

**Materials and Techniques in the Frescoes Rediscovered in the Chapel in the Castle at Lardirago**

MARIA TERESA MAZZILLI SAVINI

Our current image of Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance architecture does not correspond to what it was really like: the damage over time, ancient changes and nineteenth century restorers' interventions have caused the loss of the original chromatic finishing. New attention to 'archaeological' detail and to even minimal remains of paint film that have survived but have never been noted, the progress of studies on ancient building materials, the numerous discoveries made in the course of restoration work have led to present attempts to reconstruct the aesthetic and symbolic values of colour in the architecture of Lombardy from the XII to the XV century.

Investigations carried out in the past few decades have made it possible to retrieve the ancient aspect of many monumental complexes, where the chromatic finishing played an unexpected role. This research has shed light on a constant, thoroughly Lombard element: the persistence of traditional technical currents characterized by an exuberant type of decorativism.

An exemplary case is the discovery of painted architecture in the chapel in the castle in Lardirago (Pavia), a pluri-stratified monument that, in its various phases, shows an intention to imitate precious materials by using low-cost pictorial techniques (fake ashlar, fake columns in variegated polychrome marble, fake capitals in terracotta or sandstone, fake wallpaper, fake tapestries, fake terracotta friezes).

**Il sepolcro di Medea Colleoni nell'Ottocento: nuovi documenti, 1841-1842**

JOANNE G. BERNSTEIN

Alcuni documenti inediti dell'Archivio del Luogo pio della Pietà in Bergamo chiariscono la storia dell'acquisto della tomba di Medea Colleoni da parte dell'ente cittadino e le circostanze che portarono alla sua attuale collocazione. Il 22 settembre 1841 il possidente Pietro Venini cedette il monumento al Luogo pio, dietro pagamento di 4250 lire austriache, perché fosse collocato nella Cappella Colleoni. Gli amministratori dell'ente accettarono di farsi carico di tutte le operazioni di distacco, imballaggio e ricollocazione.

Fu l'architetto Giacomo Bianconi, docente all'Accademia Carrara, ad avvisare il Luogo Pio dell'opportunità di acquistare il

monumento dell'Amadeo e a eseguire sul luogo, la chiesa domenicana di Santa Maria della Basella a Urganano, un rilievo corredato di tutte le misurazioni necessarie per la corretta ricollocazione. Bianconi sovrintese anche al trasporto e ai lavori nella Cappella Colleoni e disegnò le decorazioni in stucco per il sepolcro e per la *Sacra Famiglia* di Angelica Kaufmann, collocata accanto alla tomba, decorazioni che furono eseguite nel 1842 da Cipriano Spinelli.

Un altro documento fa luce sulla posa in opera della tomba da parte di Antonio Galletti. Una nota di spesa dello stesso Galletti chiarisce che il paramento marmoreo a losanghe bianche e nere che fa da sfondo alla tomba preesisteva al trasporto a Bergamo, smentendo l'opinione avanzata dai precedenti studiosi che il rivestimento bicromo fosse stato creato appositamente nel 1842. Inoltre anche un disegno di Pietro Ronzoni, eseguito quando il sepolcro era ancora alla Basella, conferma la presenza del fondo a losanghe prima di quella data. I nuovi documenti provano così che la sola modifica sostanziale fu la circostante decorazione in stucco disegnata dal Bianconi per armonizzare l'altezza del monumento alla decorazione settecentesca della Cappella Colleoni.

**The Ancient Church of San Giovanni d'Itolano (Laterano) in Milan: Ercole Procaccini the Younger and Two Unpublished Paintings by Antonio Busca**

CRISTINA FARINA

The first part of the article reconstructs the complex series of architectural events surrounding the church of San Giovanni d'Itolano in Milan, which was demolished in 1936. Already documented in the eleventh century, the building underwent reconstruction work in the sixteenth century. It was radically modified thanks to the bequest of Bernardo Bussero, whose will of 1629 designated the model for the reconstruction as the church of Santi Cosma e Damiano. Various obstacles, including the difficult economic circumstances, delayed the work, which dragged on until 1666.

The second part of the article is dedicated to the examination of several paintings from the church. Archival documents attest to the activity of the painter Ercole Procaccino il Giovane, who lived in the parish, and his pupil Antonio Busca, who was *priore* of the confraternity of Corpus Domini in 1676. The stylistic analysis of the altarpiece with *Sts. Bernard, Joseph, Francis and Charles* (carried out by Procaccini and housed in the present church of San Giovanni in Laterano

in Milan) suggests a dating to the forties. The unpublished *St. Philip Neri*, now in the church of San Pio X, can also be attributed to Ercole. The reconstruction of the events following the demolition of the church have made it possible to identify two more unpublished paintings by Antonio Busca in the church of San Pio X. The works, which are attentive to models of Roman classicism, depict *Scenes from the Life of St. Philip Neri*.

**Onorio Longhi and the Years in Exile (1606-1611): The Experiences of a Roman Architect In the Lombardy of Federico Borromeo**

ANNA BORTOLOZZI

Onorio Longhi, Roman architect of Lombard origins, was forced to abandon the papal city in the summer of 1606 so that he would not be convicted for his involvement in the murder of Ranuccio Tomassoni, who had been killed by his friend Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. Longhi decided to take refuge in his native town of Viggiù, where his family not only owned property and other possessions, but also had solid professional relations.

For the next five years, until his definitive return to Rome in April of 1611, Onorio Longhi did his job as architect both in the area he came from, for the church dedicated to the birth of the Virgin in Viggiù and the church of Santi Nazaro e Celso in Arzo, as well as in the rest of Lombardy. From June of 1607 his relationship with Cristóbal Lechuga, general of artillery and superintendent of the fortresses of the Duchy of Milan, is documented. Longhi held various positions under Lechuga, working on the construction of the Forte di Fuentes and on the navigable canal that was supposed to connect Milan to Pavia. At the same time, it turns out that Longhi was involved in some of the major building sites of the time, furnishing drawings for the façade of the Cathedral in Milan and for Sant'Alessandro in Zebedia, and taking part in debates about the projects for the Duomo Nuovo in Brescia. His collaboration in these building sites with the architects Lorenzo Binago and Francesco Maria Richino contributed, through experimentation with various compositional innovations in the façades of the ecclesiastical buildings, to contamination between Roman and Lombard architectural language in the formative years of the Baroque. The Lombard experience was just as important for Longhi's later career: in the autumn of 1611, in fact, Cardinal Paolo Camillo Sfondrati entrusted him with the construction of the new church of the Lom-

bards in Rome, which was dedicated to St. Charles Borromeo. Moreover, in 1612, he presented the designs for the tabernacle of Santa Maria presso San Celso in Milan.

### **The Frescoes in the Salone dei Fasti Romani in the Palazzo Arese Borromeo in Cesano Maderno**

MASSIMO BENZO

The Salone dei Fasti Romani in the Palazzo Arese Borromeo in Cesano Maderno is decorated with two great frescoes that can be read as a manifesto of the ideas of Bartolomeo III Arese in the field of politics and religion. The fresco on the north wall represents Aeneas receiving Mercury's order to abandon Carthage and Queen Dido, a condition necessary for the hero to fulfil his mission as founder of the Roman race. This reading is compared to the related passages in the *Aeneid* and to the erudite commentary of Giovanni Fabrini published in 1609. On the south wall, there is an allegory of the Roman Catholic Church. The author puts forward the hypothesis that this unique combination is a pictorial synthesis of the theory of the «two great lights», that is the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church, given to men by God, whose cooperation is necessary so that they can live in peace on earth and be rewarded with a place in heaven. This doctrine, explained by Dante Alighieri in the treatise *De Monarchia*, may have inspired Bartolomeo III Arese as he carried out his public duties. In particular, the fresco on the south wall could be a public declaration of Arese's orthodoxy and loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church.

On the basis of references to the works of Plutarch, Livy, Ovid, Julius Caesar and Suetonius, the author also identifies Roman figures in other frescoes in the hall, each of whom represents an *exemplum* of civic virtue.

### **Ernesto Bazzaro: Two Monuments, Two Histories**

MARILISA DI GIOVANNI

Ernesto Bazzaro was one of the most important Lombard sculptors active between the nineteenth and twentieth century. He was trained in the late Scapigliatura school, of which, especially in his early works, he captured the technical innovations and Verist tendencies. He later moved towards a type of symbolism that enabled him to express personal feelings born of sincere attention to social as well as spiritual problems.

The events surrounding the two works examined here — the tomb of Stefano Branca, which was erected in the Cimitero Monumentale but is no longer extant, and the commemorative monument to the writer and politician Felice Cavallotti, originally located in the Piazzetta dell'Ambrosiana — are an example of his concept of 'great' sculpture, where innovations in technique and style are rooted in robust Michelagelesque and Baroque origins. Both works testify to his generous, at times painful willingness to accommodate patrons' proposals while at the same time defend his own ideas, which often provoked heated debates.

In the great creative liberty of the virtuosic composition of the Branca tomb, he gives voice to feelings of religiosity that contrast with his intimate convictions. In an astonishing technical and stylistic *exploit*, the sculpture expressed the inconsolable pain of the living and the flight of the soul which, freed from the weight of the body, rises towards heaven. In the monument to Cavallotti, Bazzaro instead fuses two different expressive registers, both far from symbolism or the 'liberty' current of Art Nouveau: one is a renewed neo-Cinquecentese classicism, as in the solemn figure of the hero Leonidas; the other has more movement, is freer and attentive to realistic detail in the fine high relief that runs around the base, rendered in an almost impressionistic way. Both episodes are reconstructed by going through the sculptor's extensive private collection of letters.

### **The *faber lignarius* Giovanni Ambrogio Santagostino, Abbot Onorato da Milano And the Contract for the Choir of San Vittore al Corpo**

SERGIO GATTI

According to Vincenzo Forcella, a document destroyed in the course of the last World War states that Ambrogio Santagostino was the one who executed the wooden choir in the Olivetan monastery of San Vittore al Corpo in Milan «around 1583». Scholars have ended up accepting this dating, maintaining it probable or in any event indicative of the period it was executed in.

The discovery of the contract (Archivio di Stato, Milan) for the construction of the choir makes it possible to solve this problem. On 13 February 1587, Giovanni Ambrogio Santagostino, *faber lignarius* from Milan, made a commitment with the Abbot Onorato to carry out and install the choir of the basilica by the beginning of the month of March 1588. Santagostino also promised to respect the instructions in the twenty-three points of the 'conventions' for its construction.

Finally, the author collects the scanty evidence concerning the other known works by Giovanni Ambrogio Santagostino up to this time. From the examination of archival documents, he was the brother of Cristoforo, an artist who was highly praised by his contemporary Paolo Morigia.

### **Alfonso Torreggiani and the Remodelling of the Palazzo Cavriani in Mantua: a Reconstruction of the Undertaking through Archival Documents**

SILVIA MEDDE

The remodelling of the Palazzo Cavriani is an important episode in the building history of eighteenth century Mantua. Marquis Antonio commissioned the architect from Bologna Alfonso Torreggiani (1682-1764), interpreter of a line oriented towards the late Baroque. The work, for which the architect was contacted as early as 1733, went on for over twenty years.

A great deal of care was dedicated to the plan for the new façade — connected to

the eastern front with an original corner solution — as was also the case with the entrance atrium and monumental staircase. For the demanding reorganisation of the apartment located on the southern side of the first floor, Torreggiani also designed finishings, decorations and furnishings carried out by artists of Bolognese extraction flanked by others of local origins.

The documents related to the Cavriani family, now housed in the Archivio di Stato in Mantua, confirm Torreggiani's central, continuative role, while they also illuminate the physiognomy of a home-owner who was extremely interested, competent, and actively involved in the progress of the building and the definition of its characteristics, and that is why he asked various experts for advice and qualified opinions.

The numerous graphic works, the detailed reports that accompany them, a book that preserves a record of all of the expenses and the letters between the marquis, the architect and architecture connoisseurs offer a privileged point of view in the reconstruction of the material, intellectual and planning dynamics, which made it possible to convert the ancient mass of a palazzo into a modern noble residence that was organically distributed around a central courtyard and provided with prestigious rooms and settings expressing the social status of the family vis-à-vis the city.

### **Gem cutter Giovanni Battista Dorelli's Plan for a School of Cameo Engraving (1806)**

GABRIELLA TASSINARI

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, several gem cutters active in Rome decided to move to Milan, which had become the capital of the Kingdom of Italy, since they were attracted by its lively artistic and cultural milieu and by the high level of economic prosperity. Milan offered the opportunity for numerous jobs from viceroy Eugenio di Beauharnais, his court and other prestigious art patrons. Giovanni Battista Dorelli, a not very well known engraver of cameos, also moved to Milan, and worked out a plan for the establishment of a school of cameo engraving (July 1806). The plan was in harmony with the immense good fortune enjoyed by cameos at that time, since cameos were fashionable at all levels of society.

Dorelli insisted on the economic advantages that autonomous production of cameos would have brought to the Kingdom: through the creation of a school, young artists would find employment, since they would be trained as engravers — both as *lapidari*, who would prepare stones to be worked on, as well as shopkeepers who would sell the cameos produced in Milan. The plan was sent to viceroy Beauharnais, an expert collector who was committed to encouraging the fine arts in every way and to giving incentive to manufacturing in the Kingdom. But the school was never established, thus meeting an end that was similar to Teresa Talani's. Just a few years earlier, when she had applied to the government to teach the art of engraving, the chair was rejected by the secretary of the Brera Academy, Giuseppe Bossi.