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Robert Kirkbride. *Architecture and Memory: The Renaissance Studioli of Federico da Montefeltro.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. xiii + 233 pp. $60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-14248-9; (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-51227-5.

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The Montefeltro Studioli in Multiple Dimensions

Robert Kirkbride's *Architecture and Memory: The Renaissance Studioli of Federico da Montefeltro* is part of a series of digital monographs adapted from award-winning dissertations, and published in both print and electronic forms by Columbia University Press's Gutenberg-e project, with support from the American Historical Association and funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The conventional book is published without images of the works at the center of the argument, making it impossible for the reader to fully engage with the material or to evaluate the author's contribution to our knowledge of these familiar rooms. However, the complete work, accessible at no charge and without subscription on the Gutenberg-e Web site (http://www.Gutenberg-e.org/kirkbride/) is an unusual resource that provides abundant visual documentation, including photographs, three-dimensional computer animations of the spaces, analytical drawings and models, and other illustrative evidence. The electronic version is also enriched with extensive captions, many of which do far more than describe the illustrated objects, providing contexts, commentary, and citations that allow the reader to deepen her knowledge and appreciation of the studies and their patron. In fact, the images operate much in the way the studies themselves were meant to–as invitations to cultivate a more complex understanding of the seen and experienced world through imagination, inquiry, and memory. Both the printed and electronic versions offer substantial footnotes that elaborate upon topics discussed in the body of the text and direct readers to a range of supporting primary and secondary sources.

The Urbino and Gubbio studies were commissioned by Duke Federico da Montefeltro (1422-82), a *condottiero* whose service at various times for Milan, Florence, and Naples brought him wealth, territory, and influence. The duke's palaces are widely recognized as historical sites of erudition, creativity, and power. The studies in Urbino (completed in 1476) and Gubbio (completed in 1483) were neither libraries nor cabinets of curiosities, but they functioned in analagous ways, serving as anthologies, florilegia and narratives of the patron's knowledge, and as vehicles for mnemonic exercises. Paneled with exquisitely detailed intarsia and decorated with portraits of both historical and contemporary *huomini famosi*, the chambers did not reflect or broadcast Federico's skills in the *vita attiva* as much as his engagement in the *vita contemplativa.* Kirkbride argues convincingly that the two realms were intertwined, and that knowledge of the liberal arts informed and contributed to Federico's military and administrative prowess.

The iconographic programs of these studies include the liberal arts, muses, and virtues, represented metaphorically and allegorically in the intarsia. Readers in search of definitive readings of the chambers' symbology will be disappointed; they might be more satisfied with documentation of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's reconstruction of the Gubbio studiolo on the museum's Web site (http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/studiolo/studiolo.html) or, for the Urbino chamber, publications by Luciano Cheles and Cecil H. Clough.[1] Kirkbride's project seeks not to reduce and concretize the meaning of the images, but rather to acknowledge their polysemous qualities. The project thus focuses on memory as a pedagogical discipline and an art, relying on Renaissance humanist sources, as well as more recent studies of the cultivation and functions of memory in medieval and Renaissance culture, such as those by Lina Bolzoni, Mary Carruthers, and Frances Yates.[2]

The project opens with comparative descriptions of the two studies, arguing that the Gubbio study was intended to complement and support the education of Federico's son, Guidobaldo, with emphasis on the verbal arts–grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Federico died during

the Gubbio study's construction, and Kirkbride sees in the room's program the father's intended legacy with regard to education and government. The degree to which this was literally the case can be debated, but there can be no doubt that Federico's well-known appreciation and understanding of the liberal arts, both as means and ends, were communicated at the Urbino study. As a sort of manifesto of the family's values, the Urbino program obviously influenced and was consistent with that of the Gubbio study. Subsequent chapters focus on the role of memory in quattrocento learning and examine the ways in which memory could be stimulated, tested, and developed by the chambers' representational programs. Through his consideration of pre-Enlightenment modes of thinking and perceiving, Kirkbride emphasizes the intellectual over the aesthetic, while also recognizing that aesthetic qualities, optics, and perception could be deployed in a kind of visual rhetoric. Given the title, the author's treatment of architecture per se is oddly underdeveloped. The real contribution here is the project's connection of visual and haptic experiences to cognitive pursuits.

The Gutenberg-e project aims to support and promote the scholarly monograph, which former American Historical Association president Robert Darnton, a principal motivator of the Gutenberg-e initiative, has described as a "special kind of book," that has become increasingly difficult for newly minted PhDs to publish.[3] Darnton argued that electronic books have the potential to revitalize the genre even as he recognized that "no one would read a book on a computer screen," and that the computer is used for "sampling and searching," not "concentrated, long-term reading."[4] He observed that the electronic book's principal strength is its ability to deliver layers of information. One surveys the topic, with chapters that can stand alone. The next focuses on more detailed aspects of the argument. A third presents documentation that is carefully interpreted, and a fourth provides pedagogical support, with discussion questions, syllabi, and bibliography. Kirkbride's electronic book achieves each of these objectives.

Of course, a printed book can offer the same sort of material.[5] Indeed, the best do, with the added value of sustained, synthetic analysis of the whole, and this is the key component–not a layer but a consistent thread–that is lacking in Kirkbride's electronic book. It is unclear if this is a fault of the author, the editor, or the structure of the series. As Darnton himself predicted, the electronic format lends itself to fragmentation that transfers to the reader the historian's task of making the whole cohere. If Columbia University Press is truly committed to the production of both electronic and conventional printed books for this series, it should use the two formats in ways that take full advantage of the strengths and functions of each. In such an approach, the electronic versions would continue to operate in the layered way that suits "sampling and searching," and the print versions would require (or allow) authors to unify their source material and demonstrate the full range of their analytical and theoretical skills.

Notes

[1]. See Luciano Cheles, *The Studiolo of Urbino: An Iconographic Investigation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986); and Cecil H. Clough, "Art as Power in the Decoration of the Study of an Italian Renaissance Prince: The Case of Federico da Montefeltro," *Artibus et historiae* 16, no. 31 (1995): 19-50.

[2]. See Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press*, trans. Jeremy Parzen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; and Frances Yates, The Art of Memory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

[3]. Robert Darnton, "A Program for Reviving the Monograph," *Perspectives* (March 1999).

[4]. Ibid.

[5]. It should be noted that this electronic book offers two things that a printed book cannot. One is the animated models mentioned above; the other is a sound gallery comprised of field recordings of Urbino whose value to Kirkbride's project is insubstantial.

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