Some Newly-Discovered Works by Pirro Ligorio,
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Some Newly-Discovered Works by Pirro Ligorio
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departure readily available within the material that he knew best. The conceptual basis for the decoration of a room that proclaimed victory could be transferred from his understanding of the dynamics of an encomiastic literary genre. And, in my opinion, there was another propitious combination that took place in the Hall of Troy, for Lampridio’s cultivated understanding of complex narrative structure and terse imagery found congenial parallels in Giulio Romano’s equally impressive manipulation of pictorial structure and creation of evocative images. The results of the collaboration are of a stately quality, worthy of the combined effort of two masters of symbolic story-telling; worthy indeed of the privileged function of a formal hall in the official residence of a powerful young Duke, who at the time was the most important Italian ally of the Emperor.

With clarification of the textual sources, and the identification of the scholar who chose them, a new understanding of the formation of the programme is possible. It is clear that the Sala di Troia was not intended as an illustration of any single literary source. Rather, the chain of events that led to the decoration of the room began with the Duke’s desire for a tangible display of the increased power and rising fortunes that were his throughout the decade of the 1530s. Triumphant in his own political struggles, Federico put aside more traditional imagery to identify with the Greeks who emerged victorious from the war with Troy. The scholarly interests of the programme’s adviser would have nurtured the pro-Greek bias, as Lampridio put his erudition to work to structure a sequence of stories whose ensemble would form an apposite narrative. The Duke’s artist verbally received the stories from his colleague, and discussed with him the various possibilities for turning specific scenes into incisive pictorial compositions that would at the same time tell the tales with clarity, and make clear the numerous references to the room’s owner.

It is crucial to emphasize the order of this procedure: a pre-established programme came first, and only then were literary sources gleaned for appropriate episodes. This is the only explanation that gives sense to an otherwise bewildering choice of scenes, taken from a number of different texts, one of which was itself a compendium of other sources. This method of creating an extensive and learned fresco cycle, put into practice by the Mantuan court, has much broader implications that can be applied toward an understanding of the composite character of much art produced after the first quarter of the sixteenth century, an art whose conceptual basis has proved so elusive to our comprehension.

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SOME NEWLY-DISCOVERED WORKS BY PIRRO LIGORIO

THE PURPOSE of this Note is to draw attention to some unpublished material of interest to students of antiquity and the Renaissance, namely a manuscript volume, letters and drawings by Pirro Ligorio. The Archivio di Stato in Turin possesses an autograph manuscript by Ligorio which has so far escaped the attention of scholars.1 The catalogue, however, mentions under the pressmark J.a.II.17 bis ‘Un volumetto contenente libri XLIX e L (intagli e monete, obelischi)’. This entry is a pencilled addition, made in 1929, to the list of the thirty other autograph volumes by Ligorio entitled ‘I libri delle Antichità’, which have the pressmarks J.a.III.3-15 (vols 1–13) and J.a.II.1-17 (vols 14–30).

The ‘volumetto’ has a grey cardboard binding (300 x 175 mm) and bears on the spine a somewhat erased title in brown ink: ‘Pirro Ligorio. Anticaglie intagliate’. It contains 124 original leaves of the same quality and dimensions (280 x 155 mm), except for the last single folio, which is slightly larger (280 x 210 mm) and of thicker paper: this is the only extraneous leaf in the manuscript. The volume starts with an unpaginated single leaf, at the top

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of which Ligorio has written the title in capitals. It begins: 'IL LIBRO QUARANTESIMO NONO DELL'ANTICHITÀ NEL ...' A little below the title is the following ownership-mark: 'Di me Matteo Tieghi Giud[ice] d'Argine Ferrarese'.

The main body of the manuscript is divided as follows:

1. A group of 34 bifolios paginated in pencil. The complete title of the work appears at the top of fol. 1, written by Ligorio: 'LIBRO QUARANTESIMO NONO DELL'ANTICHITÀ NEL QUALE SI TRATTA DELL'ANTICHI INTAGLI CHE SI TROVANO NELLI DIASPRI SOPRA DELLA NATURA DEL SOLE MEDICO. DA PYRRHO LIGORIO NAPOLITANO COMPILATI. ET RIDOTTI DALLE SUE DIFFICULTÀ CHIARI. NELLA NOSTRA LINGUA'. The text is illustrated with drawings.

2. A group of 24 bifolios, paginated only up to fol. 27r (p. 121). This second part is headed: 'IL LIBRO CINQUANTESIMO DELL'ANTICHITA SOPRA DEI SIGNIFICATI DELL'ANTICHI INTAGLI CHE SI TROVANO CON LA IMMAGINE DEL SCARABEO. DA PYRRHO LIGORIO NAPOLITANO ET CITTADINO ROMANO'. This section is also illustrated with drawings.

3. A group of 12 bifolios without pagination. The first folio has the following title: 'LA IMMAGINE DELL'OCEANO SECONDO FU DALL'ANTICHI SCULPITA CON LE CORNA E COL CETO'. Following this, fol. 22r deals with 'IMAGINI DELLA GUERRA'. Fol. 23 is blank. Fol. 24r contains a description of different types of marble from the Apennines, Sorrento and Orvieto.

4. A group of 8 bifolios, the first three of which have been cut down. They contain drawings of coins, except in the following cases:
   fol. 4v has a list of Roman tribes.
   fol. 5v has only the outlines of circles meant for the drawings of coins.
   fol. 13r has a sketch of the baths at Casciano.
   fols 10v, 11v, 12v, 14v are blank.

5. A group of 6 bifolios (the ninth is blank), in which the author discusses obelisks.

6. A bifolio, lacking the second part, which lists 14 inscriptions: five from Rieti and nine from Trebula. This last folio, added to the rest of the manuscript, is bound back-to-front, as can be seen from the sequence of the inscriptions: what is at present the recto starts with a single inscription from Trebula followed by the five from Rieti. In fact the Trebula inscription should be the last in its series, which actually begins on the present verso.

The provenance of the manuscript and its entry into the Archivio di Stato are documented in a note included at the beginning of the 'volumetto': 'Il presente manoscritto “libro 49 delle celebri antichità romane di Pirro Ligorio” offerto in vendita a questa direzione dal Sig. Giacinto Sibilla, venne ceduto alla medesima in data 14 gennaio 1929 per la somma di lire mille dal Cav. Gennaro d’Oro di Comacchio (Ferrara) al quale era pervenuto per successione dal cognato Mario Samaritani di Comacchio'. The presence of the work in libraries in and around Ferrara confirms the interest of local scholars in Ligorio. This interest was hitherto documented only through the diffusion of the inscriptions in Ligorio’s manuscript on the origins of Ferrara.

Like Ligorio’s other works, this codex is mainly composed of ‘libri delle antichità’. But, whereas in other works Ligorio uses inscriptions and coins as sources or to illustrate his commentaries, in this ‘volumetto’ he deals with jasper intaglios and the iconography of scarabs on Egyptian gems.

The Turin manuscript is also particularly important as new evidence of the tradition of inscriptions from Rieti and Trebula. Its...
late acquisition by the Archivio di Stato explains why it was not studied by the authors of the CIL. Sabine inscriptions will now have to be reconsidered taking its contents into account. Ligorio’s evidence should contribute to a better understanding of the complex question of Sabine epigraphy, as I hope to demonstrate in a forthcoming study.

The other new material is preserved in the Archivio Borromeo, Stresa, and consists mainly of drawings, divided into three groups. The first group includes a letter made up of two bifolios (285 x 215 mm), in which Ligorio announces to Girolamo Mercuriale the despatch of two drawings for the second edition of his De arte gymnastica, published at Venice in 1573. The left side of the first folio contains a drawing of two gladiators (‘Mirmillo et Sequator’), which Mercuriale did not use. The second drawing sent by Ligorio on this occasion, reproduced as the ‘Pyrrhichia saltatio’ on page 99 of the De arte gymnastica, was never in the Archivio Borromeo. It has recently been published by Adriano Cavicchi, who reported that it is in the Miscellanea of Giuseppe Boschini in the Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, Ferrara. Boschini himself certainly owned the letter, as it is cited in a list of his manuscripts which is preserved in his Miscellanea. After Boschini’s death his collection, presumably including the letter to Mercuriale, passed to the librarian of the Biblioteca Ariostea, Giuseppe Antonelli. It is entirely possible that he sold it: at the bottom of the letter there is a note in his hand, dated 4 January 1856, certifying that the handwriting was that of Ligorio himself.

This first group also contains ten drawings which do appear in Mercuriale’s book. The full list is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ligorio</th>
<th>Mercuriale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lavacrum</td>
<td>Lavacrum (p. 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triclinio</td>
<td>Triclinium (p. 55)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As has already been recognized, most of the designs sent to Mercuriale, including the one which he did not publish—‘Mirmillo et Sequator’—were also used, if sometimes in modified form, in the ceiling frescoes in the salone and the saletta dei giochi of the Castello at Ferrara.

Ligorio’s designs became widely known, thanks to Mercuriale’s book. On account of their archaeological interest they were used, for example, by Blaise de Vigenère and Johannes Alstorphius. Pedro Chacon and Fulvio Orsini used them to support arguments on the representation of the Gospels, and they also influenced the iconography of religious painting.


5 The first edition (1569) was not illustrated.

7 David R. Coffin, ‘Pirro Ligorio and Decoration of the Late Sixteenth Century at Ferrara’, Art Bulletin, xxxvii, 1955, pp. 177–78; see also Cavicchi (as in n. 6), pp. 137–50, and illustrations on pp. 97–120.

8 D. Métral, Blaise de Vigenère archeologue et critique d’art (1523–1596), Paris 1939, pp. 196–98. The author notes: ‘Vigenère a donc pu emprunter ces gravures (lavacrum et triclinium) à des publications de Ligorio et n’être pas le premier à les avoir publiées’. She concludes, p. 200: ‘le graveur de Vigenère nous a conservé des compositions dont les dessins originaux sont vraisemblablement à jamais perdus!’

9 Dissertatio philologica de lectis. Subjicitur eiusdem de lectis veterum diatribe, Amsterdam 1704.


11 I hope to develop this idea, supplementing the fundamental article by A. Blunt (‘The Triclinium in Religious Art’, this Journal, ii, 1938–39, pp. 271–76), in a forthcoming publication of the drawings.
CARAVAGGIO'S ST MATTHEW

CARAVAGGIO'S CALLING OF ST MATTHEW RECONSIDERED

To the memory of Wolfgang Braunfels

GIOVANNI BELLORI, 'the learned critic ... the mouthpiece and universally acclaimed promoter of the classical cause'—as Moshe Barasch described him recently1—supplied us with the first description of Caravaggio’s Calling of St Matthew (Pl. 42a) in 1672, roughly three generations after its execution. This description contains the hitherto accepted identification of Matthew. Bellori’s text reads: ‘several heads are drawn from life, among which is the saint, who interrupts his counting of money and with one hand on his breast, turns toward the Lord. Close to the saint is an old man placing his spectacles on his nose and looking at a young man seated at one corner of the table, drawing the coins to himself’2 (Pl. 42b).

Despite the fact that a number of art historians have commented on the dissimilar appearance of St Matthew in the Calling when compared with Caravaggio’s other depictions of the saint for the Contarelli Chapel, Bellori’s identification has never been seriously questioned.3 Indeed, reasons, at times rationalizations,

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Caravaggio did not follow Varro’s list of the ‘Dei Consenti’: he included Juno instead of Minerva.

12 M. T. Varro, De re rustica, t, i, 4–6. Curiously, Ligorio did not follow Varro’s list of the ‘Dei Consenti’; he included Juno instead of Minerva.

15 Mercuriale confirms this: ‘Et ut certior possit formae huiusce exercitacionis notitia haberi, adponendas curavimus halteristarum imagines quas ex gemmis antiquis sculptis acceptas ad nos misit Pyrrhus Ligorigus’ (De arte gymnastica, Venice 1573, p. 126).