

the reader to knit the whole program together again. That said, this book is a very welcome addition to the research on St. Peter's.

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*La villa dei Collazzi: L'architettura del tardo Rinascimento a Firenze.*

Amedeo Belluzzi and Gianluca Belli.

Fondazione Carlo Marchi 31. Florence: Olschki, 2016. xii + 286 pp. €76.

Few enterprises challenge architectural historians more than studying a building in the absence of materials documenting design, construction, even the identity of the architect, something no less vexing for being common in the early modern period. Amedeo Belluzzi and Gianluca Belli found just such a case with the late Renaissance Villa dei Collazzi in the Tuscan hills south of Florence. The current owners' archives include materials dating back to the Renaissance, unfortunately mostly lacking those that architectural historians yearn to find. Yet the villa described by Edith Wharton as "the most splendid stately villa" (vii) certainly merited study, not least to determine the veracity of the long-rumored attribution to Michelangelo.

An existing owner's dwelling provided the foundation for the Villa dei Collazzi, something common to many sixteenth-century rural villas, but here graced with a significantly more noble character. Four drawings, two plans copied from originals by Giorgio Vasari the Younger and two elevations from between the sixteenth and eighteenth century, offer some evidence of the original project, modified during construction and brought to completion three centuries later. These delays depended in part upon changes of ownership, although for more than 250 years, the villa belonged to the prosperous and well-connected Florentine Dini family. It ultimately passed through the hands of four different owners, the current being the Marchi. As the Dini accumulated wealth and status over the course of the sixteenth century, the authors trace their property transactions inside and outside of Florence and the marriage alliances they crafted.

Discovering what there is to know about the property from written records constitutes one part of the authors' project; they also discuss the changes the structure itself underwent over the centuries and hazard an attribution for the architect. They carefully consider the possibility of Michelangelo's participation, ultimately dismissing it for lack of physical or documentary support. The authors instead propose the prominent painter Santi di Tito, with a twofold basis for the attribution. On the one hand, they explore Santi's relations with prominent Florentine painters and patrons: commissions for paintings and documentary evidence for architectural commissions, including the remodeling of his own house on Via delle Route. Diligently plunging into archives, Belluzzi and Belli located evidence that demonstrates the network of Santi's activities that help support

their hypothesis, including the altarpiece he painted for the Collazzi chapel. On the other hand, they also trace what they can discern about his role in other architectural projects and his specific designs while at the same time systematically eliminating the possibility of other candidates for authorship. It is something of an irony that, as they show, Eugenia Levi managed to prove that Santi di Tito rather than Michelangelo designed San Michele presso Fiesole. They argue that criticism by his peers of Santi's designs as inadequately "new and magnificent" (102) ignores their sober elegance and a certain consistency in the use of materials, window treatments, and other details in some of his architectural projects, many of which also emerge in the Villa dei Collazzi. Belluzzi and Belli persuasively demonstrate the strength of their hypothesis in a short section where they evaluate the villa's early and later architectural elements—for example, the windows in the villa's portico, which reproduce almost exactly those in the upper elevation of Santi's oratory of San Tommaso d'Aquino in Florence. The analysis proceeds through the centuries to the modifications introduced in the twentieth century, where the Marchi finally completed, as much as possible, the original design.

Sumptuously illustrated with abundant color photographs, the book is at once a visual and a documentary treasure, as it includes a detailed bibliography and the sixteenth- and eighteenth-century inventories. As an example of exhaustive research and thorough documentation, this study is tough to beat. The authors also include a section on the villa's near duplicate halfway around the globe in Sierra Madre, California. Villa Barlow, two-thirds the size of the original and with some notable divergences, is now a Roman Catholic girls' high school, the Alverno Heights Academy. Society architect Walter Neff grudgingly acquiesced to the client's desire to reproduce Collazzi in the Villa Barlow (or Sol d'Oro) in 1928, one of many such so-called Tuscan villas in early twentieth-century southern California.

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*Botticelli, "Venere e Marte": Parodia di un adulterio nella Firenze di Lorenzo il Magnifico.* Marco Paoli.

Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2017. 94 pp. €10.

A beautiful young woman, in a white dress trimmed in gold, reclines in the grass. She gazes upon a handsome young man who, also supine, is deeply asleep. Except for a scant white drapery, he is undressed. His slumber is so profound that not even the imagined blast from a conch shell aimed at his right ear by a cute little baby satyr will stir him. Why is that? What is this picture about?

This question is raised and answered in Marco Paoli's stimulating, indeed highly provocative, new book, *Botticelli, "Venere e Marte."* We learn a great deal here, even though I doubt that the book's thesis, hinted at in the title, will persuade many scholars. In brief,