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

of examples and locations" (215-75), could stand on its own as a checklist of many of Scotland's most treasured national sites. Notable examples include the Nine Worthies Room in Crathes Castle, Deeside; the John Knox House in Edinburgh (where, Bath clarifies, the great reformer never lived); the emblematic motifs at Culross Palace seen alongside those copied from Whitney's 1586 woodcuts (249-53); and even decorations no longer extant but nonetheless worthy of having been recorded, such as Defoe's mentioning the Earl of Orkney's panels "curiously painted with Scriptural Stories" in Kirkwall Palace (264).

Treated seriatim, the nine chapters bring into focus Bath's steady argument about the indebtedness of Scottish decorative arts to commercial prints and pattern books from the continent. Collectively they point the way toward our understanding, in its original context, this larger transnational consciousness, at once emblematic and mnemonically oriented. Beginning with "A National Style," Bath introduces the vernacular and more cosmopolitan elements of the Scottish baronial style. Limiting himself to the time between the Reformation and the Civil Wars of the 1640s, he pursues the question of how far this national style was regionally or geographically distinctive. He looks at decorative paintings on plaster, stonework, walls of houses, window embrasures, overmantels, and vaulting; though, to be sure, the greater part is on wooden boards on ceilings: "This alone makes the Scottish tradition somewhat exceptional" (7).

Irrespective of what is painted, how it is done or in what medium, Bath insists we understand "what we are looking at and what it represents" (11). From here he develops his larger argument about the centrality of continental iconography in Scottish decorative painting, contextualized in terms of the traditional *ars memorativa*. Although this method was "taught and practiced in Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (16), a topic to which he will return in the penultimate chapter, Bath recommends it be applied circumspectly. Another caveat, concerning inscriptions, calls on us to abandon our modern assumption that popular

proverbs were an unsophisticated "commodity whose natural home would have been the kitchen" (18). This chapter also covers heraldic painting, illustrations from classical literature and mythology, religious subjects, *trompe l'oeil* effects, and antique–or grotesque–painting, with its strong links to the wider development of European Mannerism in the visual arts (the subject of Chapter 5).

Chapter 2, "Applied Emblematics," is among the strongest; as well it should be given the author's lifetime of achievement in this area (the bibliography lists only eight of Bath's many important publications along these lines). We learn here that, although complete cycles of Renaissance emblems appear in many Scottish houses, few if any examples of their own were produced in Scotland during the period when decorative painting was fashionable (29). Bath is at pains to show the extent to which emblems, in the stricter sense of the term, were well known in Scotland; his ensuing discussion of the *impresa* and specific heroic devices is exemplary. Readers can take Bath at his word that "two of the most elaborate and interesting examples of applied emblematics in Scotland–at Culross, Fife, and at Pinkie House, Musselburgh–have yet to be described" (55). This then becomes the burden of the next two chapters: "Emblems Newly Devised," which concerns George Bruce's Palace, and Chapter 4 on "Alexander Seton's Suburban Villa," which demonstrates, among other things, that "Seton's false architecture," such as the extraordinary "*trompe l'oeil* cupola at the centre of the gallery," was modeled "on a design from one of the most advanced European pattern books devoted to the mathematics and theory of perspective" by Jan Vredeman de Vries (101).

Chapter 5, "Mark Kerr's Dreamwork," looks more closely at the grotesque images that seem to be out of keeping with the context of Reformation Scotland. In the library of Adam Bothwell, Bishop of Orkney, Bath has tracked down, in addition to Rabelais' *Oeuvres*, a collection of 120 fanciful engravings by François Desprez (117). From the range of examples he has found, and drawing on the work of Anne Lake Prescott concerning how Rabelais was received and incorporated across the channel, Bath argues for the status of

these "drollities" as "products of the unregulated free play of imagination" (119). Moreover, Kerr's ceiling confirms that what he thought he was producing in 1581 was a consistent piece of "dreamwork" (120), and not, as some have speculated, images associated with Scottish witchcraft. Still, Bath admits, it is not unlikely that Kerr combined "crypto-Catholic tendencies with an educated interest in Renaissance hermeticism" (120).

Chapter 6, on an outstanding survival of Catholic Scotland's ecclesiastical painting, Grandtully Chapel, is titled "Monuments of Idolatrie," derived from a phrase in the 1612 minutes of the Synod of Fife that ordered "the destruction of the paintings at Foulis Easter near Dundee" (124). Insofar as the paintings were not destroyed, opinions must have been divided, thus confirming that the zeal of reformers varied from place to place and time to time. Then Chapter 7 takes us into "Earlshall," near Lauchars, Fife. The painted ceiling "is remarkable for the sheer prolixity of its detail" (147). Unlike other Great Halls of the era, no overall sequence seems to be followed. Still, its "local, numbered and labeled schemes may nevertheless have been designed to function as memory schemes"; and, quoting Christy Anderson, Bath remarks on how such schemes allow viewers to "recall information in a flexible order and not only in a linear, sequential structure" (160). Even taking into account the Art of Memory's more traditional function (going back to rhetorical *loci communes* used for defining seats of an argument and assisting the memory), Bath does not think this can explain the extent of the decorative program (166). And yet he does acknowledge it may have some relevance, for the divisions can be seen as being adaptable as, to use Aubrey's phrase, "Topiques for Locall memorie" (167). With this, Bath turns in the remaining chapters to the traditional arts of rhetoric and of memory.

Chapter 8, "Grave Sentences," teases out the ways "the moralising and proverbial sayings" (169) were used in the spirit of externalizing, on architectural features, things one would have by heart. For precedents Bath looks to William Engel's analysis of Montaigne's famous library (169-72) and Sir Nicholas Bacon's

Long Gallery at Gorhambury, "whose Senecan inscriptions so closely resemble the Stoic emblems in Alexander Seton's gallery at Pinkie" (170). Bath stresses how much of this proverbial philosophy and such "moralising verses" also circulated in other media, and suggests that "many of our elitist assumptions about a radical break between educated and popular culture at this period are misleading and likely to prevent us from getting adequate theoretical and historical purchase on how these ceilings work" (183). While this chapter treats grave sentences as representing the fundamentally written textual medium, the final chapter treats iconographic schemes as being primarily a visual medium..

Chapter 9, on "Topics and Schemes," reprises Bath's earlier theme of Renaissance Speaking Pictures. Accordingly he treats a series of traditional sequences frequently associated with painterly programs and mnemotechnical sequences alike, such as the four seasons, five senses, nine Worthies, twelve signs of the zodiac, and labors of the months (185). The resulting iconographic discussion discloses what is unique in the Scottish decorative arts, even if they are found to be grounded in pan-European applied emblematics. For, as Bath makes clear through his precise interpretations of local treatments of Renaissance schemes, works such as the Cullen pictures "certainly represent a significant Scottish response to the pervasive *paragone* debates about the respective claims of word and image at this period" (212). Notwithstanding the importance of this book for Scottish architectural historians and ambitious tourists, it will be invaluable to scholars of applied emblematics and mnemonic culture, as well as to art historians and students of early modern print culture more generally.