the early years of the eighteenth century, the southeastern cities—Syracuse, Catania, and Noto—emerged as new capitals of the baroque to paraphrase Giuffrè.

The author’s contextual grounding for the study of architecture reflects recent research on those Italian territories that fell under the domain of the Spanish Habsburg and later Bourbon empires. Giuffrè’s inclusion of multiple illustrations from atlases (still housed in Madrid archives) of Sicily’s coastline and ports confirms her acknowledgment that, despite distance, “Madrid was still very much in control” of the “new urban geography” that arose on the island (24). The nod to Spanish influence is largely political and not, interestingly, architectural. Yet, aside from the impact of Spanish treatises acknowledged by Giuffrè, there are significant parallels that can be traced in the evolution of the baroque in both places. For instance, Giuffrè’s notion of a “long Renaissance,” which she argues characterized much of Sicilian architecture through the late seventeenth century, also fits developments in Spain. Moreover, the delayed arrival of what can be called a late baroque style in Sicily was also seen in Spain. Thanks to the rich photography in this book, one can readily see correspondences in composition and form between monuments in cities as far apart...
as Santiago de Compostela and Mazara del Vallo. There is more to be written on this topic, but Giuffrè's revised analysis of Sicily suggests ways to move beyond Blunt's declaration nearly forty years earlier that the only similarity between architecture in Sicily and Spain is a love of decoration and contorted forms.

Giuffrè's second chapter concerns patrons, architects, and master builders at work in Sicily. Here she distinguishes among architects trained by the religious orders, those who came to architecture via painting and sculpture, and those who devoted their skills to military architecture. The essay surveys some of the leading individuals who worked in Sicily, although the brevity of the text does not allow for much more than a biographical sketch for any but the best-known architects. A third chapter devoted to the building trade surveys the working methods and innovations of key individuals. Giuffrè notes the proliferation of new building forms such as the passetto, an enclosed walkway above street level, and the tower façade, which combines the traditional campanile and pedimented central portion of a church in a manner not unlike the use of the espadaña in Seville or the retablo façade throughout Spanish territories. Giuffrè ends with a discussion of decorative work in stucco, inlaid marble, and stone that is far too brief, given her earlier publications on architectural decoration.

In a final chapter, Giuffrè considers architectural theory and especially the use of treatises in the training of Sicilian designers. She notes the widespread availability of prints and books on architecture in Sicilian collections, the topic of the catalog that is also under review, and what she calls the "uniquely Sicilian tendency to transform architecture through decoration" (239). To explain this tendency, she proposes that Sicilian architects engaged in an 'ars combinatoria', freely mixing forms gathered from the experience of visiting existing buildings or their reading of books. The result of this process for Giuffrè is the ornate late baroque style, although one could add that the same impulse led to rococo and neoclassical developments, which followed the baroque but which she views as separate. In this and the previous chapter, Giuffrè makes numerous mentions of drawings by Sicilian architects, but, surprisingly, only a handful of these are illustrated.

Ultimately, Minnella's photography overshadows Giuffrè's writing and, thus, one returns to the question of the book's intended audience. Architectural historians will certainly appreciate the author's synthesis of an apparently wide range of sources (the select bibliography is very scant) as well as her inclusion of contemporary cartographic material as illustrations. But the small number of architectural drawings that illustrate the discussion of practice and the lack of a single page from a treatise, such as Giovanni Amico's 'L'architetto pratico [sic]' of 1750, which receives considerable attention in Giuffrè's consideration of theory, are likely to disappoint. Despite these lacunae, Minnella's photography combined with Giuffrè's fragmented text succeed in capturing the collage of styles and historical periods that one perceives standing on the streets of Catania, the hilltop of Enna, or in the civic heart of Palermo. The book thereby invites further investigation.

La Biblioteca dell'Architetto is the catalog of an exhibition held in Palermo in November 2007 that explored the rich collection of books on architecture in the city's Biblioteca Centrale della Regione Siciliane and the Biblioteca Comunale di Palermo. In an introductory essay, curator Marco Rosario Nobile describes the aim of the exhibition and catalog as the exploration of architectural practice in early modern Sicily, as seen through the lens of books on architecture that served as "anthologies of forms" for architects (12). Noting that the books in the exhibition derived primarily from three sources—the libraries of architects; libraries of collectors and antiquarians; and especially the collections of Sicily's religious orders—Nobile suggests that the books are evidence of a shift in architectural practice from a workshop-based enterprise to a more elite training in theory and mathematics, which was facilitated by printed works. In a second introductory essay, Erik H. Neil outlines the types of books under consideration and then highlights examples of books written by architects, including an insightful summary of Giovanni Amico about whom Neil has written elsewhere. Turning to the topic of architects as readers, Neil illustrates the ways in which architects used prints and printed books, often through "obvious" borrowings. Near the end of his essay, he writes that the relationship between print culture and built works could at times be subtle and involved "subjective reading" by architects (28). Unfortunately, this point is made only in passing, without the sort of examples that would add heft to the essay.

Six essays by Italian scholars introduce the broad themes of the exhibition, including Vitruvius and the tradition of the architectural treatise since the Renaissance; geometry and military architecture; architectural theory in baroque Italy; the rise of a decorative tradition in printed books; and the impact of archaeology on architectural theory and practice. Each essay writer refers to books and printed works that were displayed in the exhibition, and many title pages and select other pages are illustrated, although not always with useful captions. The essays draw upon a surprisingly limited array of published sources, written almost exclusively in Italian. Two essays stand out for their contributions. Writing on architectural decoration, Fulvia Scaduto explores the taste for ornament in Sicily and argues that the decorative impulse on the island was part of an international change in taste. As evidence, the essay smartly focuses on foreign treatises, largely French and Central European, and demonstrates a profound interest in the rococo.

The strongest essay in La Biblioteca dell'Architetto is Maria Sofia Di Fede's survey of books by Sicilian authors. Like other contributors, Di Fede cites existing historiography but, happily, also confronts it. She makes the interesting point that much work remains to be done on the relationship between print culture and Sicilian architecture, especially given the still-unexplored holdings of private libraries, which are likely to include unpublished manuscript works on architecture. Di Fede also ponders the interconnectedness of architectural, mathematical, scientific, and religious training that characterizes...
the professional trajectory of many Sicilian architects. Although Neil and Federica Scibilia also comment on this matter in their essays, only Di Fede hypothesizes an explanation. Her suggestion that this connection is manifested elsewhere in the Spanish world and traceable to Juan de Herrera's founding of an Academy of Mathematics in Madrid in 1582 is one of the book's rare acknowledgments that Spanish models of architectural practice had an impact on Sicily under Spanish dominion. Di Fede also includes a few well-chosen words about ornament that complement Scaduto's essay. Rather than reduce the architecture of eighteenth-century Sicily to what Giuffrè calls “flights of fancy,” Di Fede suggests that scholars strive to uncover the mathematical underpinnings of late baroque design. This is especially prudent advice, given the quasi-scientific, quasi-theological writings of authors like Juan Caramuel de Lobokwitz, whose work was widely known among Sicilian architects.

The catalog ends with three short appendices and checklists that should make future work on Sicilian architecture more fruitful. The architectural books that survive in Palermo's principal libraries derived largely from that city, but some come also from other important places on the island.

The exhibition's demonstration of the pivotal role of books and printed matter in architectural practice complements Maria Giuffrè's portrayal of a rich architectural culture across the geographical range of Sicily. Together, the survey book and exhibition catalog explore this “island without frontiers” in a much broader context.

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Adam Hardy

The Temple Architecture of India

West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2007, 256 pp., 168 color and 7 b/w illus., 151 drawings and maps. $75 (cloth), ISBN 9780470028278

Adam Hardy's new book, The Temple Architecture of India, upon first glance appears to be a general survey of the subcontinent's religious architecture. However, this beautifully produced volume is not just an overview but a highly ambitious attempt to decipher the design principles underlying the development of temple architecture between ca. 600 and 1300. An architect by training, Hardy has spent over two decades devoting his practitioner's eye to discovering meaningful ways to approach this large body of visually complex monuments. Whereas his earlier Indian Temple Architecture (1995) was a regional study of temples in Karnataka, his new book ranges broadly across the subcontinent in order to explore the nature, origins, and evolution of India's two most significant architectural traditions: the northern Nagara and the southern Dravida.

Hardy's central argument, which is laid out in the first of the book's six parts, has two main components. The first emerges from Hardy's conceptualization of Nagara and Dravida as architectural “languages,” each functioning as “a system providing a ‘vocabulary,’ a kit of parts, along with a ‘grammar’ which regulates the ways of putting the parts together” (14). This vocabulary is identifiable in the variety of aedicules, or little buildings, that have long been familiar to scholars of Indian art. Indeed, Hardy takes as his point of departure James Fergusson's 1876 observation that “everywhere . . . in India, architectural decoration is made up of small models of large buildings” (10). But Hardy pushes beyond to assert that “aedicules are not just ornaments, but the basic units from which most Indian temple architecture is composed” (10). Although this idea can be traced back to Ananda Coomaraswamy, Hardy develops and systematically applies it to a wide range of monuments.

The second part of Hardy's argument is that the development of Nagara and Dravida grew from the possibilities inherent in the architecture's aedicularity. Hardy suggests that over time, a pattern of “centrifugal” growth moved downward and outward from the temple's central axis as aedicules multiplied, emerged, and expanded through “projection,” “staggering,” and “splitting” (part one, chapter three). Architects creatively exploited these dynamic processes to design increasingly complex monuments. They built in a modular fashion by breaking down the aedicular units and “playing out the potential of the architectural languages” (71). Over time, architectural forms evolved through complementary aspects of “fusion,” defined as the successive incorporation of earlier groupings, and “unfolding,” a process through which “new designs are unpacked and pulled out of previous ones” (69). It was this way of designing (71), passed down through generations, that shaped the evolutionary trajectory of India's architecture.

The rest of the book follows from these basic arguments. Whereas part two, “Predecessors,” briefly traces the origins of India's aedicules in the sculpture and forms of early Buddhist stupas and later Buddhist and Hindu rock-cut architecture, part three, “Temple Design,” maps evolutionary patterns from the eighth century onward. Here Hardy details architectural features, ranging from plans, geometry, piers, and ceilings to moldings and elevations. He suggests that temples expanded to incorporate larger mandapas (pillared halls) with deep blossoming, corbelled ceilings that built upon earlier designs (part three, chapters nine and fifteen).

One of the strengths of Hardy's focus on and use of aedicularity is the way it reveals the modularity of temple forms; once patterns became established, they provided the basis for further experimentation and the different formulations of Nagara and Dravida architecture (parts four and five). Hardy's discussion of Nagara emphasizes the progressive development of four of Nagara's five modes: Latina, Valabhi, Shekhari, and Bhumija; the fifth, Phamsana, is treated earlier in the book (part three, chapter ten). Hardy succeeds in showing how each mode built upon earlier forms; Shekhari and Bhumija, for example, evolved through the multiplication of Latina applied in a “centrifugal” manner. A particularly convincing argument is presented in part four, chapter nineteen, where he points out that the central cluster of the shikhara (spire) of the Ambika temple at Jagat (ca. AD 961; fig. 19.2) incorporates the “proto-Shekhari” form of the shikhara of the Vamana temple.