



Some Newly-Discovered Works by Pirro Ligorio, Ginette Vagenheim

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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^o e L^o (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

¹ It is not included in the list of Ligorio's manuscripts in Turin published by E. Mandowsky and C. Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities*, London 1962, pp. 134–39.

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. 27^r (p. 121). This second part is headed: 'IL LIBRO CINQUANTESIMO DELL'ANTICHITÀ SOPRA DELLI SIGNIFICATI DELL'ANTICHI INTAGLI CHE SI TROVANO CON LA IMAGINE 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 IMAGINE DELL'OCEANO SECONDO FU DALL'ANTICHI SCULPITA CON LE CORNA E COL CETO'. Following this, fol. 22^r deals with 'IMAGINI DELLA GUERRA'. Fol. 23 is blank. Fol. 24^r 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. 4^v has a list of Roman tribes.
fol. 5^v has only the outlines of circles meant for the drawings of coins.
fol. 13^r has a sketch of the baths at Casciano.
fols 10^v, 11^v, 12^v, 14^v 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'.² 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.³

Like Ligorio's other works,⁴ 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

² The note then mentions a 'pratica n. 121 R. del 1928' which is no longer in the Archivio di Stato. I have been able to identify Matteo Tieghi, Giacinto Sibilla, Gennaro d'Oro and Mario Samaritani thanks to the kindness of Adriano Franceschini.

³ Girolamo Baruffaldi, who owned the manuscript, discusses this at length (*Apologia di Ferrara nata cristiana contro il Tanucci*, in *Raccolta di opuscoli di A. Calogera*, vi, Venice 1732, p. 504); *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL), v, s.v. Ferrara.

⁴ Besides the 31 volumes in Turin, there are 10 volumes in the Biblioteca Nazionale, Naples (XIII. B.1-10), one volume in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (MS ital. 1129), and one volume in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS Can. ital. 138).

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 1573.⁵ The left side of the first folio contains a drawing of two gladiators ('Mirmillo et Sequutor'), 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.⁶ 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:

Ligorio	Mercuriale
Lavacrum	Lavacrum (p. 45)
Triclinio	Triclinium (p. 55)

⁵ The first edition (1569) was not illustrated.

⁶ A. Cavicchi, 'Appunti su Pirro Ligorio a Ferrara', in *L'impresa di Alfonso secondo. Saggi e documenti sulla produzione artistica a Ferrara nel secondo Cinquecento*, eds J. Bentini and L. Spezzaferro, Ferrara 1987, p. 141. Boschini's *Miscellanea* is now Coll. Antonelli no. 449. I have been unable to find the drawing.

Giocho della palla maggiore	Pilae (p. 89)
Athleti pancratiasti	Luctatores (p. 104)
Pugna dei cesti	Pugiles (p. 112)
Cesti	Caestus (p. 114)
Alteristi (a)	Alteristae (p. 120)
Alteristi (b)	Alteristae (p. 127)
Funabuli	Funabuli (p. 148)
Oscella	Oscellae (p. 164)

As has already been recognized, most of the designs sent to Mercuriale, including the one which he did not publish—'Mirmillo et Sequutor'—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.⁷

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 Vigenère⁸ and Johannes Alstorpius.⁹ Pedro Chacón and Fulvio Orsini used them to support arguments on the representation of the Gospels,¹⁰ and they also influenced the iconography of religious painting.¹¹

The second group of drawings in Stresa illustrates a letter from Ligorio to a certain prelate, written in Ferrara, 7 December 1573: 'Ill[ustrissi]mo et R[everendissi]mo et Padron[e] mio Oss[ervandissi]mo. Perché M[esser] Vincentio Stampa più volte m'ha scritto che Sua S[igno]ria Ill[ustrissi]ma desiderava intendere da me come huomo

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 archéologue 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.

¹⁰ Petrus Ciacconius Toletanus, *De triclinio sive de modo convivendi apud priscos Romanos. Accedit Ursini Appendix et Hieronimi Mercurialis De accubitus in cena antiquorum origine dissertatio et appendix caput antecedens ubi iterum de accubitu, triclinio, et de Mariae Magdalenae historia tractatur*, Venice 1601.

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.

vecchio et consumato nell'Antichità Romane, quali fussero gli habiti delli Iddij chiamati da Varrone Consenti ...' The letter consists of nine bifolios (310 x 230 mm), on which the text alternates with drawings of the twelve 'Dei Consenti', labelled respectively *Jupiter, Baccho, Cerere, Bono Evento, Flora, Lympha, Sol, Tellus, Robigo, Luna, Iunone, Venere*.¹²

The last group of drawings appears on a single folio (310 x 230 mm). The drawings represent various methods of transport in antiquity. They form an unexpected iconographical complement to Ligorio's comments on transport in the classical world, which were translated into Latin and published a century later by Johannes Schefferus in his *De re vehiculari veterum libri duo. Accedit Pyrrhi Ligorii de vehiculis fragmentum numquam ante publicatum*, Frankfurt 1671.

In his letter to Mercuriale Ligorio says that he drew the gladiators 'Dell'esempij delle cose antiche nelli intagli', while 'gli alteristi sono veduti nelli intagli delle antiche gemme'.¹³ The same statement can be found in the letter to the unidentified prelate: 'Ma perché mi sono state dimandate le forme [degli dodici Dei Consenti] secondo i Romani, dei quali mostreremo le imagini secondo l'havemo osservate nell' antiche medaglie et nelli intagli di gemme'. This link between the unpublished Turin manuscript (J.a.II.17 bis), which deals with the iconography of gems, and the Stresa drawings based on the same source indicates the importance of these new documents for the study of Ligorio's role in the transmission of antique iconographical models through engravings and paintings.

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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,

¹ M. Barasch, *Theories of Art. From Plato to Winckelmann*, New York and London 1985, p. 315.

² Giovanni Bellori, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori e architetti moderni*, Rome 1672, p. 206; translated in: W. Friedländer, *Caravaggio Studies*, Princeton and London 1955, p. 248.

³ Caravaggio was commissioned to execute three paintings for the Contarelli Chapel in San Luigi dei Francesi. *The Calling of St Matthew* and *The Martyrdom of St Matthew* were painted for the laterals between July 1599 and July 1600 followed by an altarpiece depicting *The Inspiration of St Matthew*. Documentary evidence suggests that the *Inspiration* was painted in 1602. However, to Caravaggio's dismay it was rejected by the church authorities of San Luigi. Eventually Caravaggio's patron and supporter Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani decided to take the rejected altarpiece for himself and commissioned a second *Inspiration* from Caravaggio for the Contarelli Chapel to replace the first. This second *Inspiration*, different in concept, and making use of a different model for St Matthew as well, seems to have been finished in February 1603. It was accepted by the church authorities and has remained in situ since. H. Hibbard, 'Caravaggio's two St Matthews', *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, xx, 1983, pp. 181, 193. See also n. 27 below.

¹² M. T. Varro, *De re rustica*, 1, i, 4–6. Curiously, Ligorio did not follow Varro's list of the 'Dei Consenti': he included Juno instead of Minerva.

¹³ Mercuriale confirms this: 'Et ut certior possit formae huiusce exercitationis notitia haberi, adponendas curavimus halteristarum imagines quas ex gemmis antiquis sculptis acceptas ad nos misit Pyrrhus Ligorius' (*De arte gymnastica*, Venice 1573, p. 126).