

Der junge Juvarra und sein professionelles Netzwerk

Tommaso Manfredi
Filippo Juvarra: gli anni giovanili.
 Roma, Argos 2010. 565 p.,
 763 ill. in colour.
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The year 2011 was a prolific one for the study of Filippo Juvarra (Messina 1678–Madrid 1736): it started with Tommaso Manfredi's book (published in December 2010) and ended with a conference held in Turin (November 13–16th, 2011), where scholars met to share the results of their recent research on the life, works and drawings of the architect. The conference provided the opportunity to publish online the corpus of Juvarra's drawings, preserved in the Museo Civico in Turin (www.palazzomadamatorino.it, section "collezioni", subsection "capolavori").

Juvarra was one of the most famous architects of his time. He was known throughout Europe, in Paris, Dresden, London and Madrid. While residing in Italy, he worked in Messina, Naples, Lucca, Rome, and above all in Turin, where he was appointed royal architect in 1714. Even though he had completed few buildings before moving to Turin, hundreds of drawings document the long period Juvarra spent in Rome (1704–14). Starting with the 1937 monograph devoted to Juvarra by V. Viale, L. Rovere and A. E. Brinckmann, these drawings have attracted the attention of scholars interested in the early phase of the architect's career. Since then, the major contribution to the research on Juvarra's architectural education and training has been the publication of three

sketchbooks: the first, now at the Metropolitan Museum of New York, was published by Henry A. Millon in 1984 (*Juvarra. Drawings from the Roman Period, 1704–1714. Part I*, Roma 1984) and appeared together with the Tournon collection sketchbook in Turin (later republished by Angela Griseri, *Libro di più pensieri d'architettura di Filippo Juvarra*, Torino 1998); the third, held by the Vincennes castle near Paris, was published by Andrea Barghini in 1994 (*Juvarra a Roma: disegni dall'atelier di Carlo Fontana*, Torino 1994).

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Juvarra's early career was the subject of Manfredi's unpublished PhD dissertation in 1997 (*Filippo Juvarra a Roma 1704–1714. La costruzione di una carriera*); he has also published various articles in international and Italian journals. The new book goes further by assembling the principal studies of the last ten years, including the still unpublished graduation thesis submitted by Alessandra Del Nista, *Juvarra e Lucca: disegni, progetti e committenti, 1706–1728* (Università IUAV di Venezia, tutors M. Bulgarelli/G. Curcio, 2005/06). Manfredi's book is not just a critical synthesis of the major questions that have characterised Juvarra scholarship, but a detailed reconstruction that reconsiders known facts in the light of recent contributions.

Organised chronologically, the book divides the life of Juvarra into his education in Messina (ch. 1), his participation within Fontana's studio in 1704, his work for the Concorso Clementino in 1705 and other minor commissions in Naples, Lucca and Rome (ch. 2, 3, and 4), his teaching activity at the Accademia di San Luca in 1707 (ch. 5), his designs for the theatres of cardinal Pietro Ottoboni and the Queen of Poland (ch. 6 and 7), and finally the unexecuted project for the new Royal Palace in

Messina in 1714 (ch. 8), followed by an appendix on pictures and drawings portraying the architect (ch. 9). The chronological arrangement clarifies the succession of the events, but fragments the discussion of some projects into different chapters, as it happens in the cases of the church of San Gregorio in Messina (56–58, 126–133) and of the projects for the Palazzo Pubblico and some villas in Lucca (185–211, 457–468). Furthermore, the various aspects of Juvarra's career separated into different chapters are more interwoven than the titles of these chapters suggest. For instance, the reorganization of Fontana's studio after the death of Francesco Fontana (1708) and the building of the Antamoro chapel in the church of San Girolamo della Carità in Rome (1708–10) are examined in chapter 4 ("L'architetto romano"), while the entrance of Juvarra into the Accademia di San Luca (1707) is discussed only in the next chapter ("L'accademico").

The real limit of the book is the lack of any kind of general introduction outlining the scholarly discourse, and the very short abstracts that introduce each chapter do not sufficiently compensate for the lack of a critical overview which might have made the book accessible to a wider audience. However, scholars will appreciate the vast range of information presented: The volume indeed offers the most comprehensive and updated account not only of the formative years of Juvarra, but also of the milieu of the architects working in Rome in the early 18th century.

SUCCESSFUL NETWORKING

Biographical notes rather predominate the analysis of Juvarra's works. The starting point for this approach seems to have been the importance attributed to social connections in the construction of Juvarra's career. He often benefitted from the good relations he had with his patrons (such as Monsignor Tommaso Ruffo and above all the cardinal Pietro Ottoboni) as well as with other artists who emigrated from Messina (such as the painter Paolo Filocamo and the set designer Giovanni Francesco Pellegrini) and with well positioned friends like Coriolano Orsucci from

Lucca. Some of these relations go back to the Juvarra family's connections in Messina. Paolo Filocamo lived with Juvarra in the apartment of via dei Leutari in Rome, owned by the Messines gilder Giacomo Passalacqua, whose son Pietro (1690–1748) later became an architect (a matter already well examined by the author; see Manfredi, *L'arrivo a Roma di Filippo Juvarra e l'apprendistato di Pietro Passalacqua nelle cronache domestiche di una famiglia messinese*, in: *Architettura. Storia e Documenti*, 1989, 109–116). The *Life* of Filippo Juvarra, attributed to his brother Francesco, states that Giovanni Francesco Pellegrini connected Juvarra to Ottoboni, and it is probable that the two artists met in Messina in 1702, during the previously unknown return of Pellegrini now documented by Manfredi. The family of the silk merchant Coriolano Orsucci had already been working in Messina when Juvarra made designs for the Orsucci villa near Lucca, and was commissioned to rebuild the public palace of this Republic (see Del Nista 2005/06). We may assume that Orsucci was familiar with Juvarra's projects for the façade of Santa Brigida – the church of the Lucchese community in Naples – where they stayed together in 1706.

Juvarra himself recognised the importance of this network of social and professional relations and in a set of drawings entitled "Memorie sepolcrali" he recorded the many "Homini insigni" he met in his career (discussed by many authors, Manfredi amongst them, in *La forma del pensiero. Filippo Juvarra: la costruzione del ricordo attraverso la celebrazione della memoria*, ed. by C. Ruggero, Roma 2008). In his 1738 obituary of Juvarra, his friend Scipione Maffei recorded that the architect was "di naturale molto allegro, di buona conversazione e molto amico dei divertimenti" (487). Maffei added that Juvarra "era così veloce nel disegnare, e nell'inventare, che trattenendosi spesso con molti amici, e Gentiluomini [...] fattagli qualche richiesta, metteva subito in carta diversi pensieri; e i disegni talvolta con una cattiva penna eseguiti riuscivano così nobili, e così vaghi, che da più d'uno [...] ne sono stati formati quadretti co' cristalli per insigne ornamento de' lor gabinetti" (457).

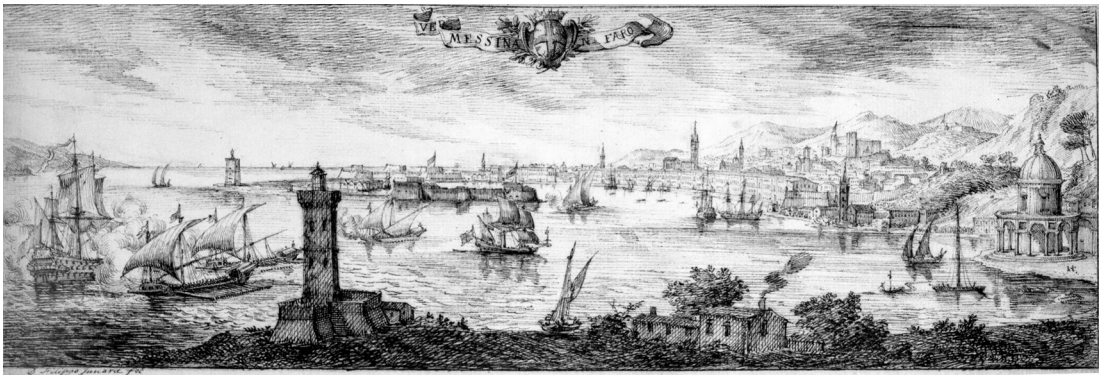
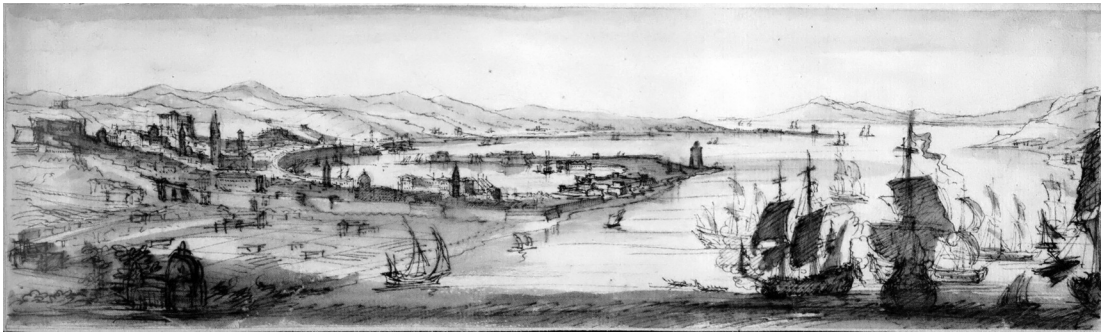


Fig. 1 Filippo Juvarra, Veduta di Messina nel Faro. St. Petersburg, Collection Tchoban (Manfredi, p. 22, fig. 13)



The book provides new information on some other architects living in Rome in the early Settecento, extracted by Manfredi from unpublished documents in different Roman archives, such as the Archivio Storico del Vicariato, the Archivio della Congregazione dei Virtuosi al Pantheon and the Archivio Storico dell'Accademia di San Luca. In the last one, he examined not only the well known collection of drawings, but also the often neglected minutes of the periodic meetings of the members of this academy. French documents cited by the author, such as the "Avvisi" now in the Bibliothèque du Ministère de la Guerre at Vincennes castle, or the letters sent to Paris by the directors of the French Academy in Rome, provide an external and comparative view of the Roman architectural context. The analysis of the context prevails: Juvarra's early career has mainly been chosen as a key to explain the functioning of Roman institutions and to illustrate the strategies of public and private patronage. We learn a lot about the practices of the Accademia di San Luca, the organization of Fontana's atelier, and the musical performances promoted by the cardinal Ottoboni and the Queen of Poland – less about Juvarra himself.

Although the topics surveyed are perhaps too broadly defined, the core illustrations are more narrowly selected. The corpus of Juvarra's drawings are reproduced in greater numbers than modern ground plans and photographic illustrations. The majority of these drawings are good quality colour reproductions, but sometimes small and thus difficult to read. The drawings from the Metropolitan Museum sketchbook – published by Millon in 1984 – are in duotone white and brown, while about 40 drawings from the Vincennes album – all reproduced in 1994 by Barghini in low quality black and white photographs – are now given in colour, which allows us to see for example that Juvarra drew the plan of Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza (262, fig. 363) correctly basing it on a triangle and not on a hexagon, an error often repeated by other architects (see Joseph Connors, *S. Ivo alla Sapienza: the first three minutes*, in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* LV, 1996, 38–57). The set design drawings now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the projects from the Tournon album in Turin are also reproduced in colour, as well as the recently discovered sheet with two views of Messina (fig. 1), here published (22, fig.

13) from the sales catalogue of November 30th, 2008 (Salle de ventes Pillet, Lyon-la-Forêt, vente aux enchères du 30 novembre 2008, Lot 24); it has been acquired by the Russian collector Sergej Tchoban (see *The Golden Age of architectural graphic art: drawings and drafts from the Sergei Tchoban Collection*, ed. by Vladimir Sedov/Irina Sedova, Moskva 2010).

The two most useful contributions to the book, in relation to Juvarra's drawings, are the colour reproductions of about 180 drawings from the album Ris. 59.4 in the Biblioteca Universitaria di Torino, and the discussion of the sketchbook in the Vatican Library. At p. 242, n. 427, Manfredi refuses the unlikely attribution to Juvarra of this album (proposed by Sarah McPhee, *The Vatican Album*, in: *Juvarra. Drawings from the Roman Period, 1704–1714. Part II*, Roma 1999, 11–151), and more convincingly proposes the name of Filippo Vasconi as the possible author. Unfortunately, the lack of a list of illustrations prevents the reader from appreciating this remarkable advancement in the study of Juvarra's drawings. One cannot find the drawings either by checking the location index or by looking for the museums and libraries where they are preserved.

SELF-CORRECTIONS

In some cases the author revises his previous scholarship, for example the presumed location of the now disappeared Palazzo Spadafora in Messina, perhaps the first project by Juvarra for a residential building in 1705/06. In 1999–2000 Manfredi had erroneously identified the palace with one belonging to another branch of the same family (see Manfredi, *Juvarra a Messina: il progetto per il palazzo Spadafora*, in: *Quaderni del Dipartimento PAU VIII–IX*, 1998–99, 139–146; id., *Juvarra a Messina*, in: *Storia dell'arte* 99, 2000, 106–133), but now, thanks to his research in the Archivio di Stato di Palermo and to the identification of a fragmentary text citing the “via del Rovolo” amongst the sheets of the Metropolitan sketchbook, he is able to locate the palace correctly to the rear of the cathedral. One might add the observation that Juvarra already imitated here those architectural examples which

he should also prefer in his later works like Michelangelo, Bernini, Andrea Pozzo, and Carlo Fontana. The main hall designed by Juvarra with its walls articulated by niches and pedestals for statues and with four cut up corners, is copied from a plan published by Pozzo in his *Prospettiva* (vol. II, pl. 57). In the monumental staircase of the palace (see 133, fig. 150; 134, fig. 152) the architect mixed the staircase invented by Michelangelo for the Biblioteca Laurenziana with the narrowing perspective of the second flight, enclosed between two walls, and derived from Bernini's Scala Regia in the Vatican, while the general plan is copied from a design proposed by Carlo Fontana for an unidentified palace, perhaps the Liechtenstein Palace in Vienna (see Sabine Jacob, *Italienische Zeichnungen der Kunstbibliothek in Berlin*, Berlin 1975, 84, n. 382). The extraordinary plan of this staircase was later reused in Messina, in Palazzo Avarna, built by Francesco Basile in the late 18th century (see Jacques Ignace Hittorff/Ludwig Zanth, *Architecture moderne de la Sicile*, Paris 1835, pl. 19). This might suggest (against the idea of Manfredi) that Juvarra actually built the Spadafora staircase. As Basile may not have been aware of Fontana's unexecuted project, one can deduce that he might have seen a similar arrangement in Messina.

Manfredi's book is not (and cannot be) a definitive study of all aspects of Juvarra's early career, but it marks a significant starting point for future studies on this important architect.

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