

rather than read, but which really should be read as closely as any text. Paul Hunneyball has read these buildings for us, but they will bear re-reading. This book is highly recommended and is a great exponent of the notion that to understand the architectural world, look around you.

Janis Bell and Thomas Willette, eds. *Art History in the Age of Bellori: Scholarship and Cultural Politics in Seventeenth-Century Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xvi + 396 pp. + 106 illus. \$90.00. Review by MICHAEL J. REDMOND, UNIVERSITY OF PALERMO.

For historians of seventeenth-century art, Giovan Pietro Bellori is best known as the author of *Le vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni* (1672), a book of essays on the lives and works of the most significant artists of the period. The final chapter on Poussin remains an essential source for studies of the French painter, given his close friendship with Bellori and acknowledged involvement in the creation of the *Vite*. Although the volume may have been envisaged initially as a continuation of Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (1550), the standard for artistic biographies, what distinguishes Bellori's approach is the selective discrimination in the choice of subjects and the detailed descriptions of individual paintings. Bellori concentrates on twelve major European figures, in contrast to the biographies of almost one hundred and sixty renaissance artists found in Vasari. Through his concept of the ideal, put forward as the underlying principle of his discernment, the Roman theorist, antiquarian, and collector made a fundamental contribution to the promotion of classicism throughout Europe.

While traditional scholars have plundered the *Vite* for documentary evidence, privileging Bellori's blend of firsthand knowledge and critical selectivity, what comes to the fore in *Art History in the Age of Bellori* is the intense effort that went into fashioning such a lasting impression of personal authority. The eleven contributors to the collection, arising from a 1996 conference at the Ameri-

can Academy in Rome, trace the social and political negotiations through which the son of a poor farmer established himself as the rightful heir to Vasari. An important consequence of the volume's focus on Bellori the individual is that it underlines the continuities between his art criticism and his career as an official antiquarian, legitimated by the preferment of Queen Christina of Sweden and Popes Clement X and Alexander VIII. It is telling that, as Janis Bell suggests in her extensive introduction, Bellori had a constant "concern for quality and standards" (3). The question that remains is whether that concern was the product of aesthetic values or the desire to cast himself as an arbiter of taste.

The first part of the collection deals with Bellori's place in Roman cultural politics. Giovanna Perini's provocative opening chapter contends that Bellori's aesthetics were conditioned by his need to attract patronage. As the growing power of France became obvious, Perini argues, the ambitious young intellectual made a strategic decision "to attend the workshop of a Frenchman, Poussin, when Rome was swarming with Italian artists of talent" (60). By taking on the role of "Roman spokesman [...] for cultural policies established in Paris," with his systematic promotion of French artists in the *Vite*, Bellori ensured international acclaim and support (64). Bellori's talent for self-promotion was also a constant in his antiquarian career. In considering the rhetoric of seventeenth-century antiquarian writing, Louis Marchesano suggests that Bellori exploited his position as Commissioner of Roman Antiquities for both profit and prestige. At the same time as he cultivated an image of erudition in his writing, using descriptions of individual artifacts to display the breadth of his cultural knowledge, he made the most of his opportunity "to monopolize the antiquities market" (75). When he gained the patronage of Queen Christina of Sweden, as Tomaso Montanari points out, Bellori's continuing advancement further enhanced the standing of his publications. Indeed, by writing works based on Christina's royal collections, Bellori took care to foreground his relationship with the monarch. The value of such efforts to cultivate prestige becomes apparent in Ingo Herklotz's discussion of competing pub-

lications about the friezes on Trajan's column. With his power and influence, Bellori's "archeological coffee-table books" earned greater acclaim than serious scholarly studies (143). For although Bellori "had probably not invested more than a couple of weeks" in his lavishly illustrated book about the column, Herklotz claims, the reception of subsequent works was conditioned by its inflated reputation (143). When Bellori turned to the field of iconography, the subject of Eugene Dwyer's chapter, he brought with him his combination of rhetorical skill, high production values, and sharp practices. Bellori's work on the history of portraiture appropriated the previous scholarship of Fulvio Orsini, even discussing unique coins in the collection of Queen Christina that had belonged to Orsini. The problem with mentioning these coins, as Dwyer shows, was that their provenance was legally suspect and Bellori was obliged "to suggest that Christina's specimens were different from the ones formerly owned by Orsini" (159). The first section concludes with Hetty E. Joyce's account of the efforts that Bellori made to commemorate the life of Annibale Carracci. As proud owner of Annibale's *Coriolanus*, a drawing inspired by ancient paintings, Bellori took care to augment the reputation of its creator. Apart from celebrating the artist in his publications, guaranteeing that ownership had its privileges, Bellori was involved in the project to create a monument to Annibale and Raphael in the Pantheon.

In the second part, entitled "Bellori's *Lives*: History, Criticism, Theory," the editors are less successful in arranging a cohesive group of essays. The diversity of the contributions, however, is an indication of the rich critical and historical implications of Bellori's great biographical project. Claire Pace and Janice Bell argue that the allegorical engravings which prefaced the life of each artist in the original edition of the *Vite* were an essential part of Bellori's allegorical strategy. While Bellori clearly liked an attractive book for its own sake, Pace and Bell demonstrate that the symbolic images serve to "reinforce Bellori's assessment of each artist and his historical importance" (222). Such a strategy is particularly evident in the engraving dedicated to Caravaggio, where the depiction of an aged woman in a plain space accentuates the criticism of his

lack of innovation in the printed text. For all of his social ambitions and political astuteness, Martina Hansmann's chapter confirms that Bellori did make a significant contribution to the development of art criticism. His descriptive method, responding to the aesthetic content and historical implications of individual paintings, "created a modern approach by virtue of an analysis that was both critical and reflective" (238). In contrast to Hansmann's focus on his modernity, Anthony Colantuono's discussion of the *scherzo*, a playful poetic conceit, locates Bellori within the context of *Seicento* literary practice. Colantuono notes that Bellori obviously had a great admiration for wit and stylistic refinement, given his repeated use of the term to describe not only "the conceits embodied in works of art but also in designating the verbal conceits that characterized seventeenth-century speech" (251). Although Bellori did not provide a theory about color in the *Vite*, in spite of the manifesto for classical style in its preface, Janis Bell's close reading of his description of a painting by Domenichino may offer some clues. The aesthetic principles that Bellori invokes to justify the importance of Domenichino's *Last Communion of St. Jerome*, Bell claims, "reveal that *colore* can be evaluated by the same high standards as *disegno* and *invenzione*" (259). The attention to color in the description underlines its importance to the critic and, implicitly, to his classicizing agenda as a whole. The final chapter of the book addresses the successive reputation of Bellori's biographical work. By recounting the publishing history of the second edition of the *Vite*, reprinted in 1728 with significant additions and alterations, Thomas Willette examines how Bellori's carefully constructed reputation became a resource that could be appropriated and exploited for partisan interests. With the interpolation of a new biography of the painter Luca Giordano, Willette makes clear, the republication was designed to elevate "the most celebrated Neapolitan artist of the second half of the seventeenth century into the Bellorian canon of exemplary modern artists" (279).

For researchers interested in cultural transactions in seventeenth-century Rome, *Art History in the Age of Bellori* offers a wide-ranging survey of the artistic and social environment of the city.

The importance of the collection is obvious for art historians. Though Bellori's reputation for accuracy has already been challenged, the essays in the first part definitively explode the myth of a reliable observer and disinterested proponent of classicism. The fact that the essays were completed prior to the publication of Evelina Borea and Carlo Gasparri's edited exhibition catalogue *L'idea del bello. Viaggio per Roma nel seicento con Giovan Pietro Bellori* (2000), as Bell and Willette take great pains to emphasize, does detract from the collection's claims to represent the latest scholarship on Bellori. As befits a study dealing with the author of some of the first coffee-table books, Cambridge University Press has produced a handsome volume with numerous illustrations.

Michael Bath. *Renaissance Decorative Painting in Scotland*. Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland Publishing, 2003. ix + 286 pp. + 255 illus. \$49.95. Review by WILLIAM E. ENGEL, NASHVILLE AND SEWANEE, TN.

Although concerned primarily with painted ceilings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this copiously illustrated volume reveals much about the "history and culture of Scotland at this period and, particularly, about its Renaissance pretensions and European connections" (vii). It does so by focusing, painstakingly, on what these paintings mean, and how they function in the buildings they decorate. Michael Bath, well-known for his research on applications of Renaissance emblem books, looks here at how emblems take part in "the wider systems of representation, the visual economies, and grammars of ornament that were current at this period throughout Europe" (vii). As a result, this book will be indispensable to emblem specialists, as well as to scholars working on transnational cultural exchanges and affinities.

Additionally, this is the most detailed and up-to-date guidebook of period houses owned by the National Trust of Scotland (as well as some privately-held properties), with a listing of locations open to the public at the beginning. And the final section, an "Inventory