paintings of 'modern life'. Yet streets have always staged the daily life of the city, and in this beautifully produced and richly illustrated book Nevola seeks to revitalise the inhabitation of the streets of Renaissance Italy.

William E. Wallace, *Michelangelo, God's Architect: The Story of His Final Years and Greatest Masterpiece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), xi and 279 pp. incl. 57 colour and 33 b&w ills, ISBN 9780691195490, £25
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Reviewed by DAVID HEMSOLL

Michelangelo is arguably the greatest artist of the Renaissance, and also the most studied. William Wallace is unquestionably Michelangelo's most dedicated and accomplished modern-day scholar. So, what does his new book contribute to our modern-day understanding of Michelangelo, especially in view of the fact that, during the final two decades of his life (which is what this book covers), he worked principally as an architect?

Wallace's own view of his contribution is that he is correcting the widespread perception that Michelangelo was 'less prolific' towards the end of his life than he had been previously. His method is to draw on his prodigious knowledge about Michelangelo amassed in his previous studies, and to rely extensively on the documentation of Michelangelo's life that is provided mainly by his biographers Giorgio Vasari and Ascanio Condivi and by a wealth of letters, so as to build up a picture of Michelangelo's intertwining professional and private worlds, dating from the time his tomb of Pope Julius II was finally installed in 1545 until his death in 1564. The book deals with all this in eight themed and chronologically arranged chapters, which mingle together the routine goings-on of his daily life, his dealings both with his family in far-away Florence — such as their gifts of wine and food — and with his friends and associates in Rome, his late activities in painting, sculpture and drawing, his professional relationships with Marcello Venusti and Daniele da Volterra as proxy artists for commissions he was overseeing, and his increasing involvements in architecture that followed in the wake of his appointment as architect of New St Peter's in 1547.

This task is accomplished mainly by paying renewed attention to primary sources, but with the addition of various semi-fictionalised excursuses, such as descriptions of Michelangelo's transportation of the Moses statue to the Julius tomb in San Pietro in Vincoli, or of his journey to work on the St Peter's site, or of a typical week in his busy life. Along the way, Wallace describes how Michelangelo's approach to artistic production gradually changed, from the 'micromanaging' that so often typified his previous practice to an engagement with colleagues that was increasingly collaborative, while presenting Michelangelo not as a cantankerous loner (as he is sometimes characterised) but as a congenial companion whose presence was sought after by many from the

pope downwards. In directing attention to the final phase of his career, Wallace is also responding to the problems and complications in Michelangelo scholarship dealing with this period. Much of Michelangelo's late art is unfinished or perceived as being substandard, and so not as successful as the works of the younger and more 'heroic' artist, or else it is in the form of works delegated to others and regarded as being of even lesser merit and interest, while his architectural output consists largely of schemes realised by others where his own contributions are not always well understood. Wallace does not point out, however, that the modern-day literature on these architectural projects is often excessively verbose and notably unengaging.

At the heart of the book is Michelangelo's involvement with St Peter's and his role, as Michelangelo himself put it, as 'God's architect'. This story begins at the death in 1546 of the previous architect of St Peter's, Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, and it covers the changes Michelangelo made to Sangallo's design and the gradual construction of the building up to the level of the dome, which had been reached at the time of Michelangelo's death in 1564. The emphasis here, again, is on the documentation supplied by the biographers and by letters charting the relationships between him and his assistants and the St Peter's workforce which reveal, in previously unnoted detail, many of the obstacles he had to overcome as well as many of his accomplishments. What becomes very clear is that Michelangelo's work at St Peter's was his overriding concern, and by far his most time-consuming activity, right to the end of his very long life, and it would ultimately even prevent his return to his native Florence.

Such documentary reliance, however, has its problems both in respect to bias and in failing to reveal and explain the very significant changes that were made to the design of St Peter's over this period. As regards the former, the documentation is weighted heavily in favour of a pro-Michelangelo position that is adhered to here, and which, for example, contrasts the supposed virtues of Michelangelo's design with the claimed deficiencies of the previous scheme devised by the 'officious and self-important' Sangallo. Thus Michelangelo's design is presented in accordance with the pro-Michelangelo sources as a return to Bramante's original project, whereas Sangallo's is characterised as 'misguided' and as being unnecessarily encumbered by ambulatories encircling the building's three rear arms — even though these ambulatories were designed to help buttress the structure and its towering dome, and were first proposed by Bramante. Other features of Michelangelo's design remain unaddressed, such as his decision to treat the exterior as a continuous curtain wall — this being an adaptation of the earlier Sangallo scheme; and passed over, too, is the train of poorly documented changes to the design that were made in the hope of maximising internal lighting while ensuring structural stability. Michelangelo's decision to install high-level windows at the ends of the arms would lead to the provision of an exterior attic, which was not an alteration to Michelangelo's project made later on by Pirro Ligorio, as the author claims, but was already proposed by Michelangelo, as demonstrated by a faint sketch for the attic on a sheet now in Lille (here plate 46). Whether Michelangelo originally intended the attic to run continuously around the building is unclear, yet this level corresponds to a constructional labyrinth inside, presumably required to provide a firm and self-buttressing platform for the main dome but resulting in the encasement of the four corner domes which, as a

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result, are largely deprived of any light. The documentary record, unfortunately, does little to elucidate any of this, but it does testify to a secrecy on Michelangelo's part in respect to his evolving plans for the building. Maybe that secrecy was fuelled by indecision, but maybe, too, it was exacerbated by Michelangelo's gradual withdrawal and by an increasing senility, rumours of which, as Vasari records, Ligorio and his associates had long been circulating.

These complications aside, and despite the positive slant placed on Michelangelo's late activities, the book provides an engrossing and refreshingly different account of this great artist during a neglected and poorly understood period of his life.

Giovanna Guidicini, *Triumphal Entries and Festivals in Early Modern Scotland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 349 pp. incl. 23 colour and 45 b&w ills, ISBN 9782503585413, €90
doi:10.1017/arh.2021.19

Reviewed by IAN CAMPBELL

Architectural history remains the most insular branch of histories of cultural artefacts. Whereas books or music can be read or performed anywhere, and paintings and statues are portable, buildings need to be studied *in situ*, which means that the architectural histories of most countries are written by their natives. Rarely do we have an Anthony Blunt, writing authoritatively about buildings in Renaissance and Baroque France and Italy. It is refreshing, therefore, to have Giovanna Guidicini, a native of Ferrara and alumna of Bologna University, cast her Italian gaze over such a wide range of Scottish cultural artefacts. She looks beyond the usual suspects of England and the Low Countries to point out parallels in the great Italian Renaissance cities and courts, as well as France, which produces great fruits. Thus, when discussing the Butter Tron, a weigh house for dairy products as well as luxury goods — a more impressive piece of civic architecture than Edinburgh's Tolbooth (Scots for town hall), until Cromwell reduced it to a ruin — she compares it with Orsanmichele in Florence rather than a more obvious Dutch cheese weigh house. Her encyclopaedic knowledge of Renaissance triumphal entries and festivities, a field that has exploded in recent years, is displayed throughout the book, a typical example being her demonstration that the iconography of the arch with the cardinal virtues in Margaret Tudor's 1503 entry follows that in Bartolomeo di Bartoli's *La Canzone delle Virtù e delle Scienze*, written in Bologna in 1349 but not printed until 1904.

Another strength of the book is its relating of ephemeral productions for specific events to the wider context of Scottish art and architecture. An example of the insights this allows is that the scenes on painted ceilings, found in many elite Scottish houses around 1600, were intended to be seen by moving rather than static observers — which, as soon as one reads it, makes sense. It explains why the quality of the paintings can vary from the sumptuous panels in the gallery at Pinkie House for Alexander Seton