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Brothers, Cammy. Giuliano da Sangallo and the Ruins of Rome

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Brothers, Cammy.
Giuliano da Sangallo and the Ruins of Rome.
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022. Pp. x, 310 + 207 col., 61 b/w ill. ISBN 9780691193793 (hardcover) US$75.

This is a book about the creativity of a Renaissance architect, his profound connections to the ruined ancient city of Rome, the sense of loss and contending with it, the process of rebirth and architectural creation through designing with ruins, and the role of the imagination in the design process as it hovers between reality and projection. It focuses on the creative processes that a very important but somewhat undervalued architect of the Italian Renaissance, Giuliano da Sangallo (1443–1516), applied in the act of drawing many ruined buildings and of designing modern ones inspired by them. As the author writes, her understanding of the way architecture was created, from perception of ancient ruins to representation of them in drawings and on to new design, has been nourished by her teaching in schools of architecture (vii–viii, 248). Many times, she evokes the creative connection between eye, mind, and hand in the work of the architect then and now. In this brilliant and beautifully produced book, she concludes that drawing, for an architect such as Giuliano, was "an active and creative mode of training the imagination and impressing certain memories on it—using the hand to train the memory to fuel the imagination," and that "perception itself may be the first creative act" (252).

Key protagonists of the book are two books themselves, the Codex Barberini in the Vatican Library and the Taccuino Senese in Siena. Created by Giuliano, they are bound codices of his quite finished drawings on valuable parchment. The drawings are not sketches, and the books are not sketchbooks but workbooks with complex and multiple functions, such as recording the state of the ruins, completing and enhancing them with innovative designs, providing lifelong design inspiration for himself and other architects, and forming conversation pieces around which Giuliano, his patrons, designer-colleagues, students, and a cultivated milieu could mill and build ideas, as well as ponder the ruins and loss of ancient Rome. The two codices interacted, too, providing a dialogue between splendid drawings in the larger, more lavish Codex Barberini, and smaller, less fanciful ones, some copied from the larger book, in the smaller Taccuino Senese. Giuliano used the books to accompany the many facets of his career. Son of a woodworker, he turned to architecture by the 1470s

in Florence, building palaces, churches, fortifications, and villas for the elites, including Lorenzo de' Medici. Among those whom he mentored as a master were the young Michelangelo and Jacopo Sansovino.

Cammy Brothers builds on the works of great scholars, from Christian Hülsen, who first catalogued the drawings of the Codex Barberini for a facsimile publication in 1910 (2nd edition, Vatican City, 1984), to Howard Burns, who has published on architectural drawings of Giuliano and his contemporaries since 1965, with particular attention to how a practising architect in Renaissance Italy would think. In addition, a handful of very recent and substantial publications on Giuliano's career have helped to reveal his importance through careful chronological and stylistic study of the built works above all. These include, for example, Sabine Frommel's monograph, *Giuliano Da Sangallo* (Florence: Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze and Edifir, 2014); a book of essays edited by Amedeo Belluzzi, Caroline Elam, and Francesco Paolo Fiore, *Giuliano da Sangallo* (Milan: Officina Libraria, 2017); and an exhibition catalogue on the architect's drawings at the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi in Florence by Dario Donetti, Marzia Faietti, and Sabine Frommel, *Giuliano da Sangallo. Disegni degli Uffizi* (Florence: Giunti and Firenze Musei, 2017).

Brothers, who has published extensively on the roles and types of drawings in Italian Renaissance architectural design, including Michelangelo's move from figurative to architectural work in *Michelangelo, Drawing, and the Invention of Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), takes a thematic tack on Giuliano. Furnishing the reader with a brief "Index of Folios" in both workbooks (300–301), she brings the reader on a textual and visual journey of deep intimacy into the world of drawings that render the architectural remains of ancient Rome. Through a remarkably clear text, which makes the close analysis of very complex drawings and their details look easy, and through some 260 illustrations, most of them in colour, the reader is plunged into a direct experience of monumental entablatures, round tombs, and the rubble of buildings in the process of ruination. Because Brothers's book has a fairly large format and because of Giuliano's extraordinary pictorial inventions in portraying architecture, the full-page colour illustrations of the Codex Barberini almost impart a physical experience of moving among falling stones, jutting cornices, and looming columns, as Giuliano did. Each chapter structures a theme, and these themes are woven throughout the entire book.

One of the great contributions of the book is Brothers's synthetic contextualization of each theme, while focusing on the drawings. There are five chapters. In chapter 1, "The Architect as Bookmaker," Giuliano's two books are set against the illuminations of giant Bibles, Leon Battista Alberti's treatises, and printed antiquarian studies. The actual complexity of practices is always stressed: the making of printed books and manuscripts overlapped in rich ways. In chapter 2, "What Is Antique?" the question of canon and anti-canon in the architecture of Giuliano's day is considered: "*Antico*, in Giuliano's terms, signified material from the past that was useful for the present" (47). Chapter 3, "Ornament and Abstraction," reveals the double track of Giuliano's practice, innovating in figurative ornament of column capitals in many instances, and in others using austere panelling to structure walls. Both practices left a tangible legacy for architects, and Brothers cites Raphael, Michelangelo, Palladio, and Francesco Borromini (115, 142). Chapter 4, "Ruins and Representation," "focuses on Giuliano's explorations of pictorial techniques to stretch the boundaries of what architectural drawing could achieve: in the representation of the passage of time and its effects; in the experience of perceiving a building while moving through it; and in the simultaneous rendering of interior and exterior" (11). There is marvellous contextualization of Giuliano's work with that of contemporary painters such as Mantegna and Botticelli. Chapter 5, "Research, Reconstruction, and Design," builds on the author's earlier publications to show how Giuliano came to the ruins with an agenda for design, and how that agenda articulated his drawings of them.

Brothers's book is a very important and welcome contribution to architectural and art histories of the Italian Renaissance, to studies of Rome, and to the history of the book. It is synthetic and highly innovative, like Giuliano himself.

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