

**Michelangelo's Grabmal für Papst Julius II.** By Claudia Echinger-Maurach, with photographs by Andrea Jemolo. 210 pp. incl. 195 b. & w. ills. (Hirmer Verlag, Munich, 2009), €98. ISBN 978-3-7774-4355-3.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVIS

THE LABYRINTHINE HISTORY of Michelangelo's monument to Pope Julius II is so long that many shy away from it. Bertolt Brecht's ironic question, 'Can the Moses of Michelangelo take hold of us only after a professor explains him?', is answered by Claudia Echinger-Maurach, as by Brecht himself, in the affirmative. For Brecht, understanding works of art requires knowledge, and even more the art of observation, which the author possesses in a high degree. Her book is first of all an apologia for the finished monument that we see in S. Pietro in Vincoli – a defence of the monument as a whole in all its dignity and grandeur and an attempt to rescue it from its fate of neglect, and ultimately from the overshadowing dominance of the *Moses*, of the prolonged history of its genesis and of the portrayal of the monument as a personal and artistic tragedy in Michelangelo's biography.

The *Entstehungsgeschichte* is re-explained to demonstrate how the final redaction of the monument grew out of Michelangelo's first idea. Instead of distinct phases in the tomb's development, the author sees an almost continuous and fluid development in Michelangelo's ideas. Surviving drawings appear to validate this interpretation. The genesis of the monument is explained in terms of the intersection of successive conceptions with other determining factors: artistic, logistic, collaborative, deadlines and the incidence of the many participants. The final form of the monument began to emerge as a project for a two-storey structure in S. Pietro in Vincoli in 1532. The first level, a *pian terreno* foundation, was erected in 1533–34, using marbles carved two decades earlier. Its resemblance to Michelangelo's drawing of 1518 for the first level in London is astonishing (British Museum, 1859–5–14–824r). If the design of the first level emerges from the monument's history, the second level was designed anew. This much taller second level is a kind of *piano nobile*, conceived in the style of Michelangelo's 'new' architecture expounded in the Laurentian Library.

Viewed architecturally, the Julius Monument is simply a *Hermengrabmal* – with anthropomorphic herms as supporting elements substituting the classical column orders: below, four robed men, their arms wrapped around themselves to help them support the structure's weight – the same fiction found in illustrations of the Persian Porch in sixteenth-century editions of Vitruvius with muscular male supporting figures variously called herms, terms, atlases (e.g. Giocondo, Cesarino, Goujon, Barbaro, Rivius) – here embedded in an *opera di intaglio*

context. Above, herms again, with long tapering abstract shafts, in a new *architettura piana* with, as ornament, only *opera di quadro* in Michelangelo's dramatic manner, a hybrid architecture, enlivened by a tension between nature and geometry. Here the canonical head-and-bust formula of the herm is nearly drained of its human element, and faces are reduced to simple grimacing unreal masks set on diminutive necks and shoulders. Michelangelo's herms are what remain of his grandiose plans for prisoners and victories – a herm was also called a *prigione*. Owing to the recent restoration, we can better see the monument as it is proposed in this book: an architectural membrane through which pass light, sound and rite, in a building context of wall, door, sacristy, *cantoria* and church.

Echinger-Maurach re-identifies the centre of meaning of the monument. It is not Moses, but the papal effigy. The *Imago Pietatis* of Julius, in conjunction with the Madonna and Child, is already present in Michelangelo's drawing for the Julius Monument of 1505 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). This deictic centre reappears in all the project drawings, and it forms the centre of the completed monument, where its expression becomes more conventional and muted. Ultimately Julius's monument is not a paean to pagan or secular virtue but a Christian one, infused with the hope for salvation.

The Moses is the only statue not made expressly for S. Pietro in Vincoli. In the course of the monument's history so many statues, finished and partially executed, were cast aside that one must wonder if Michelangelo himself really wished to include the Moses in the final tomb, or was he forced to do so by his patrons? On the lower level, the centre of the monument seems conceived almost as a blank, a void waiting to be filled or used, perhaps a real or fictive entrance with an inscription above. The monument is anepigraphic.

The concluding chapters examine the individual statues. The effigy of Julius and the statue of the *Madonna and Child* finally receive their due as works conceived and partially executed by the master. A half-century ago the *Rachel* and *Leah* were viewed unfavourably in a way that is now difficult to imagine. One facet of the monument that deserves greater emphasis is the ambiguity that surrounds the identity of four of its seven statues. Condivi and Vasari identify the lateral female personifications as *Rachel/Vita contemplativa* and *Leah/Vita attiva* (Matilda). The Leah, at the right, clearly looks into an object which she holds in her right hand, and this object is, just as clearly, a hand-mirror with a concave upper surface, a fact verified *in situ* some years ago. Thus it is visually obvious that the lateral personifications, among their other identities, represent Hope (Rachel prays, kneeling, hands folded, eyes raised) and Prudence (Leah studies circumspectly the mirror of past, present and future). The implications of the resemblances of the two statues to Hope and

Prudence are doubtless open to interpretation, but the resemblances themselves are inescapable and too apparent to be ignored. Although Hope and Prudence do not accord fully with the testimony of written sources, works of art, in this case unchanged in the course of nearly five hundred years, are equally valid testimonies to their own identities as are narrative primary sources.

**Il Sanmarino. Giovan Battista Belluzzi architetto militare e trattatista del Cinquecento** (Arte e Archeologia. Studi e Documenti 30). By Daniela Lamberini. 2 vols. 840 pp. incl. 85 col. + 17 b. & w. ills. (Casa Editrice Leo S. Olschki, Florence, 2007), €195. ISBN 978-88-222-5660-7.

Reviewed by SABINE EICHE

ANYONE SEEING DANIELA LAMBERINI'S two massive volumes from a distance would be excused for thinking that, at the least, they were yet another publication on Michelangelo, Leonardo or Raphael. No one would expect a book of this size to be about Giovan Battista Belluzzi, called Il Sanmarino, a native of the Republic of San Marino in central Italy, who was unknown to all but a few specialists on Italian Renaissance fortifications. With her exhaustive study, Lamberini, an international expert on Renaissance fortifications, brilliantly fulfils the request of the Fondazione San Marino – Cassa di Risparmio – SUMS to write about its most famous citizen for the celebration of the five-hundredth anniversary of his birth. Lamberini not only fully restores to Belluzzi the reputation that he held in his lifetime as one of the most highly regarded military architects and theorists of Italy, but she also manages to provide an immensely informative context. If this had been a book about Michelangelo, the author's lens would have been fixed on countless minute details of Michelangelo's life, career or works, leaving the larger picture out of focus; what Lamberini has done is to take both a wide-angle and close-up view, which allows her not only to meticulously analyse Belluzzi's work and working methods, but also to reveal him immersed in the society and politics of the period.

In elegant and readable prose, Lamberini reconstructs the historic context – the first half of the sixteenth century, in territory extending from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian seas – and presents all there is to know about this architect of remarkable achievements, whose most important work was done for Duke Cosimo I de' Medici. Thanks to her careful research carried out over more than two decades, our knowledge of Belluzzi is now enriched by a considerable body of previously unidentified manuscript and graphic material. Her scrupulous investigation has also led to the correction of earlier misconceptions and factual errors. As if all this were not enough, Lamberini provides a welcome

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bonus when she examines the different roles that a man of Belluzzi's standing and profession was expected to play, providing insights that will be useful to historians for understanding the careers of many other prominent Renaissance men.

The first of the two volumes is dedicated to Belluzzi's biography and career. Following a chapter proliferating with newly unearthed details of the Belluzzi family and Giovan Battista's early years, when, because of his marriage to the daughter of the Urbino architect Girolamo Genga, he served the della Rovere dukes of Urbino, Lamberini shifts her focus to Florence, where Belluzzi was sent by the Republic of San Marino as ambassador in 1543, and where he realised his full potential under the patronage of Duke Cosimo I. Lamberini's skills both as narrator and architectural historian come to the fore here in her gripping account of the turbulent events of those years and the challenges facing Belluzzi as the Medici's principal engineer and architect. The third chapter covers the final years of Belluzzi's life, which ended in 1554, during the war with Siena, when he was shot in the head by enemy fire while explaining to the Florentines where to place their artillery. An examination of Belluzzi's architectural treatises constitutes the bulk of the fourth and fifth chapters. Chapter four, the longest in the book, is devoted to a discussion of the treatise that Duke Cosimo commissioned Belluzzi to write in 1550, which was to show the fortified places of Italy and other countries. The treatise survives in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (Fondo nazionale, II.I.280). Lamberini publishes and discusses in an exemplary manner the sixty-two drawings made by Belluzzi for this manuscript. Anyone who struggles to understand how Renaissance architects/engineers used the mathematical instruments necessary for their work will greatly benefit from Lamberini's explanation, in the fourth chapter, of Belluzzi's *bussola topografica*, or surveyor's compass. Invented by Belluzzi to aid him in measuring city plans and drawing fortifications, this compass is a modification of the one used by Raphael a few decades earlier to draw a plan of ancient Rome. In the fifth chapter Lamberini analyses theory and practice in military architecture, using, among other manuscript sources, Belluzzi's treatise in Pesaro's Biblioteca Oliveriana (MS.196). Vasari's life of Belluzzi in the second edition of his biographies, and the identification of Belluzzi's portrait in the tondo in the Sala di Cosimo I, Palazzo Vecchio, that shows Duke Cosimo surrounded by his artists, are the subject of the final chapter of the first volume.

In volume two Lamberini publishes Belluzzi's writings, both known and unknown, beginning with his *Diario* (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma, Vitt. Em.476), first brought out by Pietro Egidi in 1907, which Lamberini checked against the original, making emendations and including the final folios that Egidi had omitted. We can read fascinating letters by the architect discussing his architecture and working methods in the next chapter. Lamberini transcribed

and annotated fifty-six letters, the majority by or to Belluzzi, which are found in the state archives of San Marino and Florence. The remainder of the second volume contains studies of three important treatises on fortifications by Belluzzi. Lamberini's illuminating research revealed that an unknown, badly damaged manuscript in the Archivio storico of Anghiari (Carte Taglieschi, MS.1624), inventoried as by Girolamo Maggi, was, instead, an original by Belluzzi. It was always assumed that this particular Belluzzi treatise had survived only in a copy, now in the Archivio di Stato of Turin (Z.II.24). Lamberini publishes the texts of the two manuscripts, from Anghiari and Turin, on facing pages, making it easy to compare them and to complete passages missing from the fragmentary Anghiari original. The concluding chapter offers a new edition of Belluzzi's *Trattato delle fortificazioni di terra*, preserved in the Biblioteca Riccardiana of Florence (MS. Riccardiano 2587). This manuscript was a presentation copy for Duke Cosimo's general, Stefano Colonna, and is autograph in both text and drawings. It was first published by Lamberini in 1980; the new edition corrects the errors that marred the earlier version, which was rushed through the press.

Olschki of Florence, who have published Lamberini's majestic work in a suitably majestic form, have spared no effort in producing an attractive book, printed on paper that makes reading it a pleasure, easy on the eyes, with glossy paper used only for the plates. Everything about the book is of the highest quality. It is difficult to find anything to criticise. Still, perhaps one can find something to regret, namely that this elegant and informative work of scholarship is accessible only to scholars who read Italian. Once upon a time all Renaissance scholars read Italian, but in our day and age the new generation of Anglo-Saxon and American historians depends ever more on translations into English.

**The Craftsman Revealed. Adriaen de Vries. Sculptor in Bronze.** By Jane Bassett, with contributions by Peggy Fogelman, David A. Scott and Ronald C. Schmidling II. 352 pp. incl. 100 col. + 220 b. & w. ills. (Getty Publications, Los Angeles, 2008), £39.95. ISBN 978-0-89236-919-5.

Reviewed by FRITS SCHOLTEN

ALTHOUGH BRONZE IS an ideal medium for reproducing small sculptures and artefacts, it was not this that attracted the Dutch sculptor Adriaen de Vries (1556–1626) to the material. In contrast to most of his colleagues, he chose to work in bronze for its intrinsic value. The majority of De Vries's compositions therefore exist in only one version, or at most a few. His style is also unlike anything his contemporaries were doing: De Vries was a modeller to the fingertips – '*der Aller berümbist Künstler auff*

*dem Bosziren*' ('the most celebrated artist in modelling'), as he was described in 1620 – and in many cases his statues are more like overgrown wax or clay *bozzetti* executed in durable bronze. As far as we know, he never worked in stone – again unlike many of his fellow sculptors. The thorough scientific research into the technical aspects of the work of this atypical and highly individual sculptor, carried out by Jane Bassett (Associate Conservator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles) and some of her colleagues, is therefore extremely welcome. Her research project began in 1999–2000 on the occasion of the Adriaen de Vries retrospective staged in Amsterdam, Stockholm and Los Angeles.<sup>1</sup> Altogether Bassett examined twenty-five bronzes, seventeen of which are indisputably by De Vries. The same equipment was used throughout, and the work was done under the same conditions. Each sculpture was described on the basis of a visual inspection and various technical characteristics were noted, among them traces of cold afterwork (chasing, filing and polishing), remains of sprues, casting defects, core pins, old repairs, etc. Where possible, samples of core material were taken from the interior of the statues; these were used for petrographic analysis and dating research using thermoluminescence (TL). X-radiographs were also made to reveal the internal structure of the statues, the thickness of the bronze wall and the homogeneity of the cast. Lastly, the composition of the alloy of each bronze was measured with the aid of X-radiograph fluorescence spectrometry (XRF).

Although the use of technical data in analysing bronze-casting methods and establishing the authenticity of sculptures was not new, never before had the work of a single sculptor been scrutinised in such a consistent, thorough manner – something for which the 1998–2000 exhibition provided a unique opportunity. The methodological basis for research of this kind had already been laid by Richard Stone (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) with pioneering studies into the work of Antico (1981) and Severo da Ravenna (2006), and by Francesca Bewer (Straus Center for Conservation, Harvard University, Cambridge MA).<sup>2</sup> Bewer also seized the opportunity offered by the Adriaen de Vries exhibition to undertake the first scientific research into the sculptor's work, and this resulted in two publications.<sup>3</sup> Now, almost ten years later, the research by Bassett and her colleagues has been published in a substantial volume with a number of essays – including an enlightening introduction by Peggy Fogelman – followed by twenty-five technical entries or case studies ('chapters').

Adriaen de Vries emerges from this study as an artist of remarkable technical consistency: he almost always cast by using the direct method; he used an unchanging binary bronze alloy (copper and tin); he preferred one particular clay for constructing his models; he had his own specific way of making his armatures; he finished the surface of his models according to fixed patterns; and he