

Tradition of the Antique in Cremona. The Terracotta Decoration at the Palazzo Stanga Trecco

JESSICA GRITTI

The Palazzo Stanga Trecco in Cremona, probably constructed in the last decade of the XV century, is one of the greatest examples of terracotta tile architectural decoration. Here, the Cremonese terracotta tradition reaches the highest level thanks to a profusion of motifs taken from the antique. The stringcourse frieze of the courtyard shows subjects derived from ancient Roman sarcophagi, known in Lombardy at the end of the fifteenth century through drawings and prints in circulation. In some particular cases, instead, the figures are derived from coins (the *tondos* with profiles of emperors), or from Renaissance medallions, as in the scene of a *Battle* taken from a work of the medallist Pier Jacopo Alari Bonacolsi, called *l'Antico*, active in Mantua in the circle influenced by Andrea Mantegna.

The use of these sources bears witness to the *modus operandi* of artists of the period, who rather freely juxtaposed a vast repertory of subjects *all'antica*, using them independently of their iconographic context. An important factor in this work of updating were the kilns in Cremona, which at that time probably had a rich repertory of drawings, prints, coins and medallions. The kiln that produced the terracotta decoration for the Palazzo Stanga Trecco seems to have been the same one that the frieze of the Palazzo Fodri, with its similar figures and workmanship, came from. And it may even have been the kiln called *Gazina*, located outside the Porta Mosa, owned by Benedetto Fodri. Finally, the producers of the decoration of the Palazzo Stanga Trecco show a type of culture similar to contemporary sculpture in stone by Giovan Pietro da Rho.

The Ceiling Panels with Scenes from Genesis by Bonifacio Bembo and His Workshop in the Museo Civico in Cremona: Iconographical Considerations

ROBERTA AGLIO

Among the numerous ceiling panel cycles that generally have portraits, animals or coats of arms as subjects, the group from the Casa Meli in Cremona stands out for its stylistic originality, the rarity of its subject and the exceptional quality of draughtsmanship. The cycle depicts scenes from the book of Genesis, and was carried out by Bonifacio Bembo and his workshop around the middle of the XV century.

Until the present time, the Meli panels have been studied together in a group, as a useful element of comparison with the most significant works of the workshop, in order to support attributions or define, on occasion, the different personalities of the Bembo family.

The analysis of the individual panels makes it possible to identify, in the schemes adopted by the artist, a complex elaboration not only on the artistic and compositional level, but also from an iconographical point of view. In fact, one can recognize models taken from late fourteenth century fresco cycles in the Duomo in Cremona, which are re-interpreted with great exuberance and freshness. However, customs and situations linked to the contemporary milieu of the artist as well as ancient figurative models of uncertain origin can also be observed.

Each panel in this cycle contributes to the production of a precise doctrinal programme agreed upon with the patrons and linked to life in Cremona in the XV century. The panels were probably installed in the ceiling of the private chapel of Palazzo Meli. They speak of men of the faith, like Abraham and Joseph, and they were a warning to stand firm in an era of crisis and have faith in God just like the characters in the panels: images to aid the memory and to assist in prayer.

Cesare Cesariano: an Unpublished Manuscript

MARIA GRAZIA ALBERTINI OTTOLENGHI

The Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Inc. 1005) houses an exemplar of the *editio princeps* of the *Perspectiva communis* by John Peckham, published in Milan in 1482-83 for the fonts of Pietro Corneno with comments by Fazio Cardano, lawyer and physician, in contact with Leonardo da Vinci. The book, dedicated to the court physician and ducal councillor Ambrogio Grifi, bears witness to the interest in optics and perspective among mathematicians, philosophers and artists in Milan and in the academic circles of the Studium in Pavia in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. The flyleaves of the Ambrosiana incunabulum are covered with profuse annotations written in pen (here transcribed in their entirety) with recipes for materials and colours to be used in mosaics, the beginnings of a writing on perspective and a very brief reference to personal matters.

The inscription «Cesar Cesarianus pictor mediolanensis de prospectiva scribit» and the handwriting, clearly the same as the only autograph recognized as Cesariano's (ms. 9/2790 Sección de Cortes at the Real Academia de la Historia di Madrid), enable us to identify the author as the great painter and architect to whom we owe the monumental commentary on the *De architectura* by Vitruvius.

Apart from interest in mosaic technique, some of the data that emerge from this text make it possible to venture a dating subsequent to the artist's stay in Reggio and to his probable trip to Rome between 1507 and 1508, during which he could have seen the wall paintings by Pintoricchio in the Borgia apartments or in the residence of Cardinal Domenico della Rovere, paintings that are full of decoration in gold, stucco and imitation precious stones.

L'iconografia del Marsia di Correggio

MARCIN FABIAŃSKI

Due opere di Correggio — dipinte per lo studiolo di Isabella d'Este a Mantova e ora conservate al Louvre — ritraggono *Minerva e Marsia*, intesi rispettivamente come allegorie della saggezza e della follia. Il significato della seconda scena è stato però variamente interpretato. La sua probabile ricezione originale da parte del colto pubblico mantovano viene qui studiata alla luce delle immagini e dei testi disponibili nella corte gonzaghesca dell'inizio del Cinquecento.

Se due figure nel dipinto costituiscono un'eco evidente del *Laocoonte* e di un genietto dipinto da Giulio Romano nel palazzo del Te, i lettori di Filostrato, tradotto proprio per Isabella da Demetrio Mosco, potevano riconoscere nella figura centrale il satiro Marsia, legato al dio Bacco. Marsia è tormentato dalle menadi (o, secondo altri, dalle furie), riconoscibili dall'attributo dei serpenti: questo motivo, piuttosto che da fonti figurative, era conosciuto attraverso la letteratura classica e i commenti di Porfirio e Antonio Mancinelli. La lettura più probabile da parte degli spettatori mantovani era che le baccanti puniscono Marsia per la lussuria causata dall'ebbrezza. Chi aveva letto Orazio con il commento di Porfirio poteva inoltre riconoscere nell'albero avvolto dalla vite un ulteriore simbolo della lussuria. Combinando questi elementi col significato morale veicolato dall'affine *Sansone e Dalila* di Mantegna, lo spettatore vedeva nel satiro torturato un simbolo dell'uomo che impazzisce per gli effetti dell'ebbrezza, in esplicita opposizione alla casta e temperata saggezza di Minerva dipinta nell'altra scena.

Rubens, che lavorò a Mantova all'inizio del Seicento, capì correttamente il significato di questa scena, a cui si ispirò per il suo *Ercole Onfale*, anch'esso conservato al Louvre.

Barbelli, Arduino, Feria: Reflections on Recent Exchanges Among Authors

MARIO MARUBBI

The recent publication in *Arte Lombarda* of the *Visitation* in Pognano provides an occasion for a few clarifications concerning recent exchanges among authors on Gian Giacomo Barbelli from Crema, Giovanni Maria Arduino from Genoa and Claudio Feria (or Ferit) from Lorraine. The stylistic affinities among these three painters are in fact very close, especially among the works from the period of Barbelli's stay in the northern part of Lake Como (1628) and Arduino's and Feria's in Valtellina. Starting with some recent documentary discoveries on the cycle with *Scenes from the Life of St. Blaise* in Magenta, the author makes specific statements on old and new attributions, with a few further reflections on several paintings that were wrongly included among Barbelli's youth-

ful works. In the article several new attributions are also put forward for Barbelli and for Claudio Feria.

Masterpieces by Pietro Tempesta

MARCEL ROETHLISBERGER

The present article aims to make known four of Pietro Tempesta's unpublished large-scale landscapes, which can be considered masterpieces from his mature period. The paintings, which are on a grand scale, form a group that dates back to the last decade of the seventeenth century.

The four canvases have no thematic connection: each work is complete in itself; the unity of the cycle comes from a sort of compositional saturation that is repeated in the vast landscapes, which are all enlivened by unusually small figures and illuminated by a homogeneous lighting.

It is not known who commissioned the works. The series belonged to the Forbin-Janson family, owners of the Verdrière Castle in the Var region of France. From the eighteenth century onwards, the family had intense ties with Italy.

In the article, Tempesta's artistic evolution is taken into consideration, as the author goes through the phases of his life as an artist and his movements from the Low Countries to Rome, Genoa, Lombardy and Venice. Finally, the author presents two more paintings that belong to his late career.

The Sacro Monte in Ghiffa: the Cappella dell'Incoronazione. Original Colours and Repainting of the Statues

ANTONIETTA GALLONE

The painted terracotta statues that enliven the Cappella dell'Incoronazione di Maria at the Sacro Monte in Ghiffa show few traces of the original paint, which was removed or covered by later intervention. The research results presented here study the original painting technique and identify repainting, the various phases of which are arranged in a chronology based on the dating of the pigments.

In the preparation for the paint, a layer of whitening is present, which is at times mixed with particles of colour and fragments of gilding, signs of a refined technique. Quality and refinement can also be observed in the original paint, for which the pigments, the successive coats they were applied in and the binder have been identified. In the blue in David's cloak, for example, enamel was used, a vitreous pigment known for its transparent characteristics. Realgar, a gold-colour pigment, was found in the Madonna's cloak, which could be a sign of a precious ornamental motif. The search for delicate technical effects is also borne out by traces of the original gilding (in two cases the gold leaf is still well-preserved).

Three phases of repainting have been observed, from 1750 to the mid-twentieth century. At times, the work distorts the original inten-

tion of the artist, or it could not match the chromatic quality, since synthetic pigments were used. In particular, in Christ's flesh, more restoration work was identified: this fact can be explained by the desire to continually renew and beautify the most important statue for special religious ceremonies.

These analyses have thus made it possible to enter into the 'depth' of the work, by making its once-invisible initial qualities come out again, and identifying the succeeding layers of overpainting.

The Scuola dei Quattro Santi Coronati in the Milan Cathedral

FRANCESCO REPISHTI

The exact date of the foundation of the confraternity dedicated to the four crowned saints (Scuola or Confraternita dei Quattro Santi Coronati) at the Campo Santo at the Milan Cathedral is not known. For about three centuries, the Scuola was the place where the stonecutters and sculptors of this construction site met. Its activity is already documented in the middle of the fifteenth century by new archival data: in fact, a series of acts between 1451 and 1455 attest to a precise internal structure guided by a prior and at least two procurators, as is the existence of an altar dedicated to the four martyr patron saints in the Campo Santo.

The acts housed in the Fondo Notarile at the Archivio di Stato in Milan, or in copies at the Archivio della Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, make it possible to draw up a proper census of *maestri* at work from 1450 to 1786 and, indirectly, specifications on the phenomenon of artistic migration, on norms governing apprenticeships or *pacta ad artem*, on social life and on the relations between different masters, as well as on the organization of a confraternity, even if anomalous, and on the formation of *societates* among artists.

In fact, many artists who were present in the most important construction sites in Europe were trained or became established in the *Cascina dei lapicidi*, which reinforces the idea of a role for the Fabbrica as an important 'place of passage' in artistic migrations to other regions of Italy or Europe.

In the appendix, there is a transcription of the rules and regulations of the Scuola approved at the meeting of 17 February 1517. The various articles are written in the vulgate and they list the responsibilities of the masters who were enrolled: from participation in the life of the Scuola (board meetings, the tasks of the prior or of the representatives) to professional and 'moral' behaviour in the construction site.

Unpublished Documents on the Cremonese Sculptor Giulio Sacchi. The Years in Spain (ca. 1696 - 1713)

CELE COPPINI

The Cremonese sculptor Giulio Sacchi reached Spain around 1696, in the company of his maestro Giacomo Bertesi, the well-known

sculptor and architect who was also from Cremona. For a few years, Sacchi lived in Alicante, then moved to Madrid, where he entered the workshop of Nicolás de Bussy, court artist from Alsace who had a fundamental influence on his training. The most representative phase of his Spanish experience is his stay in the city of Elx (Elche) between 1699 and 1711. Several notarial documents partially shed light on this period, not very well known up to our own day. Among the various events we have evidence for, the most significant are his imprisonment in 1703 (perhaps for economic reasons) and the purchase, in 1699, of the family home that would then be sold in 1711, a circumstance which seems to foreshadow his return to Cremona in 1713.

From these documents, no notices on his artistic activity as sculptor in these years emerge. Desiderio Arisi, the oldest of his biographers, implies that Sacchi, besides working in Alicante and Madrid, carried out works in the Churches of St. Claire and the Church of the Holy Saviour in Elche, but he gives no further details. Moreover, he refers to his involvement in the executive project for the main façade of the cathedral in Valencia, decided by the Chapter in 1701. The incongruence between this notice and the fact that there is no trace of his name in the archives in Valencia could be resolved by considering the role that Bussy and his collaborators, including Sacchi of course, could have had in the preparatory phase of that important work.

The Servants' Quarters and Cellars of the Palazzo Arese Borromeo in Cesano Maderno

SILVIA BOLDRINI - DANIELE SANTAMBROGIO

The inventories of the Palazzo Arese Borromeo drawn up at the turn of the XVII and XVIII centuries describe the six rooms that made up the servants' quarters located on the ground floor in the northwest part (storeroom, scullery, kitchen, second storeroom, pantry, wine cellar), specifying their function and the utensils they contained. A comparative reading of the four inventories enables us to reconstruct aspects of everyday life of an important aristocratic family at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and to have an idea of the complexity of the culinary arts of the time. The article also includes the transcription of the 1697 inventory, the oldest that has come down to us, and by a glossary that explains the most typical terms.

The wine cellars were also located in the north wing, in correspondence to the oldest part of the building, as shown by two imposing pointed arches. Little known until the present day, the restoration work of 2005 recovered the original aspect of these quarters. Besides the cellars, destined for the aging of wine, the underground areas of the building were occupied by the seventeenth century ice house, by the room for the press and the room with the alembic, probably ordered by Carlo IV Borromeo Arese (1657-1734), where distilled spirits were probably produced from the wine grapes.