Margaret Muther D'Evelyn. *Venice and Vitruvius: Reading Venice with Daniele Barbaro and Andrea Palladio.*
New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012. xii + 492 pp. $65. ISBN: 978-0-300-17451-9.

This book offers a meticulous, in-depth study of the idea of Venice as perceived by Daniele Barbaro (1514–70), Venetian patrician and patriarch of Aquileia. In the mid-sixteenth century, Venice was politically divided between two factions, the group of reformers — so-called Romanists — and the traditionalists. Barbaro was one of the leaders of the former movement and actively advocated for the use of a classical architectural language, both in theoretical and practical terms, as a visual embodiment of a political renewal. Among other efforts to promote his agenda, he published translations and commentaries in both Latin and Italian of Vitruvius's *De Architectura* (*On Architecture*), the only architectural treatise to have survived from antiquity. Barbaro's work followed in the tradition of previous publications; however, as already recognized by Manfredo Tafuri, he was the first translator of Vitruvius who completely understood the famously obscure architectural text. Barbaro's considerable effort in publishing a reliable translation that could be easily understood by his readers led him to seek the collaboration of the architect Andrea Palladio (1508–80), who provided the clear and well-executed drawings for the book. D'Evelyn draws from both Barbaro's commentaries and Palladio's drawings in exploring the contemporary situation of architecture in mid-sixteenth-century Venice, and the role of classical architecture as a powerful tool in the pursuit of a political agenda of government reform.

D'Evelyn's book is divided into two parts. The first one, "The Arrival of the Italian Renaissance Illustrated Architectural Book," is an exploration of this new literary genre and of the examples that were most influential to Barbaro and Palladio. She begins her discussion with Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439–1501), the first architect to extensively use images to describe architecture in his never-published treatise. The following author is Sebastiano Serlio (1475–1554), who published the first two books of his architectural treatise in Venice, respectively dedicated to the architectural orders and buildings from antiquity. D'Evelyn argues how Francesco di

Giorgio's and Serlio's studies on Vitruvius were extremely influential for Barbaro and Palladio. In fact, each of these authors sought answers in Vitruvius's text for problems that he encountered in his own architectural practice.

The second part of the book consists of a series of short essays on specific parts of buildings (foundations, doors and atria, windows, roofs), on the most widely used construction material (bricks), and on the perception of the city as a theater. In these chapters, D'Evelyn systematically compares architectural details and construction techniques described by Vitruvius with those visible in Venice, through the eyes of Barbaro. Some of these comparisons are self-evident, such as the association of the Piazza San Marco with the ancient forum described in the *De Architectura*; others are less obvious and at times questionable, such as identification of the characteristic Venetian *altane* with ancient *maeniana*. In these observations, a great assortment of images provides direct comparisons between the commentaries by Barbaro, Palladio's images made both for Vitruvius and for his own architectural treatise *The Four Books of Architecture*, and the different editions of the *De Architectura*, edited by Fra Giocondo, Cesare Cesariano, and Guillame Philandrier, among others. Even when a particular building typology was completely unknown in antiquity, as in the case of bell towers, D'Evelyn shows us the effort made by Barbaro to identify relevant passages in Vitruvius's text. In such instances, the author is tempted to speculate about other sources, looking well beyond the floating borders of the city to its connections across the Mediterranean: for example, she links bell towers to Islamic minarets. The final chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the literary sources used by Barbaro for his *Commentaries*: among others, Ovid, Pliny, Dante, Leon Battista Alberti, and the author of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (lightly identified with Francesco Colonna).

D'Evelyn's book pays homage to the work of Manfredo Tafuri and Deborah Howard, especially the former's introduction to the Italian edition of the *Commentaries* (together with Manuela Morresi, 1987) and his *Venice and the Renaissance* (1989). The essential points regarding the meaning of Vitruvius for Barbaro are identified in these earlier studies, as well as in Deborah Howard's *Venice Disputed: Marc'Antonio Barbaro and Venetian Architecture, 1550–1600* (2011). The most important original contribution of *Venice and Vitruvius* is the careful and detailed reading of mid-sixteenth-century Venice through the political and professional eyes of Barbaro and Palladio. The extensive use of primary sources — both textual and visual — makes this book a well-documented study of the theory and practice of Venetian architecture. The extensive endnotes are a useful resource for the reader. Ultimately, D'Evelyn offers a thorough exploration of the intellectual challenges faced by Barbaro and Palladio in working between text and practice.

LORENZO VIGOTTI
Columbia University