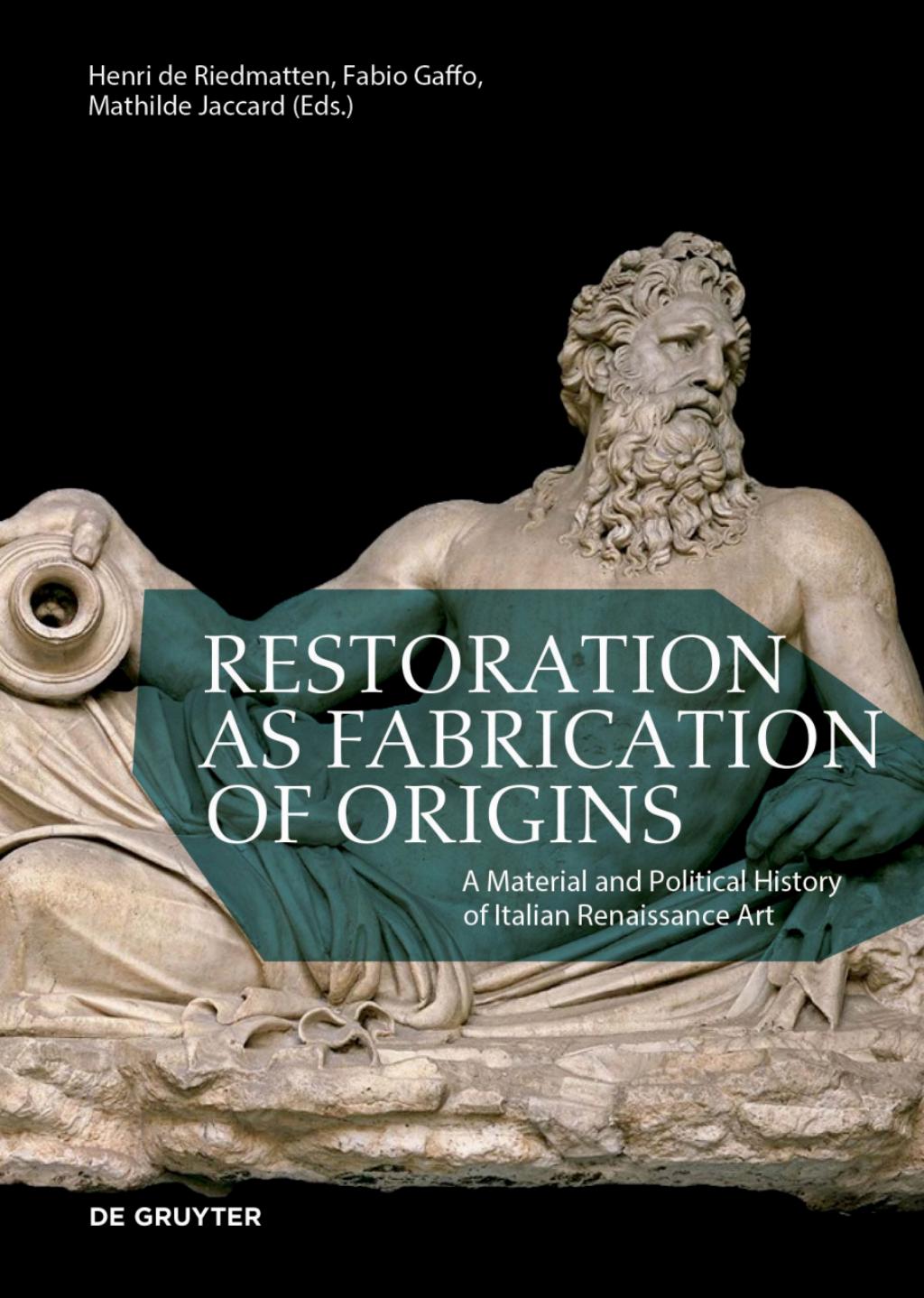


Henri de Riedmatten, Fabio Gaffo,
Mathilde Jaccard (Eds.)



RESTORATION AS FABRICATION OF ORIGINS

A Material and Political History
of Italian Renaissance Art

DE GRUYTER

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De la restauration comme fabrique des origines

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**Une histoire matérielle et politique de l'art à la Renaissance
italienne**

DE GRUYTER

With the support of the Swiss National Science Foundation and the University of Geneva.



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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Foreword **7**

Avant-propos **11**

ON THE NOTION OF RESTORATION / DE LA NOTION DE RESTAURATION

Kathleen W. Christian

Translatio and Restauratio

Text and Image in Renaissance Rome **17**

Mateusz Kapustka

The Reason of Distance

Iconoclasm and Antiquarianism in the 16th Century **37**

Arnold Nesselrath

Ex Uno Lapide **61**

OF SPACES AND PLACES / D'ESPACES ET DE LIEUX

Caroline S. Hillard

Raffaele Maffei and the Discovery of an Etruscan Tomb in 1508 **81**

Florian Métral

Une poétique de l'archaïque

Sur la Loggia de Raphaël (1516–1519) **99**

Jérémie Koering

Temps mêlés

La Galleria dei Mesi au palais ducal de Mantoue comme restauration artistique et politique **119**

RECENT RESTORATION PRACTICES / PRATIQUES RÉCENTES DE LA RESTAURATION

Neville Rowley

Transparence ou opacité

Restaurer la Renaissance italienne (xx^e–xxi^e siècles) **137**

Victor Lopes

La mise au tombeau de Véronèse

Traces, histoire matérielle et restauration **157**

A COLONIAL RENAISSANCE? / UNE RENAISSANCE COLONIALE ?

Beat Wyss

Nova Atlantis

The Colonial Renaissance **171**

Acknowledgments / Remerciements **187**

Credits **188**

Henri de Riedmatten, Fabio Gaffo, Mathilde Jaccard

FOREWORD

In April 2019, Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris was engulfed in flames. In the aftermath of the disaster, the focus has shifted to its restoration. Should the intervention go beyond mere conservation? If so, which state is to be recreated—the 12th-century construction or its last known iteration, which includes the spire added by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc in the 19th century? While instances of renovation due to natural damages are not uncommon, it is not necessarily clear which procedures should be followed. To cite but one example, Avignon Bridge has been repeatedly damaged by the flooding of the Rhône but there are no plans to rebuild it in its entirety.

Discussions around conservation and restoration practices were codified in the West in the framework of the Athens Charter of 1931. The Second World War temporarily put an end to the debate, but it was quickly revived in the wake of the considerable material losses it caused. These discussions culminated in the Venice Charter in 1964, a compromise between intergenerational transmission and structural integrity.

While the Venice Charter specifically concerns built heritage, it clearly illustrates the general tendency towards preserving assets in their current state. If there is to be an intervention, it should be aimed at keeping things as they are—as in the case of Sénanque Abbey, which might have collapsed if work had not been undertaken since 2019. However, Sénanque Abbey is a special case to the extent that the original nucleus of the abbatial church was built over a short period of time and the function of the building has not changed since its foundation, which lends it a certain architectural coherence despite the workings of time and a few alterations. As a result, it was easier to lay down the procedure than in other situations where the layers of time intertwine and can hardly be distinguished.

For this is one of the main issues: should one choose one narrative over another? As a matter of fact, the anti-interventionist approach raises as many questions as answers. Among other things, the Krakow Charter, which complemented the Venice Charter in 2000, recommends to distinguish contemporary additions from prior structures—an approach that can sometimes result in visual dissonance. Beyond the purpose of preserving essential information that allows us to understand the object's history, the main risk of preservation at all cost is a museification, if not disneyfication, of heritage.

It is equally damaging to disregard the phenomena of appropriation and projection, past or present. To cite another Parisian example, the Bourse de Commerce has served successively as a grain shed, ballroom, and trading house before it was transformed by the Japanese architect Tadao Andō into a museum of contemporary art in 2021. However, not all spaces are suitable for upgrading, and day-to-day management of repurposed buildings can be problematic, especially in urban areas. This explains why the architectural complex of Les Halles in Paris, for example, suffered a different fate from the Bourse de Commerce.

It is in the context of this debate that the present publication took shape. It emanates from an international online conference organized in March 2021 by the Department of Art History of the University of Geneva in collaboration with the Museum of Art and History of Geneva. It comprises contributions in French and English and, like the symposium itself, forms part of the project *Restoration as Fabrication of Origins: A Material and Political History of Italian Renaissance Art* supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

The aim of this volume is to clarify the relationships between material restoration and politics in Italian Renaissance art. The focal point of this research is the question of origin as a foothold for political, patrimonial, and cultural identity. Indeed, the 15th and 16th centuries bear witness to the emergence and consolidation of political consciousness. In order to establish their legitimacy and ensure their longevity, local and regional governments started to model themselves on earlier political regimes, predominantly the Roman Republic and ancient Greece. Concurrently, patrician families now asserted ancient, mythical or historical, genealogies.

These claims were enacted within a system which, rather than restoring the initial forms and meanings of existing objects, remodeled the past according to new identity needs: spaces were reorganized, and works of art invested with new meanings. Their material and aesthetic reality was thus transformed and redefined. For the contemporary researcher, the aim is therefore to analyze the potential physical modifications of these artefacts in light of their symbolic recoding.

The question is to what extent restoration is an invention of a new state of the work—an imaginary fabrication of its original state. Which mechanisms are at work, consciously or not, in the shift from restoration to foundational myth? This book also looks at the re-casting of past events in later historical contexts, more specifically through narratives of origin that aim to found the present rather than testify to a past time.

On the notion of restoration

The first part of this volume questions the semantic ambiguity of the concept of restoration in the Renaissance and the still imprecise contours of its use in the context of the reception of antiquity. Restoration could include practices of adding, mutilating, substituting, or even displacing works with a view to their reuse. Kathleen W. Christian traces the emergence of the notion of *restauratio* in the world of antiquarians and analyzes its association with the

concept of *translatio* based on various textual and visual examples. Mateusz Kapustka's contribution confronts restoration with iconoclasm, focusing on the reception of the figure of Emperor Constantine as a destroyer of idols. Arnold Nesselrath's study focuses on the *Laocoön Group*, using this paradigmatic example to show how restoration, reconstruction, and addition can affect or even define a work of art.

Of spaces and places

The second part offers case studies of characteristic arrangements and rearrangements of spaces and places in the dynamic context of the rediscovery of antiquity. These undertakings had the particular effect of adding a material reference to the postulates of an antique origin and/or of supporting a foundational myth. Caroline Hillard describes the discovery of an Etruscan burial chamber and its objects at Castellina in Chianti near Florence in 1508, which was among the most significant archaeological events in Renaissance Italy. It provided a heritage basis for the celebration of Florence's Etruscan origins, cultivated by the humanists and politicians of the time, including Pier Soderini, gonfalonier of the Florentine Republic. The essay by Florian Métral highlights the poetics of "the archaic" at play in Raphael's Loggia (1516–19) in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican. Developed by the artist at the request of the first Medici pope, Leo X, this *all'antica* aesthetic supports the political program of *restauratio Urbis* and *renovatio Ecclesiae*. The contribution by Jérémie Koering focuses on the Galleria dei Mesi (1572–79), an architectural and decorative ensemble within the Ducal Palace of Mantua created during the reign of Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga, which is here analyzed from the point of view of artistic and political restoration, that is, of a *restitutio* ensuring a subtle transition between different eras, ancient and modern.

Recent restoration practices

In a bid to enable an interactive relationship between past and present, this book also looks at the reception and restoration of Renaissance art objects in the following centuries up to the present day. In this way, the history and practices of restoration allow for a better material understanding of the object and its successive historical layers, between its destructions and restorations over time. Neville Rowley surveys the restorations of emblematic works of art from the Italian Renaissance in the 20th and the early 21st century. His contribution details their complex dynamics, and the theoretical and practical choices underpinning them, between transparency and opacity. The essay by Victor Lopes is an in-depth examination of Veronese's *Entombment* (c. 1575–80, Geneva, Musée d'art et d'histoire) and the journey that led it from Venice to Geneva, via Versailles and Paris. It explores the changes in its material condition, caused in particular by its varying status and function, up until the most recent restoration carried out by the author himself.

A colonial Renaissance?

The contribution of Beat Wyss, acting as a conclusion that opens onto another field, probes the myth of Atlantis from Plato to our days, with a focus on *The New Atlantis* (1627) by Francis Bacon. Summoning Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin, and Erwin Panofsky, it questions the very concept of Renaissance and considers the power of political or even colonial legitimacy it carries.

Henri de Riedmatten, Fabio Gaffo, Mathilde Jaccard

AVANT-PROPOS

En avril 2019, la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris subissait l'assaut des flammes. La question se pose à présent concernant sa restauration. Doit-on intervenir au-delà de la simple conservation ? Si oui, quel état reconstituer, celui de sa construction au XII^e siècle ou le dernier état connu, incluant la flèche ajoutée par Eugène Viollet-le-Duc ? Les cas de rénovation en raison de dégâts naturels ne sont pas rares, mais la démarche à suivre n'en est pas pour autant plus évidente. Pour n'en citer qu'un exemple, le pont d'Avignon a subi au fil des siècles les crues du Rhône et seule une partie a pu être à ce jour conservée, sans projet de reconstruire l'ensemble du bâtiment.

Les discussions autour des pratiques de conservation et de restauration avaient été codifiées en Occident dans le cadre de la charte d'Athènes de 1931. La Seconde Guerre mondiale a provisoirement mis fin à ces interrogations, mais les pertes matérielles considérables qui en ont découlé ont rapidement relancé le débat. Les discussions ont abouti à la charte de Venise en 1964, un compromis entre transmission intergénérationnelle et intégrité structurelle.

Même si la charte concerne le patrimoine bâti, elle illustre bien la tendance générale qui se veut de conserver les biens patrimoniaux dans leur état actuel. Si intervention il y a, cela sera essentiellement dans un but de maintien, à l'image de l'Abbaye de Sénanque qui aurait pu s'effondrer si des travaux n'avaient été entrepris dès 2019. Le cas de cette dernière est toutefois assez singulier. En effet, le noyau original de l'abbatiale a été construit sur une courte durée et elle n'a pas changé d'assignation depuis sa fondation, ce qui lui vaut de posséder une certaine cohérence architecturale en dépit des affres du temps et des quelques transformations apportées. En conséquence, la marche à suivre est plus aisée à définir ici que dans d'autres situations où les couches temporelles s'entremêlent et sont difficiles à appréhender.

C'est d'ailleurs l'un des principaux enjeux : faut-il choisir un récit au détriment d'un autre ? La démarche anti-interventionniste génère de ce fait autant de questions qu'elle fournit de réponses. La charte de Cracovie, venue compléter en 2000 celle de Venise, demande notamment de distinguer les ajouts contemporains des structures antérieures, pouvant parfois créer des dissonances visuelles. Au-delà de vouloir maintenir des données

essentielles à la compréhension de l'histoire, le risque principal de la préservation à tout prix est une muséification, voire une disneylandisation, du patrimoine.

Il est au même titre dommageable de faire abstraction des phénomènes d'appropriation et de projection, qu'ils soient passés ou présents. Pour reprendre un exemple parisien, la Bourse de Commerce a servi successivement de hangar à grains, de salle de bal puis de lieu de négoce avant de connaître l'intervention de l'architecte japonais Tadao Andō et de rouvrir ses portes en qualité de musée d'art contemporain en 2021. Tout espace n'est néanmoins pas adapté à la revalorisation, sa gestion pouvant s'avérer problématique, surtout en milieu urbain. Ainsi, l'ensemble du quartier des Halles n'a pas pu connaître le même destin que le hangar à grains.

C'est dans le cadre de ce débat que prend forme cet ouvrage. Ce dernier trouve sa source dans un colloque international organisé en ligne en mars 2021, conçu au sein de l'Unité d'histoire de l'art de l'Université de Genève avec la collaboration du Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève. Il accueille des contributions en langues française et anglaise et, à la suite du colloque, s'inscrit dans le cadre du projet soutenu par le Fonds national suisse de la recherche scientifique : *De la restauration comme fabrique des origines. Une histoire matérielle et politique de l'art à la Renaissance italienne*.

Le volume a pour but de clarifier le rapport entre restauration matérielle et enjeu politique autour de l'œuvre d'art à la Renaissance italienne. Le point de convergence de cette recherche est la question des origines, lieu d'ancrage d'une identité politique, patrimoniale et culturelle. Les xv^e et xvi^e siècles témoignent en effet de l'émergence et de la consolidation de consciences politiques. Afin de construire leur légitimité et d'assurer leur longévité, les différents gouvernements se revendiquent de régimes antérieurs, le plus souvent de la République romaine et de la Grèce antique. Au même titre, les familles patriciennes se réclament d'une généalogie antique, mythique ou historique.

Ces enjeux s'inscrivent dans un dispositif qui, plutôt que de rendre à des objets existants leur forme et sens initiaux, remodelle le passé en fonction des nouveaux besoins identitaires : les espaces sont réaménagés et les œuvres d'art sont investies de significations nouvelles. Leur réalité matérielle et esthétique peut s'en trouver ainsi transformée et redéfinie. Le but est donc d'analyser les potentielles modifications physiques de ces artefacts en vue de leur réinvestissement symbolique.

Il s'agit d'examiner dans quelle mesure la restauration est l'invention d'un état de l'œuvre dont elle fabrique et fantasme l'origine. Quels sont les mécanismes opérants, consciemment ou non, dans le glissement de la restauration vers le mythe de fondation ? L'ouvrage se penche aussi sur le remaniement d'événements passés dans un contexte historique postérieur. Et ce à travers des récits de l'origine qui visent à fonder le présent plutôt qu'à témoigner d'un temps passé.

De la notion de restauration

La première section du volume interroge particulièrement l'ambiguïté sémantique de la notion de restauration à la Renaissance, et les contours encore imprécis de son usage dans le contexte de la réception de l'Antiquité. Ainsi la restauration était susceptible de recouvrir également des pratiques d'ajout, de mutilation, de substitution, ou encore de déplacement des œuvres en vue de leur remploi. Kathleen W. Christian retrace l'émergence de la notion de *restauratio* dans le milieu antiquaire et analyse son association avec le concept de *translatio* à travers divers exemples textuels et visuels. La contribution de Mateusz Kapustka confronte la restauration à l'iconoclasme, avec pour centre d'intérêt la réception de la figure de l'empereur Constantin comme destructeur d'idoles. L'étude d'Arnold Nesselrath porte sur le groupe de marbre du *Laocoön* et développe à travers cet exemple paradigmatique la façon dont restauration, reconstruction et additions peuvent affecter, voire définir une œuvre d'art.

D'espaces et de lieux

La seconde partie propose des études de cas impliquant de façon plus caractérisée des agencements et réagencements d'espaces et de lieux dans une dynamique de redécouverte de l'Antiquité. De telles entreprises ont notamment pour effet d'ajouter une référence matérielle aux postulats d'une origine antique et/ou de venir consolider un mythe de fondation. Caroline Hillard détaille la découverte d'une chambre funéraire étrusque et des objets s'y trouvant à Castellina in Chianti près de Florence en 1508, comptant parmi les événements archéologiques les plus marquants de la Renaissance en Italie. Cette découverte confère une assise patrimoniale à la célébration de l'origine étrusque de la cité de Florence, cultivée par les humanistes et les hommes politiques de l'époque, dont Pier Soderini, gonfalonier de la République florentine. L'article de Florian Métral met en évidence la poétique de l'« archaïque » qui se joue dans la Loggia de Raphaël (1516-1519) dans le palais apostolique du Vatican. Imaginée par l'artiste à la demande du premier pape Médicis, Léon X, cette esthétique *all'antica* nourrit une entreprise de nature politique liée à la *Restauratio Urbis* et à la *Renovatio Ecclesiae*. La contribution de Jérémie Koering se penche sur la Galleria dei Mesi (1572-1579), ensemble architectural et décoratif réalisé au sein du palais ducal de Mantoue sous le règne du duc Guglielmo Gonzaga. Il l'analyse dans une perspective de restauration artistique et politique, de *restitutio* assurant une transition subtile entre différents temps, anciens et modernes.

Pratiques récentes de la restauration

Pour une relation interactive entre présent et passé, le livre intègre également la réception et la restauration d'objets d'art de la Renaissance lors des siècles suivants et jusqu'à nos jours. De la sorte, l'histoire et les pratiques de la restauration permettent d'approfondir la

compréhension matérielle de l'objet et ses couches historiques successives, entre ses destructions et ses restaurations au fil du temps. Neville Rowley propose un cheminement à travers les restaurations d'œuvres d'art emblématiques de la Renaissance italienne, au xx^e et au début du xxi^e siècle. Il détaille la dynamique complexe de chacune d'entre elles et les choix théoriques et pratiques qui les déterminent, entre transparence et opacité. Le texte de Victor Lopes offre un examen approfondi de *La mise au tombeau* de Véronèse (v. 1575-1580, Genève, Musée d'art et d'histoire) dans ses pérégrinations la menant de Venise à Genève, en passant par Versailles et Paris. Il y explore les modifications de sa condition matérielle, causées notamment par ses changements de statut et fonction, jusqu'à la dernière restauration menée par ses soins.

Une Renaissance coloniale ?

La contribution de Beat Wyss, en guise de conclusion ouvrant sur un autre champ, sonde le mythe de l'Atlantide, de Platon à nos jours, en portant une attention particulière à *La Nouvelle Atlantide* (1627) de Francis Bacon. Convoquant Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin et Erwin Panofsky, il s'interroge sur le concept de Renaissance et considère le pouvoir de légitimité politique, voire coloniale, que ce dernier sous-tend.

**ON THE NOTION OF RESTORATION
DE LA NOTION DE RESTAURATION**

Kathleen W. Christian

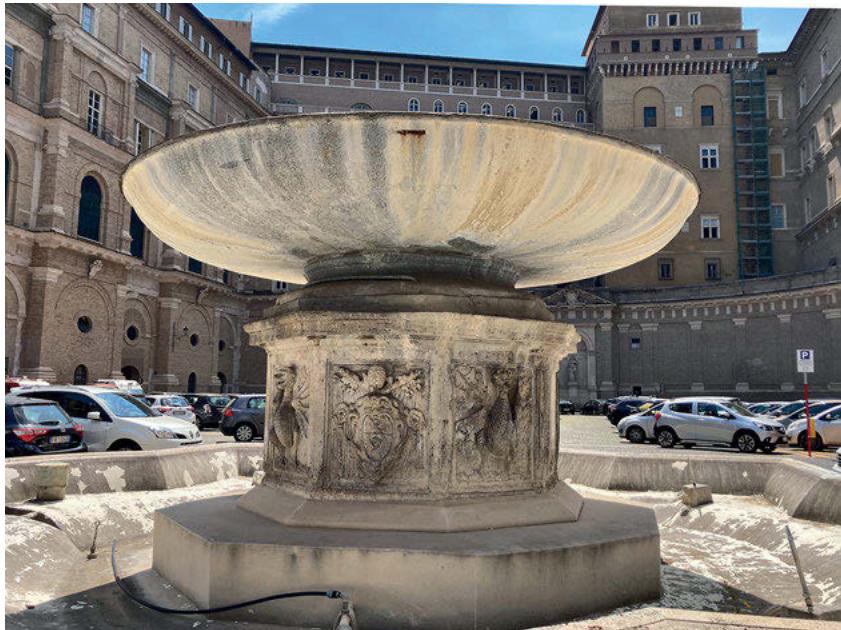
TRANSLATIO AND RESTAURATIO

Text and Image in Renaissance Rome

The first establishment of an antiquities collection in the Belvedere might be traced not to the discovery of the *Laocoön*, or the transfer of the *Apollo Belvedere* and other famous statues to the Vatican, but to the movement in 1504 of an enormous granite basin (fig. 1). Today, this *vasca* is rather unceremoniously displayed in the middle of the parking lot familiar to those who cross it to visit the Vatican library and archives. It stands on the now-abraded marble base that Pope Paul V provided for it in the 17th century. In the time of Pope Julius II, when the basin was the centerpiece of Bramante's lower Belvedere court, its display was commemorated by an inscription, which has since been lost: "Pope Julius II brought to the Vatican gardens this basin, twenty-three feet wide, from the Baths of Titus and Vespasian, broken by the injustices of time, adorning and restoring it to its original condition, in the first year of his papacy, 1504."¹

Julius's engineers had dragged this massive object, one of the largest basins to survive from antiquity, across four kilometers of difficult terrain, through the narrow streets of Rome, across the Tiber until it reached its final destination at the Belvedere. A drawing by Giovannantonio Dosio shows it installed in the lower garden (fig. 2). It comes as no surprise that the dedicatory inscription gives Julius credit for moving such an enormous basin from a *vigna* near the Colosseum. More difficult to explain, however, is the emphasis the inscription places on the basin's repair: not only did the pope have this vessel transported across Rome, but he also had it restored to its original condition, having found it "broken by the injustices of time." While the basin's *translatio* is obviously praiseworthy, its history of *restauratio* remains uncertain. Today, the vessel reveals rather modest signs of restoration, and descriptions of the object in its Quattrocento state suggest that before its move to the Belvedere it was not extensively broken, but intact.²

- 1 The inscription was recorded by Giacomo Grimaldi in 1616, then reproduced in Vincenzo Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d'altri edificii di Roma*, Rome, Tipografia delle scienze matematiche e fisiche [and other publishers], 1869–84, 6, p. 55, n. 122. For the vessel, see Annarena Ambrogi, *Labra di età romana in marmi bianchi e colorati*, Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2005, L. 35, pp. 224–31.
- 2 See Giovanni Rucellai's description in his *Zibaldone Quaresimale*: "di giro da torno di braccia 40 et il diamitro suo di braccia 12, ritratto a modo d'uno piattello." He located it in a "vigna appresso al Co-



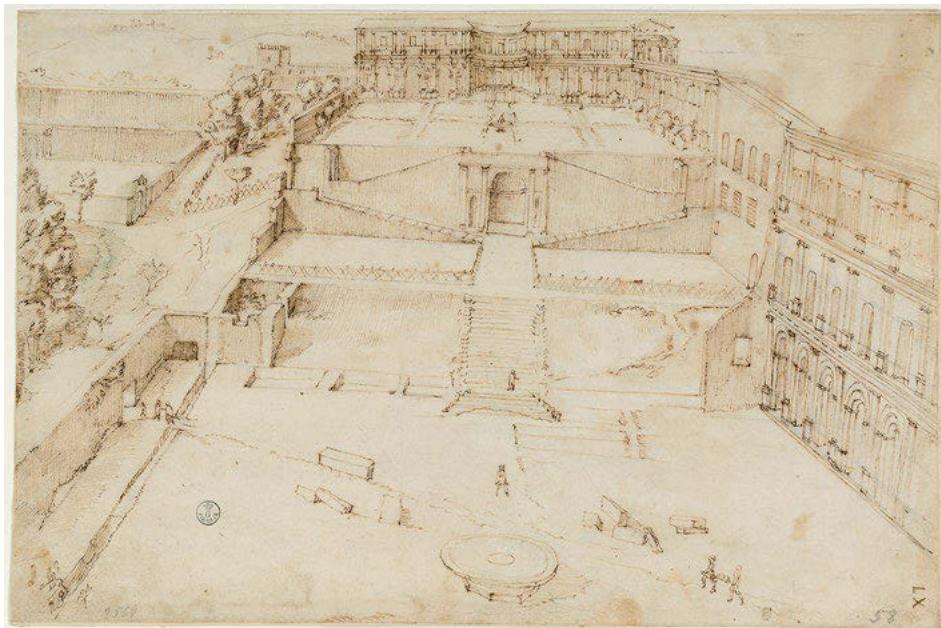
1 Basin on a 17th-century pedestal, 2nd century CE, granite, 680 × 75 cm, Vatican City, Cortile del Belvedere

Arguably, Julius II's inscription takes pains to emphasize the concept of restoration. By Julius II's day, while *translatio* was already an age-old concept, *restauratio* had more recently come into fashion as a desirable type of antiquarian intervention. By the 16th century, it appeared alongside *translatio* as a practice underpinning the early history of collecting amongst private individuals, and as an important point of emphasis in the patronage of popes.

Translatio (from *transferre*, to carry over or transfer), a symbolic or literal movement from one place to a supposedly better one, has been closely associated with the concept of *spolia*, notably in Maria Fabricius Hansen's book *The Eloquence of Appropriation*. "The use of spolia," she writes, was "a practice consisting of a transference of power from the past through a taking over of its cultural expressions and incorporating them into one's own."³ Hansen analyses *spolia* as a *translatio* of materials, of meaning, and of time. She understands *trans-*

liseo, dove si vede molte anticaglie, dove si mostra esservi stato una terme." Cited in Alessandro Perosa, *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone, I: Il Zibaldone Quaresimale*, London, The Warburg Institute, 1960, p. 77. The vase is represented schematically on the "Pianta Strozzi" in the 1470s, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Codice Rediano 77, fols 7v–8r. See Ambrogi, *Labra...*

³ Maria Fabricius Hansen, *The Eloquence of Appropriation: Prolegomena to an Understanding of Spolia in Early Christian Rome*, Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2003, p. 263.



2 Giovannantonio Dosio, *The Cortile del Belvedere*, ca. 1561, pen and ink on paper, 22.1 × 33.3 cm, Florence, Uffizi (GDSU, inv. 2559 A r)

latio as a form of appropriation, a process that involves finding suitable cultural expressions, transferring them to a new setting, and translating them so that they fit a new, Christian context and create new meanings. In the setting of Renaissance Rome, *translatio* had special significance. The large size of so many of the remains of antiquity meant that movement was difficult, richly symbolic, and easily exploited by the popes and powerful cardinals in possession of the required means. Examples of difficult movements abound long before the Belvedere granite basin: the bronze *pigna* brought sometime before the 12th century to the forecourt of St. Peter's for re-use as a fountain, the colossal *krater* moved to the front of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, or other, massive antique basins and urns sculpted in granite or marble dragged to the fronts of basilicas or curial residences. The granite basin moved by Cardinal Pietro Barbo (the future Pope Paul II) to the front of Palazzo Venezia was so large its transfer required the destruction of two houses, while Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, Sixtus IV, Leo X, Paul III, and Sixtus V are also known for ambitious *translationes*, most impressively that of the Vatican obelisk (fig. 3). The technical and logistical prowess, and political and military might required for such moves draws comparison with the powers of the ancient Roman emperors and their superhuman capacity to transport objects on the scale of the Egyptian obelisks. Papal *translationes* were rich with symbolic, religious, and political meaning, achieving the goal of self-celebration and adding splendor to the Christian *caput mundi*.



3 Obelisk from Heliopolis, 1835 BCE, red granite, 25.5 m, Vatican City, St. Peter's Square

By the time Julius II transferred the massive granite basin, *restauratio* had become another, much more widely practiced form of antiquarianism. *Restauratio* came into focus particularly during the 15th century, when attention shifted towards smaller, fragmented antiquities in white marble gathered in private collections. Arguably, a concept of *restauratio* first took shape in the Trecento, in connection with cultural phenomena outlined in Tilmann Buddensieg's classic article "Gregory the Great, the Destroyer of Pagan Idols."⁴ While Gregory had been praised in the medieval era for eradicating antique texts and

4 Tilmann Buddensieg, "Gregory the Great, the Destroyer of Pagan Idols. The History of a Medieval Legend concerning the Decline of Ancient Art and Literature," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 28, 1965, pp. 44–65.

smashing statues of pagan idols, as Buddensieg discusses, a pronounced shift occurred when *literati* in the circle of Petrarch began to condemn the pope's wanton destruction of ancient texts. The discussion soon broadened to include the condemnation of the purposeful destruction of ancient statues and images by former popes as well, as is seen in the second book of Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Commentarii*. Ghiberti opens this part of his treatise with a condemnation of Constantine and Pope Sylvester (*reg. 314–35*) for forbidding the practices of sculpture and painting and for having "destroyed" statues and paintings and "rent them of their nobility and antique and perfect dignity."⁵

Buddensieg's article and other important studies have considered the theme of Rome's dramatic fall from glorious capital to cadaver, a miserable, pitiable landscape of ruins created by ignorance and neglect. The complex symbolism of the Roman ruins in the Tre- and Quattrocento, and the emergence of calls for rebirth and restoration are topics that have been explored extensively elsewhere, and remain beyond the scope of this essay.⁶ It should be noted however that the acceleration of the *calca* trade—the practice of melting down ancient marbles in kilns to make mortar—with the resurgence of the papal capital in the early 15th century played a particularly important part in the emerging discourse of *restauratio*. At a time when ancient inscriptions, statues, and architectural ruins were disappearing at an alarming rate, an antiquarian ethos emerged to call for the rescue of every fragment of inscribed or carved marble from the *calca* kilns. The polemic previously directed towards Sylvester and Gregory the Great shifted towards the *calca* burners, their crimes, and the authorities who allowed the practice to continue. In this context, as has often been noted, the antiquarian goal of rescuing and restoring the ancient past focused on both texts and material culture—works of art, architecture, and inscriptions. What I would like to highlight is a particular aspect of this history that has received less attention: the overlap between regret at the fragmentation of antique marbles and dismay at the disappearance of the literary corpus of ancient authors among the humanist "book hunters." Arguably, the discovery of texts by revered ancient authors, the rescue of manuscripts left to decay in the dark corners of monastic libraries, their discovery in a state of fragmentation, and subsequent efforts to restore these texts would inform in important and enduring ways the practices of excavating, collecting, and restoring antique works of art.

5 "[A]dunche al tempo di Costantino imperadore e di Silvestro papa sormontò su la fede christiana. Ebbe la ydolatria grandissima persecuzione, in modo tale, tutte le statue e le picture furon disfatte e lacerate di tanta nobiltà et antica e perfetta dignità, e così si consumaron colle statue e picture, e vilumi, e comentarii, e linimenti, e regole davano amaestramento a tanta et egregia e gentile arte." L. Bartoli (ed.), L. Ghiberti, *I commentarii*, Florence, Giunti, 1998, p. 82.

6 See, for example, Giuseppe Lombardi, "La città, libro di pietra: immagini umanistiche di Roma prima e dopo Costanza," in M. Chiabò, G. D'Alessandro, P. Piacentini, and C. Ranieri (eds.), *Alle origini della nuova Roma, Martino V (1417–1431)*, conference proceedings (Rome, 1992), Rome, Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 1992, pp. 17–45; Sabine Forero-Mendoza, *Le temps des ruines. Le goût des ruines et les formes de la conscience historique à la Renaissance*, Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 2002; Kathleen W. Christian, *Empire without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c. 1350–1527*, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 2010.

Before collecting and restoring antique statuary were widespread, the book hunters practiced textual *restauratio*. For the early humanists, texts were by far the most pitiable victims of time's cruel passage and humanity's ignorance. They had been damaged by those who had not preserved them carefully, or who had copied them incorrectly: with each misunderstanding by an ignorant scribe, the original had become more fractured and damaged. The solution, however, was for enlightened men—equipped with the necessary linguistic skills—to discover the missing pieces, searching for fragments in libraries near and far, then return texts to their original condition by reassembling them and correcting their errors. Eventually, texts could be disseminated widely through publication, a method of transmission that would protect them from the risk of being lost, or damaged by scribal errors.

The long-lived sense of continuity between the fragmentation of texts and images can be seen in the language of the 14th- and 15th-century book hunters. While Petrarch, in his letters to friends, describes his grief at the mutilated and fragmented state of revered classical authors, such metaphors expanded and intensified in the Quattrocento.⁷ In a letter to Guarino Veronese dated 1416, Poggio Bracciolini, for example, used the imagery of wounded bodies and broken statues to describe the condition of the orator Quintilian, as if his damaged literary corpus were his own, injured body: "among us Italians, he so far has been so fragmentary, so cut down by the action of time, I think, that the shape and style of the man has become unrecognizable." Quoting Virgil's description of the mutilated body of Deiphobus, son of Priam, Poggio tells Guarino he has so far only seen Quintilian with "his face cruelly lacerated—his face and both hands—his ears torn from his ravaged temples, and his nostrils cut off by an appalling wound."⁸ He then goes on to describe the famous re-discovery by himself, Cencio de' Rustici, and Bartolomeo Aragazzi of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* in 1416 at the library of St. Gallen. Although "cut to pieces and scattered," Quintilian had been "through our efforts called back not only from exile but from almost complete destruction."⁹ Poggio and his companions had found Quintilian's missing parts far from Italy, in a sort of barbarian prison, "a foul and gloomy dungeon at the bottom of one of the towers."¹⁰ Through this discovery they were able to put him back together, returning him intact to his homeland: "the more we regret and blame ourselves for the damage that was formerly done to him, the more we should congratulate ourselves that by

⁷ Petrarch, *Familiares*, 24.4, 24.7, and 24.8, discussed in Hester Schadee, "Ancient Texts and Holy Bodies: Humanist Hermeneutics and the Language of Relics," in A. Blair and A.-S. Goeing (eds.), *For the Sake of Learning: Essays in Honor of Anthony Grafton*, 2, Leiden, Brill, pp. 675–91.

⁸ Poggio to Guarino da Verona, December 15, 1416, in Tommaso Tonelli (ed.), *Poggii epistolae*, Florence, Typis L. Marchini, 1832, I, letter 5, pp. 25–9, translation adapted from Phyllis W.G. Gordan, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggiius Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 193, quote from Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI.495–7. See also Julia H. Gaisser, "Poggio and Other Book Hunters," in R. Ricci (ed.), *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity: Textual and Material Traditions*, Florence, Firenze University Press, 2020, pp. 173–88.

⁹ Gordan, *Two Renaissance...*, p. 194.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

our energetic search he has now been restored to us in his original appearance and grandeur, whole and in perfect condition.”¹¹ Cencio de’ Rustici’s account of the discovery of the manuscript, similarly, emphasizes the indignity of the place where it had been found “neglected and infested with dust, worms, soot and all the things associated with the destruction of books.”¹² This rescue and restoration of Quintilian was praised by many, including Leonardo Bruni, who congratulated Poggio with the words: “Quintilian, who used to be mangled and in pieces, will recover all his parts thanks to you.”¹³ The metaphor of the broken body is striking, and has been considered in relation to Christian relics, the holy fragments of the bodies of Christian saints.¹⁴ Marble fragments of antique statues and other artistic works are, however, another form of *reliquiae* that shared a close and profound conceptual affinity with neglected and fragmented literary remains. Like the “corpus” of a particular author or like a particular manuscript, they seemed to be fragmented bodies that Rome’s barbarian enemies had attacked and mutilated.

In practice, the restoration of texts and the restoration of sculpture would follow different paths: one involved a precise type of philological skill, the other a more fluid artistic response to, and *paragone* with, antique works of art. Within the broader context of curial Rome, the problem of textual ruination long remained a more urgent, more serious issue. The restoration of antique statues emerged as an ideal that was often articulated but—in contrast to the editing of texts—not consistently prioritized, and carried out relatively rarely; before the second half of the 16th century, restoration was generally reserved for select, highly prized works of antique statuary.¹⁵ *Restauratio* as a point of view, however, embraced both texts and images and resonated across both spheres. Arguably, any display of antique statues and reliefs, from the Trecento onwards, offered rich symbolic ground for artists, *literati*, and others to call attention to a problem of fragmentation first articulated by writers and humanists, or to compare the loss of texts to the loss of artistic works. Rather than emphasizing the massive size of antique objects dragged from one place to another, as is often seen in papal *translationes*, *restauratio* exploited the opposite qualities of vulnerability and fragmentation. As a result, it opened up opportunities to “appropriate”

11 *Ibid.*, p. 194.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 189, translation of a letter from Cencio de’ Rustici to Francesco da Fiano, dated by Bertalot to summer 1416 (Ludwig Bertalot, “Cincius Romanus und seine Briefe,” *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 21, 1929–30, pp. 222–5).

13 Leonardo Bruni, *Epistolarum Libri VIII*, L. Mehus (ed.), Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2007 (1724), 4.5; Gordan, *Two Renaissance ...*, appendix 2; translation in Gaisser, “Poggio...,” p. 182.

14 Schadee, “Ancient Texts...,” pp. 675–91.

15 For examples of restorations, see Arnold Nesselrath, “Antico and Monte Cavallo,” *The Burlington Magazine*, 124, 1982, pp. 353–7; Francesco Caglioti, “Due ‘restauratori’ per le antichità dei primi Medici: Mino da Fiesole, Andrea del Verrocchio e il ‘Marsia rosso’ degli Uffizi,” *Prospettiva*, 72, 1993, pp. 17–42, and 73/4, 1994, pp. 74–96; Orietta Rossi Pinelli, “Chirurgia della memoria: scultura antica e restauri storici,” in S. Settim (ed.), *Memoria dell’antico nell’arte italiana*, Turin, Einaudi, 3, 1986, pp. 183–251; Matthias Winner, Bernard Andreae, and Carlo Pietrangeli (eds.), *Il Cortile delle Statue. Der Statuenhof des Belvedere im Vatikan*, Mainz, Philipp von Zabern, 1998.

textual and visual fragments. *Restauratio* developed as a complement to *translatio*, allowing a wider range of actors—scholars, editors, artists, or aristocrats—to inherit the past legitimately and virtuously. The restoration of texts and eventually also statues became an ambition and a worthy cause, even if an often difficult one to achieve.

It is not possible to do justice in this essay to the question of how, why, and when concepts of *restauratio* developed, nor to expand further upon the complexities of the interplay between texts and images. A lengthier discussion would need to consider moments such as the publication of Flavio Biondo's *Roma instaurata*, or the role of key individuals such as Cencio de' Rustici, Pier Paolo Vergerio and Giulio Pomponio Leto, whose academic circles focused on both literary editions and antique remains. Suffice it to say that the rhetoric of *restauratio* was widespread by the reign of Sixtus IV, when Pomponio Leto and his followers won support from the pope and a number of wealthy cardinals. Sixtus IV's patronage plays an important part in this history, and it is clear that this pope was keen to set himself apart from his "bad" predecessors by emphasizing his role as restorer: whether it be the symbolic restoration of bronze sculptures to the Roman people on the Capitoline hill, or the physical restoration of ancient texts, Latin inscriptions and images.¹⁶ His restoration of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius at the Lateran, probably in 1473 or 1474, is a case in point. A new, inscribed base commemorated his intervention with the words: "Sixtus IV restored this bronze horse and its rider, collapsed and damaged with age, with this large marble base."¹⁷ The appearance of the marble base is suggested by Filippino Lippi's representation of the statue in the Carafa Chapel in Santa Maria sopra Minerva (fig. 4). The base gave the statue a new, more monumental appearance, yet the dedicatory inscription exaggerates the improvement in the statue's condition through Sixtus's base. In reality the statue was not "collapsed" prior to Sixtus's intervention, but had actually been restored not long before by Sixtus's predecessor, Pope Paul II.¹⁸ Just as with Julius II's granite *vasca*, exaggeration of the statue's former misery and poor condition stresses the damage or neglect it has suffered in the past, as well as its rescue by a benevolent and enlightened patron.

¹⁶ Paola Guerrini, "L'epigrafia sistina come momento della 'Restauratio Urbis,'" in M. Miglio, F. Niutta, D. Quaglioni, and C. Ranieri (eds.), *Un Pontificato ed una città: Sisto IV (1471–1484)*, conference proceedings (Rome, 1984), Rome, Roma nel Rinascimento, 1986, pp. 453–68.

¹⁷ According to Francesco Albertini, the inscription read: "Syxtus.iii. Pont. max. equum hunc aeneum vetustate quassatum collabentem cum assessore restituit." *Opusculum de mirabilibus Novae & veteris Urbis Romae*, Rome, Mazzocchi, 1510, n.p. See Claudio Parisi Presicce, "I grandi bronzi di Sisto IV dal Laterano in Campidoglio," in F. Benzi (ed.), *Sisto IV: le arti a Roma nel primo rinascimento*, conference proceedings (Rome, 1997), Rome, Associazione culturale Shakespeare and Company, 2, 2000, pp. 189–200, here p. 189. Sixtus IV's base is also represented in Berlin, SMB-PK, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 7.D.2, fol. 71v.

¹⁸ For Paul II's involvement with the statue, see Anna Modigliani, "Paolo II e il sogno abbandonato di una piazza imperiale," in M. Miglio (ed.), *Antiquaria a Roma: intorno a Pomponio Leto e Paolo II*, Rome, Roma nel Rinascimento, 2003, pp. 125–61.



4 Filippino Lippi, *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius*, 1492–93, fresco, Rome, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Cappella Carafa

Collapsus is, indeed, an odd description for any statue, and it comes as no surprise that it is a rhetorical formula directly borrowed from antique inscriptions, particularly those honoring architectural restorations. The SPQR or the emperors had used it often to take credit for re-erecting buildings that had “collapsed” after an earthquake or a fire.¹⁹ One canonical example was an inscription once found on the architrave of the Temple of

19 Edmund Thomas and Christian Witschel, “Constructing Reconstruction: Claim and Reality of Roman Rebuilding Inscriptions from the Latin West,” *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 60, 1992, pp. 135–77.

Concord in the Roman Forum, recorded in the anonymous 9th-century manuscript known as the *Einsiedeln Itinerary* (Stiftsbibliothek Einsiedeln, Cod. 326): the SPQR “restored the temple of Concord, which had collapsed because of its age, to a better state, by work and splendid attention.”²⁰ This and other antique inscriptions provided rhetorical *topoi* for dedicatory inscriptions marking restorations in Rome, for example when Nicholas V hailed his restoration of the Acqua Vergine after it had “collapsed with age.”²¹

The idea that a statue had collapsed in on itself, like an aqueduct, underscores not only the work of art’s very poor condition, but also the indignity it suffered while lying on the ground. *Restauratio*, by contrast, emphasizes an intervention that returns ancient artefacts to their former state of splendor, often expressed by their elevation and their removal from squalid, dishonorable places. The idea is seen for example in the anonymous preface to the edition of poems from the *Festa di Pasquino* of 1509, where the statue’s patron, Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, is praised for bringing the statue of Pasquino (fig. 5) to the corner of his house, after “it had lain abandoned covered over with dirt for many years.”²² One can also consider the inscription marking the display of a porphyry basin at the Pantheon under Pope Leo X: the pope is credited with saving the vulnerable antique object and ordering it “to be restored and embellished, lest it languish in squalor, dishonored by neglect.”²³ The inscription is now immured in the forecourt of the Pantheon (fig. 6), yet is shown in its original position in a 16th-century drawing by Francisco de Holanda (fig. 7).

Restoration establishes a moral point of view, setting up a clear divide between the restorers and the work of art’s enemies—foreign barbarians, ignorant men, or “bad” popes—who were targeted for their destruction of texts in the circle of Petrarch, and then for their destruction of images in Ghiberti’s *Commentarii*, or in the “Letter to Leo X” by Raphael and Baldassare Castiglione.²⁴ The era of *restauratio* signaled the final defeat of these wrongdo-

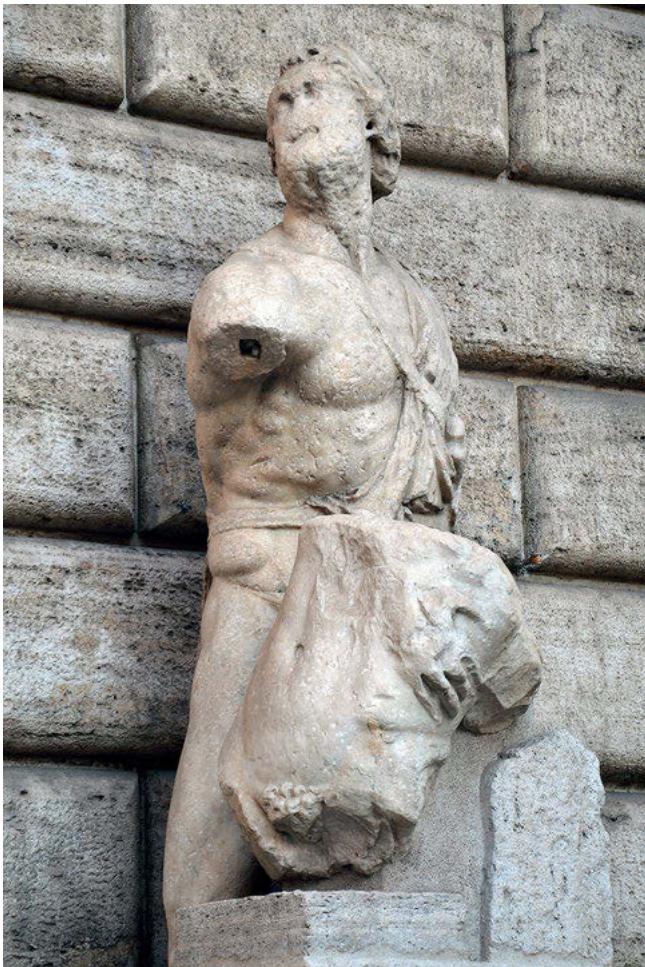
20 *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, VI:89: “S[enatus] P[opus] Q[ue] R[omanus] aedem Concordiae vetustate collapsam in meliorem faciem opere et cultu splendidiore restituit.”

21 “Nicolaus V pontifex maximus post illustratam insignibus monumentis urbem ductum aquae Virginis vetustate collapsum sua impensa in splendidiorem cultum restitui ornariq[ue] mandavit anno Dom[ini] Iesu Christi MCCCCLIII pontificatus sui VII.” Iiro Kajanto, *Papal Epigraphy in Renaissance Rome*, Helsinki, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1982, pp. 60–1.

22 “Ad angulum domus Cardinalis Neapolitani statue & quidem insignis, olim est Herculis, ut quidam congregant, quae trunca mutilave cruribus brachiis ac naso in loco non multos pedes ab eo in quo Cardinalis impensa nunc erecta conspicitur distante, abiecta iacuit ac sordibus obducta annos complures.” *Carmina quae ad pasquillum fuerunt posita in anno M.CCCCC.IX*, s.l., 1509, n.p.

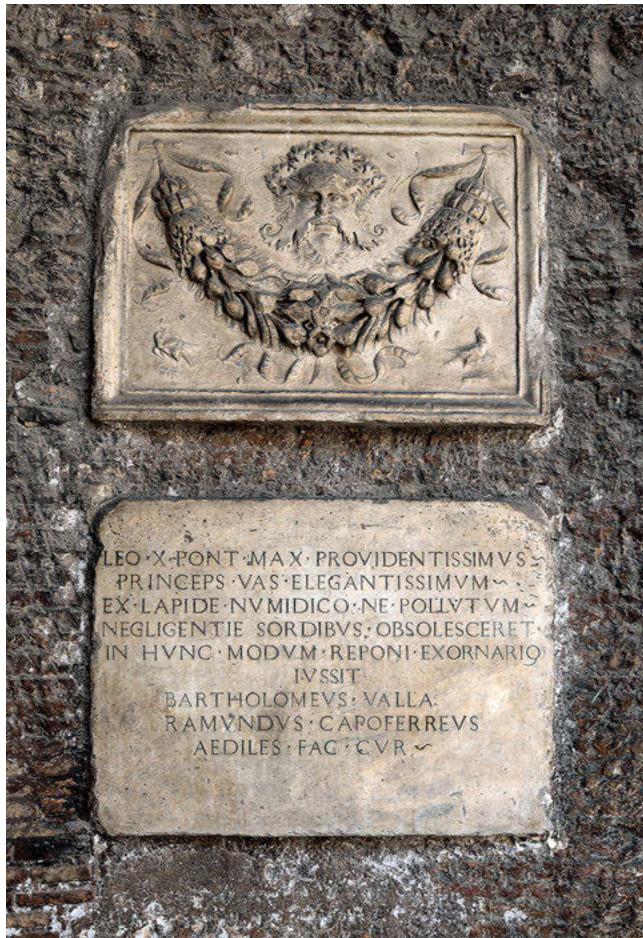
23 Forcella, *Iscrizioni...*, 1869–84, 1, p. 294; these types of dedicatory inscriptions are put in relation to decrees in the Theodosian Code on the purification of pagan images in Christian, *Empire without End...*, p. 196.

24 To cite only one passage in this letter, the authors ask the pope, “why do we lament the Goths, Vandals, Ostrogoths, and other such fierce enemies, if those who—as fathers and guardians with the duty of defending the poor relics of Rome—have themselves long destroyed them?” (“perché si è dolere noi de’ Gotti, Vandali, Ostrogotti, et altre tai fiere inimici, se quelli che, come padri e tutori, deveano diffendere queste povere reliquie di Roma, essi medesimi hanno lungamente atteso a destruerle?”). Quoted from John Shearman, *Raphael in Early Modern Sources*, 1, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 2003, p. 502.



5 *Pasquino group*, Roman copy of Late Hellenistic original, 192 cm high, Rome, Piazza di Pasquino

ers, offering a resolution to the problems of fragility and disorder, ignorance and greed. Restoration of texts and images complements the benefits of *translatio* by emphasizing other types of improvements: illumination, elevation, repatriation, the restoration of wholeness, protection from the enemies of the Romans, the imposition of order, and the arrival of justice. Through virtuous acts of restoration, ancient texts, and equally ancient images, were brought back to a complete and original state, their missing parts re-discovered and replaced, and their future protection in their native homeland ensured by their safekeeping to collections and libraries. The next step, the eventual publication of texts and images in print (often described as an act of bringing them “into the light”) can be considered yet another cultural expression of *restauratio*. In this manner, finding, editing, restoring, displaying, or publishing the damaged remains of the ancient past signals one’s par-



6 Sculpted relief and dedicatory inscription from the time of Leo X, marble, Rome, Pantheon pronaos

ticipation in a common enterprise. In both the antiquities collection and in the library, cultural artefacts that were previously “buried,” hidden from sight, kept in darkness, or exiled in wretched conditions outside of Italy are permanently rescued and given new life. As has been pointed out, the antiquarian trope of rebirth draws meaning from the Christian concept of resurrection, when the body is made whole again, purified, and given eternal life—what Thomas M. Greene has described as “the archaeological impulse downward into the earth, into the past, the unknown and recondite, and then the upward impulse to bring forth a corpse whole and newly restored, re-illuminated, and made harmonious.”²⁵

25 Thomas M. Greene, “Resurrecting Rome: The Double Task of the Humanist Imagination,” in P. A. Ramsay (ed.), *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth*, conference proceedings (Binghamton, N.Y., 1979), Binghamton N.Y., Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982, pp. 41–54.



7 Francisco de Holanda, *Basin and Lions in front of the Pantheon* (detail, upper half of folio), post 1538–ante 1571, pen and ink wash on paper, 39 × 27 cm, Real Monasterio El Escorial (MS. inv. 28-1-20, fol. 16v, detail)

The fragmentation of statues was comparable to crimes against the Latin tongue, or the “bodies” of antique manuscripts; in this sense, foreigners such as the monks of Constance who did not recognize the treasures in their library were comparable to the Gauls who had invaded Rome and wantonly destroyed ancient monuments, setting up a paradigm for “barbaric” behavior towards images. When writers and humanists drew comparisons, however, between the destruction of images and the destruction of texts or the Latin language generally, it was the latter which was judged a greater tragedy. Here one can consider Pietro Bembo’s discussion of two of the most famous classical manuscripts of the Renaissance, a 5th- or 6th- century manuscript of Terence’s comedies and a Carolingian compilation of works by Virgil, including the *Culex* then attributed to the Augustan poet. Now both manuscripts number among the treasures of the Vatican library.²⁶ In the Quattrocento, they were such prized possessions of the Bembo family that Pietro Bembo wrote a dialogue in tribute to them, his *De Virgili Culice et Terentii fabulis liber*. Bembo’s dialogue takes place

26 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat.lat. 3226 and 3252.

in the antiquarian circles of Rome that its author knew and greatly admired, and unfolds as a discussion between the Venetian humanist Ermolao Barbaro and his teacher Giulio Pomponio Leto in the presence of Tommaso Inghirami.²⁷

Bembo set this dialogue in an evocative antiquarian garden owned by Barbaro, which he locates near Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Pomponio Leto visits this garden and finds Barbaro there contemplating an antique statue. Barbaro gazes upon a marble figure of a man "lying in a casual and indecorous manner on the ground [...] without a head, without feet and even without hands, but with his left arm folded in a garment."²⁸ The pair then reflect together on the fate of Rome's antique monuments, comparing the ruination of figures in marble to the tragic loss of literary works. Leto and Barbaro consider that statues which were once "another population in stone" are now broken into pieces and scattered. The Pantheon or the Vatican Obelisk (fig. 3) are ancient treasures that are now, sadly, hidden and obscured by the modern shops and markets built up around them. Ancient literature shares a similar fate: the works of Catullus, Ovid, Horace, and Virgil have survived to the present day, but are now fragmented, corrupted, and obscured by modern accretions. Just as the beauty of the Pantheon is now hidden by the unattractive shops, ancient texts as well have become hidden by clumsy, post-classical errors. In Bembo's dialogue, the comparison between texts, statues, and built monuments is far from equal. While images are merely delights for the eyes, texts are the food and medicine of the soul, and the damage done to them is far more tragic. The works of Greek and Latin authors, especially poets, have perished. "Does their loss not seem much greater to you, Pomponius," Barbaro asks, "than that of stones and walls?" Pomponio Leto agrees, admitting that "writings are like statues: much more has been lost than has been preserved," and that the poets have been particularly "mutilated and diminished."²⁹

27 Pietro Bembo, *De Virgilii Culice et Terentii fabulis liber*, Venice, Per Io. Ant. eiusque fratres Sabios, 1530, dedicated to Ercole Strozzi. It was published only in 1530 but is thought to have been substantially completed by 1505, when the Aldine press received a *privilegium* to print it. For the text, see John N. Grant, "Pietro Bembo and Vat. Lat. 3226," *Humanistica Lovaiensia*, 37, 1988, pp. 211–43; *Id.*, "Pietro Bembo as a Textual Critic of Classical Latin Poetry: *Variae lectiones* and the Text of the *Culex*," *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 35, 1992, pp. 253–303; Maurizio Campanelli, "Pietro Bembo, Roma e la filologia del tardo Quattrocento: per una lettura del dialogo *De Virgilii Culice et Terentii fabulis*," *Rinascimento*, ser. 2, 37, 1997, pp. 283–319.

28 "Nam cum ad Hermolaum Pomponius, ut solebat, ex Quirinali ad Minervae venisset; essetque ipse una cum Pomponio; atque illum in hortis sedentem offendisset (erat autem meridie fere tempus), conseditque ibi, tum cum illo, viso hominis marmoreo truncō, qui ante illorum pedes humi temere, atque indecorē iacebat, sine capite, sine pedibus, sine etiam manibus, pallio tantum laevo brachio involuto, ita coepisse Pomponium dicebat." Bembo, *De Virgilii Culice...*, n.p.

29 After describing the state of the Pantheon and the Vatican obelisk, Barbaro writes: "Sed haec tamen, quoniam tantummodo oculorum oblectamenta sunt, ferenda sunt aequius. Quid illa vero Pomponi, quae non oblectamenta modo et delectamenta, sed levatio etiam et medicina et quasi potus aliquis cibusque animorum sunt, scripta videlicet illa tot in omni quidem doctrinarum genere antiquorum hominum, vel Graecorum vel nostrorum, maxime autem poetarum, quae perierunt; quomodo sunt ferenda? An non tibi longe maior iactura haec, quam illa lapidum et murorum videtur?" In Pomponius's reply, he states: "Nam prope ut signorum, ita scriptorum non parum plura amissa, quam retenta

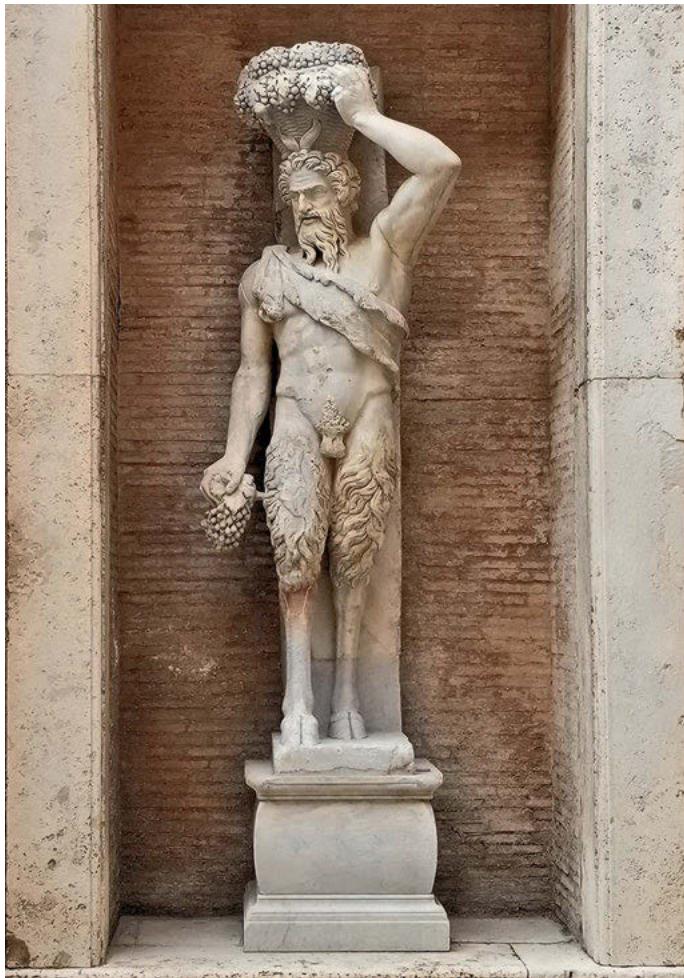
Ancient statues and classical texts are objects in need of rescue and rehabilitation; for *literati*, however, the abundance and devastation of marble ruins in Rome serves a broader purpose as a reminder of the much more appalling loss and corruption of literary works. For the book hunters, the broken bodies of ancient statues, the memory of their destruction by foreign enemies, and their burial underground served as a metaphor for the more calamitous devastation of literature: as was seen, the manuscripts personify the abused and fractured bodies of the authors themselves.³⁰ When Antonio Agustín published his edition of Sextus Pompeius Festus in 1559, he described the chance survival of one copy of the text in such terms. "While the whole book was still extant in the time of Charlemagne," he wrote, "one Paulus thought it would be useful if he made a sort of epitome of the parts he liked best." Then came a period of barbarous destruction, which only fragmented parts of the text's original "corpus" survived. "One codex survived the slaughter. But that was like a soldier whose comrades have been defeated and massacred, and who creeps along at random with his legs broken, his nose mutilated, one eye gouged out, and one arm broken [...]. The remains of the codex passed to Aldo Manuzio, who tried to combine them with the epitome of Paulus, thus making one body from two sets of parts."³¹ The task of the humanists was to find and piece together the remaining fragments of literary bodies, rescuing them from darkness, exile and imprisonment and putting together their scattered pieces. A similar sense of personification is often found in the case of the bodies of antique statuary: they are also objects of chance survival now in mutilated form and their pitiable fate calls out for their removal from the ground, the discovery and restoration of their missing pieces, and their return to a state of wholeness. Latin poetry often dwells on these themes, personifying the fragmented object and giving statues a voice in which to lament their own destruction and neglect. One example is a poem composed by Paolo Spinozo, sometime before 1479, on the subject of the famous Capitoline *Pans* (fig. 8). These twin statues had, according to Spinozo's poem, only recently been discovered in a mutilated state, with their arms missing, in the countryside outside Rome. Sometime before 1490, the statues would be brought to the house of the Della Valle, where Maarten van Heemskerck drew them in the 1530s. Spinozo's poem focuses on their destruction by an "enemy" (who is unnamed but who is implicitly a foreign invader, rather than a descendant of Aeneas and Romulus) and on the moment of their discovery, which brings an end to long centuries of burial and neglect:

The Discovered Fauns to One who Looks Upon Them: [...] We were a spectacle for the people, and were the whole glory of Rome, when its name reached up to the highest

sunt. Sed utinam illa tantummodo periissent, ac non ii etiam Poetae nostri, qui habentur qui que permanent, mutilati decurtatique haberentur." Bembo, *De Virgilii Culice...*, n.p.

30 See Schadee, "Ancient Texts...", pp. 683–5.

31 Quotation and translation from Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship: I. Textual Criticism and Exegesis*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983, pp. 134–5. Kind reference of Cesare Pastorino.



8 One of the twin Capitoline Pans, Rome, Capitoline Museums

stars. But after the house of the descendants of Aeneas had been subjected to ruin, and the kingdom of the descendants from Romulus had been laid low, we too were cast out by the enemy with our limbs damaged, so that this adornment should not survive in the fields of Latium. The rotting earth covered us first for many centuries, and many a rock buried our faces. But envious daylight seized us from the shadows, suffering neither the shadows nor for us to live as more obscure *Lares*.³²

32 "Fauni inventi ad inspicientem ipsos. [...] Spectaculum populis fuimus decor omnis et Urbis, / cum penetrat summa nomen in astra suum. / Sed postquam Aeneadum domus est subiecta ruinis / strataque Romulidum regna fuere patrum, / nos quoque deieicti laceris prius arctibus hoste, / ne decus

The Pans were eventually brought to collections that would take shape over the following decades in several adjacent palaces of the Della Valle, which would number among the largest and most celebrated in Rome. In the 1520s, Cardinal Andrea della Valle expanded the family's statue collections with a new "hanging garden" constructed as a glorious, open-air statue court and garden on the top levels of his palace, above the stables (fig. 9). In the second edition of his *Lives of the Artists*, Giorgio Vasari paid tribute to the cardinal and the architect and sculptor responsible for the installation of the statue collection, Lorenzetto, for starting the practice of sculpture restoration in Rome. According to Vasari, Lorenzetto installed antique sculptures in the Della Valle statue court, some with missing pieces that he had "restored by good sculptors. [...] This was the reason that other lords have since done the same thing and have restored many ancient works."³³

Dedicatory inscriptions on the side walls lay out these pious intentions, invoking once again the trope of the "collapsed" statue: one solemnly dedicated the statue court to "the restoration of collapsing statues and the decoration of the hanging garden." It is certainly an exaggeration to claim that the Della Valle courtyard was "the first" instance of statue restoration in Rome, or that this collection was the inspiration for all future restorations. As drawings of the collection from the 1530s clarify, many of the statues, indeed, were left unrestored. Yet at the same time, the statue court successfully represented itself as the culmination of a long-lived ideal of *restauratio*. *Restauratio*, here and in other collections, meant more than adding lost arms and legs. Instead, it articulated a broader cultural notion of the recovery and rescue of the past, a demonstration of one's virtuous and pious attitude and the righting of past wrongs. A poem by Pietro Corsi praising Andrea della Valle as a collector, written soon after the Sack of Rome, frames the collection in these terms:

in Latiis hoc superasset agris. / Multa prius putris textit nos secula tellus / et sepelit nostra plurimus
ora lapis. / Emula lux tenebris rapuit nos, passa nec umbras, / nec magis obscuros nos habitare lares.³⁴
For the poem, see Rosella Bianchi, *Paolo Spinoso e l'Umanesimo romano nel secondo Quattrocento*, Rome, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2004, pp. 137–40. Bianchi dates the Codex between the early 1460s and 1479. The *Pans* then moved to the collection of the Della Valle sometime before 1490, when Giovanni da Tolentino saw them there; see Richard Schofield, "Giovanni da Tolentino Goes to Rome: A Description of the Antiquities of Rome in 1490," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 43, 1980, pp. 246–56.

33 Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori, et architettori*, Florence, Giunti, 1568, 2, p. 134: "buoni scultori. [...] La quale cosa fu cagione che altri signori hanno poi fatto il medesimo e restaurato molte cose antiche." English translation quoted from Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 5, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere, London, Macmillan and The Medici Society, 1913, p. 57. See also Giorgio Vasari, *I Ragionamenti di Giorgio Vasari pittore ed architetto aretino sopra le Invenzioni da lui dipinte in Firenze nel Palazzo di Loro Alteze Serenissime, con lo Illusterrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Don Francesco de' Medici, Principe di Firenze*, Florence, Giunti, 1588, p. 129. For the Della Valle collection, see Maria Cristina Paoluzzi, "La famiglia della Valle e l'origine della collezione di antichità," in A. Cavallaro (ed.), *Collezioni di antichità a Roma fra '400 e '500*, Rome, De Luca, 2007, pp. 147–86; Kathleen W. Christian, "Instauratio and Pietas: The Della Valle Collections of Ancient Sculpture," in N. Penny and E. D. Schmidt (eds.), *Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe*, Studies in the History of Art, 70, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, conference proceedings (Washington, D.C., 2003), Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, 2008, pp. 33–65.

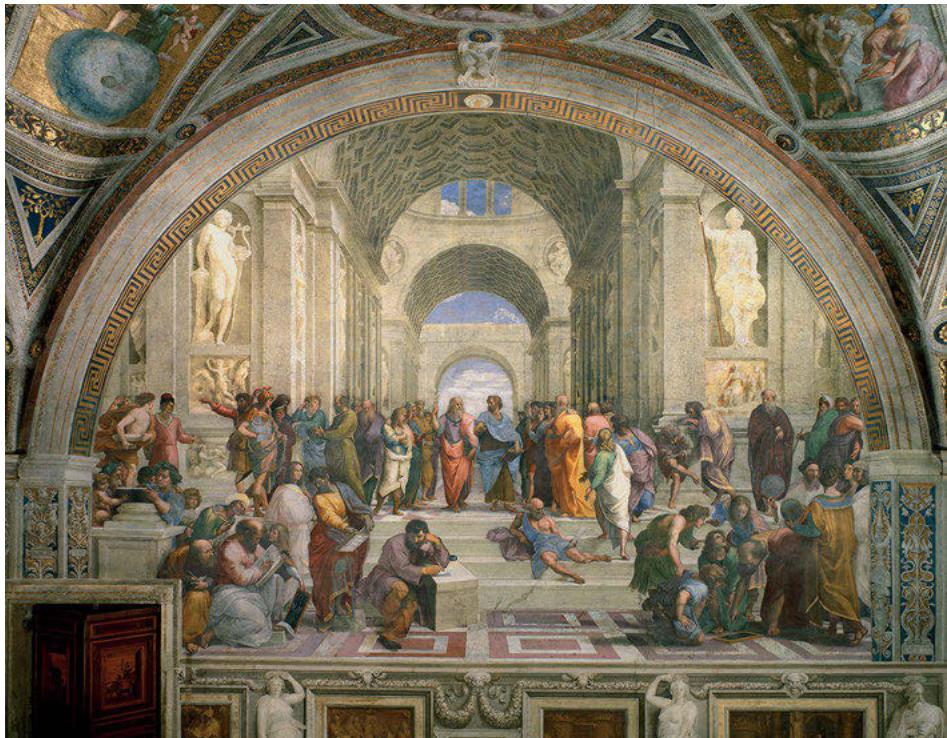


9 Maarten van Heemskerck, *Statue Court of Cardinal Andrea della Valle*, 1532–7, pen and ink, 28.4 × 42.5 cm, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes (Réserve B-12 (3)-BOITE FOL, inv. Ga 80, fol. 53r)

Illustrious images of the gods and illustrious images of the ancient Quirites
 Father della Valle ordered them to be discovered and restored
 And then he hung his new gardens up high in his palace
 Where you see living marbles stand in perpetuity.
 At last the Ruler of Olympus beheld Latium
 And so he consoled the saddened breast of Venus
 You cried over her so many times, because she was hidden for so many centuries.³⁴

In sum, the *restauratio* of statues came into its own between the era of Sixtus IV and the Della Valle, and thus became an established practice later than, yet in close dialogue with, concepts that had first developed in the context of the rediscovery and correction of classical texts. How the artistic practice of sculpture restoration itself fits into this history is a topic beyond the scope of this essay. So too is the topic of how both *translatio* and *restau-*

34 For this poem and the original Latin, see Christian, "Instauratio and Pietas...," pp. 52–3.



10 Raphael, *The School of Athens*, 1509–11, fresco, 500 × 770 cm, Vatican City, Stanza della Segnatura

ratio are concepts which impacted the visual arts generally, far beyond the practicalities of the movement of objects, or the repair of their missing parts.

As an example, one can refer to Raphael's canonical expression of the *translatio* and *restauratio* of the antique past in the present, *The School of Athens* (Fig. 10). The setting of the fresco was a library, in which the texts of classical philosophers that had been long neglected, their works damaged by the effects of time and human ignorance, had been brought out of obscurity, transferred, reassembled, corrected, and collected in a protective place. In response, Raphael's fresco evokes the classical gymnasium, depicting in the background statues of antique gods and goddesses that stand elevated and illuminated, the sheer height of their display emphasized by a view of vaults opening up onto clouds and sky. The fresco seems not only an expression of a glorious *translatio studii*: philosophers from different ages, from all corners of the Greco-Roman world, have moved their achievements and their intellects to the worthy shelter of Julius II's Rome. It is also a celebration of Julius's *restauratio* of classical texts and images, with statues set in a fictive gallery and represented in an ideal state of wholeness and order, reflecting the ideals embraced in the context of the Belvedere statue court. Restoration and reintegration bring about an ideal

expressed by the symmetrical composition of Raphael's fresco and by the ordered gallery of whole and unfragmented statues. This fictive philosophical school contrasts materially and intellectually with its implied alternatives: fragmentation, burial, exposure to barbarism, and disorder. There are thus parallels to be drawn between *The School of Athens* and the instance of the antiquarian patronage of Julius II described at the beginning of this essay, the movement, restoration, and re-dedication of the granite basin to the lower court of the Belvedere. Both celebrate transfers from an unsuitable place to a better one, the re-assemblage in Rome of what had previously been scattered and fragmented, and the successful return of cultural treasures to a state of dignity and wholeness, allowing for the rebirth of the "original splendor" of the antique. Such metaphors join together textual and visual aspects of humanism and resonate within the fields of philology, collecting, and sculpture restoration.

Mateusz Kapustka

THE REASON OF DISTANCE

Iconoclasm and Antiquarianism in the 16th Century

In his first large study of 1853 devoted to the historical personality and legacy of Constantine the Great, Jacob Burckhardt pictured the situation of Christian imperial reign in terms of a cultural threshold.¹ He delineated a broad panorama of what he called the “senescence” (*Alterung*) of classical ancient culture, a process he identified with its “demonisation” (*Dämonisierung*) during the 3rd century. The presence of demonic spirituality in the late Roman empire was, in his view, indebted to the incorporation of Oriental, Neoplatonic, and partly Pythagorean beliefs and magic systems of thought. These introduced heterogeneous, hybrid image cults subsumed under the new concept of immortality, which was to be reached in the transcendent afterworld. Christianity appeared in this light as a ‘natural’ consequence of the decline, a response to religious deviation and iconic disaggregation in the demonic period.² For this new religion, it was therefore not the concept of divine transcendence itself but rather the very exclusivity of doctrinal iconoclasm—the official removal of existing cult images—that introduced difference and marked the limits of the empire’s new cultural sovereignty.³ According to this view, Christian art should fulfill the needs of triumphal manifestation of imperial power by giving priority to painting as means of narration, which by its very nature was not burdened *a priori* by possible accusations of idolatrous worship, contrary to sculpture:

1 Jacob Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, trans. M. Hadas, New York, Pantheon, 1949 (1853). In his obituary, Heinrich Wölfflin recalls Burckhardt saying that this monograph had been written upon “what the others before me have left aside.” Heinrich Wölfflin, “Jacob Burckhardt 1818–1897, Nachruf von Heinrich Wölfflin,” in J. Gantner (ed.), *Jacob Burckhardt und Heinrich Wölfflin. Briefwechsel und andere Dokumente ihrer Begegnung 1882–1897*, Leipzig, Koehler & Amelang, 1988, pp. 175–86, here p. 178.

2 Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine...*, pp. 163–243; cf. Dieter Timpe, “Burckhardt und die Dekadenz,” in L. Burckhardt and H.-J. Gehrke (eds.), *Jacob Burckhardt und die Griechen. Vorträge einer internationalen Fachkonferenz in Freiburg i. Br., 1.–5. September 2004*, Basel/Munich, Schwabe/Beck, 2006, pp. 139–88, here esp. pp. 154–5; Egon Flaig, “Der Begriff der ‘Alterung’ in Jacob Burckhardts ‘Zeit Konstantins des Grossen,’” *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, 28, 1984, pp. 201–13, here esp. pp. 207–8.

3 Burckhardt (*The Age of Constantine...*, p. 201) describes the Constantinian iconoclasm, after Eusebius of Caesarea, as a procedure of disillusionment.

It was the domination of subject over form that gave painting preference over sculpture in the realm of the Christian art. Plastic expression of sacred figures, even if executed with the art of a Phidias, would have seemed a kind of idolatry; dressed in the forms of the period of decline, they were mere caricature as compared with the great works of antiquity. If it was to make any impression by means of art, therefore, Christianity required a narrative or a symbolically interrelated art, an art rich in figures; hence it must use painting primarily, or the intermediate form of relief.⁴

Burckhardt himself counterbalanced his early notion of senescence—a complex, metaphorically charged, and highly disputable term invented from the standpoint of the classicist ideal ('the eternal Greek')⁵ by introducing the terms of "development," "revival" (rebirth), and "discovery" seven years later in his major study *The Civilization of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy*.⁶ The cited passage, however, exemplifies his steadfast conviction as to the interdependence between the autonomy and the social purposes of art.⁷ Through this double reference to decline and renewal, the present essay intends to recapture that particular thought on the pragmatical as well as ontological subordination of sculpture, once delineated by Burckhardt as a kind of *parergon* within his broad panorama of demonological dismemberment of classical values shortly before the Constantinian era. To do so, it will diachronically follow the discursive visual parameters of the 16th-century practice of *restauratio* through the collecting of antiquities, and investigate the possible impact of the teleological positioning of iconoclasm in the Christian comprehension of the past. Bearing this primary Constantinian reference in mind, it will address the issue of the long-term Christian dependency of images on their accreditation as ontologically disembodied, disenchanted objects of purely semantic reference, which, by sheer virtue of their appealing form, are however exposed to the danger of becoming again agents of deception and objects of idolatrous worship—the return of the demon.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁵ Glen W. Bowersock, "Burckhardt on Late Antiquity: From the *Constantin* to the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*," in A. Cesana and L. Gossman (eds.), *Begegnungen mit Jakob Burckhardt. Vorträge in Basel und Princeton zum hundertsten Todestag*, Basel/Munich, Schwabe/Beck, 2004, pp. 215–28, here p. 216. See also Egon Flraig, "Ästhetischer Blick und Griechischer Mythos. Wie Burckhardt für Europa einen Ursprung erfindet," in P. Betthausen and M. Kunze (eds.), *Jacob Burckhardt und die Antike*, Mainz, Philipp von Zabern, 1998, pp. 27–37.

⁶ Flraig, "Der Begriff der 'Alterung'...," pp. 207, 211–3; see also Johannes Irmscher, "Jacob Burckhardts Konstantinbild," in P. Betthausen and M. Kunze (eds.), *Jacob Burckhardt...*, pp. 87–96. For further reading, see the recent critical anthology (which appeared after submitting this essay): S. Bauer and S. Ditchfield (eds.), *A Renaissance Reclaimed: Jacob Burckhardt's Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy Reconsidered*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022.

⁷ Jacob Burckhardt, "Über die Stellung der Kunst in der Weltgeschichte," in Jacob Burckhardt, *Kunst der Betrachtung – Aufsätze und Vorträge*, ed. H. Ritter, Cologne, DuMont, 1997, pp. 191–9.



1 Tommaso Laureti, *The Triumph of Christian Religion over Paganism*, 1585, fresco, Vatican City, Vatican Palace, Sala di Costantino

Painted in 1585 in the course of papal reform initiated under Gregory XIII and pursued by Sixtus V, Tommaso Laureti's ceiling fresco in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican Palace serves as an early modern epitome of the cultivated topicality of the first institutionalized iconoclasm in the Christian empire (fig. 1). This painting, originally planned as a depiction of Constantine smashing the idols, elevates the historical event into a teleological *topos*.⁸ It has been executed in a room whose decoration pays homage to the tradition of *Constitutum Constantini*—almost 70 years after its exposure by Lorenzo Valla as a high-medieval falsification in his *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione* (written in 1440 and published in 1517).

Laureti's fresco embodies the antagonistic element of the Sistine image policy, which Michael W. Cole has called "perpetual exorcism," a gesture of ecclesiastical authority aimed

8 Filip Malesevic, *Inventing the Council inside the Apostolic Library: The Organization of Curial Erudition in Late Cinquecento Rome*, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2021, pp. 211–6; Mateusz Kapustka, *Die Abwesenheit der Idole – Bildkonflikte und Anachronismen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Vienne/Cologne/Weimar, Böhlau, 2020, pp. 175–7; Anna C. Knaap, "Sculpture in Pieces. Peter Paul Rubens's 'Miracles of Francis Xavier' and the Visual Tradition of Broken Idols," in C. van Eck (ed.), *Idols and Museum Pieces: The Nature of Sculpture, Its Historiography and Exhibition History 1640–1880*, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2017, pp. 65–84, here pp. 78–9; Ingrid Dettmann, "Leben und Werk des Malers und Architekten Tommaso Laureti (1530–1602)," PhD Diss., FU Berlin, 2016, pp. 171–94; Andreas Plackinger, *Violenza – Gewalt als Denkfigur im michelangelesken Kunstdiskurs*, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2016, pp. 153–4; Stefano Pierguidi, "1585–1586: il cambio della politica delle immagini tra il pontificato gregoriano e quello sistino," *Bollettino dei Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie*, XXX, 2012, pp. 199–203; Katja Richter, *Der Triumph des Kreuzes – Kunst und Konfession im letzten Viertel des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin/Munich, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009 (Kunstwissenschaftliche Studien, 143), pp. 103–16, here pp. 111–4.

at neutralizing and subordinating the ancient artworks' original meaning and agency.⁹ The message of Laureti's painting is clear in this respect: standing on a pedestal, the central bronze crucifix, which dominates the illusionistic atrium interior of the *ecclesia*, assumes the position of the fallen ancient stone idol, which lies scattered in pieces on the floor—"una statua di Mercurio fracassata."¹⁰ It guards the entrance to the open Heavenly Jerusalem, designed as an ancient forum with a round *tempietto* flanked with two obelisks, visible behind (i.e. above, from the beholder's position) only through a narrow vaulted *corridoio*—a scene long considered in art history as the first ceiling painting with an illusionistic perspective achieved through architectural foreshortening.¹¹ This duel of images—the idol and the cross—can be seen as a focused extrapolation of the *storia* of Constantine's vision, conversion, and baptism visible on the walls beneath, painted after Raphael by Giulio Romano and Gianfrancesco Penni in 1519–24. Indeed, Laureti's quasi-emblematic *concetto*, devoid of any human action and depicting the vision as an already accomplished, bygone fact, is an intrusive pictorial element in a room filled with a comprehensive narration of an ongoing history. It is precisely thanks to this difference that it becomes an austere vision of the cross as a salient sign of triumph, inviting the beholder to imitate Constantine's historical visionary experience of *in hoc signo vinces* (in this sign thou shalt conquer), and introducing a sub-real realm where the origins of Christian history meet its triumphant conclusion. Laureti's fresco thus literally subsumes the innermost momentum of Constantine's vision as an insight into the long-term consequence of the choice of the cross as the exclusive means of representation. In other words, the fresco opens a prolonged perspective into the strictly ontological magnitude of the emperor's decision beyond the course of earthly history: with the means of teleological anticipation, it summarizes the Christian history of salvation by showing the fall of an ancient idol as its indispensable component. Hellenic gods were able to offer augural insights through their figures and appearances—Burckhardt, speaking of "daimonic powers," cites the example of the *simulacrum Mercurii* in Tralles, as reported by Apuleius und Varro, possibly only a reflection of the god in water, seen by a boy who was then able to tell the future in 160 verses.¹² In Laureti's concept, this mantic feature of diverse local deities makes way for the rigorously

9 Michael W. Cole, "Perpetual Exorcism in Sistine Rome," in M. W. Cole and R. Zorach (eds.), *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*, Farnham/Burlington, Ashgate, 2009, pp. 57–76.

10 Quoted from the manuscript of *Memorie sulle pitture e fabbriche di Gregorio XIII* in Malesevic, *Inventing the Council...*, p. 211, note 8.

11 The interior of the distant temple is completely covered by the foregrounded crucifix. On a statue in the *tempietto* as the vanishing point of Anton Eisenhout's frontispiece of Michele Mercati's *Metallotheca vaticana* of ca. 1580, cf. Horst Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Machine: The Kunstkammer and the Evolution of Nature, Art and Technology*, trans. A. Brown, New Jersey, Markus Wiener Publishers, 1995 (1993), pp. 15–18.

12 Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine...*, p. 196. See also Anthony Ossa-Richardson, *The Devil's Tabernacle: The Pagan Oracles in Early Modern Thought*, Princeton/Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2013, pp. 46–82.

centralized promise of the completion of the future in terms of a doctrine of salvation that involves the teleological *a priori* presence of the future.

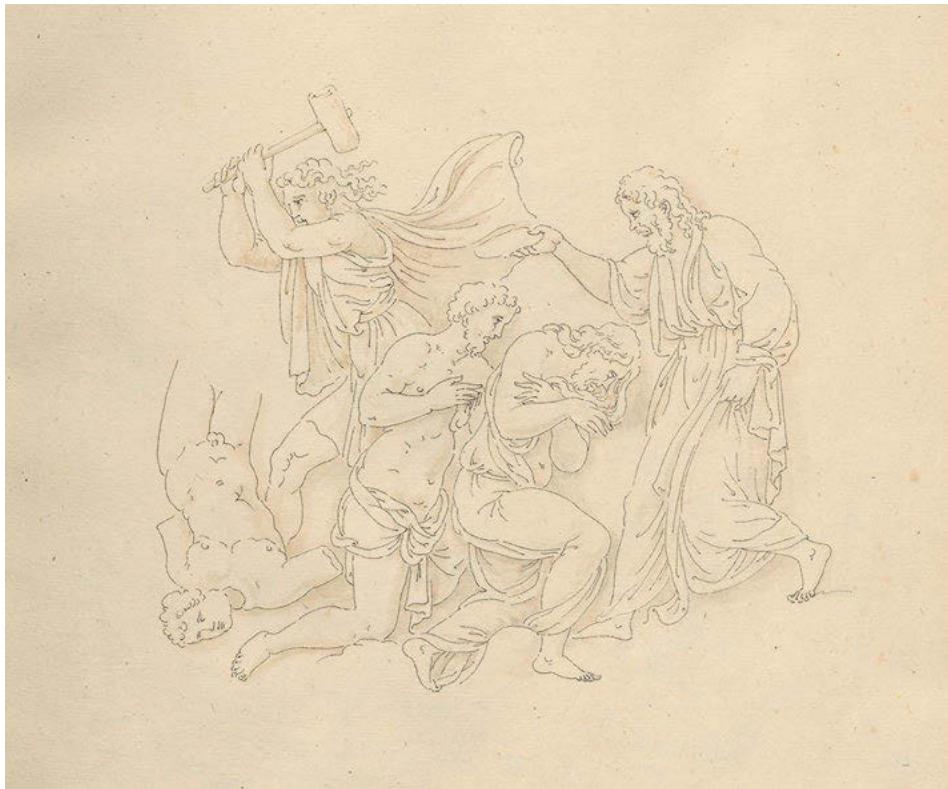
However, to see it as propaganda or ideology falls short of its deeper meaning; similarly, confining the inquiry into the discursive impact of iconoclasm to the monumental propaganda of the Catholic reform or the Counter-Reformation proves hardly conclusive if one wants to examine the long-term impact of iconoclastic tradition on practicing genealogy, restoration, and 'renaissance.' The present essay therefore follows this thread of doubt and, after the preliminary analysis of some representative examples, addresses iconoclasm not primarily as a notion, visible action, or image of genealogy, but—in distant concordance with those aspects—as an implicit attitude discernible in practice and representable with the means of art. This approach reaches beyond the duality of fore- or background of historical narratives devoted to idolatrous 'excess' or iconoclastic 'righteousness.' Instead, it recognizes iconoclasm as a form of 'silent articulation' that permeates the history of iconic competitions, survivals, and restorations and thus pre-defines and accompanies the very nature of open, already multilaterally explored historical archives of thought, word, and image.¹³ Any study of the aesthetic experience with ancient artifacts during the Renaissance in the context of the contemporary pictorial discourse of a disempowering estrangement of the non-Christian past runs the risk of generalization and revision. But in actual fact it requires an acute sense for the intricate intertwinings and discursive reductions pointing us to the fact that singular pictorial statements are not only embedded in an overall context, but also create by themselves the very framework in which they are able to articulate themselves.

However, as Aby Warburg has shown, *der liebe Gott steckt im Détail*. The validity of a discourse, or of its inner tectonics, becomes all the more visible in the cracks between historical statements, in narrative shifts, in margins and details, in the reverberations between ostensible regularities, which in turn create new uneven sequences and intersections. Let us consider, for instance, how Jacopo Strada, the well-known imperial *antiquario*, included an iconoclastic motif in his *Libro di disegni* in 1570, several years before Laureti concluded the Constantine cycle with Mercury's fall. In the *Codex miniatus* 21, now in Vienna, we see a historical scene of the baptism of the first Christians, which, as Dirk Jansen has pointed out, was taken from Giulio Romano's designs for the Camera degli Stucchi in the Palazzo del Te in Mantua, realized by Primaticcio (fig. 2).¹⁴

That concise scene, which included two kneeling figures—a man and a woman—receiving baptism, was transformed by the antiquarian into a statement of exclusivity: Strada

13 Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," in R. Young (ed.), *Untying the Text: A Poststructuralist Reader*, Boston/London/Henley, Routledge/Kegan Paul, 1981 (1970), pp. 48–78, here esp. pp. 57–8 and 66. On "the relations on the very surface of the discourse," see "Michel Foucault explique son dernier livre (entretien avec J.-J. Brochier)," *Magazine littéraire*, 1969, p. 23. Reprinted in Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, I, 66, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, p. 772.

14 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Min. 21, 1–3. See Dirk Jacob Jansen, *Jacopo Strada and Cultural Patronage at the Imperial Court: The Antique as Innovation*, Leiden, Brill, 2019, pp. 666–7.



2 Jacopo Strada, *Iconoclasm and Baptism*, ca. 1570, washed pen drawing, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Cod. Min. 21, 3, fol. 6r)

changed the anonymous woman into Christ and altered the posture of the man to resemble the topically recognizable kneeling figure of Constantine in the moment of his imperial baptism by Silvester I, as pictured by the wall frescos in the Sala di Costantino. The most intriguing feature, however, is the expressive figure of an iconoclast who smashes an ancient statue with a hammer. Whether an exact copy of Romano's original design or not, this additional violent actor provides a symptomatic indication for the status of "*cose assai antiche, ritrovate in diversi tempi, più notabili, et più perfette dell'altre*," in Strada's own words.¹⁵ This poses the question to what extent we can perceive such an iconographic extension as a pictorial safeguard that authorizes the aesthetical valuation of ancient artifacts. This issue gains crucial significance if we realize that in the same sketchbook—among a plethora of festive designs, (partly colored) ornaments, and second-hand copies of ancient

15 Jansen, *Jacopo Strada...*, p. 692.

statues, sculptural groups, and reliefs made by Strada after diverse artistic samples—there are also drawings of fragmented ancient statues that would perfectly fit as ‘models’ for this iconoclastic scene: Herculean, Bacchic, and other adolescent heroic figures from Strada’s own collection, both their perfectly chiseled musculature and advanced state of destruction meticulously documented—statues that have become ‘accidental torsos’ (figs. 3 and 4).¹⁶

This co-presence of iconoclasm and evidence of sculptural remnants in Strada’s sketch-book mirrors to a certain extent a dichotomy that frequently determined the experience of antiquity in Renaissance Rome. On the one hand, due to their ongoing medialization by means of drawings, circulating prints, collection inventories, and guidebooks, Graeco-Roman artifacts were perceived and propagated not only as individual monuments or outstanding relics but also as a raw ancient material, as *anticaglie* scattered in courtyards and ruins across the city.¹⁷ Anonymous fragmented statues, found alongside remnants of decayed architecture and incomplete ornamentation, were often imprecisely or falsely identified with mythological or Olympian divine personalities. With their original cultic purposes largely disregarded, they were identified mainly with the excavation sites where they had been discovered.¹⁸ In this kind of random, indifferent attribution one can see a non-explicit, parenthetic mode of their progressive alienation as objects. At the same time, they formed a casual background for the humanists’ exaltation of newly excavated exemplars of classical ancient sculpture and their ingenious artistic adaptations and literary ekphrases, such as, for instance, the *Torso del Belvedere*, signed by the artist (Apollonios) and medialized since the beginning of the 15th century.¹⁹ On the other hand, we may also recall the fate of decontextualized, fragmented, and re-assembled ancient figures of divinities and heroes put on public display in Roman gardens and collections. Despite (or concurrent with) the curiosity they prompted, they were harshly criticized for their ‘pagan’ sensuality, their tempting, provocative nudity, and the obviousness of their deceptive moral “falsity.”²⁰ Burckhardt himself emphasized the Renaissance contemporaneity of “magic enchantment” (*magisches Entzücken*) and “severe hostility” (*schwere Gegnerschaft*) they provoked as remnants of an alien, pre-medieval world.²¹ Accordingly, the valuation of an ancient artifact by an antiquarian must have been determined by a trifold tension: between the anonymity of the plethora of unearthed and serially documented historical relics sweepingly ascribed to

16 *Ibid.*, p. 675–6.

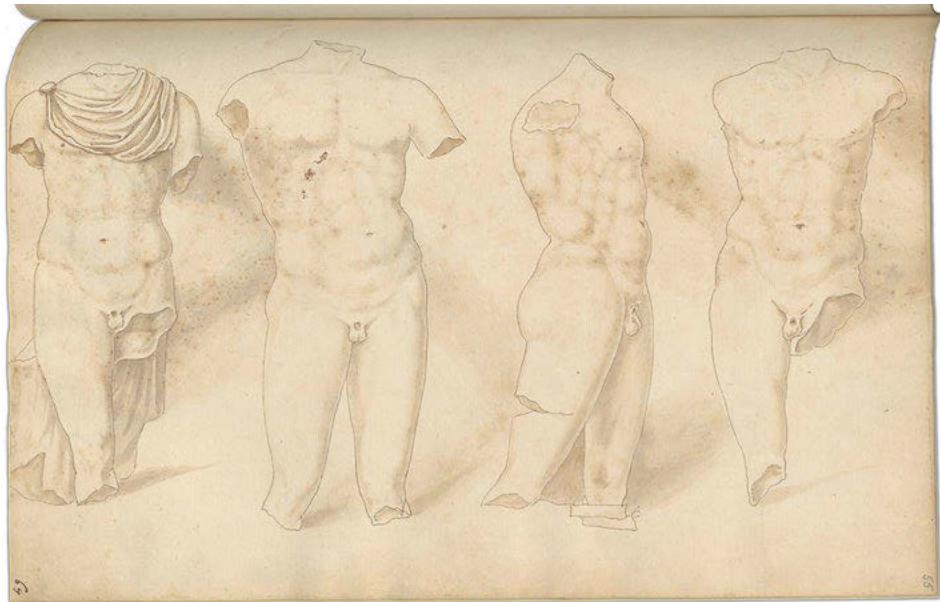
17 Luba Freedman, *The Revival of the Olympian Gods in Renaissance Art*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 62–94, esp. 73, 82–3; see also 94–106.

18 Freedman, *The Revival...*, pp. 68–9. Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity...*, pp. 11–4; see also 93–4.

19 On *ekphrasis*, see Freedman, *The Revival...*, pp. 111–27.

20 Katherine M. Bentz, “Ancient Idols, Lascivious Statues and Sixteenth-Century Viewers in Roman Gardens,” in M. Rose and A.C. Poe (eds.), *Receptions of Antiquity, Constructions of Gender in European Art, 1300–1600*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2015, pp. 418–9. See also the garden inventories in Christian Hülsen, *Römische Antikengärten des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, Heidelberg, Winter, 1917.

21 Jacob Burckhardt, *Beiträge zur Kunsgeschichte von Italien. Das Altarbild. Das Porträt in der Malerei. Die Sammler*, Basel, Lendorff, 1898, pp. 327–30; cf. Horst Bredekamp, *Repräsentation und Bildmagie der Renaissance als Formproblem*, Munich, Carl-Friedrich-von-Siemens-Stiftung, 1995, pp. 7–9.

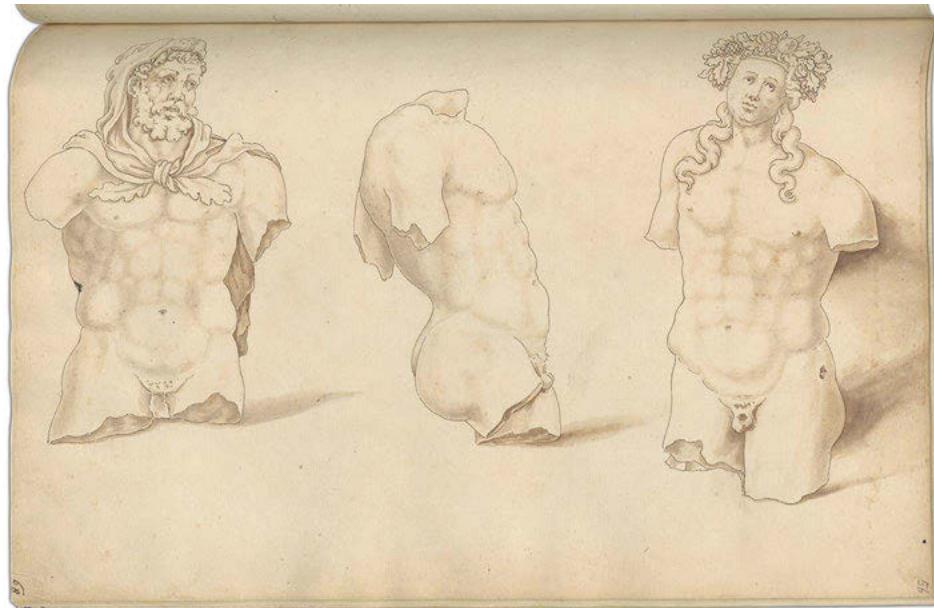


3 Jacopo Strada, *Ancient torsos*, ca. 1570, washed pen drawing, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Cod. Min. 21, 3, fol. 55r)

antiquity; the rediscovered, individualized ideals that provided new legitimacy for the alien form through its aesthetical admiration, reproduction, and artistic as well as scholarly circulation; and, finally, the assumed integral completion of the delegitimized ‘pagan’ past.

Strada’s famous gesture in his portrait painted in 1567–68 by Titian (fig. 5) fits perfectly into this realm of ambiguity.²² Usually interpreted as a presentation of a small marble Venus statuette to a fictitious customer or noble visitor in his *studiolo*, it points to the presumed pure objecthood of collected sculpture which, consequently, allows its market value to be measured. The statue is pseudo-ancient, Titian most probably depicting a

22 Frank Fehrenbach, “*Rationes seminales: Die Strada-Bildnisse von Tizian und Tintoretto*,” in Frank Fehrenbach, *Quasi vivo. Lebendigkeit in der italienischen Kunst der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2021, pp. 243–76; Jansen, *Jacopo Strada...*, pp. 1–8; Michael Thimann, “Zeigen, Abbilden, Ausstellen. Tizians Bildnis des Jacopo Strada und die Kultur der Antiquare im 16. Jahrhundert,” in M. Heun, S. Rößler and B. Rux (eds.), *Kosmos Antike. Zur Rezeption und Transformation antikrer Ideen in der Kunst. Festschrift für Dieter Blume*, Weimar, VDG, 2015, pp. 211–31; Duncan Bull, Dirk Jacob Jansen, and Willem de Ridder, “Les portraits de Jacopo et Ottavio Strada par Titien en Tintoret,” in V. Delieuvin and J.-P. Habert (eds.), *Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse. Rivalités à Venise*, exh. cat. (Paris, Musée du Louvre, 2009), Paris, Musée du Louvre, 2009, pp. 200–13; Luba Freedman, “Titian’s Jacopo da Strada: A Portrait of an antiquario,” *Renaissance Studies*, 13, 1999, pp. 15–39.



4 Jacopo Strada, *Ancient torsos*, ca. 1570, washed pen drawing, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Cod. Min. 21, 3, fol. 56r)

'marble' version of a popular *bronzetto* of his time, or possibly an ancient statuette completed in this manner by Alessandro Vittoria.²³

Obviously, the gesture is not devoid of an erotic component that underlines possession: Strada's hand seizing the goddess's right breast counterbalances her own hand covering her left breast.²⁴ At the same time, it is an example of the iconoclastic discourse that accompanies the rise of antiquarian interest and the culture of admiration, aimed at eschewing the danger or accusation of idolatry: a license to aestheticize that emerges alongside the practice of excavation, collection, description, and presentation of antique artifacts. Here, it is the *preium*, the value and price of collected artifacts, ancient and modern, that makes the difference and helps to create the moment of objectifying alienation by means of pecuniary measurement.²⁵ As Salvatore Settis, writing about the aesthetical transformation of antiquities, put it: "their monetary value, and the social prestige it entailed, exorcised the

23 Volker Krahm, "Sulla 'Venere' di Jacopo Strada e su alcuni bronzetti del Rinascimento," in M. Ceriana and V. Avery (eds.), *L'industria artistica del bronzo del Rinascimento a Venezia e nell'Italia settentrionale*, Verona, Scripta, 2008, pp. 219–32.

24 Fehrenbach, "Rationes seminales....," pp. 247–8, 251–2 (here interpreted in terms of Pygmalionian "imaginary enlivenment").

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 252–64.



5 Titian, *Portrait of Jacopo Strada*, 1567–68, oil on canvas, 126 × 95.5 cm, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (Gemäldegalerie, inv.81)

memory of their pagan origin.²⁶ However, within this rhetoric of iconic subjugation evident in Strada's gesture, the focus is on the aesthetic distance towards secured and merchandised objects rather than on staging the mythological enlivenment of the artwork's dead matter. Indeed, the pure objecthood of Strada's small figure is underlined by its plinth, which is turned towards the visitor (and so the beholder) and, in what is clearly a witty painter's trick, seems to dispense the coins lying beneath it on the table. Measured and inventoried sculpture thus appears in its topical passivity—not only within the humanist

26 Salvatore Settis, "Collecting Ancient Sculpture: The Beginnings," *Studies in the History of Art*, 70, 2008, pp. 12–31, here p. 18. Burckhardt (*Beiträge...*, pp. 490–6) describes the ambiguous interdependence between the Renaissance restoration—the idiosyncratic completion of fragmented ancient figures in private collections—and their profitable forgeries. On copies and forgeries, see Linda Bozian, "Collecting in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth Century Venice: Originals, Copies, and 'Maniera di,'" in Frederick Ilchman (ed.), *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice*, exh. cat. (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 2009), Boston, MA, Museum of Fine Arts, 2009, pp. 61–71, here pp. 68–71.

span between exhumation, collection, and imaginative reconstruction,²⁷ but also as a valuable, reproducible source of profit and wealth that becomes part of the aesthetical realm. Julius Schlosser already discredited the apparent superficial dichotomy between the higher value of art and the accumulation of goods, pointing to the organic conflation of capital economy, power, and aesthetics in the early antiquarian culture.²⁸

This conjunction, present in Titian's painting, was even more clearly demonstrated by Tintoretto in his portrait of Jacopo's son Ottavio, painted as a pendant in the same year, 1567 (fig. 6).²⁹ Here, a bronze cast of a nude female figure in the foreground is cut off by the frame, while Ottavio nonchalantly clenches an anonymous masculine torso in his hand. In fact, the action is limited to the opulent flow of money from the cornucopia held by Fortuna.³⁰ In the original version, altered by Tintoretto and made visible by x-radiography, Ottavio's right hand firmly grasped the neck of the female figure and the forefinger of his left hand pointed to her womb, as though indicating his private source of *fecunditas*, the beneficial gravidity of objecthood. Besides, Fortuna was deprived of her cornucopia, which in the present version illustrates the almost transactional literality of profit as against its mere potential. In the background, a painterly sketch of Roman ruins—most probably after Hieronymus Cock's contemporary views of the Palatine Hill (*Domus Severiana*) in his series *Præcipua aliquot Romanae* from 1550–62, or their inverted repetitions by Giovanni Battista Pittoni—completes the scenario of medialization.³¹ The instantaneous metamorphosis of collected figures into capital, their 'liquefaction' into measurable, monetary value, becomes all the more visible. Remarkably enough, Ottavio's profit was conditioned by his management of iconic reproduction, replication, and dissemination with the means of drawings, prints, and copies.³² We find a comparable gesture of possession and dominance

27 See Thomas M. Greene, "Resurrecting Rome: The Double Task of the Humanist Imagination," in P. A. Ramsey (ed.), *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth*, Binghamton/New York, Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982, pp. 41–54.

28 Julius von Schlosser, "Zur 'Philosophie' des Kunstsammelns," in Julius von Schlosser, *Präludien. Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Berlin, Bard, 1927, pp. 404–9.

29 For the relevant literature, see note 22.

30 See Delieuvin and Habert (eds.), *Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse...*, pp. 207–8.

31 Arthur J. DiFuria, *Maarten van Heemskerck's Rome: Antiquity, Memory, and the Cult of Ruins*, Leiden, Brill, 2019, pp. 216–42; Tatjana Bartsch, "Romruinen als Gegenwelten," in C. Bertsch and V. Vahrson (eds.), *Gegenwelten*, exh. cat. (Innsbruck, Universität Innsbruck, 2013–4), Innsbruck, Haymon, 2014, pp. 250–63; J. van Grieken, G. Luijten, and J. van der Stock (eds.), *Hieronymus Cock: The Renaissance in Print*, Brussels, Mercatorfonds, 2013, pp. 89–124, here 92; Anna Grelle, *Vestigi delle antichità di Roma... et altri luoghi. Momenti dell'elaborazione di un'immagine*, Roma, Quasar, 1987, pp. 33–52, here 4. I would like to thank Tatjana Bartsch for her help in identifying the ruins.

32 Before he was disinherited because of his conflict with Jacopo in 1573–4, Ottavio's responsibility in the family business was the complex practice of drawing archaeological finds as well as copying artistic samples and sketches. Eliška Fučíková, "Einige Erwägungen zum Werk des Jacopo und Ottavio Strada," *Leids kunsthistorisch jaarboek*, 1, 1982, pp. 339–53, here p. 340. See also Jansen, *Jacopo Strada...*, pp. 629–718, 725–8, 781–6. Fehrenbach, "Rationes seminales..." pp. 270–6, interprets the portraits of 1567 from the perspective of Ottavio's later dispossession and highlights the competition between Titian and Tintoretto.



6 Tintoretto, *Portrait of Ottavio Strada*, 1567–8, oil on canvas, 128 × 101 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (SK-A-3902)

in Tintoretto's 1561 portrait of the Venetian 'accumulator of antiquities' Giovanni Paolo Cornaro (fig. 7), evocatively nicknamed "dalle Anticaglie." Here, the pecuniary aspect gives way to that of status, but again, the ancient female bust on which the collector is leaning



7 Tintoretto, *Portrait of Giovanni Paolo Cornaro*, 1561, oil on canvas, 102 × 81.2 cm, Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten (1914-CL)

his arm, representing a fashionably dressed woman rather than a goddess, is only partly visible, her own sight obscured by his hand.³³

These staged gestures of estrangement show how the discourse of alienating objectification, distinctly but inevitably rooted in the Constantinian origins of anti-idolatry, pre-determines, accompanies, and enables further aspects of mythological metamorphosis so meaningful and profitable for the Renaissance culture of collecting: the refreshed narrative of Promethean transformation of nature into art and the revival of the Pygmalionian enlivenment of art in the course of erotic interaction with the ideal form of sculpture.³⁴ In either case, it is the proclaimed ‘death’ of antiquity that habituates its attraction, categorization, and artificial afterlife.

33 See Borean, “Collecting...,” p. 67.

34 See Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity...*, pp. 19–27; cf. Fehrenbach, “*Rationes seminales...*,” pp. 251–2; Victor Stoichita, *The Pygmalion Effect: From Ovid to Hitchcock*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008, pp. 96–110.



8 Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of Andrea Odoni*, 1527, oil on canvas, 104.6 × 116.6 cm, London, The Royal Collection (RCIN 405776)

However fictitious the danger of succumbing to idolatrous exaltation may be, it is not devoid of substance, as we see in the portrait of Andrea Odoni, another iconic collector from Venice, by Lorenzo Lotto in 1527 (fig. 8).³⁵ The *antiquario* seems to have found an appropriate antidote to the sensual lure of aesthetically appealing ancient images: holding the Egyptian Diana of Ephesos in his right hand, he touches his small necklace crucifix with his left. This clear gesture of identity authorizes the objectifying look of the erudite, providing him with a necessary instrument of *anaesthesia* within an aesthetics of legitimacy

35 See Kathleen Christian, "Between Reality and Representation: Portraits, Objects, and Collectors," in: S. Settis (ed.), *Serial/Portable Classic: The Greek Canon and Its Mutations*, exh. cat. (Venice/Milan, Fondazione Prada, 2015), Milan, Fondazione Prada, 2015, p. 153–9; David Alan Brown, Peter Humfrey, and Mauro Lucco, *Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1997–98), New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 161–4; Barbara Coli, "Lorenzo Lotto e il ritratto cittadino: Andrea Odoni," in A. Gentili (ed.), *Il ritratto e la memoria*, 1, Rome, Bulzoni, 1989, pp. 183–204; Lars Olof Larsson, "Lorenzo Lottos Bildnis des Andrea Odoni in Hampton Court. Eine typologische und ikonographische Studie," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift*, 37, 1968, pp. 21–33.

where pure admiration for the retrievable past goes hand in hand with its ontological and moral subordination.³⁶

Although the staging of ancient sculptures and their copies or imitations in this invented *studiolo* is intentionally ironic and not devoid of the wit of painterly animation,³⁷ it is the owner's gesture of aesthetically authorized possession that vouches for the sincerity of this portrait—a gesture that clearly distinguishes between the outwardness of the old, dead, material form of a 'pagan' goddess on the one hand, and the intrinsic, essential spiritual content and transcendent reference in the personal image of the cross on the other.³⁸ This distinction is the prerequisite for researching the distant past by judging its material relics. Anaesthetic handling of the object's original allure as the *sine qua non* of aesthetic admiration: the ancient image is declared invalid, however appealing it still may be. In these 16th-century portraits, we see the first statements of pure objecthood that go beyond the medieval depictions of 'pagan' idols as negative actors in sacred narratives, while also transcending the language of antique-oriented allegory. The reason for this is an ontological tear articulated in the disempowering semanticization and objectification of images, located in the long-term cultivation of the Constantinian threshold, as evidenced in Strada's sketchbook with its hybrid iconic combination of iconoclasm and baptism. Odoni's counterbalancing gesture appears as a professional certificate of legitimacy for an antiquarian who demonstrates that he treats possessions as things, that is, without affect. His affect is reserved for the sign of the cross; the rest, no matter how aesthetically seductive, is inanimate, belonging to the world of things. What we see here is a symptom of an ongoing discursive iconoclasm that demotes old sacred images to the status of items of a long-gone history and instead exclusively presupposes another, purely referential or semantical status of images as material representations and artful means of sacred narration.

There is, incidentally, an obvious difference in how the artifacts are being touched in these paintings: a crucifix cannot be held in the manner the collectors grasp and take possession of their exclusive acquisitions, the "*cose antiche ritrovate*" or their copies and imitations.³⁹ While the two Strada portraits evidence exemplary gestures of possession, replication, valuation, and, eventually, monetarization, Odoni's outstretched arm moreover

36 Following the remarks in Brown *et al.*, *Lorenzo Lotto...*, p. 164, and Christian, "Between Reality and Representation...," pp. 153–4, an extensive analysis of this gesture was recently provided by Henry Kaap, *Lorenzo Lotto malt Andrea Odoni. Kunstschaffen und Kunstsammeln zwischen Bildverehrung, Bildskepsis, Bildwitz*, Berlin, Gebr. Mann, 2021, a.o. pp. 29–30, 69–74, 89, 96–7, 135–7, 216–7.

37 Kaap, *Lorenzo Lotto...*, a.o. pp. 101–5, 217–25; Coli, "Lorenzo Lotto...," pp. 201–2; Larsson, "Lorenzo Lottos Bildnis...," pp. 26–7.

38 Odoni lived in the Venetian sestiere of Santa Croce, where his family was buried in Santa Maria Maggiore, under the *altare del Crocifisso*. Andrew John Martin, "Amica e un albergo di virtuosi": la casa e la collezione di Andrea Odoni," *Venezia Cinquecento*, 10, 2000, pp. 153–70, here pp. 57 and 169, note 23.

39 On still another mode of touch, namely, sculptures held by sculptors in their portraits, see Jérémie Koering, "L'art en personne(s)," in Delieuvin and Habert (eds.), *Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse...*, pp. 178–90.



9 *Della trasportatione dell'obelisco vaticano et delle fabrice di Nostro Signore papa Sisto V fatte dal cavallier Domenico Fontana, Rome 1590 (frontispiece)*

creates a clear pictorial space of estrangement that signifies aesthetic distance and thus legitimizes the collection as such: the small statuette of Diana Ephesia, held horizontally with its head oriented towards the beholder as though it were casually handed over for the sake of an estimation of its object status and historical value, is literally contrasted with the small crucifix, which, in a twisted diagonal position, assumes the role of its observant, antithetical adversary.

'Possession' of an object is also an issue in the portrait of Domenico Fontana, the architect of the Sistine re-erection and transformation of four Egyptian obelisks in Rome, which was included in the frontispiece of his account *Della trasportatione dell'obelisco vaticano* of 1590 (fig. 9).⁴⁰ The image shows him holding the miniaturized obelisk as a personal trophy, as if to prove the ability of technology to command over the monumentality of carved ancient stone.

This analogy sheds additional light on the previously discussed order of aesthetic estrangement. In his study on the Sistine policy of renovation, Cole describes how pilgrims to Rome were driven by the desire to see the cross that had been mounted on top of the obelisk.⁴¹ Their experience was twofold: what they could personally see *in situ* was the very limitation of the pagan embodiment or divine agency originally attributed to the ancient object (in Egypt, obelisks were seen as petrified rays of the Sun god Ra), as well as its triumphal subordination by the cross as Christian *signum* of representation and ontological transgression. In other words, they could witness the perpetuated moment of restriction, a reassurance of cultural dominance presented as an irreversible fulfillment of history. Collecting antiquities as an imaginary journey through time—across the cultural boundary of disenchanted pagan embodiment—was similarly subdued to the necessity of exorcising the stone as potentially charged with the demonic power of idolatrous seduction. What Sixtus V in 1586 manifested as a 'restoration' in the form of a public performative ritual of expelling the demons from an ancient artifact—the Vatican obelisk, erected in front of the Roman basilica, consecrated, and adorned with an exorcizing inscription—also possessed an imitative, typological quality: the Egyptian stone with the bronze cross on its top evokes the "new brazen serpent" erected by Moses and demonstrates the combined procedure of subjugation, conversion, and material translation of an artifact from the non-Christian history.⁴² The Lateran obelisk, the largest of all, restored by Sixtus V only a year later, also provides specific information in this respect: originally looted by Constantine himself in Heliopolis (where the statues of pagan gods were said to have crashed to the ground when

40 On Fontana's self-promotion, see Clemens Voigts, "Constructing a Discourse on the Art of Engineering: Domenico Fontana and the Vatican Obelisk," in E.-C. Heine (ed.), *Under Construction*, Berlin, LIT, 2015, pp. 141–61, here pp. 145–9 (esp. pp. 147–8, on Fontana's choice of the obelisk for his coat of arms). See also Costanza Caraffa, "Domenico Fontana e gli obelischi: fortuna critica del 'Cavaliere della Guglia,'" in G. Curcio, N. Navone, and S. Villari (eds.), *Studi su Domenico Fontana 1543–1607*, Mendrisio, Academy Press, 2012, pp. 21–47, here pp. 21–34.

41 Cole, "Perpetual Exorcism...," pp. 63–6.

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 68–76.

the Holy Family passed through the city on its flight into Egypt), it was planned to be transferred to Constantinople but remained in Alexandria until his son Constantius moved it to the Roman Circus Maximus in 357, where it was eventually excavated and transported to the Lateran and narratively embedded in the myth of Constantine's baptism, which was wrongly believed to have taken place there.⁴³ Erected between the Lateran Palace and the Baptistry and crowned with a bronze cross, it was also furnished with four inscriptions on its pedestal that indisputably demonstrate the ultimate seclusion of 'pagan' history.⁴⁴ Furthermore, this is also the only Roman obelisk distinguished by novel claims for the secondary authorship: the additional inscription on the base mentions Domenico Fontana as the architect behind this transformation.⁴⁵

Fontana's and Strada's gestures, however similar they may seem in their iconic staging of a subjugation of the past, refer to different realms of scale and diverging orders of symbolical representation.⁴⁶ Moreover, they indirectly point to the significant gap between the respective conditions of the rebirth of classical taste and the emergence of early modern Egyptomania. Nevertheless, with respect to the question of the alienating objectification of the past that underlies both these examples, we may ask to what extent the practice of antiquarianism too may be perceived as a kind of 'historical pilgrimage.' Naturally, in the context of private collections, monumental gestures of sovereignty such as the 'taming' of an obelisk had to be transformed into a personal commitment to the ontological disempowerment of the past that pre-dates the origins of Christian legacy, demonstrating that the antiquarian is capable of overcoming the image exposed to the curious gaze, capable of de-paganizing curiosity. In this way, the image from a distant alien culture itself becomes a forbidden fruit that may be consumed, but only after a 'spiritual disinfection' that allows it to be incorporated into the realm of the legitimacy of the present. This situates it exactly at the intersection between legacy, legitimacy, and legality, which forms an indispensable component of the early modern view on the distant past and the ways in which it can be narratively traced, reported, evaluated, and finally restored—always under the aegis of the

43 Cesare D'Onofrio, *Gli obelischi di Roma: storia e urbanistica di una città dall'età antica al XX secolo*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1992, pp. 160–72; Erik Iversen, *Obelisks in Exile*, I, Copenhagen, Gad, 1968, pp. 55–65. On the cultivation of this *topos* in the Seicento, see Jack Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600: Christian Concord in Counter-Reformation Rome*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 81–129. On the importance of Heliopolis as a categorical exponent of Egyptian alterity in the Christian discourse of cultural subjugation, see Kapustka, *Die Abwesenheit der Idole...*, pp. 101–8, 111–3, 265, 507.

44 "CONSTANTINVS / PER CRVCEM / VICTOR / A S. SILVESTRO HIC / BAPTIZATVS / CRVCIS GLORIAM / PROPAGAVIT" (on the Baptistry side); "[...] FL. CONSTANTINVS / MAXIMVS AVG. / CHRISTIANAE FIDEI / VINDEX ET ASSERTOR / OBELISCVM / AB AEGYPTIO REGE / IMPVRO VOTO / SOLI DEDICATVM / [...] TRANSFERRI [...] IVSSIT [...]" (on the side of the Capitol).

45 "EQVES DOMINCVS FONTANA / ARCHITECT EREXIT"; see D'Onofrio, *Gli obelischi...*, pp. 171–2; Iversen, *Obelisks in Exile...*, pp. 63–4.

46 They both illustrate, however, the main thesis in Bredekamp's *The Lure of Antiquity...*, according to which the early culture of collecting sets the framework for pre-modern technological progress.

constantly present discursive premise of Constantinian iconoclasm. It was, therefore, the reserved objectification embedded in such conformant procedures of anti-idolatrous prevention that provided a plain field for the "experimentation in merging form and meaning"⁴⁷ and gradually paved the way for the experience of ancient artifacts as art. As Luba Freedman writes, the "depersonalization" of the Olymp had a practical consequence: "The statues of the Olympian deities were [...] used in much the same way as other antique statues, that is, as integral parts of a collection of antiques; this ensuing use meant, of course, the neglect of their significance as cult images of pagan deities and their reassignment as *objets d'art* like any other."⁴⁸

It should be added that the position of an *antiquario* is of special relevance in this context, since it was precisely the dilettantish collectors of the 16th and 17th centuries who initiated the strictly pictorial approach of the past, reconstructed and narrated not upon scriptures but upon material remains—sculptures, vessels, armors, and coins, which, according to the antiquarians, were sources that even enabled them to 'correct' history told upon written accounts.⁴⁹ Accordingly, the greater the reliance on collected ancient images in reconstructing the course of ancient history, the more we must stress the importance of the openly, though inconspicuously conveyed iconoclastic moment that preconditions and accompanies the way in which ancient images are first deactivated and re-authorized as such, and only then put on display. A Renaissance collection of antiquities, therefore, inevitably distinguishes itself through its dynamic aspect of ontological transformation: whereas Sixtus V personally sprinkled the Vatican obelisk with Holy Water and expelled the 'devil' from the artifact expatriated from the ancient 'heathen' culture, the *Kunstkammer* appears as a place of aesthetical exorcism, accumulating images formerly embedded in the circulation of religious beliefs and ritual practices, but which since Constantine can be perceived as mere objects. It is on account of the cultivated validity of those distant iconoclastic origins of the Christian empire that they lose their original meaning and turn into lifeless things. In the words of Krzysztof Pomian, they become *semiophora*, but only insofar as they are deprived of their meaning and put on display as indifferent objects of decidedly non-religious desire, a new aesthetics of the subjugated alien past that relies on a one-sided, self-confident judgement to which they are no longer allowed to interactively respond.⁵⁰

47 Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity...*, p. 110. See also Christian, "Between Reality and Representation...", p. 158, on the fictitious status of the scenarios depicted in collectors' portraits.

48 Freedman, *The Revival...*, p. 125, see pp. 108–10.

49 Thimann, "Zeigen, Abbilden, Ausstellen...", p. 219. Jansen, *Jacopo Strada...*, presents Strada as both "antiquary"—that is someone studying the material remains of Antiquity, whom we would call an archaeologist or historian" and "antiquarian,' an expert and dealer in art and antiques" (p. 4). See also pp. 711–7, 800–29; Volker Heenes, "Jacopo Strada. Goldschmied und Maler, Antiken- und Münzhändler, Sammler und 'Antiquarius Caesareus,'" in D. Hakelberg and I. Wiwjorra (eds.), *Vorwelten und Vorzeiten. Archäologie als Spiegel historischen Bewußtseins in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2010, pp. 295–310, here pp. 302–3.

50 Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500–1800; Origins of the Museum*, trans. E. Wiles-Portier, Cambridge, MA, Polity Press, 1990 (1987).

The last question, which, although it transcends the limits of this essay, is essential for the subject at hand, concerns the way in which this issue was reflected in the early modern practice of image-making and the artists' self-defense against idolatry. Were image-makers *a priori* image-breakers?⁵¹ To what extent did the sustainable iconoclastic attitude not only imply depictions of destruction or subjection of alien images, but also precondition conscious and conformant image-making with all its levels of artistic competition between the genres? Laureti, the master of architectural design who provided drawings for Vignola's *prospettiva pratica* in 1583,⁵² painted his idol in the Vatican two years later. The fallen statue of Mercury, patron of commerce, trickery, and thieves, but also art, one of the few winged, flying gods of Graeco-Roman antiquity, and therefore an ideal candidate for a sudden fall, is represented not only in a perfect central perspectival foreshortening. Within this illusionistic scenario, Laureti also has the defeated, decapitated sculpture gaze at the margins of the painting, literally forcing Mercury to estimate the trajectory of his inevitable *decadence* beyond the frame of the fresco, with one of the fragments threatening to fall into the room where the *storia* of Constantinian origins unfolds (fig. 10).

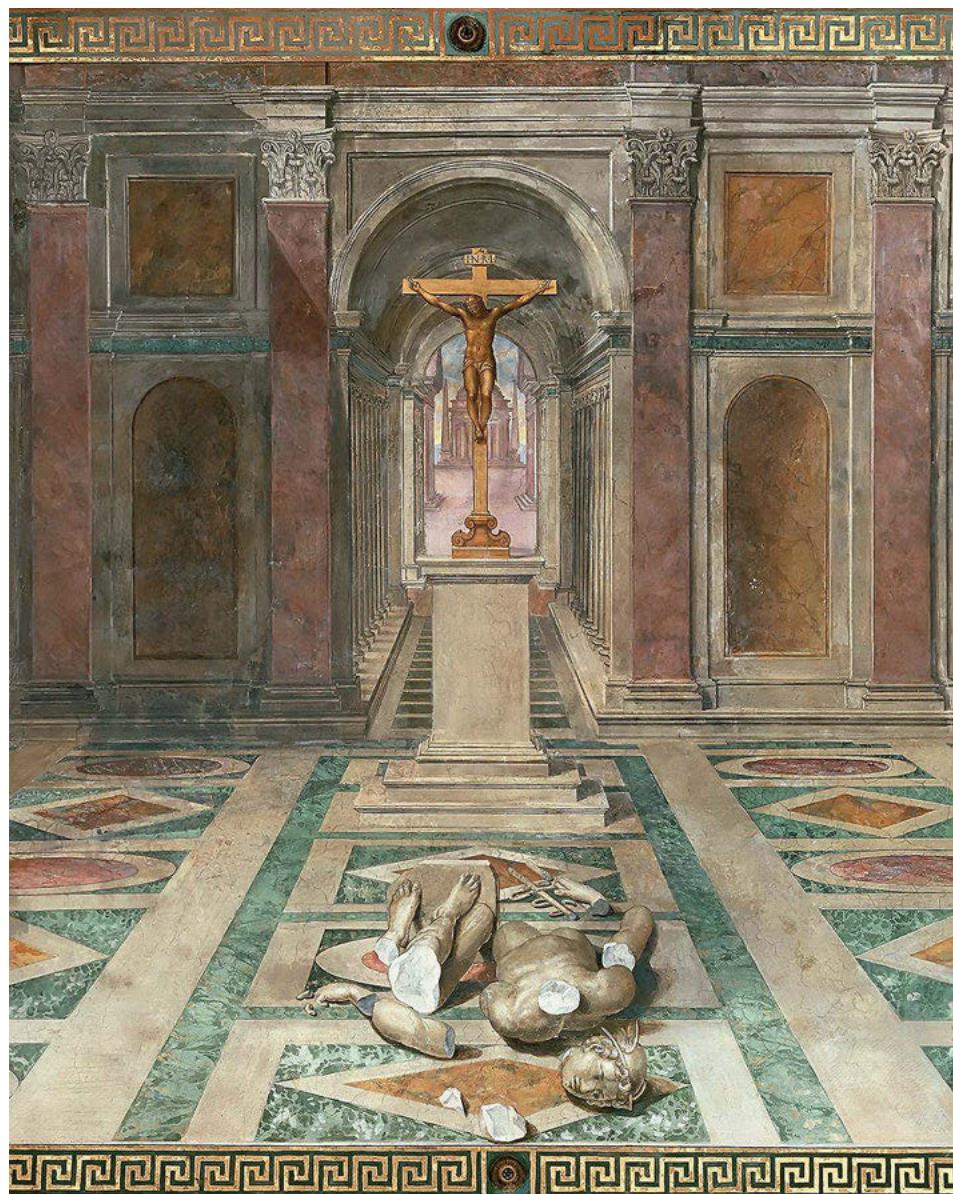
In this setting, the artistic illusion of the desired Heavenly Jerusalem is 'preceded' by the highly deceptive depiction of the victory over the ontological illusion of the idol. One could ask if this speaks to a permeative primordial parameter of Constantinian elevation of painting over sculpture, of skillful reference and indifferent narration over inherent embodiment and inhabitation—a relationship that subtly but continuously accompanies the concept of *paragone* throughout the centuries of the Renaissance and the Baroque. Does *paragone* appear in this light not only as the artistic competition between the genres and their representatives but also as a silent, yet open reference to their respective grades of exposure to idolatry, and to the ways in which one can find an eloquent antidote to it?⁵³

In any case, it may be symptomatic in this context that in *The Civilization of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy*, Burckhardt refers to the St. Luke Madonnas (*Malereien des St.*

51 This question alludes to the prominent phrase by Joseph Leo Koerner on the double-sided nature of Christian representation as iconoclastic "self-negation." Joseph Leo Koerner, "The Icon as Iconoclash," in B. Latour and P. Weibel (eds.), *Iconoclash: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Art*, Cambridge, MA/Karlsruhe, MIT Press/ZKM Center for Art and Media, 2002, pp. 164–213, here pp. 189–200. See also Georges Didi-Huberman, *Devant l'image. Questions posées aux fins d'une histoire de l'art*, Paris, Minuit, 1990, pp. 169–270.

52 Ingrid Dettmann, "Tommaso Laureti un allievo del Vignola? Considerazioni sui primi anni a Roma e note su due sconosciuti disegni di fontane," *Roma moderna e contemporanea*, 17, 2009, 1/2, pp. 207–33, here pp. 208–9. Interestingly, as early as in 1562 Laureti includes a depiction of the *Torso del Belvedere* in his fresco in the Palazzo Vizzani in Bologna. Dettmann, "Tommaso Laureti...," pp. 210, 212–3, and "Leben und Werk...," p. 48.

53 See in this respect Pietro da Cortona's meaningful altar arrangement in SS. Luca e Martina in Rome of 1640, where the copy of the famous Raphaelesque *St. Luke Painting Madonna with Child* of 1623 by Antiveduto Grammatica was staged as the sublimation of painting over the materiality of sculpture. See Kapustka, *Die Abwesenheit der Idole...*, pp. 234–52 (with further substantial literature), and the recent exhibition *The Academy of Saint Luke and the Myth of Urbinate* (Rome, Palazzo Carpegna, 2021).



10 Tommaso Laureti, *The Triumph of Christian Religion over Paganism* (fragment), 1585, fresco, Vatican, Vatican Palace, Sala di Costantino

Lucas), the Christian archetype of painting and apostolic exemplar for the artist as a visionary, when describing the survival of pagan practices in the popular belief and the cult among the *litterati*. In chapter VI, relating to “deviations in the cult” (*Schwankungen im Kultus*), Burckhardt cites in this context a statement by the early 16th-century theologian Battista Mantovano (Mantuan), who in his major work *De sacris diebus* of 1516 points out that, already among the Hebrews, “all graven images” were considered to be subject to the danger of restoration of idolatry. However, images seem to lose their seductive power as soon as they are exposed as relics of long-gone history: Mantovano argues that as soon as one knows the nature of evil and realizes the distance to the past, sculptures become old marbles, and paintings are no longer able to deceive but only to give testimony:

Nunc autem, postquam penitus natura Satanum
Cognita, et antiqua sine maiestate relicta est
nulla ferunt nobis statuae discrimina, nulos
fert pictura dolos; iam sunt innoxia signa;
Sunt modo virtutum testes monumentaque laudum
Marmora, et æternæ decora immortalia famæ.⁵⁴

It is intriguing that Burckhardt mentions paintings by St. Luke as representations that were supposed to miraculously intervene in the life of Italian communities (we can recall here, of course, the most prominent case, the *Salus Populi Romani*) and explicitly doubts the historical accuracy of Mantovano’s overconfident judgment on the efficacy of art-related exorcism. He considers these old miraculous images, as well as their contemporary Renaissance counterparts, to be still filled with “magical virtue” (*magische Gewalt*), contrary to the literary quality of poetry, and concludes that, eventually, through the means of art, “the worship of the saints among the educated classes often took an essentially pagan form.”⁵⁵

54 Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014 (1878), p. 288. On early modern demonology at the intersection of ‘image’ and ‘art’ see Stephen J. Campbell, “Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva”: Michelangelo, Rosso, and the (Un)Divinity of Art,” *The Art Bulletin*, 84/4, 2002, pp. 596–620, here pp. 608–9; Michael Cole, “The Demonic Arts and the Origin of the Medium,” *The Art Bulletin*, 84/4, 2002, pp. 621–40.

55 Burckhardt, *The Civilization...*, pp. 288–9. In this context, Burckhardt also refers to the post-Dantesque mariological literature and mentions, among others, Latin poems by Jacopo Sannazaro as deprived of religious spirit due to their profane form. See Wölfflin’s remark in 1895 on Mantovano and Sannazaro as Renaissance representatives of Virgilian classicism in *Briefe und Gespräche über die Kunst der Renaissance in Italien 1895/97*, in *Jacob Burckhardt und Heinrich Wölfflin...*, p. 132. This observation, in turn, is followed by Wölfflin’s introduction of Sannazaro’s poem *De partu virginis*—in which the immaculate conception is described ekphratically in terms of monumental mythological theophany—into the analysis of pathos in 15th-century Italian art. See Heinrich Wölfflin, *Die klassische Kunst*, Munich, Bruckmann, 1899, pp. 193–5.

This is possibly the realm of ambiguity where the historical field of *restauratio* performed by antiquarians, artists, and beholders can be located as inevitably conditioned, on the one hand, by a discourse of pictorial violence and alienation, inscribed into the very logic of constant iconoclasm, and, on the other, by the implicit ontological competition of media. In this instance, however, it is also painting that is accused of carrying the danger of a transgression of ascribed delimitations. As such, painting too induces the order of self-control when it comes to making images and estimating their potency of allure as possibly still echoing in the artwork's authorized power of aesthetic attraction.

Arnold Nesselrath

EX UNO LAPIDE

Ex Uno Lapide—“from a single block”—is perhaps a slightly strange title for a paper on the restoration of ancient statues, as it denotes the one quality that most of them almost certainly lack. Pliny’s famous phrase about the *Laocoön* (fig. 1)—“a work superior to any painting and any bronze. Laocoön, his children and the wonderful clasping coils of the snakes were carved from a single block”¹—has no doubt secured the sculpture’s role as a predominant work of art, first in antiquity and then in the modern era.² Taken as a point of departure for “the Renaissance sculptor’s *tour de force*,”³ the qualification can be likened to a form of Procrustean ideology. However, when its significance is considered in a wider context, commencing already before the discovery of the marble group on the Colle Oppio in Rome on January 14, 1506, the historical coincidence of the rise of the text together with the work of art begins to stimulate distinct direct correlations between the two. These arise as much from the numerous open questions surrounding the event, when the *Laocoön* returned to perform as an artistic energy, as from the still unresolved issues regarding the ancient sculpture itself. The fact that in over five hundred years and despite an abundant bibliography on the subject, nobody has yet succeeded in achieving a convincing reconstruction of one of the most influential sculptures produced by mankind, and that, instead, the different reconstructions put forward over time have sparked their own individual afterlives, is merely one idiosyncrasy among many.⁴

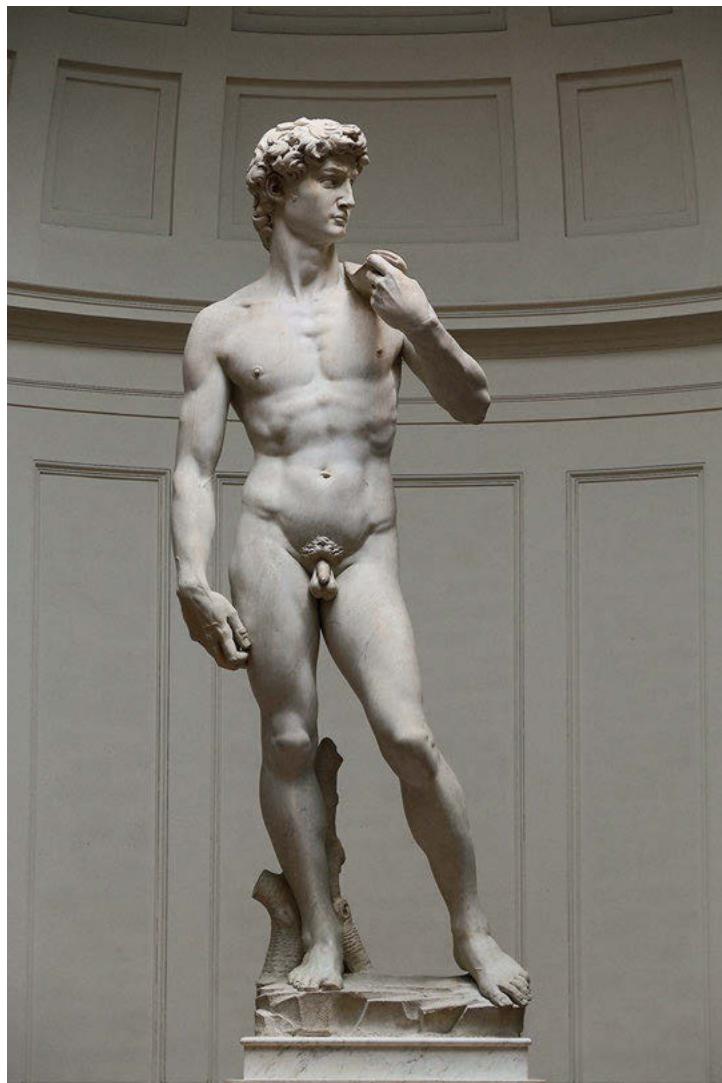
- 1 Pliny, *Natural History*, ed. and trans. D. E. Eichholz, X, XXXVI–XXXVII, London, Heinemann/Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1971, pp. 28–31. “In Laocoonte [...] opus omnibus et pictureae et statuariae artis praeferrendum. Ex uno lapide eum ac liberos draconumque mirabile nexus de consilii sententia fecere summi artifices [...].”
- 2 This was further helped by the fact that Pliny named its authors and its whereabouts.
- 3 Irving Lavin, “*Ex Uno Lapide*: The Renaissance Sculptor’s Tour de Force,” in M. Winner, B. Andreae, and C. Pietrangeli (eds.), *Il Cortile delle Statue. Der Statuenhof des Belvedere im Vatikan*, Mainz, Philipp von Zabern, 1998, pp. 191–210.
- 4 Francesco Buranelli, Paolo Liverani, and Arnold Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–07), Rome, “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 2006; Susanne Muth (ed.), *Laokoon. Auf der Suche nach einem Meisterwerk*, Rahden, Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2017; Christoph Schmälzle, *Laokoon in der frühen Neuzeit*, 2 vols., Frankfurt, Stroemfeld, 2018.



1 Hagesandros, Athanodoros, and Polydoros, *Laocoön*, 40–20 BCE, marble, 208 × 163 × 112 cm, Vatican City State, Vatican Museums, inv. 1059, 1064, 1067

Two years before the *Laocoön* was found near the Via Merulana, Michelangelo, in Florence, had finished his *David* (fig. 2), which at a height of 5.17 m (almost 9 *braccia*) is considered the first colossal, freestanding, monolithic marble sculpture since antiquity.⁵ But was this a conscious artistic statement of its maker or rather of the people who had commissioned it? There seems to be no explicit evidence for either. Furthermore, this is not even where the story of the *David* actually begins. As is well known, more than a generation before, in August 1464, the sculptor Agostino di Duccio had been commis-

5 Lavin, "Ex Uno Lapide..." pp. 194–6; Michael Hirst, *Michelangelo: The Achievement of Fame*, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 2011, pp. 42–48.



2 Michelangelo, *David*, 1501–04, marble, 517 cm (height), Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia, Inv. Scult. n. 1076

sioned to create precisely this statue of the biblical figure David for one of the buttresses of Florence Cathedral, to be delivered in 18 months' time and carved from four blocks—the head and both arms were to be worked separately and attached to the body. As another document, dated December 1466, reveals, Agostino instead decided to sculpt the entire figure from a single block. Although his patrons, the Overseers of the Office of Works of

Florence Cathedral, acknowledging that the statue would thereby gain in value, agreed to the greater expense this entailed, Agostino did not successfully realize his enterprise. After a few intermediate attempts by others over the following decades, Michelangelo was eventually commissioned in 1501 to complete the somehow initiated "Giant."⁶

One can only speculate as to what motivated Agostino to revise his project. Although Leon Battista Alberti, in his *De re aedificatoria* (completed in 1452), mentions three statues of Jupiter each created from a single block by the ancient Greek sculptor Memnon, and despite the fact that he seems to praise the sculptor's skill independently of the size of the stone, this instance of *ex uno lapide* might have had more practical than artistic reasons.⁷ After all, it has been a convention for centuries to carve the statues for Gothic cathedrals, such as the *Ecclesia* and the *Synagoga* in Bamberg, from a single block of stone.⁸ Following this established tradition, Michelangelo's *David*, like Agostino's, was intended to be placed atop one of the buttresses of the apse of the Florentine cathedral. No matter how "reborn" the antique might appear in Michelangelo's representation of the nude's anatomy, his figure was destined for a Gothic function and met the requirements this entailed. It might be somewhat provocative to draw a line from Wilhelm Vöge's *Die Anfänge des monumentalen Stiles im Mittelalter* to Michelangelo's *David*, but the long-standing practical convention of carving monumental statues out of a single block simply for reasons of solidity seems to predate the theoretical concept of *ex uno lapide* by far.⁹

The discussion of the placement of Michelangelo's *David* marks a critical turn insofar as it abandons the medieval perception. Regardless of whether the stoning of the figure was politically motivated or not, the violence that erupted on the first night of its four-day journey from the cathedral to the Piazza della Signoria, where it arrived on May 18, 1504, testifies to the emotional tension that had pent up in the course of half a century. Already in January that year, on behalf of the consuls of the Arte della Lana and of Michelangelo himself, the Opera del Duomo had called a meeting in which about thirty leading Florentine artists expressed their opinions on nine alternative placings. It is indicative of the level of controversy of the debate that the final decision was taken less than a fortnight after its arrival in the square.¹⁰

6 Sergio Risaliti and Francesco Vossilla, *L'altro David*, Florence, Cult Editore, 2010.

7 Leon Battista Alberti, *L'Architettura (De re aedificatoria)*, G. Orlandi (ed.), Milan, Il Polifilo, 1966, pp. 654–5.

8 Matthias Exner (ed.), *Die Kunstdenkmäler von Bayern*, Bamberg, Bayerische Verl.-Anst./Munich, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2015, 1, pp. 430–3 and 441–2, and 2, pp. 1145 and 1878–9. I am grateful to Ulrich Först in Bamberg for his exhaustive information about the statues of *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga* and on the famous *Bamberg Horseman* as well as for indicating the relevant pages in the published inventory.

9 Wilhelm Vöge, *Die Anfänge des monumentalen Stiles im Mittelalter*, Strasbourg, Heitz & Mündel, 1894.

10 Giorgio Vasari, *Le opere*, G. Milanesi (ed.), 7, Florence, Sansoni, 1906, pp. 153–7; Karl Frey, "Studien zu Michelagniolo Buonarroti und zur Kunst seiner Zeit. III," *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preußischen Kunstsammlungen*, 30 (supplement), 1909, pp. 103–80; Saul Levine, "The Location of Michelangelo's



3 Hall with shelters for Michelangelo's statues to protect them from Allied bombings during World War II, ca. 1943, Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia

Irrespective of iconological considerations, the location of a work of art radically alters its nature and has as genuine an impact as a restoration. The *David*, quite simply, is a different sculpture depending on whether it hovers at a distance, high up on a buttress, or towers in front of the church façade; it conveys again a completely different message depending on whether it is positioned in a remote environment like the courtyard of Palazzo Vecchio or the Hall of the Great Council, inside the palace, or framed by the arch in the centre of the Loggia dei Lanzi, whether it is set off under the left arch of the façade, or even pushed around the corner to the side arch of the building, or displayed at the entrance of the seat of the city government. This changing nature continued in 1873, when it was transferred to a newly built, sterile environment at the Accademia delle Belle Arti¹¹, or in 1943, when it had to be covered up to protect it from Allied bombings (figs. 3 and 4).¹² Arguably, the sculpture was less impacted when its arm had been damaged in 1527 and restored in the following years¹³—effectively ending its *ex uno lapide* state—than by its different settings.

David: The Meeting of January 25, 1504," *The Art Bulletin*, 56, 1974, pp. 31–49; Michael Hirst, "Michelangelo in Florence: 'David' in 1503 and 'Hercules' in 1506," *The Burlington Magazine*, 142, 2000, pp. 487–92; Hirst, "Michelangelo...," pp. 45–6.

11 Adolf von Hildebrand, "Michelangelos *David* und die Piazza della Signoria," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 1910.

12 I am grateful to Arnold Esch for pointing this impressive photograph (fig. 3) out to me.

13 Hirst, "Michelangelo...," p. 48.



4 Hall with Michelangelo's statues, 2019, Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia

Although the myth of the Trojan priest Laocoön was contemplated in Florence at the beginning of the 16th century, as is apparent from the fresco initiated by Filippino Lippi in the Medici Villa at Poggio a Caiano built by Giuliano da Sangallo,¹⁴ and although Cristoforo Landino's translation of Pliny's *Natural History* had been published in various editions,¹⁵ there is no evidence that Pliny's description of the famous ancient sculpture as having been crafted *ex uno lapide* had any impact on the tradition that Michelangelo had inherited from Agostino di Duccio together with the old block of marble. In fact, he himself habitually carved his works from single blocks; already for his *Pietà* for Cardinal Jean Bilhères de Laugraulas at Santa Petronilla in Rome, he personally went to Carrara to choose the stone.¹⁶

It was probably the unearthing of the *Laocoön* that brought forth the *ex uno lapide* doctrine—perhaps precisely because it isn't even true! The spectacular events that began with the discovery of the sculpture on January 14, 1506, are well known, yet remain stimulating even beyond the remaining, profound questions. A fair number of quite different pieces of evidence exist, from which we can circumscribe the state of preservation of the sculpture at its discovery: five letters from the first half of 1506 recount the actual event, sometimes in surprising detail, and four more or less independent visual sources depict the sculpture with different levels of accuracy.¹⁷ Just over a decade ago, in 2009, the site of Felice de Fredis's vineyard was identified as being located at number 38 of today's Via Angelo Poliziano.¹⁸ Finally, a close analysis of the pieces of which the group is composed and a review of their surfaces provide further valuable information. The room where De Fredis found the *Laocoön*, at about six *braccia* (more than 3 m) below ground level behind a bricked-up access, is described in the above mentioned documents as being fitted with a "most beautiful floor" and walls of a "wonderful veneer." The posterior part of the altar on which the father is struggling happens to be a restoration made from another type of marble—more distinctly Luna marble (that is, from Italy), whereas the rest of the sculpture is realized in Parian marble from Greece. Only if this block, chiselled in a different, rougher technique than the rest, is already an ancient replacement of the original block (in other words, only if the *Laocoön* was already restored in antiquity), can the group of statues have been standing upright when it was found.¹⁹ Nor is there any trace of the original plinth

14 Arnold Nesselrath, "Laocoonte vive," in F. Buranelli, P. Liverani, and A. Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–7), Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2006, pp. 67–78, here p. 72, figs. 5 and 6.

15 Marco Buonocore, "Plinio il Vecchio, *Naturalis historia*," *op.cit.*, pp. 120–1, no. 4.

16 Hirst, "Michelangelo...," pp. 34–6.

17 Nesselrath, "Laocoonte vive," pp. 68–70.

18 Rita Volpe and Antonella Parisi, "Alla ricerca di una scoperta: Felice de Fredis e il luogo di ritrovamento del Laocoonte," *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma*, 110, 2009, pp. 81–109.

19 Filippo Magi, *Il ripristino del Laocoonte* (*Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, series 3, *Memorie*, IX, 1), Vatican, Tipografia poliglotta vaticana, 1960, pp. 20–3 and 55; Georg Daltrop, *Die Laokoongruppe im Vatikan* (*Xenia, Konstanzer althistorische Vorträge und Forschungen* 5), Konstanz,

into which the various parts would have been inserted, meaning that in 1506, the whole set up was probably unstable and could not have been easily moved. Merely the lack of the right arms of the father and of the younger son are explicitly mentioned by the early sources. The well-known contemporary drawing (now in Düsseldorf) showing the sculpture propped up with wedges and supporting dados, provides a good impression of the unstable state in which the new treasure presented itself.²⁰ The number "1508," written on the back of the sheet alongside two names—Domenico Pisano, one of De Fredis's neighbors, and Michele Credi di Aristotile—is difficult to read as a date if the drawing is taken as a documentation of the state of the *Laocoön* before its departure to the Vatican, where it arrived before March 7, 1506. But if the drawing documents the state of the sculpture in 1508, as it first stood in the Vatican, then the names require further explanation. (So far, the second, Michele Credi di Aristotile, is still unidentified.) In any case, the missing right foot of the younger son in the drawing is an indication that at least some repair was done soon after the discovery of the sculpture, as today the original ankle is attached again.²¹ Incidentally, it is also missing in the engraving by Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, which could, however, be related to the drawing and therefore does not necessarily convey the information independently.²²

Even without speculating on the delicate transport from the Colle Oppio to De Fredis's bedroom and onto Julius II's Belvedere Villa, we know from the letter that Cesare Trivulzio wrote from Rome to his brother Pomponio in Milan on June 1, 1506, that at least Michelangelo and Giancristoforo Romano "deny that the statue was made of a single marble and identify about four joints"²³ It is, in fact, made of seven parts, not counting the antique repair pieces and the previously mentioned reattached original foot of the younger

Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1982, p. 27; Susanne Muth, "Von wegen 'ex uno lapide'. Die geheime Meisterschaft des Laokoon," in S. Muth (ed.), *Laokoon. Auf der Suche nach einem Meisterwerk*, Rahden, Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2017, pp. 353–74, here pp. 356 and 373; Wolfgang Filser, "Überlegungen zu Anstückungen und Reparaturen der Laokoongruppe," in S. Muth (ed.), *Laokoon. Auf der Suche nach einem Meisterwerk*, Rahden, Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2017, pp. 375–86.

20 Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, inv. FP 7032. See Tatjana Bartsch, "Anonimo artista bolognese, *Laocoonte e i suoi figli*," in F. Buranelli, P. Liverani, and A. Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–07), Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2006, pp. 125–6, no. 11; Sonja Brink, *Italienische Zeichnungen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts aus der Sammlung der Kunstabakademie Düsseldorf im Museum Kunstpalast*, 1, Petersberg, Michael Imhof Verlag, 2017, pp. 204–6, no. A 79. I am indebted to Anna Schütz and Inga Scholl for valuable information regarding the verso of the sheet as well as for providing me with a working aid photograph.

21 Nesselrath, "Laocoonte vive," pp. 68–9.

22 Tatjana Bartsch, "Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, *Laocoonte e i suoi figli*," in F. Buranelli, P. Liverani, and A. Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–07), Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2006, pp. 126–7, no. 12.

23 "Questa statua, che insieme co' figliuoli, Plinio dice esser tutta d'un pezzo, Giovannangelo romano, e Michel Cristofano fiorentino, che sono i primi scultori di Roma, negano ch'ella sia d'un sol marmo, e mostrano circa a quattro commettiture." Quoted in Lavin, "Ex Uno Lapide...," pp. 196–7; Sonia Maffei, "La fama di Laocoonte nei testi del Cinquecento," in S. Settim (ed.), *Laocoonte: fama e stile*, Rome, Donzelli, 1999, pp. 85–230, here pp. 108–9.



5 Filippo Magi, casts of the constituting parts of the *Laocoön* group at the Humboldt University of Berlin, digitally assembled, in: Susanne Muth (ed.), *Laokoon. Auf der Suche nach einem Meisterwerk*, Rahden, Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2017, p.38

son, nor the so-called “Pollak arm,” but including the posterior part of the altar in Luna marble (fig. 5).²⁴ Trivulzio, relying once more on the authority of “the first sculptors of Rome,” declares outright that Pliny’s claim is technically impossible: “Because it would be impossible to make secure three large figures, joined in a single block with so many and such wonderful tangles (*mirabili gruppi*) of serpents, without any sort of devices.”²⁵

Whatever may have motivated Pliny’s “*ex uno lapide*,” Trivulzio, despite his objection, tries to use it to explain how skilfully Hagesandros, Polydoros, and Athanadoros have hidden the joints. When one does indeed take the Vatican *Laocoön* apart—as Filippo Magi

24 Muth, “Von wegen ‘*ex uno lapide’*...,” p. 356.

25 “Poiché non si potevano tener salde tre statue di statura giusta, collegata in un sol marmo, con tanti, e tanto mirabili gruppi di serpenti, con nessuna sorta di stromenti.” Quoted in Lavin, “*Ex Uno Lapidē...*,” p. 197; Paola Manoni and Cristina Pantanella, “Cesare Trivulzio, *Lettera al fratello Pomponio*,” in F. Buranelli, P. Liverani, and A. Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–7), Rome, “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 2006, pp. 136–7, no. 23.



6 Filippo Magi, cast of one of the constituting parts of the *Laocoön* group comprising the younger son, 1957, Berlin, Humboldt University of Berlin, in: Susanne Muth (ed.), *Laokoon. Auf der Suche nach einem Meisterwerk*, Rahden, Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2017, pl. 13

did in 1957, or as one can see today in the eight separate casts of the relevant single elements produced by Magi and of which three copies exist (in the Vatican, in Munich, and in Berlin, respectively)²⁶—the ingenious logistics employed by the three ancient sculptors becomes obvious. The amount of forethought required to coordinate the work of the three Rhodian artists exceeds the feat of carving a sculpture *ex uno lapide*. In *De statua* and *De re aedificatoria*, Alberti had admired a similar degree of perfection, described by Diodorus

26 Muth, "Von wegen 'ex uno lapide'..." pp. 353–74; Filser, "Überlegungen..." pp. 375–86.



7 Kai Raffael Nesselrath, photomontage of the cast of the constituting part of the *Laocoön* group comprising the younger son and De Chirico's *Piazza d'Italia*

Siculus, in the way in which the Egyptians created different parts of a statue in distant locations and joined them as if they had been carved by a single artist.²⁷ The *ex uno lapide*, which Michelangelo and Giancristoforo Romano declared impossible in 1506,²⁸ has been approached as an illusionistic challenge by Hagesandros, Polydoros, and Athanadoros, in the manner of a bronze sculptor who has to cast the various pieces of his work so that he can join and solder them together. The charge faced by the masters of the *Laocoön* becomes visually conceivable when one imagines the disparate details contained in a block—e.g., the younger son, the right leg of the father, the anterior part of the altar with some drapery, and in particular the body and a noteworthy loop of a snake (fig.6)—which form a

27 Leon Battista Alberti, *Das Standbild. Die Malkunst. Grundlagen der Malerei*, O. Bätschmann and C. Schäublin (eds.), Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000, pp. 150–1; Alberti, *L'Architettura*, pp. 656–7; Lavin, "Ex Uno Lapidé...," pp. 194–5.

28 Daltrop, *Die Laokoongruppe....*, pp. 15–6; Lavin, "Ex Uno Lapidé...," pp. 196–7.

near-surrealistic composition that would sit nicely in a painting by De Chirico (fig. 7).²⁹ In contrast, the lower leg of the father is of a striking simplicity, and a small element, but becomes immediately comprehensible when, as a counterpart of the whole rest of the contorted figure of the father, one inserts it into the loop of the snake from below.

From this perspective, Michelangelo's criticism of the copy that Baccio Bandinelli made of the *Laocoön* between 1520 and 1525 and in which the sculptor claimed to have surpassed the antique model, is only too pertinent, for merely reducing the number of parts from seven to three ignores the Rhodians' skilfulness and does not really go beyond a mere reproduction.³⁰ Bandinelli could have demonstrated a superior talent by either challenging Michelangelo's assessment of what can or cannot be done *ex uno lapide* or by competing with the Rhodian sculptors' adroitness at hiding the joints of their complex composition. But he did neither. By proposing in his copy a natural position for the lacking arms of the *Laocoön* and his younger son, which he might have previously restored in wax and even attached to the original sculpture,³¹ Bandinelli does not fulfil any voiced or presumed claim.

From the moment of the discovery, the issue of the arms was obviously a topic discussed among artists, as Moderno's³² and Amico Aspertini's³³ considerations suggest. Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli contemplated the question at length in his autograph sketches for his restoration or completion of the sculpture in 1532, a task for which Michelangelo had recommended him to Pope Clement VII. Why Montorsoli eventually opted for the outstretched arm of the father despite its obvious anatomical mismatch, and whether this was merely aimed at improving the visibility of the sculpture across the courtyard behind the colossal river gods in the center, remains open to speculation.³⁴

29 I am grateful to Kai Raffael Nesselrath for kindly producing the suggestive photomontage.

30 Lavin, "Ex Uno Lapide...," p. 198.

31 Orietta Rossi Pinelli, "Chirurgia della memoria: scultura antica e restauri storici," in S. Settimi (ed.), *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, 3, Turin, Einaudi, 1986, pp. 181–250, here pp. 185–6; Ludovico Rebaudo, "I restauri del Laocoonte," in Settimi (ed.), *Laocoonte: fama e stile*, Rome, Donzelli, 1999, pp. 231–58, here pp. 232–3.

32 Timo Strauch, "Galeazzo Mondella, detto Moderno, *Flagellazione*," in F. Buranelli, P. Liverani, and Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–7), Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2006, pp. 155–6, no. 46.

33 Nesselrath, "Laocoonte vive," p. 71, fig. 4.

34 Avignon, Musée Calvet, inv. 996-7-705. Arnold Nesselrath, "Montorsolis Vorzeichnung für seine Ergänzung des Laokoon," in M. Winner, B. Andreea, and C. Pietrangeli (eds.), *Il Cortile delle Statue. Der Statuenhof des Belvedere im Vatikan*, Mainz, Philipp von Zabern, 1998, pp. 166–74; Arnold Nesselrath, "Giovanni Antonio Montorsoli (1500–1563), Studien zur Ergänzung der Laokoongruppe," in *Hochrenaissance im Vatikan: Kunst und Kultur im Rom der Päpste 1503–1534*, exh. cat. (Bonn, Bundeskunsthalle, 1998), Ostfildern-Ruit, Hatje, 1999, pp. 326 and 516–7, no. 237; Paolo Liverani, "Giovanni Antonio Montorsoli, *Disegno per il restauro del Laocoonte*," in F. Buranelli, P. Liverani, and A. Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–7), Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2006, pp. 149–50, no. 39.

While in 1540, Primaticcio still reproduced the antique sculpture in a bronze cast for King François I of France without the newly restored additions,³⁵ soon afterwards the outstretched arm began to dominate the image and afterlife of the *Laocoön* for centuries to come. Whether in graphic representations, sculptures, or restorations and casts documenting different points in history and with different additions to the original, its various forms³⁶ appear like Eadweard Muybridge's sequences of "automatic electrophotographs."³⁷ Whether Cornacchini's heavy marble addition,³⁸ Lessing's discourse, Winckelmann's "*Einfalt, stille Grösse*" (noble simplicity and quiet grandeur), or Napoleon's imperial setting—they all reacted to *Laocoön*'s outstretched arm.³⁹ A critical analysis of the historical casts in the various cast collections around the world—invariably taken from the sculpture as a whole, not from its constituting parts (in other words, following a philosophy entirely alien to the making of the original ancient sculpture)—can probably reveal many subtle changes in the aesthetics of the restorations. One of the strongest impacts of Montorsoli's choice was on Aby Warburg's "pathos formula,"⁴⁰ which may even have received an unconscious or unintended confirmation in situations such as the Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City (fig. 8).

It is a curious historical coincidence that just two years before Warburg coined his intellectual concept, Ludwig Pollak—inadvertently—destroyed one of its icons. In 1903, in an antique shop on the Esquiline Hill in Rome, near where the sculpture had been discovered almost exactly 400 years before, Pollak found the *Laocoön*'s original arm. His discovery confirmed—of course, one is tempted to say—what Bandinelli, Montorsoli, Michelangelo,

35 Amaury Lefébure, "Francesco Primaticcio e collaboratori, *Laocoonte e i suoi figli*, replica dall'antico," in F. Buranelli, P. Liverani, and A. Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–7), Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2006, pp. 150–1, no. 40; Maria Wiggen, *Die Laokoon-Gruppe. Archäologische Rekonstruktion und künstlerische Ergänzungen*, Ruhpolding, Harrassowitz, 2011, pp. 211–8.

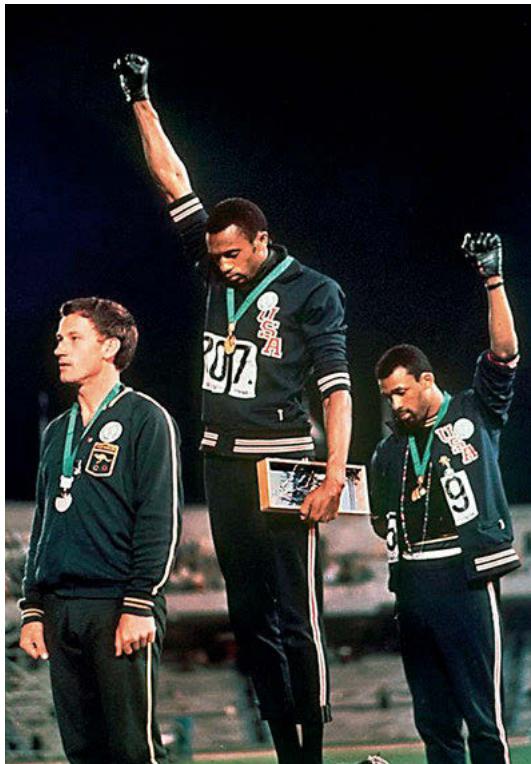
36 See the catalogue F. Buranelli, P. Liverani, and A. Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–7), Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2006, pp. 152–200.

37 Rossi Pinelli, "Chirurgia...," pp. 183–91.

38 Daltrop, *Die Laokoongruppe....*, pp. 18–9, figs. 13 a-c; Rebaudo, "I Restauri..." pp. 233, 238, and 245–7; Paolo Liverani, "Anonimo, Braccio destro sbizzato per un restauro del Laocoonte," in F. Buranelli, P. Liverani, and A. Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–7), Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2006, pp. 180–1, no. 77; Wiggen, *Die Laokoon-Gruppe....* pp. 61–85.

39 Daltrop, *Die Laokoongruppe....*, pp. 23–4; Ian Jenkins, "'Gods without Altars': The Belvedere in Paris," in M. Winner, B. Andreae, and C. Pietrangeli (eds.), *Il Cortile delle Statue. Der Statuenhof des Belvedere im Vatikan*, Mainz, Philipp von Zabern, 1998, pp. 459–69; Schmälzle, *Laokoon....*, 1, pp. 361–408; Rolf F. Sporleder, "Die Laokoongruppe im Wandel der Zeit und des Geschmacks. Zwischen Vergessen und (Wieder-)Entdecken vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert," in S. Muth (ed.), *Laokoon. Auf der Suche nach einem Meisterwerk*, Rahden, Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2017, pp. 161–70.

40 Aby Warburg, "Dürer und die italienische Antike," in D. Wuttke (ed.), *Aby Warburg: Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen*, Baden-Baden, Valentin Koerner, 1979, pp. 125–30, here p. 125; Marcus A. Hurtig, *Antiquity Unleashed: Aby Warburg, Dürer and Mantegna*, London, Paul Holberton Publishing, 2013.



8 Tommie Smith and John Carlos doing the Black Power Salute at the Olympic medal ceremony in Mexico City, 1968

and others had known all along, but which had been ignored by and large under the visual impact of the restoration of 1532, namely, that the antique arm of the father was bent. Pollak bequeathed his most spectacular archaeological finding—which he had identified applying the most genuine of art historical methodologies: a critical visual judgement—to the Vatican.⁴¹ Stimulated by Pollak's contribution, Georg Treu made a first attempt in Dresden in 1906 to reconstruct the group based on the new evidence.⁴² It was not until

- 41 Daltrop, *Die Laokoongruppe...*, pp. 24–6; Paolo Liverani, "Braccio Pollak," in F. Buranelli, P. Liverani, and A. Nesselrath (eds.), *Laocoonte: alle origini dei Musei Vaticani*, exh. cat. (Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 2006–7), Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2006, p. 192, no. 90; Franziska Becker and Simone Vogt, "Ein Zufallsfund und die Konsequenzen: Rekonstruktionen des Laokoon im 20. Jahrhundert," in S. Muth (ed.), *Laokoon. Auf der Suche nach einem Meisterwerk*, Rahden, Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2017, pp. 171–83.
- 42 Ingeborg Raumschüssel, "Zur Rekonstruktion des Laokoon durch Georg Treu," in Kordelia Knoll (ed.), *Das Albertinum vor 100 Jahren. Die Skulpturensammlung Georg Treus. Zur Erinnerung an die Eröffnung*

1957, however, that Filippo Magi finally dared to attach Pollak's arm to the *Laocoön*. This final restoration of the ancient group of statues removed an emblem that had impacted European culture for centuries; basic scholarly analysis had thrown a long-established public opinion into turmoil. For many years, the Vatican therefore exhibited two sculptures side by side in the statue court of the Belvedere: the original with Pollak's arm, and a plaster cast with the outstretched arm as established by the postclassical tradition. (The latter is still standing, rather aimlessly, in a remote corner of the museum entrance.) However, Magi's proposal and his positioning of the arm do not seem conclusive either. Indeed, the issue requires further scrutiny, if only because Magi made improper concessions and, as we now know, the arm appears to have been restored already in antiquity.⁴³ When Primaticcio's cast came to the Vatican for the *Laocoön* exhibition in 2006, we tried to position Pollak's arm on it (fig. 9), a test Magi had been able to perform only from afar and with particular means of exchange.⁴⁴

Different from Michelangelo's "whole" *David*, the "pieced" *Laocoön* is one of the most eminent examples for the way in which restoration, reconstruction, and additions can impact or even define a work of art. It also demonstrates to what extent, as Cesare Brandi put it in his *Teoria del restauro*, its own history becomes an integral part of the work itself.⁴⁵ In the case of the *Laocoön*, this leads to what could be termed a "split personality"—between its antique and its postclassical appearance. It would be interesting to reflect on why some works, such as the equestrian statue of *Marcus Aurelius* (inside the Capitoline Museums and outside in the Capitoline Square), develop a sort of Dostoyevskian double, but not Michelangelo's *David*.

A third aspect I want to consider here does not concern a specific work or a material restoration, but the literary quote "*ex uno lapide*." Although Pliny's *Natural History* had been widely read, even translated and published by Cristoforo Landino, this specific phrase did not trigger any noteworthy reactions before 1506. It seems that the actual discovery of the *Laocoön*, the circumstances, and the previously described constellations gradually resulted in a Mannerist art theory and topicality in the course of the 16th century. For illuminated academies and educational institutions, such as the Ambrosiana in Milan⁴⁶ or Bernhard August von Lindenuau's art school and museum in Altenburg, the *Laocoön* and Michelangelo's *Pietà* became traditional counterparts.

In his recently published novel *Pollaks Arm*, Hans von Trotha recounts the tragic fate of the Jewish art dealer, immortalized through his infallible eye and his incredible

der Sammlung der Originalbildwerke am 22. Dezember 1894, exh. cat. (Dresden, Albertinum, 1994–95), Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, 1994, pp. 277–80.

43 Luca Giuliani and Susanne Muth maintain the position of Laocoön's right arm as proposed by Magi. See "Laokoon reset. Wie die Statue in der Antike ausgesehen haben könnte," in S. Muth (ed.), *Laokoön. Auf der Suche nach einem Meisterwerk*, Rahden, Verlag Marie Leidorf, 2017, pp. 291–330.

44 Magi, *Il ripristino...*, pp. 6–13.

45 Cesare Brandi, *Teoria del restauro*, Turin, Einaudi, 1977, pp. 7–8.

46 Marco Navoni and Alberto Rocca, *The Pinacoteca Ambrosiana*, Novara, Electa, 2013, p. 29.



9 Pollak's arm of the *Laocoön* positioned on Primaticcio's bronze cast during the installation of the *Laocoön* exhibition in the Vatican in 2006

discovery, focusing on the last few hours before he was deported by the Nazis from Rome to Auschwitz in October 1943.⁴⁷ In a fictitious dialogue with a potential saviour, Pollak reflects on the *Laocoön* and perceives the figure as the post-illuminist ancient hero. In his

47 Hans von Trotha, *Pollaks Arm*, Berlin, Wagenbach, 2021.



10 Studio Stefanori (design) and Brammertz Schreinerei (production), *Trojan Horse and Laocoön*, 2006, wood, ca. 600 cm, Aachen, Soers, Equestrian Stadium

medium, uncanny to visual study, Von Trotha breathes afterlife into the sculpture today, which not only is not even considered *ex uno lapide* anymore, but whose image was irreversibly "split" by Pollak's discovery and will never be mended. But the impact of the *Laocoön*'s sculptural appearances goes even further: in digital terms, a computer virus is frequently referred to as a Trojan, although it was really the Trojan priest Laocoön who warned of the "Greek gift" (i.e., the wooden horse) and tried to save Troy and the Trojans. When, as part of the Vatican exhibition for the 5th centenary of the discovery of the *Laocoön*, I was faced with the challenge of conveying its significance to a wider public, I relied on the Trojan horse and juxtaposed its silhouette with that of the statue group (fig. 10).⁴⁸

Digital humanities can foster erudition and might well save our classical education from Ajax's rage, provided we overcome its inherent binary mentality. This will require, from us and from our discipline, clear and open scrutiny of our history, its evidence and remains, whether physical, literary, or visual. It will require consciousness as to what we call a torso or a ruin (which can thereby even gain aesthetic attraction), what is a restoration (even if it might be disputed), what is a reconstruction (which always requires great scholarly honesty when crucial questions cannot be answered and have to remain open for lack of decisive evidence or arguments), or what is a collage (when patching together old

48 Permanently exhibited on the tower of the equestrian stadium (Hauptstadion) in Aachen since 2007.

and new). It may be complicated to achieve a satisfying solution, especially when it aims to be a public statement—as in the case of the Berlin Palace, which does not even qualify as a “falso storico.”⁴⁹ We might, on the other hand, decide to refrain from getting involved in these issues and allow ourselves to simply draw inspiration from a stimulating form or creation and concentrate solely on its aesthetic aspects—and this would by no means amount to a retreat into an ivory tower!

49 Brandi, *Teoria...*, pp. 8, 36, and 47.

**OF SPACES AND PLACES
D'ESPACES ET DE LIEUX**

Caroline S. Hillard

RAFFAELE MAFFEI AND THE DISCOVERY OF AN ETRUSCAN TOMB IN 1508

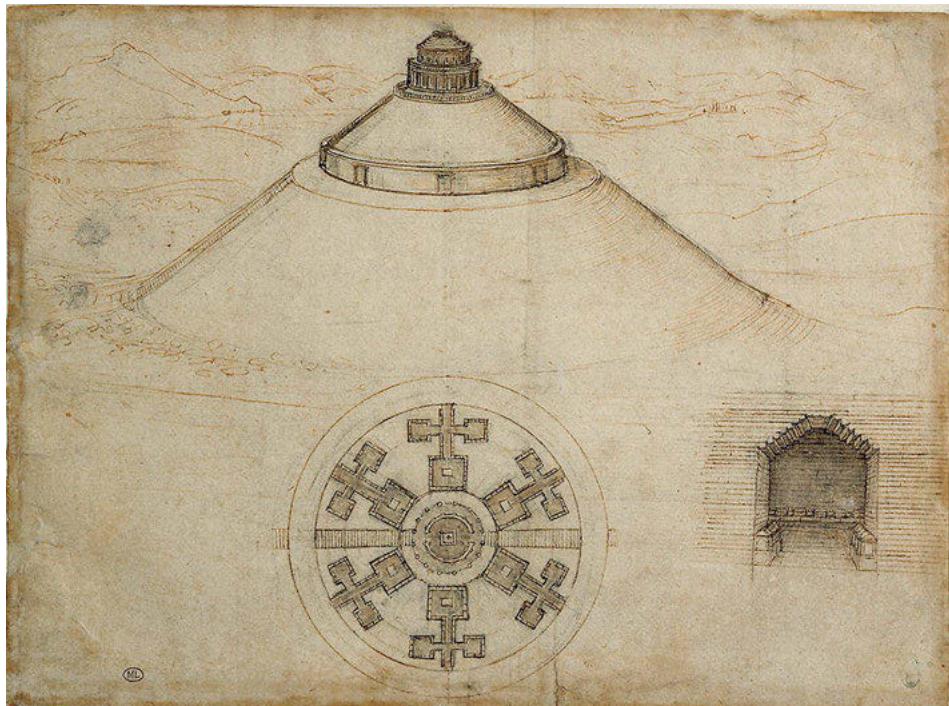
The unearthing of an Etruscan tomb chamber at Castellina in Chianti, near Florence, in January 1508 was among the most memorable archeological events in Renaissance Italy.¹ The tomb is documented in at least three historical treatises and six letters, the earliest of which was written only twelve days after the discovery. These sources describe a lively exchange about Etruscan antiquities among prominent Florentines, including Chancellor Marcello Virgilio Adriani (1464–1521), Cardinal Francesco Soderini (1453–1524), and Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), who produced a drawing based on the find (fig. 1). A generation later, in the 1540s, Florentine authors Pierfrancesco Giambullari (1495–1555), Pier Vettori (1499–1585), and Santi Marmocchini (d. 1548) continued to discuss the find. These sources describe the wonder inspired by the tomb's architecture, grave goods, and inscriptions, and by the Etruscan civilization itself.²

A previously overlooked document in the Biblioteca Guarnacci in Volterra, dated June 9, 1508, provides new evidence for the tomb at Castellina and its reception in 16th-century Italy. It consists of an autograph letter written by the Volterrano humanist Raffaele Maffei (1451–1522), known as *il Volterrano*, to the Florentine statesman Piero Soderini (1452–1522), *gonfaloniere di giustizia* of the Florentine Republic from 1502 to 1512.³ It presents

1 Warm thanks to Daniele Conti for his transcription of the document discussed in this paper, to Joseph McAlhany for his assistance with the Latin, to Jacqueline Ortoleva for her insights on Etruscan artifacts, and to Mary Shea for her help with photographs of Castellina in Chianti. Without their assistance this paper would not have been possible. All errors, however, are my own.

2 An analysis of these sources may be found in Caroline S. Hillard, "Leonardo and the Etruscan Tomb," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 71/3, Fall 2018, pp. 919–58, and Nancy T. De Grummond, "The Curious Case of Castellina in Chianti and Evidence for the Reception of Etruscan Culture in 16th-Century Europe," in J. Swaddling (ed.), *An Etruscan Affair: The Impact of Early Etruscan Discoveries on European Culture*, London, The British Museum, 2018, pp. 113–22. The drawing by Leonardo was first associated with the discovery at Castellina by Marina Martelli, "Un disegno attribuito a Leonardo e una scoperta archeologica degli inizi del Cinquecento," *Prospettiva*, 10, 1977, pp. 58–61.

3 Biblioteca Guarnacci, Volterra (BGV), MS 181 (filza 5377) XLVII.2.2; Giuseppe Mazzatinti, *Inventario dei manoscritti delle biblioteche d'Italia*, 2, Forlì, Casa Editrice Luigi Bordandini, 1892, p. 216, n. 181. The letter is discussed briefly in Nicoletta Marcelli, "Pier Soderini, Leonardo da Vinci e la Battaglia di Anghiari," *Interpres*, 36, 2018, pp. 191–213, here p. 207, with a partial transcription. I am grateful



1 Leonardo da Vinci, drawing of an Etruscan mausoleum, 1508, ink and black chalk on paper, 19.8 × 26.7 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. 2386

substantial new information about not only the tomb, but also about the range of Etruscan antiquities known in Renaissance Italy, their reception, and the methods employed in their interpretation. Additionally, it also documents the growing interest in ancient Etruria at a key moment in Florence's history, the period of Medici exile from 1494 to 1512.

The discovery at Castellina

Before turning to the document in question, a brief look at what was previously known about the discovery at Castellina will help contextualize the new information it offers. One of the most detailed accounts comes from the *Dialogo in defensione della lingua toscana*, a

to Daniele Conti for bringing Marcelli's work to my attention. The document cited in Alison Knowles Frazier, *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, p. 271, n. 8, in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (MS Barb. lat. 2517, fol. 7r–v), is an early copy.

treatise on the Florentine vernacular of about 1547 by Marmocchini, a Dominican friar and biblical scholar who was interested in ancient languages.⁴ Marmocchini describes the fortuitous discovery of a cross-shaped tomb chamber, sealed with slabs of Alberese limestone, during the planting of a vineyard on January 29, 1508. The chamber was packed with grave goods, including clay urns, a silver mirror, gold jewelry, and sculptures of women reclining on alabaster urns, adorned with leaves of silver. The tomb itself was roofed with a corbeled vault, that is, "vaulted without mortar, with great, wide slabs, which, from one course to another, little by little and one above the other, got closer together until they met at the center."⁵ Alongside this description, Marmocchini presents a drawing of the tomb's cruciform plan with its dimensions indicated in Florentine *braccia* ($201 \times 3w \times 5h$, with side chambers of $51 \times 5w$), as well as notes on Etruscan inscriptions.

Another account of the burial comes from a page in the Codex Pighianus, a collection of antiquarian material compiled by the Dutch humanist Stephanus Winandus Pighius (1520–1604) in the mid-16th century. It transcribes a letter by Adriani, first chancellor of Florence from 1498 to 1512, to Francesco Soderini, and is dated February 10, 1508. Adriani notifies the cardinal about the discovery of "a tomb very recently excavated in the Chianti, near the town of Castellina," relating how a farmer unearthed a vaulted cavern while planting a vineyard. Like Marmocchini, he describes a vault "constructed without mortar, but from overlapping stones lying on top of one another so as to be self-supporting." Among other things, he notes the presence of numerous clay urns with gabled lids, images of youths engaged in sport and embracing, and the effigy of a woman holding a golden bowl. The page also includes a drawing of the plan of the tomb, as well as copies of Etruscan inscriptions and sketches of two urns. The dimensions indicated, in *braccia*, are close to those given by Marmocchini: $19.51 \times 3w$, with side chambers of $5w$ and a larger chamber of $6w \times 5.5h$ (fig. 2).⁶

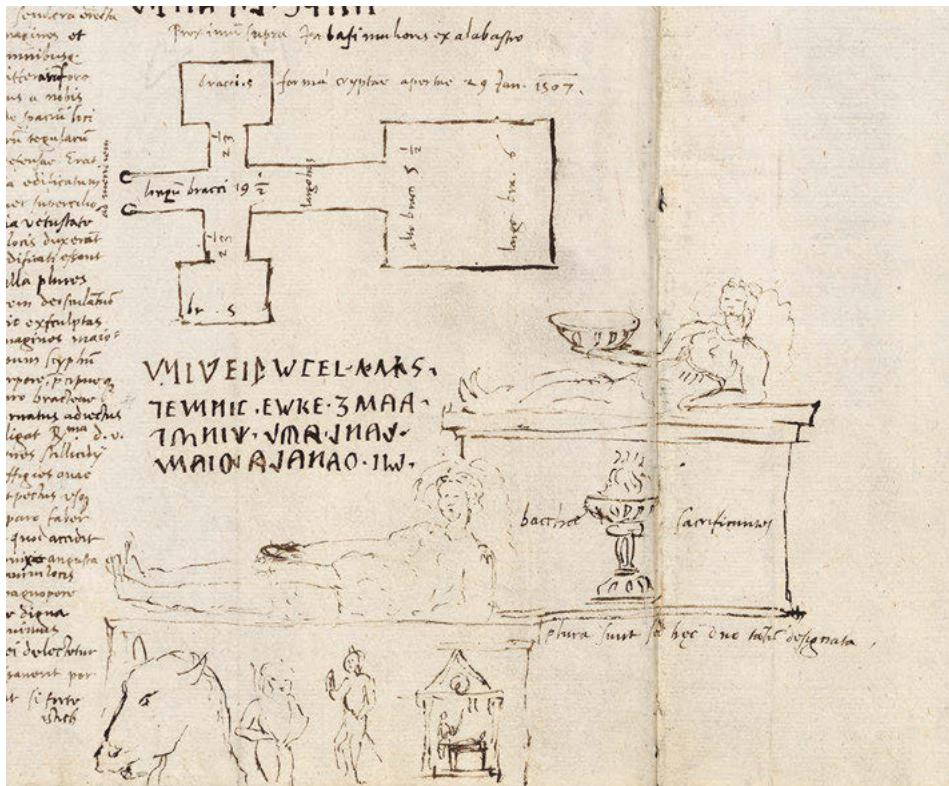
Together, these sources document the discovery of a single cross-shaped tomb chamber enclosed with a corbeled vault, measuring roughly 11.5 meters in length.⁷ The description suggests a monument from the Orientalizing period, that is, from the 7th century BCE.

4 Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Fondo Magliabechiano, classe XXVIII, cod. 20. On the treatise, see Lisa Saracco, "Un'apologia della *Hebraica veritas* nella Firenze di Cosimo I: il *Dialogo in difensione della lingua thoscana* di Santi Marmochino O.P.," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa*, 42, 2006, pp. 215–46.

5 Marmocchini, fol. 14r: "Era in volta senza calcina, cioè lastroni grandi e grossi che dall'una banda all'altra a poco a poco l'uno sopra l'altro si accostavano al mezzo e qui si congiungevano."

6 Staatsbibliothek Berlin, MS Lat. fol. 61, fol. 55v; *Census of Antique Works of Art and Architecture Known in the Renaissance* [URL: <http://census.bbaw.de/easydb/censusID=251796>]. The document was published in the 19th century, in part by Otto Jahn, "Miscellanei archeologici dal Codice Pighiano della R. Biblioteca di Berlino," *Annali dell'Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica*, 24, 1852, pp. 206–16, here pp. 207–8, and in full by Giancarlo Conestabile, *Second spicilegium de quelques monuments écrits, ou épigraphes des Étrusques. Musées de Londres, de Berlin, de Manheim, de la Haye, de Paris, de Pérouse (Italie)*, Paris, Aux bureaux de La Revue archéologique, 1863, pp. 45–7.

7 With one *braccio* equaling 58.4 cm.



2 Codex Pighianus, plan of an Etruscan burial chamber and drawings of two urns, ca. 1550, ink on paper, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Manuscript Department, MS Lat. fol. 61, fol. 55v

One imagines a structure similar to the cruciform tomb chambers within the tumulus of Montecalvario, an Orientalizing monument excavated near Castellina in the early 20th century. This imposing tumulus, about 53 feet in diameter, rises over four burial chambers of dimensions similar to those described in the texts, three of which are cross-shaped (fig. 3). Each chamber is constructed of roughhewn Alberese limestone and is roofed with a corbeled vault (fig. 4).⁸

8 For the excavation reports, see Luigi A. Milani, "Montecalvario: Ipogeo paleoetrusco di Montecalvario presso Castellina in Chianti," *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 2, 1905, pp. 225–42, and Luigi Pierrier, "Montecalvario, presso Castellina in Chianti: Grande tumulo con ipogei paleoetruschi sul poggio di Montecalvario," *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 13, 1916, pp. 263–81.

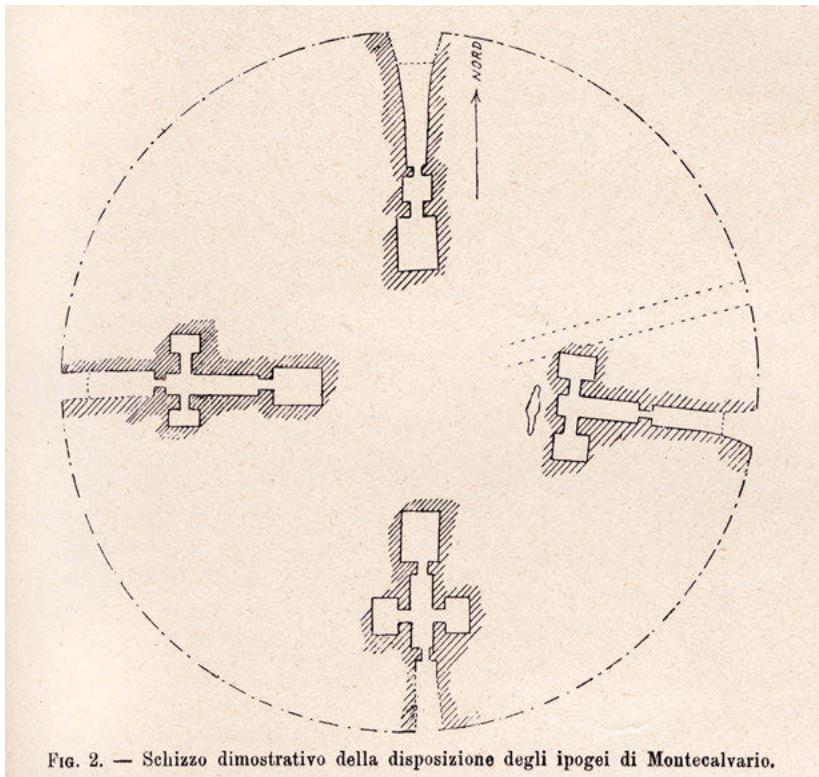
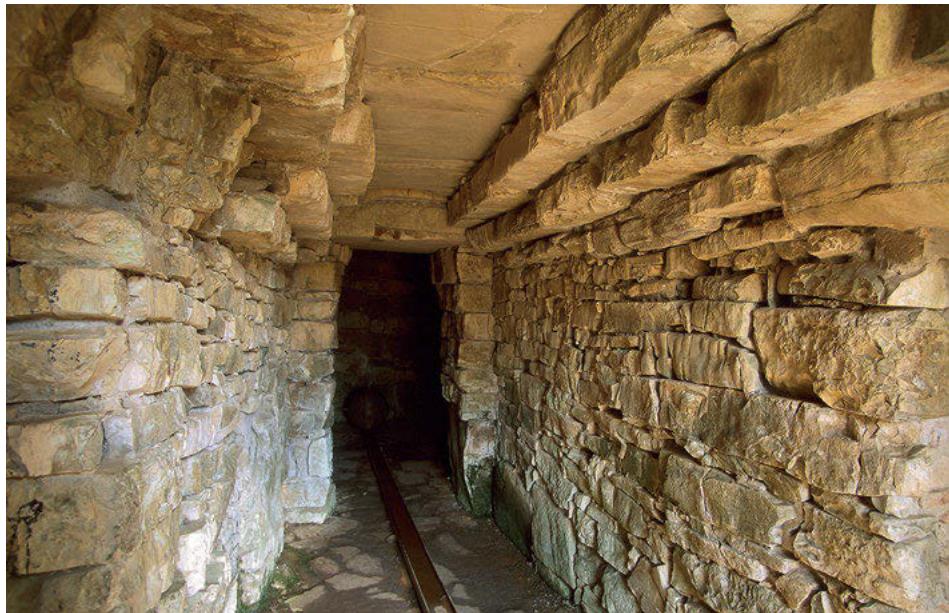


FIG. 2. — Schizzo dimostrativo della disposizione degli ipogei di Montecalvario.

3 Tumulus of Montecalvario, plan, Castellina in Chianti, in Luigi Pernier, "Montecalvario, presso Castellina in Chianti: grande tumulo con ipogei paleoetruschi sul poggio di Montecalvario," *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 1916, 2, p. 265

Given its proximity to Castellina, many scholars have assumed that the tomb described in the documents was in fact part of the tumulus of Montecalvario.⁹ Others, however, have

9 Milani, "Montecalvario...," pp. 225–6, and Luigi Pernier, "Ricordi e monumenti archeologici della Valdelsa e del Chianti," *Miscellanea storica della Valdelsa*, 33/2–3, 1925, pp. 1–104, here p. 99, already raise the possibility that Montecalvario was the same monument discussed by Marmocchini. Other studies that conflate the two monuments include Carlo Pedretti, *Leonardo, Architect*, trans. S. Brill, New York, Rizzoli, 1985 (1978), p. 123; Martin Kemp and Jane Roberts, *Leonardo da Vinci Artist, Scientist, Inventor*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989, p. 205; Carlo Starnazzi, *Leonardo: From Tuscany to the Loire*, Foligno, C. B. Cartei & Bianchi, 2008, p. 145; Renaud Temperini, *Léonard de Vinci au Louvre*, Paris, Scala, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2003, p. 53; Jack Freiberg, *Bramante's Tempietto, the Roman Renaissance, and the Spanish Crown*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 119; Pietro C. Marani and Maria Teresa Fiorio (eds.), *Leonardo da Vinci 1452–1519: The Design of the World*, exh. cat. (Milan, Palazzo Reale, 2015), Milan, Skira, 2015, p. 567, no. VIII.10; Gilda Bartoloni and Piera Bocci Pacini, "The Importance of Etruscan Antiquity in the Tuscan



4 View into an Etruscan tomb chamber, 7th c. BCE, limestone, tumulus of Montecalvario

noted that this identification poses problems, which Nancy De Grummond examines in depth in a 2018 study.¹⁰ She stresses that Marmocchini and Adriani seem to describe grave goods from the Hellenistic period only, while “none of the objects in the Renaissance reports bring to mind artefacts of Orientalising Etruscan culture that might be associated with the multitude of objects [...] found at Montecalvario.”¹¹ Although the Etruscans are known to have reused older tombs for their burials, no evidence of such reuse at Montecalvario was uncovered during the 20th-century excavations. She also points out elements in Leonardo’s drawing that are inconsistent with Montecalvario, such as the inclusion of pillars, a bench, and regular paving stones within the tomb chamber, the monumental stairway and entrances leading into the tomb chambers, the treatment of the masonry and the direction of the corbeling, and the presence of a chapel on the tumulus’s peak. These inconsistencies show that “if the drawing took any inspiration from

Renaissance,” in Jane Feijer *et al.* (eds.), *The Rediscovery of Antiquity: The Role of the Artist*, Copenhagen, Museum Tusculanum Press/University of Copenhagen, 2003, pp. 449–79, here p. 458; and Carmen Bambach, *Leonardo Rediscovered*, 3, New Haven/London, 2019, pp. 123–4.

¹⁰ De Grummond, “The Curious Case...,” pp. 117–9. See also Martelli, “Un disegno attribuito a Leonardo...,” p. 60, and Giuseppina Carlotta Cianferoni, *Gli etruschi nel Chianti*, Radda in Chianti, Centro di Studi Storici Chiantigiani, 1991, pp. 32–3.

¹¹ De Grummond, “The Curious Case...,” p. 117.

Montecalvario, it was rather general, and should not be used as archaeological evidence for the appearance or identification of the Etruscan tomb.”¹²

Maffei's account

Maffei was a significant figure in Italian humanism of the late Quattro- and early Cinquecento. Born in Rome to a prominent Volterrano family with ties to the Curia, he entered papal service in 1468. A student of Greek, Latin, and classical history, he produced translations of Xenophon, Procopius, and Homer, and published his encyclopedic *Commentaria urbana* (Urban Commentaries) in Rome in 1506. The following year, he withdrew to Volterra, where he spent the rest of his life writing on church doctrine and devotion while maintaining a robust correspondence with his contacts in Rome and elsewhere.¹³

The letter in question is found in a collection of sixty autograph letters by the Volterrano humanist, six of which were written to the Florentine *gonfaloniere*. It describes a visit to an area of archaeological finds at an unnamed location, where Maffei was received by a certain Giuliano and permitted to view the ruins and grave goods. He describes a number of artifacts, which he believed to be “nearly two thousand years old, judging by their Etruscan inscriptions.”¹⁴ Of these, a bronze urn—a drawing of which Soderini already possessed—was “the most remarkable of all, being about four cubits tall and a little less in girth, and formerly gilded,” and “because of its antiquity [it] is in poor condition and fragile in every part, so that if it is ever moved it will barely hold together.”¹⁵ He posits that “it probably belonged to a *lucumo* [chief magistrate] of Etruria, who ruled over the others,” reasoning that “it was lying next to an iron ax, with helmets and the weaponry of a war-horse and some trumpets, which are the indications of a leader.”¹⁶ He goes on to describe the discovery of “numerous statues of recumbent women that had been uncovered and were dis-

12 *Ibid.*, p. 118.

13 John D'Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome: Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation*, Baltimore/London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983, pp. 82–5; Stefano Benedetti, “Maffei, Raffaele,” *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 67, 2006, October 9, 2019 [URL: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/raffaele-maffei_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/].

14 BGV, MS 181 (filza 5377) XLVII.2.2: “ut tempus annorum fere duum millium ex litteris etruscis.”

15 *Ibid.*: “urna illa, cuius habes apographum, nihil inter haec spectabilius, alta cubitis fere quattuor, lata paulominus aenea, ut deprenditur, olim aurata, prae vetustate caduca fragilisque tota, ut forte mota vix consistat.”

16 *Ibid.*: “Lucumonis alicuius Aetruriae, qui ceteris imperabat, verisimile fuisse, presertim quod cum securi ferrea et galeis et bellatoris equi armaturis insuper et tubis, que signa ducis erant, iacebat.” See Raffaele Maffei, *R. Volaterrani Commentariorum Urbanorum* [Libri XXXVIII], Rome, Joannes Besicken, 1506 (henceforth *Commentaria*), IV, fol. 44r: “lucumones, qui magistratus Aetruriae fuerant annuisque imperiis Heturiam regebant.” For a modern edition of the *Commentaria urbana* with extensive commentary, see José Antonio Cadenas Navarro, *Los Commentarii urbani de Raffaele Maffei Volterrano: sentido, forma y edición de una enciclopedia latina del Renacimiento*, PhD diss., Universidad de Valladolid, 2016, June 26, 2020 [URL: <https://uvadoc.uva.es/handle/10324/39254>].

played," which "were all in alabaster, like most [such urns] at Volterra, but looked like alabastrite."¹⁷ He further notes the presence of "a number of vessels for sacrificial use, which Homer calls tripods" and "a lot of gold picked out of the soil and mud."¹⁸

After this discussion of the grave goods, Maffei turns to the tombs themselves, noting that they were built "in the same style as those of the martyrs in Rome, but smaller." It is noteworthy that here Maffei writes about multiple tombs, providing a few details about their specific location: "at a higher part of the hill, overlooking the castle, there are more crypts a short distance apart, and one in particular that is vaulted with a wall of huge stones above it. I think that [Giuliano] need only to keep searching and he will find even more; indeed, I hear that he has already found some, where silver riches and bowls were found, if the news is true."¹⁹

Recognizing that this burial site must have been tied to an ancient settlement, Maffei next addresses the question of where such a settlement might have been located. Noting that "in the area there is no trace of an ancient city anywhere, as far as I could tell from my inquiries," he posits that it was "perhaps the villa of a prince, from whose ruins the [adjacent] town was easily built." Here Maffei seems to be reasoning that if the tomb of an Etruscan *lucumo* had been constructed adjacent to a city, surely there would be some memory of that city. He must have had both textual as well as physical evidence in mind; he had after all published his *Commentaria* just two years before, the first book of which is an exhaustive work of chorography based on his reading of the classical authors. A princely estate, on the other hand, might have been overlooked by the ancient authors, and, with its ruins absorbed by the existing town, no trace of it would have survived. Anticipating that someone might object to this interpretation, given the distance of the site from a major Etruscan city, he points out that "the villas of the Romans were 30 or 40 miles from the city; it would therefore not be surprising if in Etruria some were 20 to 30 miles away [from their respective cities]. Volaterrae, Faesulae, Rusellae, Clusium, and Vetulonia, all ancient towns, lie within this range."²⁰ In sum, the burial site with its princely tomb must have been associated with the *lucumo* of a major Etruscan center.²¹

17 BGV, MS 181 (filza 5377) XLVII.2.2: "multae muliebres statuae procumbentes extractae monstrabantur, sicuti Volaterris plurimae in gypso omnes."

18 *Ibid.*: "plura vasa sacrificiis apta, tripodes Homero vocata [...] aurum quoque plurimum ex humo lutoque lectum monstrat."

19 *Ibid.*: "Coemiteria sane videntur more illorum, quae Romae sunt martyrum, breviora tamen. In altiore montis parte, quae castello iminet, plures sunt cryptae spatio brevi distantes, una presertim saxorum superne ingentium macerie concamerata."

20 *Ibid.*: "Ex quo villam principis forte viri fuisse putaverim, cuius ruinis id facile oppidum exaedificatum, ubi saepe tumulari [...] soliti. Nam si Romanorum villas consideras, XXX et XL millibus passuum ab Urbe procul fuere. Non igitur mirum et in Aeturia quasdam XX et ad summam XXX abfuisse; in quo spatio Volaterrae, Fusulae, Rosellae, Clusium, Vetulonia, vetustae sane omnes existunt."

21 Of the five, Maffei names Faesulae, Volaterrae, and Rusellae as among the twelve chief cities of the Etruscan federation in his *Commentaria*; see V, fol. 60v (Faesulae), fol. 63r (Volaterrae), and fol. 64v (Rusellae). He moreover refers to the famous tomb of King Porsenna at Clusium described by Pliny the Elder (V, fol. 42v).

While Maffei does not specify the location of these discoveries, there can be little doubt that the letter refers to Castellina in Chianti. The description of a tomb chamber vaulted with enormous stones, found on a hill near a town with a fortress, filled with statues of women recumbent on alabaster urns, matches the accounts of Adriani and Marmocchini. Moreover, the date of the letter—June 9, 1508, barely more than four months after the discovery at Castellina in late January—appears conclusive since no other known 16th-century source ever mentions another find in that year. Details in the account suggest that Maffei was writing not in the immediate aftermath of the discovery, but sometime later: there is no mention here of the moment the tomb was uncovered, with the farmer tilling the soil and the unexpected opening of the chamber. Instead, enough time had passed for Soderini to acquire a drawing of the giant bronze vessel, for the alabaster urns to be removed from their findspot and put on display, and, apparently, for additional tomb chambers to be excavated.

Going beyond the grave goods, the letter offers other clues to the location of the site. As noted above, Maffei posits that the tombs were built near a princely villa located 20 to 30 miles from the ancient cities of Faesulae, Volaterrae, Vetulonia, Rusellae, and Clusium, that is, about 30 to 45 kilometers from the existing towns of Fiesole, Volterra, and Chiusi and the remains of Vetulonia and Rusellae.²² Here one must take into account that Maffei believed that ancient Vetulonia was located at Massa Marittima, about 23 km further north than its actual position, and that ancient Rusellae was at the site of Montalcino, about 40 km northeast of its actual position.²³ His description points to a site somewhere near Siena, between Fiesole to the north, Volterra to the east, and Massa, Montalcino, and Chiusi to the south. Castellina lies about 20 km north of Siena, within the general area Maffei describes, and was at the southern edge of the Florentine territory at the time of Maffei's writing. It makes sense that the *gonfaloniere*, like his brother Francesco and his first chancellor, Adriani, would have had a keen interest in a significant Etruscan find within the boundaries of the Florentine state.

Despite the similarities that Maffei's letter shares with the accounts of Adriani and Marmocchini, it includes many details absent from the previously known documents. Neither of those accounts mentions musical instruments, weaponry, tripods, or a bronze urn of such a massive scale. Whereas the previous accounts describe objects primarily from the Hellenistic period, many of those recounted by Maffei are datable to a much earlier period. Etruscan tripods—three-legged stands designed to support a cauldron—were

22 It seems likely that Maffei was thinking in terms of Roman miles (1.489 km) given his Roman background; he only settled in Volterra the same year the letter was written. For the length of the mile (*miglio*) in different Italian states, see Ronald Edward Zupko, *Italian Weights and Measures from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century*, Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1981, p. 153.

23 Maffei, *Commentaria...*, V, fol. 64v: "In agro autem Senensi Ruselle colonia Plinio uocata inter XII urbes, cuius adhuc uestigia prope Alcinoi montem cernuntur. [...] Vetulonia ubi nunc Massa."

produced in Vulci between 540 and 470 BCE, during the Archaic period.²⁴ The trumpets (*tubae*) mentioned in the letter could be one of two types of wind instrument found in Etruscan tombs: the *cornu*, a large arced horn that was used for giving signals in military situations, or, more likely, the *lituus*, a long trumpet-like instrument, often with a curved end.²⁵ In Etruscan society, the *lituus* was connected to warfare, social status, and funerary ritual, and *litui* have been discovered in burials next to weaponry, particularly in older deposits. For example, a significant votive deposit from Tarquinia, dating to the 7th century BCE, included a bronze ax head, a *lituus*, and a shield, so it is possible that Maffei's description indicates a deposit from around that time.²⁶

Maffei also mentions the "weaponry of a war-horse." In Etruscan culture, horses were used for military purposes and were a sign of high social status. Equestrian bridles and bits, dating as early as the 8th or 7th centuries BCE, were often deposited in the tombs of wealthy Etruscans.²⁷ Hundreds of whole chariots have also been found in aristocratic tombs, the best preserved of which is the Monteleone chariot in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, from the 6th century BCE.²⁸ Excavations at Montecalvario in 1904 in fact revealed the remains of a chariot from the late Orientalizing period, along with other artifacts associated with horses (fig. 5).²⁹

The monumental bronze urn is harder to tie to known Etruscan objects. While bronze vessels such as vases and cauldrons are fairly common Etruscan grave goods, these rarely exceed 80 or 90 cm in height. Its fragile state—described by Maffei as being in danger of disintegrating if moved—could suggest an object made in hammered bronze sheets fastened to a wooden framework, in a manner similar to the bronze thrones found in early Etruscan tombs. This technique was used in a so-called canopic urn in the National Archaeological Museum in Chiusi, for example, and leaves the bronze susceptible to breakage after the wooden framework decays (fig. 6).

While it is impossible to know exactly when the objects described in the letter were produced, all but the alabaster urns with their reclining effigies suggest types that existed at least since the 7th century BCE, and that have been found together in burial deposits

24 Richard de Puma and Christopher Lightfoot, *Etruscan Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013, p. 74.

25 Cristina-Georgeta Alexandrescu, "The Iconography of Wind Instruments in Ancient Rome: Cornu, Bucina, Tuba, and Lituus," *Music in Art: International Journal for Music Iconography*, 32/1–2, 2007, pp. 33–46, here pp. 38–9.

26 Maria Bonghi Jovino, "The Tarquinia Project: A Summary of 25 Years of Excavation," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 114/1, January 2010, pp. 161–80, esp. pp. 168–70. My thanks to Jacqueline Ortoleva for her insights on Etruscan grave goods.

27 See, for example, "Snaffle Bit," Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 10, 2021 [URL: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/29343>].

28 De Puma and Lightfoot, *Etruscan Art...*, p. 47.

29 Milani, "Montecalvario...," pp. 231–3; Giuseppina Carlotta Cianferoni, "Il carro di Anfiarao," in M. Firmati (ed.), *Castellina in Chianti: Museo Archeologico del Chianti senese*, Milan, Silvana Editrice, 2014, pp. 78–81.



5 Etruscan chariot, late 7th–early 6th c. BCE, bronze fragments on modern wood base, Castellina in Chianti, Museo Archeologico del Chianti Senese

from that time. The description could therefore refer to a deposit that dates to about the same time as the architecture of the tomb itself, which would be consistent with the usual Etruscan practice. This is important because few sources before the mid-16th century describe Etruscan objects of such an early date.³⁰ Maffei's text shows that the range and

30 Most appear to have been Hellenistic, especially the common type of urn with a reclining effigy on the lid. See, for example, the account of an Etruscan tomb uncovered near Volterra in John R. Spencer,



6 Etruscan canopic urn, 2nd half of the 7th c. BCE, hammered bronze with terracotta head, about 84 cm, Chiusi, Museo Archeologico Nazionale

variety of objects recognized as Etruscan in 16th-century Italy was broader than previously acknowledged. Additionally, the description of Orientalizing or Archaic artifacts alongside

"Volterra, 1466," *Art Bulletin*, 48/1, March 1966, pp. 95–6. For an overview of the knowledge and reception of Etruscan antiquities, see André Chastel, "L'Etruscan Revival" du xv^e siècle," *Revue archéologique*, 1, 1959, pp. 165–80; Nancy T. De Grummond, "Rediscovery," in L. Bonfante (ed.), *Etruscan Life and Afterlife: A Handbook of Etruscan Studies*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1986, pp. 18–46; Bartoloni and Bocci Pacini, "The Importance of Etruscan Antiquity..." pp. 449–79.

Hellenistic ones resolves a longstanding problem in the previously known sources: both Marmocchini and Adriani describe an Orientalizing structure, but only Hellenistic grave goods, a situation that is difficult to reconcile with Etruscan burial customs. It now seems that Orientalizing objects were there all along.

In light of this new evidence, it is worth revisiting the question of whether Montecalvario could be the tomb in question after all, as it can no longer be excluded on the basis of the grave goods alone. The tumulus is unusual among Etruscan tomb sites in that it is at the highest point in the surrounding area, but this is consistent with Maffei's description of a tomb "on the higher part of the hill, overlooking the castle." The *castellum* in question, after which the town of Castellina is named, is in fact clearly visible from even the lower part of the tumulus today, a view from the summit being blocked by several large pine trees (fig. 7).³¹ The fact that Maffei describes multiple tombs a short distance apart could suggest that further excavation of the tumulus revealed one or more of the monument's other burial chambers, which are in fact "a short distance apart" from each other. Scholars have long noted that the south-facing burial chamber at Montecalvario corresponds with the one described by Marmocchini and Adriani in both its shape, construction, and approximate size. While it is true that Leonardo's drawing includes several features that are inconsistent with Montecalvario, it is clearly only loosely based on real Etruscan architecture and cannot be considered definitive evidence either way.

It is not surprising that Maffei was interested in the Etruscans. His native Volterra—Etruscan *Velathri*—was known to have been founded by the Etruscans, its pre-Roman history testified by the great Etruscan city gate that still stands today (fig. 8). Maffei himself, in the *Commentaria*, describes his homeland as one of the *dodecapoli*, or twelve principal cities of ancient Etruria.³² The *Commentaria* not only illustrates his knowledge of Etruscan history, but it also makes frequent reference to his experience with Etruscan artifacts. It is, in fact, the first printed book to transcribe an Etruscan inscription, which he based on the text inscribed on an ancient sculpture.³³ Maffei's interest in the Etruscans was immortalized in his tomb monument, commissioned by his brother Mario and executed by Silvio Cosini around 1530. Raffaele's unidealized portrait effigy, propped on one elbow and holding a scroll, appears to be modeled after the Etruscan funerary art that he knew well (fig. 9).

In addition to reflecting its author's fascination with Etruscan antiquities, the letter also sheds light on the antiquarian interests of its recipient, head of the reformed Florentine Republic during a period of Medici exile from the city in the early 16th century. It is clear from the letter that it wasn't the first conversation the two men had about Etruscan artifacts. "I have taken up the task of recording this in writing far too late," Maffei writes,

31 Graeme Barker and Tom Rasmussen, *The Etruscans*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 1998, p. 303.

32 Maffei, *Commentaria...*, V, fol. 63r.

33 *Ibid.*, XXXIII, fol. 463r. On the inscription, see Françoise-Hélène Massa-Pairault, "La stele di 'Avile Tite' da Raffaele il Volterrano ai giorni nostri," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité*, 103/2, 1991, pp. 499–528.



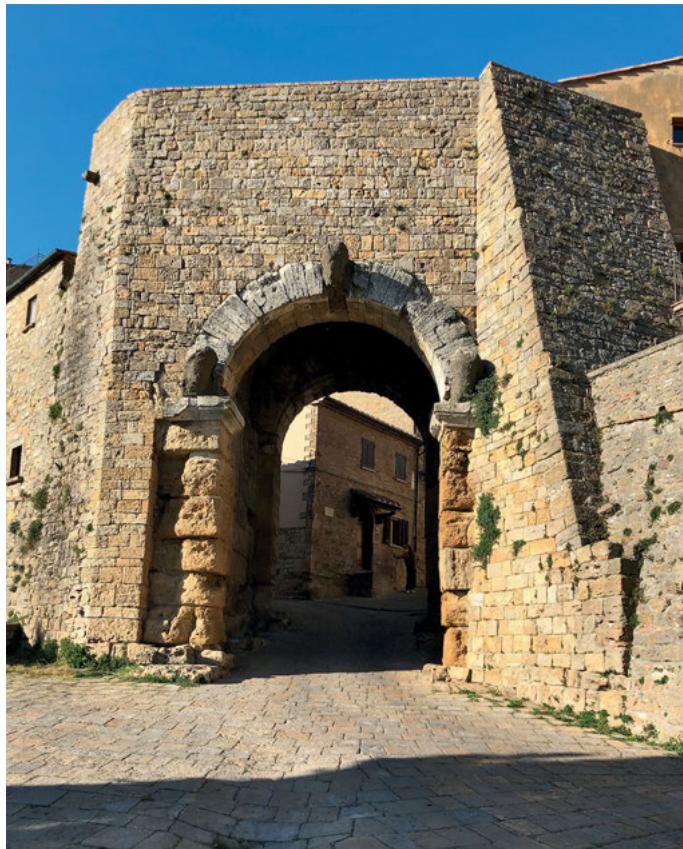
7 View towards Castellina in Chianti from the south side of the tumulus of Montecalvario

"because I [mistakenly] believed that all the facts were already known to you," implying that he was writing at Soderini's request or perhaps to fulfill a promise.³⁴ Soderini wasn't just interested in descriptions of Etruscan antiquities, but also in drawings of them, judging by Maffei's observation that he possessed a rendering of the bronze urn. And Maffei was not the only scholar with whom Soderini was corresponding about the Etruscans. In his treatise, Marmocchini mentioned a letter that the Sienese historian Sigismondo Tizio (1458–1528) wrote to Soderini about the Etruscan language, but this letter remains untraced.³⁵

It is no wonder that the tomb at Castellina, brimming with sculptures, precious metals, and as yet unreadable Etruscan inscriptions, attracted Soderini's attention. Adriani, who penned the earliest and most detailed account of the find, was Soderini's first chancellor, while the recipient of Adriani's letter was the gonfaloniere's brother. As the historiography

34 BGV, MS 181 (filza 5377) XLVII.2.2: "Serum quidem hoc scribendi offitium sumpsi, quod tibi omnia innotescere existimarem."

35 Marmocchini, fol. 14v; Olof A. Danielsson, *Etruskische Inschriften in handschriftlicher Überlieferung*, Uppsala/Leipzig, Almqvist & Wiksell/O. Harrassowitz, 1928, p. 59, n. 1.



8 Etruscan city gate, known as the "Porta all'Arco," 4th–3rd c. BCE, limestone, Volterra

of the foundation of Florence makes clear, Florentines had long been interested in their region's Etruscan past. A tradition extending at least to the 13th century held that, although founded by the Romans, ancient Florence was inhabited by Romans and Etruscans alike, the latter having settled in the new city after the Romans destroyed their nearby home of Fiesole. In the 1420s, Leonardo Bruni celebrated the legacy of Etruria and praised the wealth, power, and religious piety of the Etruscans in his *History of the Florentine People*, and Florentine humanists from Salutati to Machiavelli all emphasized their role in founding the city.³⁶ On top of this long-standing narrative, the Etruscans achieved new importance around 1500 thanks to the work of Annius of Viterbo (Giovanni Nanni, 1432–1502), whose *Antiquitates*, a lengthy compendium of forgeries dealing with Italy's prehistory, was

36 Giovanni Cipriani, *Il mito etrusco nel rinascimento fiorentino*, Florence, Olschki, 1980, esp. pp. 1–69.



9 Silvio Cosini, effigy of Raffaele Maffei, ca. 1529–33, marble, Volterra, church of San Lino

published in Rome in 1498, just a decade before the discovery at Castellina.³⁷ Scholars have long recognized the influence of Annius's version of Etruscan history on the work of the Accademia Fiorentina in promoting the cultural politics of Cosimo I de' Medici (*reg.* 1537–74) in the 1540s.³⁸ The case of Castellina in Chianti reminds us that Renaissance Etruscan

37 For an overview of Annius's life and career, see Roberto Weiss, "Traccia per una biografia di Annio da Viterbo," *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 5, 1962, pp. 425–41, and Ingrid Rowland, *The Culture of the High Renaissance: Ancients and Moderns in 16th-Century Rome*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 53–9. For analyses of his writings and influence, see Walter Stephens, "When Pope Noah Ruled the Etruscans: Annius of Viterbo and His Forged 'Antiquities,'" *MLN*, 119/1, January 2004, pp. 201–23; Walter Stephens, *Giants in Those Days: Folklore, Ancient History, and Nationalism*, Lincoln, NE, University of Nebraska Press, 1989, pp. 98–138; Walter Stephens, "The Etruscans and the Ancient Theology in Annius of Viterbo," in P. Brezzi and M. de Panizza Lorch (eds.), *Umanesimo a Roma nel Quattrocento*, New York, Barnard College, Columbia University, 1984, pp. 309–22; Anthony Grafton, "Invention of Traditions and Traditions of Invention in Renaissance Europe: The Strange Case of Annius of Viterbo," in A. Grafton and A. Blair (eds.), *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990, pp. 8–38.

38 See Caroline S. Hillard, "Mythic Origins, Mythic Archaeology: Etruscan Antiquities in 16th-Century Narratives of the Foundation of Florence," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 69/2, Summer 2016, pp. 489–528,

studies were not exclusively a Medicean phenomenon, and that the pride and interest in the Etruscan legacy also thrived in the Soderini Republic.

Text of Maffei's letter

"Petro Soderino vexillifero perpetuo Raphael Volaterranus salute. Serum quidem hoc scribendi officium sumpsi, quod tibi omnia innotescere existimarem. Ubi apste discessi, a Iuliano humaniter exceptus, ilico, quanquam imbre paulum impediente, vidi omnia, non tamen omnia deprendi, nisi ex coniectura quedam, ut tempus annorum fere duum millium ex litteris etruscis, urna illa, cuius habes apographum, nihil inter haec spectabilius, alta cubitis fere quattuor, lata paulominus aenea, ut deprenditur, olim aurata, prae vetustate caduca fragilisque tota, ut forte mota vix consistat. Lucumonis alicuius Aetruiae, qui ceteris imperabat, verisimile fuisse, presertim quod cum securi ferrea et galeis et bellatoris equi armaturis insuper et tubis, que signa ducis erant, iacebat. Neque ego illud confractum tubarum instrumentum aliud quam castrense fuisse existimo. Iuxta vero in parte alia multae muliebres statuae procumbentes extractae monstrabantur, sicuti Volaterris plurimae in gypso omnes, quanquam alabastri ostendunt: gypsum enim in alta defossum tellure duritie ac conspicuitate, ut est deprenum, commendatur. Sunt praeterea plura vasa sacrificiis apta, tripodes Homero vocata; aurum quoque plurimum ex humo lutoque lectum monstrat, ut putant auri convertores, ramenta inter cineros fuisse. Veniam ad locum. Coemiteria sane videntur more illorum, quae Romae sunt martyrum, breviora tamen. In altiore montis parte, quae castello iminet, plures sunt cryptae spatio brevi distantes, una presertim saxorum superne ingentium macerie concamerata, satisque, existimo, si vestigare perget, alias inveniet, quanquam audio iam invenisse, ubi gaza argentea nonnulla et paterae quedam, si verus nuntius. Urbis in ea parte antiquae vestigia, uti sane sum percunctatus, nusquam apparent. Ex quo villam principis forte viri fuisse putaverim, cuius ruinis id facile oppidum exaedificatum, ubi saepe tumulari [...] soliti. Nam si Romanorum villas consideras, XXX et XL millibus passuum ab Urbe procul fuere. Non igitur mirum, et in Aetruria quasdam XX et ad summam XXX abfuisse; in quo spatio Volaterrae, Fesulae, Rosellae, Clusium, Vetulonia, vetustae sane omnes existunt. De his itaque antiquarios eruditiores consules. Elogium mitto nemini visum, quod tuae dignitati et illius existimationi ac meritis congruere mihi videbatur. Tu qui emuntis es naribus, adde, dele, superadde, castiga, muta, quod acervavi dispensa, quod numeravi expende, quicquid ante in eo desiderabas, gratum fuerit intelligere. Vale, mi here, cui me plurimum commendo. Volaterris V eidus iunii MCCCCCVIII."

with additional bibliography, as well as Ann Moyer, "Noah on the Janiculum, Dardanus in Fiesole: Medieval Legends and Historical Writing in 16th-Century Florence," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 19/2, Fall 2016, pp. 335–57.

Florian Métral

UNE POÉTIQUE DE L'ARCHAÏQUE

Sur la Loggia de Raphaël (1516–1519)

Arkhé

On ne saurait aujourd’hui retirer du terme « archaïque » autre chose qu’une impression négative. Après tout, la caractéristique d’un archaïsme – un discours, une pratique, une production – n’est-elle pas d’être le reflux d’une époque dont on considère qu’elle n’est plus ou ne peut plus être, de s’offrir comme un lieu de repli rassurant face à un présent jugé incertain ?

Ainsi réduit à la chose du passé, dépassée, démodée, désuète, anachronique, arriérée, primitive et fondamentalement non-moderne, l’archaïque apparaît comme l’instrument privilégié d’une conception tantôt linéaire tantôt cyclique de l’histoire, qui a longtemps irrigué (et irrigue encore) le champ des sciences humaines et sociales notamment l’histoire de l’art. Henri Focillon dans *la Vie des formes* (1934) nomme ainsi « archaïsme » cet « état expérimental [...] où le style cherche à se définir »¹, faisant notamment référence par ces mots aux débuts de l’art grec – la statuaire dite « archaïque » des VIIe-Ve siècles avant notre ère où s’observent les évolutions formelles des *Korés* et des *Kouroi*².

Hubert Damisch notait dans *Théorie du Nuage* (1972) qu’il n’y a guère de « notion plus équivoque que celle d’archaïsme »³. L’histoire complexe du terme lui donne assurément raison. Le mot, qui semble apparaître dans la langue française à partir du XVII^e siècle, relève

* Je tiens à adresser mes chaleureux remerciements à Henri de Riedmatten pour l’invitation à ce colloque, et ses remarques sur ma contribution aux côtés de celles de Fabio Gaffo, Jérémie Koering, Arnold Nesselrath et Beat Wyss.

- 1 Henri Focillon, *La vie des formes*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1943, p. 16. Focillon précise en outre que le terme peut se voir conférer « une acceptation péjorative ou favorable, selon que l’on y voit un grossier balbutiement ou une verte promesse, ou plutôt selon le moment où nous nous trouvons nous-mêmes placés ».
- 2 Sur l’élaboration de la catégorie historiographique de l’archaïque grec, voir Pascal Payen, « Archaïsme et époque archaïque en Grèce ancienne. Remarques sur la constitution d’une origine (XVI^e–XX^e siècles) », *Ktēma : civilisations de l’Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome antiques*, n° 31, 2006, p. 17–31.
- 3 Hubert Damisch, *Théorie du nuage. Pour une histoire de la peinture*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1972, p. 63.

du champ de la critique littéraire et désigne l'imitation des anciens dans un style considéré comme suranné⁴. Cependant, davantage que le jugement négatif émis à l'endroit de l'archaïsme – défaut ou vice de l'*elocutio* –, c'est sa dimension souvent intentionnelle qui lui confère tout son intérêt et doit retenir ici l'attention. Dans *Early Netherlandish Painting* (1953), Erwin Panofsky découvre dans l'art de la génération des Gérard David (vers 1460–1523), Quentin Metsys (vers 1466–1530) et Jan Gossaert (vers 1478–vers 1532) des tendances archaïques qui se manifestent dans un retour conscient et assumé à des modèles, des formes, des motifs et des techniques élaborés par les figures fondatrices de l'art flamand⁵. Dans *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (2011), Alexander Nagel dresse un constat semblable au sujet de quelques tableaux d'autel de Fra Bartolomeo (1472–1517), Raphaël (1483–1520) ou Andrea del Sarto (1486–1530) qui apparaissent comme « des retours à l'art antérieur, un art qui se caractérise par son éloignement dans le temps et dans l'espace, originaire, en un mot, archaïque »⁶.

Entendu à un niveau poétique – autrement dit sur le plan du faire ou de la *création artistique* –, l'archaïque peut donc se comprendre comme une *restauratio* de l'art. Il est, pour reprendre une formule de Michel Foucault, ce « fragment de passé dans un présent »⁷. Et son intentionnalité, évidente dans nombre de cas, le fait moins apparaître comme une « forme fossilisée du passé » que comme cette « dimension, toujours active, du présent »⁸. Ainsi que l'expose encore Paul Zumthor, « ce mot implique, fondamentalement et simultanément, une double notion : celle d'être-passé et de redevenir-présent »⁹.

Issu du latin *archaicus*, lui-même dérivé du grec *arkhaikós*, les termes *archaïsme* et *archaïque* sont tous deux construits à partir de la racine *arkhè*, mot qui désigne une instance de la pensée et une modalité de connaissance du monde qui se rapportent aux prémices et aux commencements, à l'origine et à l'originale, à la cause ou au principe, mais qui désigne également la personne qui ordonne et préside, l'individu qui commande et gouverne, la figure du pouvoir et de l'autorité. Le fait qu'au v^e siècle avant notre ère Aristophane dans

4 Le terme archaïsme semble pour la première fois attesté en français au xvii^e siècle dans une lettre de Jean Chapelain (1595–1674) qui, au sujet d'un poète espagnol souhaitant donner davantage de « gravité » à son discours, déclare qu'il « affecte l'archaïsme », cité dans Paul Zumthor, « Introduction aux problèmes de l'archaïsme », *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises*, n° 19, 1967, p. 11–26, ici p. 11.

5 Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1966 (1953), vol. 1, p. 38 et sqq. Pour une mise en perspective de l'archaïque chez Panofsky, voir notamment Joseph L. Koerner, *The Moment of Self-portraiture in German Renaissance Art*, Chicago/Londres, The University of Chicago Press, 1993, p. 122.

6 « reversions to earlier art, art that is characterized as being remote in time and place, originary, in a word, archaic », Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art*, Chicago/Londres, The University of Chicago Press, 2011, p. 86. Traduction de l'auteur.

7 Michel Foucault, « Le chah a cent ans de retard », dans *Id., Dits et écrits*, 1954–1988. II, 1976–1988, Daniel Defert et François Ewald (éd.), Paris, Gallimard, 2001, p. 679–683, ici p. 680.

8 Dominique Clévenot, « La présence de l'archaïque », dans Dominique Clévenot (éd.), *L'archaïque contemporain*, Pau, Presses universitaires de Pau et des pays de l'Adour, 2011, p. 13–30, ici p. 13.

9 Zumthor, « Introduction aux problèmes de l'archaïsme », art. cit., p. 13.

les *Nuées* qualifie Zeus de « vieilleries (*archaika*) »¹⁰ est certes un trait d'humour de la part du poète, mais dont la pertinence tient justement à la fonction du dieu : celle d'être le souverain de l'Olympe et le principe de toutes choses dans le cosmos. La dimension cosmique justement, et plus encore cosmogonique, de l'archaïque est évidente chez Anaximandre, qui un siècle auparavant l'emploie pour désigner l'*apeiron* – ce principe originel (*arkhé*) du cosmos, « un indéfini », une « sorte de nébuleuse ou de brouillard sans contours précis », un « flou indéfiniment plastique »¹¹. Plus tard, Aristote quant à lui convoque dans la *Physique* la notion d'*arkhé kineseos*, le « principe de mouvement » qui régit la nature du monde¹². Au r^e siècle de notre ère, le philosophe juif Philon d'Alexandrie parlera à son tour d'*arkhé geneseos*, de principe de genèse, de naissance et de génération pour qualifier Dieu, Créateur tout-puissant et autorité suprême du monde chrétien¹³.

Ce qui commence et ce qui commande, telle est la dialectique consubstantielle à l'archaïque. Et si la notion me semblait mériter cet excursus en guise d'introduction, c'est parce qu'elle permet de mettre en évidence ce qui se joue précisément dans ce décor singulier et majeur de la Renaissance qu'est la Loggia de Raphaël, imaginée par l'artiste à la demande du premier pape Médicis, Léon X (1513–1521), pour le palais apostolique du Vatican et réalisée, avec l'aide de son atelier, entre 1516 et 1519 (fig. 1)¹⁴.

In principio

Dans l'édition de 1568 des *Vies*, Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) dit au sujet de la Loggia, qui forme le troisième niveau des Loges du Vatican, vaste ensemble architectural *all'antica* initié par Donato Bramante (1444–1514) à la demande du pape Jules II (1503–1513) :

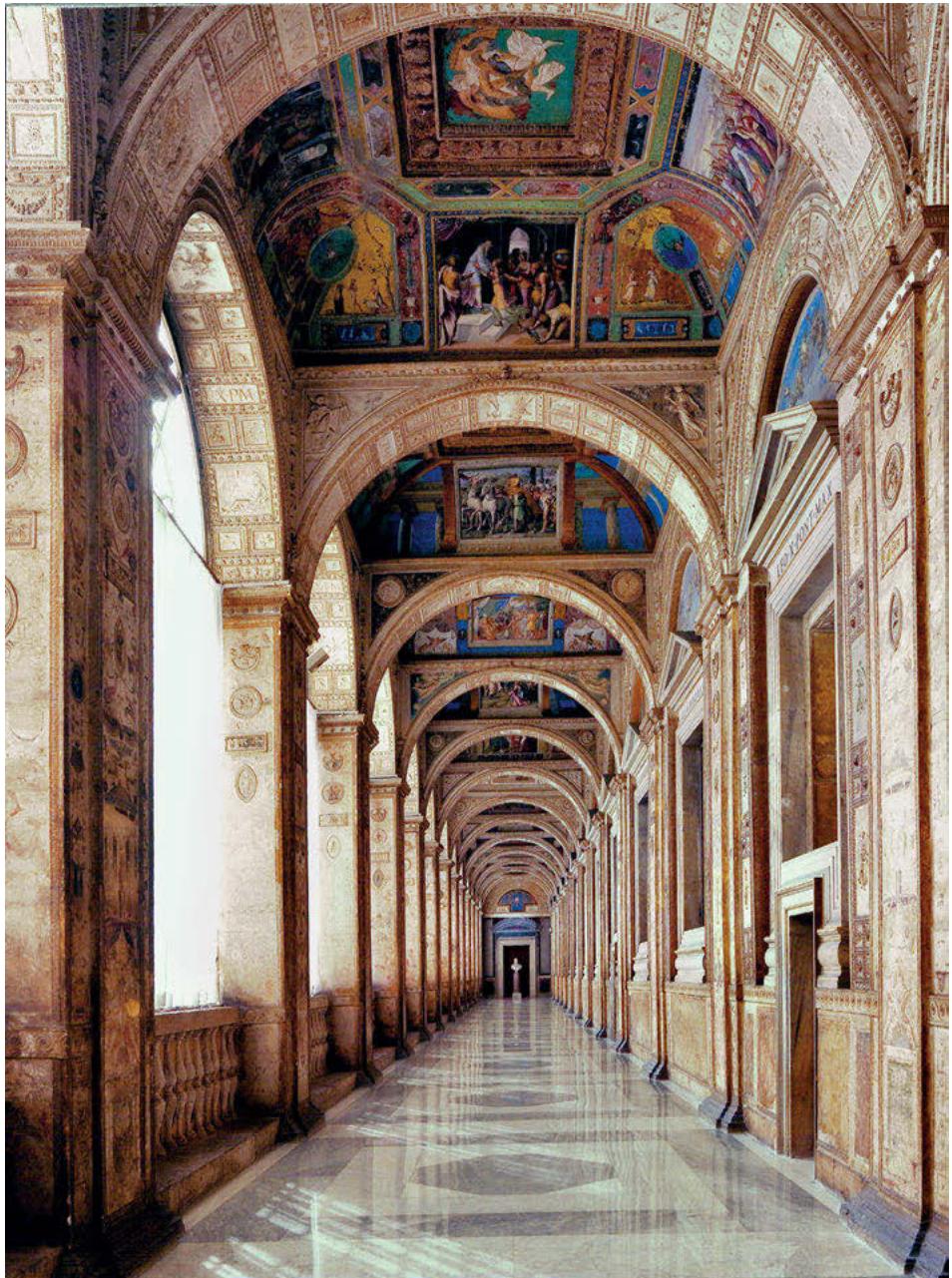
10 Aristophane, *Les Nuées* (*Comédies*. Tome 1), Victor Coulon (éd.), trad. du grec ancien par H. van Daele, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1972, p. 198.

11 Anaximandre, *Fragments et témoignages*, Marcel Conche (éd.), trad. du grec ancien par M. Conche, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1991, p. 64.

12 Aristote, *Physique*, Henri Carteron (éd.), trad. du grec ancien par H. Carteron, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1996, Livre II, 1, 192b, 14–15, p. 58–59. Voir également Abraham P. Bos, « Aristote sur dieu en tant qu'"Arché geneseôs" en opposition au démiurge de Platon », *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne*, n° 27/1, 2009, p. 39–57.

13 Voir Abraham P. Bos, « Philo on God as "archê geneseôs" », *The Journal of Jewish Studies*, n° 60/1, 2009, p. 32–47.

14 Cette étude reprend en partie une analyse déjà développée dans Florian Métral, *Figurer la création du monde. Mythes, discours et images cosmogoniques dans l'art de la Renaissance*, Arles, Actes Sud, 2019, p. 190–197. Sur la Loggia de Raphaël, on se référera essentiellement aux études de Johann D. Passavant, *Raphael d'Urbin et son père Giovanni Santi*, trad. de l'allemand par J. Luntenschutz, Paris, Renouard, 1960 (1839), vol. 2, p. 166–189 ; Bernice F. Davidson, *Raphael's Bible: A Study of the Vatican Logge*, University Park / Londres, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1985 ; Kathryn V. Andrus-Walck, « The "Bible of Raphael" and Early Christian Antiquity », thèse de doctorat, University of North Carolina, 1986 ; Nicole Dacos, *Le Logge di Raffaello maestro e bottega di fronte all'antico*, Rome, Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1986 ; Christiane Denker-Nesselrath, « La Loggia di Raffaello », dans *Raffaello nell'appartamento di Giulio II e Leone X*, Milan, Electa, 1993, p. 39–79 ; Nicole Dacos, *Les Loges de Raphaël. Chef-d'œuvre de l'ornement au Vatican*, Paris, Hazan, 2008.



1 Vue d'ensemble de la Loggia de Raphaël depuis l'extrémité septentrionale, 1516-1519, Cité du Vatican, Palais apostolique

« pour les peintures (*pitture*), les stucs (*stucchi*), l'agencement (*ordine*) et l'invention (*belle invenzioni*), on ne peut absolument pas imaginer plus belle œuvre »¹⁵. Les « peintures » dont parle Vasari font, en premier lieu, référence aux cinquante-deux fresques historiées disposées chronologiquement par groupe de quatre, depuis l'extrémité sud vers l'extrémité nord, sur les voûtes des treize travées de la Loggia (fig. 2). S'y ajoute un second groupe de fresques historiées, des grisailles feignant le bronze, disposées au niveau des soubassements de la paroi faisant face aux baies, liées thématiquement aux peintures des voûtes¹⁶. Les sujets de ces fresques historiées ont été puisés, pour l'immense majorité d'entre eux, dans l'Ancien Testament. Bien que déjà débordé de travail au moment de la réception de la commande, vers 1516, Raphaël pensa manifestement l'invention des *storie* peintes en un temps record, sans perdre en qualité artistique si l'on en juge par le titre de « Bible de Raphaël » qu'on attribua à ce décor au cours des siècles suivants.

La « Bible de Raphaël » met pour l'essentiel en scène l'histoire des patriarches de l'Ancien Testament, élus de Dieu et guides des croyants¹⁷. Suivant au plus près la trame biblique, les peintures des voûtes conçues par Raphaël font se succéder les histoires d'Adam et Ève, et de Noé dans les deuxièmes et troisièmes travées de la Loggia, puis celles d'Abraham, d'Isaac et de Jacob – la grande « triade patriarcale »¹⁸ – dans les quatrième, cinquième et sixième travées. Au niveau de la septième travée, soit au centre exact du décor, ont été peintes les *Histoires de Joseph*. Le récit des accomplissements de Moïse a la particularité de se déployer sur deux travées, la huitième et la neuvième, sans doute en raison de son statut à cette époque de symbole du pape (*typus papae*)¹⁹. Les histoires de Josué, de David et de Salomon prennent quant à elles place dans les dixième, onzième et douzième travées de la Loggia.

15 Giorgio Vasari, « Vie de Raphaël », *Les Vies des meilleurs peintres, sculpteurs et architectes*, André Chastel (éd.), trad. de l'italien par A. Chastel, Arles, Actes Sud, 2005, vol. 1, Livre V, p. 216.

16 Ces fresques, très altérées (repeintes pour certaines, détruites pour d'autres), sont connues notamment grâce à un album de la main de Giovanni Battista Armenini, aujourd'hui conservé à la Nationalbibliothek de Vienne (Cod. Min. 33, Vienne, Nationalbibliothek ; le manuscrit est disponible en ligne : <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/AC14451116>). Certaines planches sont reproduites (en couleur) dans Denker-Nesselrath, « La Loggia di Raffaello », art. cit. et Dacos, *Les Loges de Raphaël...*, op. cit. Nicole Dacos considère cet ensemble de grisailles comme un ajout au projet original de Raphaël, contrairement à Christiane Denker-Nesselrath et Bernice Davidson qui l'intègrent pleinement à l'invention de l'artiste.

17 Pour Dacos, les sujets des *storie* bibliques s'accorderaient à la théologie augustinienne de l'histoire du monde – *ante legem, sub lege et sub gratia* –, voir Dacos, *Les Loges de Raphaël...*, op. cit., p. 193. Davidson quant à elle y voit plus justement un complexe arrangement de thèmes qui se rejoindraient dans la mise en scène de la promesse du sabbat, voir Davidson, *Raphael's Bible...*, op. cit., p. 48.

18 Voir Raymond J. Tournay, « Genèse de la triade "Abraham-Isaac-Jacob" », *Revue Biblique*, n° 103/3, 1996, p. 321–336.

19 Les fresques du Quattrocento de la chapelle Sixtine en sont le meilleur exemple, et elles ne sont pas sans rapport avec la traduction complète de l'œuvre de Philon d'Alexandrie par Lilio Tifernate, entre 1479 et 1486, en particulier le *De vita Mosis*, voir Matthieu Somon, « Moïse ou la fortune de l'allégorisme philonien », dans Anne Hélène Hoog, Matthieu Léglise et Mathieu Somon (éd.), *Moïse. Figures d'un prophète*, cat. exp. (Paris, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du judaïsme, 14 oct. 2015–21 fév.



2 Vue d'ensemble des treize travées architecturales de la Loggia de Raphaël depuis l'extrême méridionale, 1516–1519, Cité du Vatican, Palais apostolique

Il n'est pas inutile de commencer par remarquer que le terme grec de « patriarches » – *patēr* (père) et *arkhé* (origine/principe) – est en soi intéressant puisqu'il contribue à faire de ces derniers les « pères fondateurs » et les figures d'autorité de l'Ancien Testament. Dans la Loggia de Raphaël, leur large présence et surtout la succession chronologique de leurs vies

2016), Paris, Flammarion, 2015, p. 48–51. Voir aussi Métral, *Figurer la création du monde...*, op. cit., p. 147–148.

permettent d'insister sur la généalogie du pouvoir ecclésial qui prend la forme d'une *archéologie* – littéralement un discours (*logos*) sur les origines (*arkhé*) – du christianisme.

La poétique archaïque de la Loggia de Raphaël se révèle encore plus évidente dans le choix des scènes narratives qui ouvrent et concluent le décor : les *Histoires de la création du monde* (première travée) et les *Histoires du Christ* (treizième travée) qui mettent en scène les actions de Dieu le Père et celles du Fils de Dieu, autrement dit la naissance du monde et sa renaissance symbolique dans la personne de Jésus (fig. 3 et 4). Certaines études dédiées à la Loggia ont souligné, sans pouvoir toutefois y apporter une réponse pleinement satisfaisante, l'étrangeté de l'arrangement – l'« *ordine* » tant loué par Vasari – des scènes bibliques qui, après avoir conté les grands événements de l'Ancien Testament (du Livre de la Genèse au Premier Livre des Rois), opèrent un saut chronologique pour le moins soudain jusqu'aux Évangiles et à la vie du Christ²⁰ ; vie déterminante pour le christianisme, cela va de soi, mais limitée à cinq *storie* peintes sur la soixantaine que compte le décor²¹. Comme je l'ai déjà proposé²², un élément de réponse doit être trouvé dans l'exégèse théologique du Prologue de l'Évangile selon Jean, texte majeur de la littérature néotestamentaire, qui s'ouvre par le verset suivant – également cité ici, afin d'en mesurer la portée pour notre analyse, dans la traduction latine de la Vulgate (*Bibbia Poliglotta Complutense*, 1514–1517²³) et dans la translittération grecque de la Septante :

Au commencement était le Verbe et le Verbe était avec Dieu et le Verbe était Dieu²⁴
[Bible de Jérusalem]

Le verset inaugural du Prologue de Jean constitue une reprise explicite du verset liminaire du récit de la création du monde au sein de la Genèse, premier Livre de la Bible :

Au commencement Dieu créa le ciel et la terre²⁵ [Bible de Jérusalem]

La construction générésiaque du premier verset du texte johannique constitue l'un des fondements de l'exégèse typologique de la Bible, pratiquée dès les origines du christianisme et largement promue par les Pères de l'Église, à savoir la mise en correspondance d'épisodes vétéro- et néotestamentaires dont la finalité s'accorde le plus souvent au concept paulinien

20 Voir notamment Davidson, *Raphael's Bible...*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

21 On trouve représenté sur la voûte les scènes de la *Nativité du Christ*, de l'*Adoration des Mages*, du *Baptême du Christ* et de la *Dernière Cène* ; la *Résurrection* était figurée plus bas, au niveau du soubassement.

22 Métral, *Figurer la création du monde...*, *op. cit.*, p. 195–196.

23 La *Bibbia Poliglotta Complutense* (1514–1517) est une traduction multilingue de la Bible entreprise par le cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517), qui fut dédiée au pape Léon X. Sa diffusion demeura néanmoins assez confidentielle avant les années 1520.

24 « In principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud deum, et deus erat verbum ; En arche en ho logos, kai ho logos en pros ton theon, kai theos en ho logos ».

25 « In principio fecit Deus celum et terram ; En arche epoiesen ho Theos ton ouranon kai ten gen ».



3 Raphaël et atelier, *Histoires de la création du monde*, 1516–1519, fresque, Cité du Vatican, Palais apostolique, Loggia de Raphaël

de *recapitulatio* : tout se récapitule, se résume, se révèle dans la vie et l'œuvre du Fils de Dieu²⁶. Dans la Loggia de Raphaël, la disposition spéculaire d'un bout à l'autre du décor des *Histoires de la Création du monde* et des *Histoires du Christ* est l'incarnation même de ce discours typologique, le symbole par excellence de la poétique archaïque qui fait se re-

26 Parmi une ample littérature sur le sujet, voir notamment Jean Daniélou, *Sacramentum futuri. Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1950 ; Pierre Bonnard, « Crédation et nouvelle création dans le Nouveau Testament », *Anamnesis. Recherches sur le Nouveau Testament*, Genève/Lausanne/Neuchâtel, *Revue de théologie et de philosophie*, 1980, p. 71–80 ; Raymond Kuntzmann (éd.), *Typologie biblique. De quelques figures vives*, Paris, Editions du Cerf, 2002.



4 Raphaël et atelier, *Histoires du Christ*, 1516–1519, fresque, Cité du Vatican, Palais apostolique, Loggia de Raphaël

joindre origine et principe, commencement et commandement²⁷. Léon X était à n'en pas douter familier de la typologie johannique, comme suffit à la prouver le portrait exécuté par Raphaël entre 1517 et 1519 (soit au moment de la décoration de la Loggia) où le pape

27 Raphaël avait déjà eu recours à un tel dispositif typologique de mise en scène de l'histoire chrétienne pour la décoration d'une bannière processionnelle – possiblement commandée par la Confraternita della Trinità – représentant la *Création d'Ève* et la *Trinité* (vers 1502–03), aujourd'hui conservée à la Pinacoteca Comunale de Città di Castello. C'est également le cas, comme j'ai eu l'occasion de le montrer, pour la chapelle Chigi de Santa Maria del Popolo, élaborée par l'artiste dans les années 1510, voir Métral, « Au commencement était la fin. Retour sur la chapelle Chigi de Santa Maria del Popolo à Rome », *Studiolo*, 12, 2015, p. 154–183.

apparaît, comme l'a montré Bernice Davidson, en train d'ausculter à la loupe le manuscrit de la *Bible d'Hamilton* (1350–1360) précisément ouvert aux pages du Prologue de Jean²⁸.

Il faut encore remarquer que dans la première et la dernière travée de la Loggia la figuration de ce discours typologique ne se limite pas seulement aux *storie* peintes, mais fonctionne également grâce au registre ornemental des voûtes qui présente un dispositif illusionniste en tous points semblable, en l'occurrence un plafond à caissons peuplé d'anges. Pour le dire autrement, l'ornementation dans le décor de Raphaël se voit confier, au même titre que l'iconographie, une fonction d'exégèse visuelle de la typologie biblique ; ce qui constitue de la part de l'artiste une démarche artistique incontestablement novatrice. Dernier élément directement lié à ce qui vient d'être dit : la particularité de la Loggia est de ne pas se limiter à une typologie christologique d'ascendance paulinienne et johannique. Mais de laisser entrevoir une typologie spécifiquement vétérotentamentaire que le christianisme hérite du judaïsme, par le recours à des dispositifs illusionnistes identiques pour le registre ornemental des voûtes – sur la base d'une symétrie axiale par rapport à la travée centrale (*Histoires de Joseph*) – dressant des associations entre Adam et Salomon, Noé et David, Abraham et Josué, Isaac et Moïse ou Jacob et Moïse.

All'antica

La Loggia commandée par Léon X ne doit pas sa renommée uniquement parce qu'elle abrite la « Bible de Raphaël », mais aussi parce qu'on y trouve « sur toutes les voûtes un très beau décor de stucs, avec des rinceaux de grotesques à l'antique (*simili all'antiche*) et mille inventions pleines de charmantes fantaisies offrant les motifs les plus variés et les plus originaux qu'on puisse imaginer »²⁹. Vasari ne ménage pas son engouement pour ces éléments décoratifs qui lui font encore dire que Giovanni da Udine (et avec lui Raphaël) parvint « non seulement à égaler les artistes antiques (*paragonò gl'antichi*) mais à les dépasser » et que grâce à la Loggia « ce type de peinture [les grotesques notamment] s'est répandu non seulement à Rome, mais dans toutes les autres parties du monde »³⁰.

Bien souvent, l'historiographie sur la Loggia a voulu dissocier, voire opposer, le registre narratif – incarné principalement par la « Bible de Raphaël » – et le registre ornemental composé principalement des stucs et des grotesques. Pourtant, les interactions que l'ornement entretient avec les *storie* – à l'image de la première et de la dernière travée – sont indéniablement nombreuses et riches de sens. Il n'est pas lieu ici d'en faire l'inventaire strict ; je souhaite davantage m'employer à mettre en évidence comment ce registre ornemental, dans certains de ses ressorts figuratifs, est lui aussi animé par une poétique de l'archaïque en ce qu'il aspire, pour l'essentiel, à faire revivre des techniques et des formes types de l'Antiquité marquées du sceau de l'autorité originelle.

28 Davidson, *Raphael's Bible...*, op.cit., p. 12–13.

29 Giorgio Vasari, « Vie de Giovanni da Udine », in Vasari, *Les Vies...*, op.cit., Livre VIII, p. 342.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 342–343.

On aurait tort de réduire l'esthétique *all'antica*, dont parle encore Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529) à propos de la Loggia³¹, à un goût ou à une mode. Il me semble que pour Raphaël et Giovanni da Udine – du moins dans le cas qui nous occupe – elle doit se comprendre comme une véritable démarche archéologique, sur le mode d'une remontée vers les commencements dont les fins ne visent pas seulement la connaissance intellectuelle des témoignages du passé mais aussi leur restauration matérielle. Il en va de même pour les papes de la Renaissance, en particulier Léon X, pour lesquels l'esthétique *all'antica* devient l'incarnation du programme politique de la *Restauratio Urbis*, la restauration de la ville de Rome, elle-même miroir de la *Renovatio Ecclesiae*, le renouveau de l'institution ecclésiale par un retour à la pureté des temps originels³².

Au centre de cette esthétique à l'antique triomphent les ornements de stucs disposés sur les pilastres ou encore les intrados et les écoinçons des voûtes de la Loggia. D'une incroyable variété, certains d'entre eux peuvent raisonnablement se voir attribuer une identification iconographique, quand d'autres demeurent indéchiffrables ou tout simplement privés d'un véritable sujet. Si la nature exacte de la relation que les stucs entretiennent avec les histoires bibliques reste obscure, un ensemble de quatre pièces, placé sur un des pilastres de la première travée, permet cependant d'en cerner la haute valeur signifiante : Giovanni da Udine y a représenté, de haut en bas, un homme en train de dessiner, suivi d'un autre broyant des pigments de couleur, puis de cinq artistes en train de décorer les parois d'une salle et enfin d'une figure de la Renommée (fig. 5).

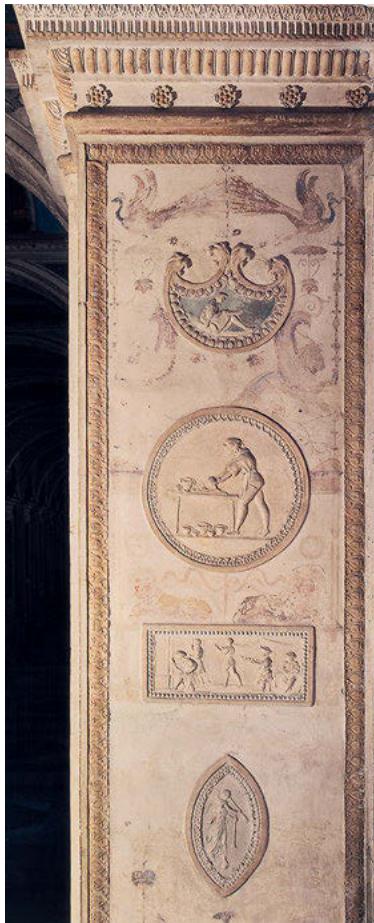
Véritable « photo souvenir » de la décoration de la Loggia, la nature réflexive de cette série ne se joue pas seulement, en raison de sa proximité immédiate avec les *Histoires de la Création du monde*, au niveau de l'analogie symbolique entre Dieu et l'artiste³³. Elle présente également un visage plus matériel, dans la mesure où cette mise en représentation de la fabrique de l'art doit être directement liée à la *restauratio* par Giovanni da Udine de la technique *archaïque* du stuc, le « *vero stucco antico* » comme l'appelle Vasari à l'occasion du récit qu'il livre de cette redécouverte³⁴. De là, on comprend que, potentiellement, chaque stuc de la Loggia s'offre comme le signe de cette renaissance matérielle de l'Antiquité, qui

31 « Et hor si è fornita una loggia dipinta e lavorata de stucchi, alla anticha, opra di Raphaello, bella al possibile e forsi più che cosa che si vegga hoggi dì de' moderni », Baldassare Castiglione, « Lettre à Isabelle d'Este », 16 juin 1519, reproduite dans John Shearman, *Raphael in Early Modern Sources* (1483–1602), New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003, vol. 1, p. 459.

32 Alexander Nagel défend une approche similaire de l'esthétique *all'antica* au sujet du renouveau de la statuaire en ronde-bosse de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance : « this revival of all'antica [...] was not merely a classicizing trend but an effort to renew and reform Christian art ». Ces modèles antiques « stood at the focus of a convergence of a humanist culture that saw the forms and rhetoric of antique models as a path to cultural renewal and a reform-minded culture that aimed to return to the pure forms of Early Christianity », Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art...*, op.cit., p. 109.

33 Métral, *Figurer la création du monde...*, op.cit., p. 280–284.

34 Giorgio Vasari, « Vie de Giovanni da Udine », in Vasari, *Les Vies...*, op.cit., Livre VIII, p. 342–343. Pour une approche plus globale de la technique du stuc à la Renaissance, voir Nicolas Cordon, « Aux frontières du décor : Le stuc dans l'art romain de la Renaissance. Marginalité, simulacres, transgressions », thèse de doctorat, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2018.



5 Giovanni da Udine, stucs du pilastre nord de la première travée, 1516–1519, Cité du Vatican, Palais apostolique, Loggia de Raphaël

est avant tout artistique mais dont on ne peut ignorer la dimension politique. Ce n'est sans doute pas un hasard si les stucs les plus monumentaux de la Loggia qui trôntent au centre de chacune des treize voûtes (à l'exception singulière de la septième, consacrée à Joseph) – un ange (ou une victoire) au-devant d'un ciel azur tenant dans ses bras un joug et une bague sertie d'un diamant avec trois plumes, encore accompagné de la devise médicéenne *semp[er] [adamas] in poenis*] – renvoient très directement à Léon X et contribuent ainsi à souligner son rôle de premier plan dans cette entreprise de *restauratio* (figs. 1 et 2)³⁵.

Restons dans cette partie du décor pour nous intéresser à nouveaux frais aux dispositifs illusionnistes des voûtes qui, outre le plafond à caissons peints des premières et dernières

35 Voir Denker-Nesselrath, « La Loggia di Raffaello », art. cit., p. 50–52.

travées, déploient eux aussi, au travers du médium de la fresque, tout ce que l'Antiquité comptait en matière d'éléments de toiture et de couverture (plafonds ornés de grotesques et de stucs, structures architecturales à colonnade ou à piliers) ou d'abri et d'ombrage (pergolas et fausses draperies, mais aussi tentures également ornées de grotesques) dans une démarche là aussi pleinement archéologique. L'effet d'un édifice à l'antique devait encore être renforcé par la présence jadis au sein de la Loggia d'une collection d'antiques, que Léon X avait récupérée du pape Jules II, dans les niches aménagées dans la paroi opposée aux baies³⁶. S'étendant sur les parois et les pilastres, les grotesques, dont Raphaël avait déjà expérimenté en 1515–1516 la possibilité à grande échelle pour la Loggetta et la Stufetta du cardinal Bibbiena (1470–1520), constituent sans doute le signe le plus évident de la promotion de cette esthétique *all'antica*³⁷. C'est également le cas des festons de végétaux, de fruits et de fleurs se déployant sur un fond azur ; motifs relevant d'un imaginaire des célébrations et cérémonies antiques dont Raphaël et Giovanni da Udine exploiteront toutes les possibilités à l'occasion d'une nouvelle collaboration pour la Loggia de Psyché (vers 1518) de la villa Farnesina³⁸.

Loin d'entretenir le mythe de l'Antiquité « blanche »³⁹, la Loggia de Raphaël au Vatican fut un espace où triomphait la couleur et la lumière, et cette impression était encore indéniablement renforcée par le pavement originel en majolique (démantelé au XIX^e siècle), conçu et exécuté par l'atelier des Della Robbia. Difficile d'en prendre la mesure aujourd'hui tant les fresques et les ornements ont souffert du passage du temps, ce qui rend les copies à l'aquarelle de Giovanni Battista Armenini (1530–1609) d'autant plus précieuses pour tenter d'approcher au plus près la colorimétrie originelle du décor. Il reste que c'est cette remarquable démonstration à grande échelle du langage *all'antica*, où se révèle pleinement cette poétique de l'archaïque, qui fera dire à Vasari que « parmi les œuvres de ce genre, [la Loggia de Raphaël] est la plus belle, la plus exceptionnelle et la meilleure qu'ait jamais contemplé l'œil humain »⁴⁰.

36 Selon le témoignage de Marcantonio Michiel qui relate, en 1519, que Léon X fit disposer de « nombreuses statues, qu'il tenait secrètes dans sa garde-robe et qui avaient été acquises par le pape Jules, peut-être à cet effet, [...] », cité dans Dacos, *Les Loges de Raphaël...*, op. cit., p. 15. Parmi cet ensemble de statues, dont on ne sait rien ou presque, se trouvait notamment un Mercure et une « *idea della Natura* » – une *Diane d'Éphèse* selon Dacos et Davidson –, voir Denker-Nesselrath, « La Loggia di Raffaello », art. cit., p. 47–50.

37 Voir Dacos, *La découverte de la Domus aurea et la formation des grotesques à la Renaissance*, Londres / Leiden, Warburg Institute/Brill, 1969. Pour une approche différente et complémentaire du phénomène des grotesques, voir Philippe Morel, *Les grotesques. Les figures de l'imaginaire dans la peinture italienne de la fin de la Renaissance*, Paris, Flammarion, 1997.

38 Voir Morel, « Priape à la Renaissance. Les guirlandes de Giovanni da Udine à la Farnésine », *Revue de l'Art*, n° 69, 1985, p. 13–28.

39 Voir Philippe Jockey, *Le mythe de la Grèce blanche. Histoire d'un rêve occidental*, Paris, Belin, 2013.

40 Giorgio Vasari, « Vie de Giovanni da Udine », dans Vasari, *Les Vies...*, op. cit., Livre VIII, p. 343.

Léon X-Joseph

La profusion décorative de la Loggia de Raphaël et l'absence apparente d'un discours dominant en son sein ont pu parfois conduire à des conclusions fortement préjudiciables pour sa juste compréhension, à l'instar de Nicole Dacos qui considère qu'elle ne reposeraient sur aucun programme iconographique, qu'elle ne serait qu'un lieu où le pape Léon X « aimait se promener avec les dignitaires »⁴¹. Qu'elle ait été un espace de détente privé du pontife pour prendre l'air et contempler Rome depuis les hauteurs ne fait aucun doute, comme il en ressort des propos de Marcantonio Michiel (1484–1552)⁴². Mais de là à lui ôter toute fonction politique, ce serait se méprendre sur les ambitions du premier pape Médicis. Dans une lettre du 18 août 1516, le prélat Agostino Gonzaga (mort en 1557) rapporte que Léon X s'est promené ce jour « dans une loggia faite récemment, où est arrivée une foule de personnes auxquelles il a donné audience »⁴³, laissant entendre que dans ce lieu, certes privé, pouvait tout à fait se dérouler des entretiens informels liés au pouvoir pontifical⁴⁴.

Le registre ornemental, on l'a rappelé précédemment, semble trouver sa raison d'être, contrairement au registre narratif, dans une forme de liberté sémantique. Il me semble, néanmoins, qu'au moins en deux endroits précis de la Loggia ces registres narratif et ornemental fonctionnent de concert, précisément à des fins de célébration de la personne du pape Médicis. Du premier endroit – les extrémités du décor avec les scènes de la Création et de la vie du Christ, articulées autour de la typologie johannique –, j'ai déjà eu l'occasion de parler. Le second, qui va nous intéresser désormais, se situe en l'exact milieu de la Loggia, à savoir la septième travée où ont été représentés les grands événements de la vie de Joseph le patriarche (fig. 6).

En dépit de sa localisation stratégique, la travée centrale du décor n'a pas toujours reçu l'attention qu'elle mérite. Or c'est elle qui assurément concentre les références explicites à Léon X⁴⁵. La plus évidente réside dans la présence au centre de la voûte des armes monumentales du premier pape Médicis, en lieu et place de son *impresa* comme dans les autres travées. Une manière de rappeler que l'histoire chrétienne qui se joue dans la Loggia est placée sous le contrôle de Léon X qui, métaphoriquement, trône donc au-dessus d'elle. La richesse et l'abondance dans cette partie du décor des ornements de stuc – un des instru-

41 Dacos, *Les Loges de Raphaël...*, *op. cit.*, p. 124. L'affirmation apparaît en d'autres endroits de l'ouvrage, légèrement nuancée (p. 106) : « Il serait vain – on l'a vu – d'y chercher un programme, mais de la galerie n'en émane pas moins un symbolisme diffus ».

42 « tenuta chiusa et al piacere solum del Papa [...] », Marcantonio Michiel, journal du 27 décembre 1519, cité dans Denker-Nesselrath, « La Loggia di Raffaello », art. cit., p. 39.

43 Agostino Gonzaga, cité dans Dacos, *Les Loges de Raphaël...*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

44 John Shearman, « Gli appartamenti di Giulio II e Leone X », dans *Raffaello nell'appartamento di Giulio II e Leone X*, *op. cit.*, p. 15–37, ici p. 35.

45 Pour John Shearman, les références à Léon X culminaient davantage dans les trois dernières travées de la Loggia – consacrées à David, Salomon et au Christ, figures auxquelles le pape est régulièrement comparé dans les sermons et éloges de son temps, voir Shearman, « Gli appartamenti di Giulio II e Leone X », art. cit., p. 35.



6 Raphaël et atelier, *Histoires de Joseph*, 1516–1519, fresque, Cité du Vatican, Palais apostolique, Loggia de Raphaël

ments de la poétique de l'archaïque –, sous la forme de guirlandes, portiques à colonnes ou encore candélabres, viennent ici à propos pour mettre en valeur l'*antiquitas* du décor et ainsi souligner l'*auctoritas* du pape. Les couples de figures se tenant la main en signe d'amitié, situées dans les pilastres à la base de la voûte, viennent quant à elles plus particulièrement célébrer le mythe politique du *pacificator*, le faiseur de paix, en direction duquel Léon X a choisi d'orienter son pontificat⁴⁶.

46 Voir notamment pour une approche générale Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1998, p.300. Notons que vers 1515–1516, suite à l'accord de paix conclu avec François I^{er} après la bataille de Marignan, Léon X fit frapper une médaille avec l'inscrip-



7 Raphaël et atelier, *Songes de Joseph*, 1516–1519, fresque, Cité du Vatican, Palais apostolique, Loggia de Raphaël

Ce mythe du *pacificator* est justement exemplifié dans la relation que la Loggia de Raphaël construit entre le pape Médicis et Joseph dont l'histoire, édifiante, est ici narrée au travers de cinq épisodes – sur la voûte, les *Songes de Joseph*, *Joseph vendu par ses frères*, *Joseph et la femme de Putiphar*, *Joseph expliquant les rêves de Pharaon* (figs. 7–10), et au niveau du soubassement, *Joseph reconnu par ses frères*. Comme l'ont déjà bien noté Christiane Denker-Nesselrath et Bernice Davidson, la vie de Joseph n'était pas sans présenter aux yeux du pape (et de ses conseillers et panégyristes) quelques correspondances

tion « *SCVTA COMBVRET IGNI* », tiré du psaume 45 – « Il brisera l'arc, et mettra les armes en pièces : et Il brûlera les boucliers par le feu (*et scuta comburet igni*) » – accompagnée d'une figure apposant une torche enflammée sur des boucliers. D'autres médailles commandées par le pape Médicis jouent également sur la promotion de ce mythe politique du *pacificator*, à l'instar de celle avec l'inscription « *PAX IN VIRTUTE* » empruntée au psaume 122 – « Que la paix soit dans tes murs, et la tranquillité dans tes palais (*Fiat pax in virtute tua et abundantia in turribus tuis*) ! » – ou encore, plus significative, celle frappée de l'inscription « *PACEM MEAM DO VOBIS* » tirée de l'Évangile selon saint Jean – « Je vous laisse la paix, je vous donne ma paix (*pacem meam do vobis*) ».



8 Raphaël et atelier, *Joseph vendu par ses frères*, 1516–1519, fresque, Cité du Vatican, Palais apostolique, Loggia de Raphaël

bienvenues avec sa propre vie⁴⁷. Pour Denker-Nesselrath, ces correspondances fonctionnent à un niveau général, eu égard notamment aux éminentes charges politiques que les deux figures viennent à exercer au cours de leur existence – Joseph, ministre de Pharaon, et Léon X, vicaire du Christ – et aux admirables vertus dont tous deux font preuve ; Léon X (comme Joseph) prend soin des siens et, malgré les trahisons, pardonne. Davidson de son côté suggère des correspondances plus précises, en mettant par exemple en pendant la chasteté de Joseph à l’égard de la femme de Putiphar et la chasteté de Giovanni de’ Medici reconnue et célébrée de son vivant, entre autres, dans l’un des arcs de triomphes érigés à l’occasion de son entrée à Florence en novembre 1515⁴⁸.

47 Denker-Nesselrath, « La Loggia di Raffaello », art. cit., p. 58–59 et Davidson, *Raphael's Bible...*, *op.cit.*, p. 72–75.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 25. Sur cet évènement, voir l’article toujours indispensable de Shearman, « The Florentine Entrata of Leo X, 1515 », *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, n° 38, 1975, p. 136–154.

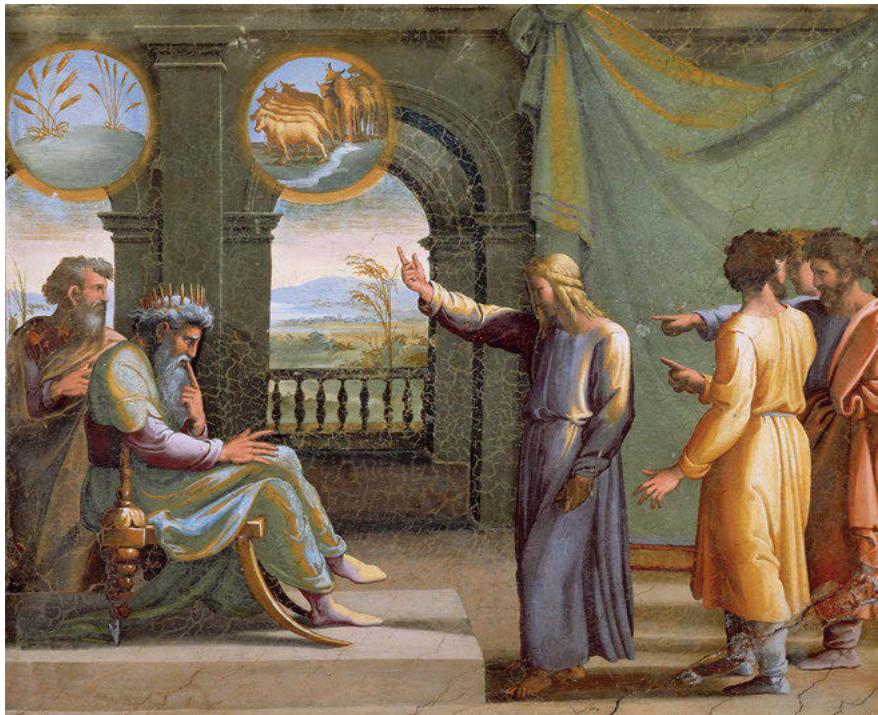


9 Raphaël et atelier, *Joseph et la femme de Putiphar*, 1516–1519, fresque, Cité du Vatican, Palais apostolique, Loggia de Raphaël

Deux autres correspondances, également proposées par Davidson, apparaissent encore plus riches de sens, en ce qu'elles appartiennent à l'époque « archaïque » de Léon X⁴⁹. Premièrement, l'épisode de *Joseph vendu par ses frères*, obligeant le fils préféré de Jacob à un exil forcé et un destin d'esclave en Égypte, résonnait pour Léon X qui, du temps où il était encore un jeune cardinal, fut contraint avec le reste de sa famille de quitter Florence suite à la mort de son père Laurent le Magnifique (1449–1492) et à la mise à l'écart du pouvoir de son frère aîné Piero de' Medici (1472–1503) en 1494. Un exil douloureux qui dura un peu moins de vingt ans et qui est largement détaillé dans la *Vita di Papa Leone Decimo* (1548) de Paolo Giovio (1483–1552)⁵⁰. Deuxièmement, l'épisode de *Joseph expliquant les rêves de Pharaon*, dans lequel le patriarche est extrait de sa prison afin de se faire l'interprète des songes du souverain d'Égypte, n'était pas sans rappeler au cardinal Médicis sa captivité en avril 1512 des suites de la bataille de Ravenne, puis sa libération au mois de

49 Voir Davidson, *Raphael's Bible...*, op.cit., p.74.

50 Paolo Giovio, *La Vie de Léon dixième pape écrite en latin*, trad. de l'italien par M. de Pure, Paris, Jean Couterot, 1675 (1548), p.123.



10 Raphaël et atelier, *Joseph expliquant les rêves de Pharaon*, 1516–1519, fresque, Cité du Vatican, Palais apostolique, Loggia de Raphaël

juin lui permettant de participer au congrès de Mantoue en août où il obtient de Jules II et de ses alliés le retour des Médicis à Florence, tout en se positionnant dans la perspective d'un futur conclave ; un moment indéniablement marquant de la vie de Giovanni de' Medici, puisque ce dernier, une fois devenu pape, l'a fait représenter dans la bordure inférieure de la *Guérison du paralytique* (1515–1519), une des dix tapisseries commandées à Raphaël pour la chapelle Sixtine⁵¹.

Dans ce jeu de correspondances entre Léon X et Joseph, un motif apparaît particulièrement important en raison de sa récurrence narrative et plastique : la tunique. Dans l'histoire de Joseph, elle est tour à tour l'objet de la jalouse de ses frères, la preuve brandie par la femme de Putiphar, le vêtement du prisonnier avant de devenir celui du ministre de Pharaon. Chez Giovanni de' Medici aussi, il est question de tunique, à commencer par la pourpre cardinalice qu'il reçoit en 1489, à l'âge de treize ans. Lors de l'exil des Médicis en 1494, il est forcé, pour ne pas être reconnu, d'abandonner son vêtement de cardinal et quitte

51 John White et John Shearman, « Raphael's Tapestries and Their Cartoons », *The Art Bulletin*, n° 40/3, 1958, p. 193–221, ici p. 199.

Florence, comme le raconte Giovio, travesti en frère franciscain⁵². Après trois tentatives échouées de revenir dans sa patrie, Giovanni de' Medici, écrit encore Giovio, « quitta toute marque de cardinal » et, revêtu d'« un habit semblable à tous les autres », partit « méconnu et déguisé » pour l'Allemagne⁵³. Le dernier habit qu'il recevra est celui de pape en mars 1513. Nul doute que Léon X se sentait plus que jamais être dans la peau de Joseph.

Dans l'exégèse chrétienne – au moins depuis le *De Josepho* de Philon d'Alexandrie (1^{er} siècle de notre ère)⁵⁴ –, Joseph bénéficie pour l'essentiel d'une double lecture : il est la figure du pardon et de la fraternité, mais également celle de l'homme d'État vertueux et pacifique. Une double lecture qui, au milieu du XVI^e siècle, allait contribuer à en faire un véritable « type » de la destinée médicéenne, que promeut à lui seul le cycle de tapisseries consacrées à la vie du patriarche commandée par Cosimo I de' Medici (1519–1574) dans les années 1540 à Jacopo Pontormo, Agnolo Bronzino et Francesco Salviati⁵⁵. Mais déjà dans les années 1520, le pape Clément VII, Giulio de' Medici (1478–1534) qui n'est autre que le cousin de Léon X, a fait frapper une médaille portant l'inscription « EGO SVM IOSEPH FRATER VESTER » (Je suis Joseph, votre frère), que la tradition relie volontiers à la révolte florentine de 1527 lors de laquelle les Médicis sont à nouveau chassés de la cité⁵⁶. Si l'on en croit cette filiation, la Loggia constitue la première formulation aboutie de la récupération par les Médicis de la vie de Joseph à des fins de mise en scène de leur propre destinée.

Dans la Loggia de Raphaël, on le voit, la poétique de l'archaïque se manifeste en de multiples endroits du décor, suscitant autant de niveaux de lecture possibles. On peut bien entendu la considérer comme un lieu de détente et de plaisirs ; on peut y voir une pure démonstration artistique du langage *all'antica* par Raphaël et ses collaborateurs. Mais il apparaît nécessaire de la replacer au sein d'une démarche plus ambitieuse pour le *pacificator* Léon X, une entreprise de nature politique directement liée à l'idéologie de la *Restauratio Urbis* et de la *Renovatio Ecclesiae*. La restauration matérielle et archéologique de l'Antiquité – inséparable du reste de la grande histoire chrétienne de la rédemption que déploie la « Bible de Raphaël » – apparaît alors comme le visage de la restauration de l'autorité originelle des Médicis et plus largement de celle de l'Église. Restauration fragile toutefois que viennent rappeler, dans ces mêmes années, la montée de la Réforme puis le sac de Rome en 1527.

52 Giovio, *La Vie de Léon dixième pape...*, *op.cit.*, p.65.

53 *Ibid.*, p.97.

54 Sur l'importance du *De Josepho* de Philon d'Alexandrie dans l'iconographie de Joseph, voir notamment Meyer Schapiro, « The Joseph Scenes on the Maximianus throne in Ravenna », *Gazette des beaux-arts*, n° 40, 1952, p. 27–38.

55 Graham Smith, « Cosimo I and the Joseph Tapestries for the Palazzo Vecchio », *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, n° 6/3, 1982, p.183–196.

56 Voir Beth L. Holman, « For "Honor and Profit": Benvenuto Cellini's Medal of Clement VII and His Competition with Giovanni Bernardi », *Renaissance Quarterly*, n° 58/2, 2005, p.512–575, ici p.524–525.

Jérémie Koering

TEMPS MÊLÉS

La Galleria dei Mesi au palais ducal de Mantoue comme restauration artistique et politique

De manière certainement inhabituelle pour un colloque en histoire de l'art où les règles d'usage imposent au contributeur d'attirer l'attention sur quelque manifestation artistique exceptionnelle, injustement oubliée ou mal interprétée, ce qui va nous occuper dans ces pages n'a rien de « remarquable ». Et pour cause, la Galleria dei Mesi (fig. 1), cet ensemble architectural et décoratif réalisé au sein du palais ducal de Mantoue sous le règne du duc Guglielmo Gonzaga entre 1572 et 1579, constitue, avouons-le, une répétition un peu monotone d'un dispositif décoratif quant à lui admirable, celui de la Loggia dei Marmi, conçu et mis en œuvre par Giulio Romano entre 1539 et 1540. En conséquence, point de nouveauté, de rupture, ou de « progrès » ici¹. Mais alors pourquoi s'y attarder ? Pourquoi faire place à ce qui joue manifestement la carte de l'infra-mince, de la discréption, du lisse ? Peut-être parce que dans cet imperceptible murmure se dit, à qui sait l'entendre – c'est-à-dire à qui sait se déprendre du spectaculaire, du neuf, de l'extraordinaire en matière de faste princier –, quelque chose de fondamental : orner revient à « *augmenter* », à « *accroître* », comme le signalent Yan Thomas et à sa suite Patricia Falguières, « la somme de ce qui illustre ou pare un édifice », en incorporant « certains matériaux et certaines formes – marbres, colonnes, statues – à la somme des matériaux et des formes qui constituent un

1 Sur la Loggia dei Marmi, voir Jacqueline Burckhardt, « Giulio Romano, Regisseur einer verlebendigten Antike. Die Loggia dei Marmi im Palazzo Ducale von Mantua », thèse, université de Zürich, 1994 ; et sur la Galleria dei Mesi, Clifford M. Brown, « Bishop Gerolamo Garimberto: Archaeological adviser to Guglielmo Gonzaga Duke of Mantua (1570–1574) », *Arte Lombarda*, n° 83 (4), 1987, p. 32–58 ; Raffaella Casciano, « Comittenza ducale mantovana dopo B.G. Bertani: Guglielmo e Vincenzo Gonzaga (1576–1595) », thèse de doctorat, Venise, 1998, p. 229–230 ; Renato Berzaghi, « Decorazioni in Palazzo Ducale da Guglielmo a Vincenzo II », dans Rafaella Morselli (dir.), *Gonzaga – La celeste galleria, I: Le raccolte*, cat. exp. (Mantoue, Palais Te ; Palais Ducal, 2 sept.–8 déc. 2002), Genève/Milan, 2002, p. 553 ; Paolo Carpegiani, « Il progetto del Palazzo Ducale (1549–1587) », dans Rafaella Morselli (dir.), *Gonzaga – La celeste galleria, I: Le raccolte*, cat. exp. (Mantoue, Palais Te ; Palais Ducal, 2 sept.–8 déc. 2002), Genève/Milan, 2002, p. 493 ; Jérémie Koering, *Le prince en représentation. Histoire des décors du palais ducal de Mantoue au XVI^e siècle*, Arles, Actes Sud, 2013, p. 299–308.



1 Vue de la Galleria dei Mesi (côté est, avec les trois travées de Giulio Romano), 1572–1579, Mantoue, Palais Ducal

patrimoine déjà constitué »². Or, contre toute attente, cette opération de parure peut parfois se réaliser sans bruit.

En effet, à l'inverse peut-être de la proclamation tonitruante de la puissance de Federico Gonzaga dans la Sala di Troia voisine – là où le fracas des armes et les retournements de fortune tendent un miroir à l'histoire contemporaine³ –, c'est dans l'action silencieuse d'une restauration, et par là d'une invisible suture temporelle, que la complexité du temps politique du règne de Guglielmo Gonzaga s'énonce, discrètement mais sûrement, au sein de la Galleria dei Mesi. Les accords, en apparence dissonants de l'action et du retour du même, apportent, par leurs subtiles harmoniques, la preuve que la conservation de l'État peut passer par de très modestes et prudentes adjonctions.

- 2 Yan Thomas, « Les ornements, la cité, le patrimoine », dans Clara Auvray-Assayas (dir.), *Images romaines*, Actes de la table ronde organisée à l'ENS (Paris, 24–26 oct. 1996), Paris, Presses de l'École Normale Supérieure, 1998, p. 263–284, p. 265–266 pour la citation. Nous soulignons. Et sur les échos de cette définition à la Renaissance, voir Patricia Falguières, « L'ornement du droit », dans *Questionner l'ornement*, actes de colloque des Arts Décoratifs/INHA (Paris, 7–8 nov. 2011), Paris, 2013, <https://madparis.fr/IMG/pdf/06-Falguieres.pdf>; Patricia Falguières, « Alberti, l'ornement, la nature et le droit : Une lecture du *De re aedificatoria* », *Albertiana*, XX (N.S. II), 2017, p. 97–144, p. 115 pour la citation.
- 3 Voir Jérémie Koering, « *Intrecciamento* : Benedetto Lampridio, Giulio Romano et la poétique de la salle de Troie », *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 75, n° 3, 2012, p. 335–350.

Pour le comprendre, il faut en venir à des choses plus concrètes. Autrement dit, en venir au visible, en décrivant précisément l'apparence de cette Galleria dei Mesi qui fut à l'origine une loggia, celle dite *dei Marmi*. Mais qu'il me soit d'abord permis de rappeler que rien de ce qui va suivre n'aurait pu être formulé sans le minutieux travail de reconstitution effectué par Jacqueline Burckhardt dans sa thèse *Giulio Romano, Regisseur einer verlebendigten Antike Gonzaga: La celeste galleria, I – Le raccolte – Die Loggia dei Marmi im Palazzo Ducale von Mantua*⁴. C'est en effet grâce à cette patiente enquête qu'il m'est aujourd'hui possible de mesurer la subtilité des ajouts et des imperceptibles variations qui ont été introduits dans la Galleria dei Mesi par les artistes au service de Guglielmo Gonzaga.

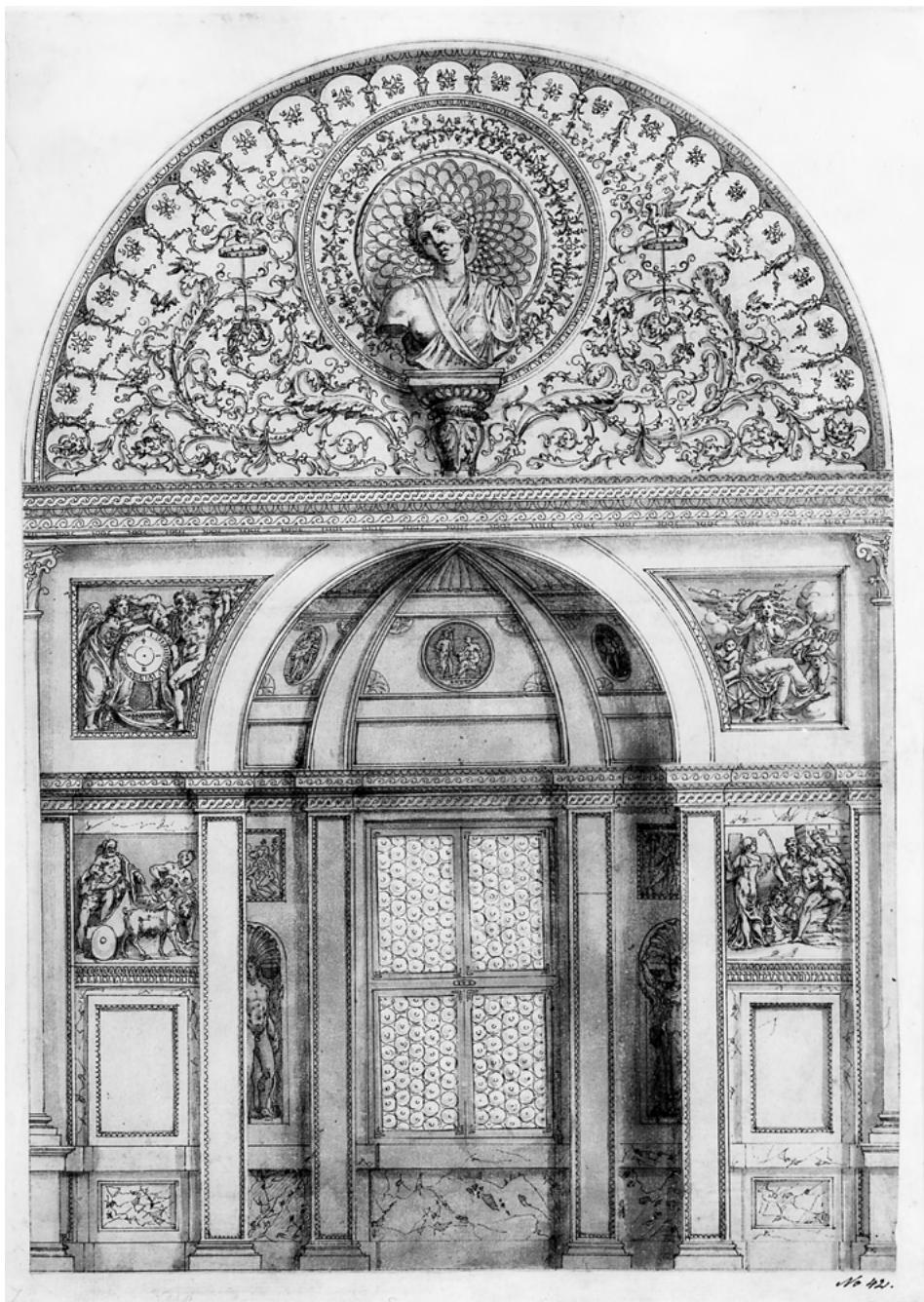
Cette dette reconnue, décrivons à présent la Loggia dei Marmi. Cet espace ouvert faisait partie de l'Appartamento di Troia construit entre 1536 et 1540 et fut la dernière pièce mise en œuvre au sein de ce chantier. Giulio Romano, son inventeur et superviseur, s'est très largement inspiré de l'architecture antique en rythmant les parois par des pilastres corin thiens soutenant une voûte en berceau. Le décor qui s'inscrit dans ce cadre architectural n'est aujourd'hui que partiellement conservé en raison du réaménagement effectué à la demande de Guglielmo et de la vente d'une partie de la collection des Gonzaga en 1627. Cependant, les parties altérées ou détruites nous sont connues grâce à plusieurs dessins d'Ippolito Andreasi réalisés vers 1567 et conservés à Düsseldorf⁵. On trouve ainsi sur la paroi est (fig. 2), dans la partie gauche, un bas-relief représentant Saturne dévorant ses enfants. Celui-ci fait face à son épouse Ops, la déesse de la terre et de l'abondance. Entre les deux divinités, Giulio a installé une horloge ce qui, tout en se rattachant naturellement au thème du temps illustré par Saturne, constitue un geste notable sur le plan symbolique comme nous le verrons. Dans le bas-relief inférieur, Silène, soutenu par un satyre, monte sur un char tiré par deux boucs. Il s'agit là d'une œuvre antique réemployée⁶. Sur le pilier droit, le bas-relief supérieur montre une divinité féminine, entourée de deux putti, qui repousse des nuages (aujourd'hui dans la Sala delle Cariatidi au palais du Te, l'original étant remplacé par un moulage). Cette figure est traditionnellement identifiée à l'Aurore ; mais pour Burckhardt il s'agirait d'une allégorie des éléments : les éclairs dans les cheveux pour le feu, le putto versant le contenu d'une amphore pour l'eau, le visage soufflant pour l'air, enfin le putto jetant le contenu d'un vase et la roue pour la terre⁷. Les niches placées dans les embrasures contenaient, à gauche, une statue d'Apollon et, à droite, une statue de Diane. Le relief surplombant la niche de gauche représentait Philoctète et la nymphe Chrysé, scène copiée d'après le *Philoctète* de Tullio Lombardo réalisé pour le Studio d'Isabelle d'Este en 1522. Celui de droite, qui est encore en place, présente un combat entre athlètes. Au-dessus de la porte, on trouve trois médaillons avec des figures antiques : à gauche une Victoire, à

4 Burckhardt, *Giulio Romano...*, *op. cit.*

5 Richard Harprath, « Ippolito Andreasi as a draughtsman », *Master drawings*, 22/1, 1984, p. 16–17 ; Burckhardt, *Giulio Romano...*, *op. cit.*, p. 51–57.

6 Burckhardt, *Giulio Romano...*, *op. cit.*, p. 123–130.

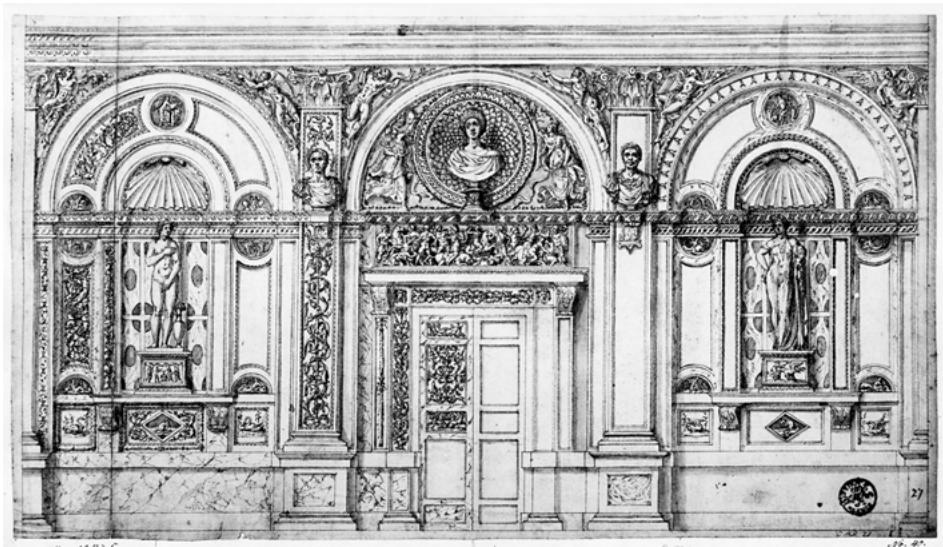
7 *Ibid.*, p. 165.



2 Ippolito Andreasi, *Loggia dei Marmi, paroi est*, 1567, pierre noire et lavis, Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, Sammlung der Kunstakademie



3 Ippolito Andreasi, *Loggia dei Marmi, paroi ouest*, 1567, pierre noire et lavis, Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, Sammlung der Kunstakademie

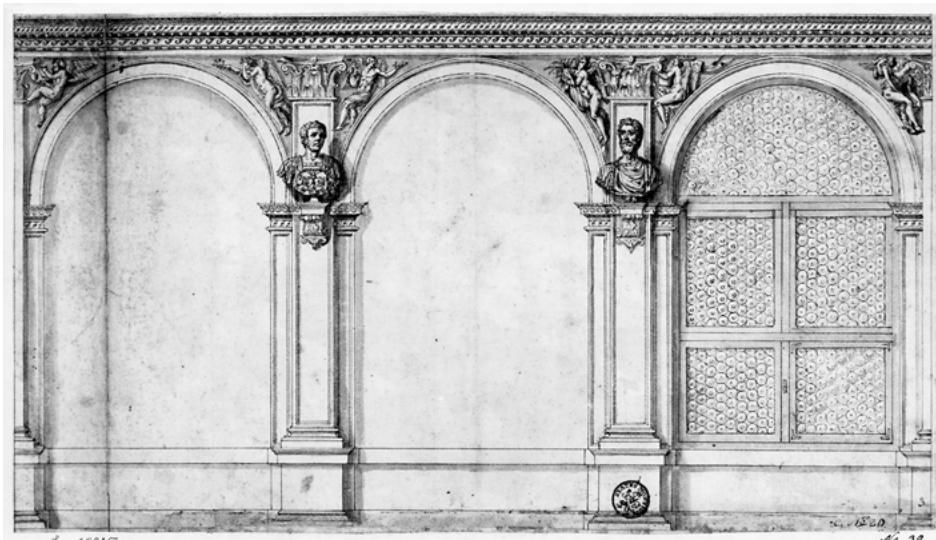


4 Ippolito Andreasi, *Loggia dei Marmi, paroi nord*, 1567, pierre noire et lavis, Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, Sammlung der Kunstabakademie

droite une Renommée tenant une tige d'olivier, au centre Annona qui porte la corne d'Abondance face à Cérès – cette dernière scène est réalisée d'après une médaille antique, également reprise sur la cheminée de la maison de Giulio Romano à Mantoue. Le dessin d'Andreasi indique, enfin, qu'un buste féminin se trouvait au centre du tympan : Diane, selon Burckhardt, ou Vénus, suivant l'hypothèse de Rausa formulée à partir de dessins annotés conservés à Windsor Castle⁸.

La paroi ouest (fig. 3) a été démantelée en 1572 et remontée au bout des nouvelles travées réalisées à la demande du duc Guglielmo. La plupart de ces éléments décoratifs manquent aujourd'hui, mais le dessin d'Andreasi nous permet d'en connaître l'aspect original. Au sommet du pilier gauche, on trouve un bas-relief représentant le *Jour*, sous la forme d'Apollon guidant les quatre chevaux de son char. En-dessous, une scène sculptée montre une jeune femme dénudée surprise par un homme alors qu'elle s'approche d'une fontaine. Il s'agit de Manto et du dieu Tibre, les deux parents d'Ocnus, le fondateur de la ville de Mantoue. Sur le pilier droit, la partie haute est occupée par une représentation sculptée de la *Nuit*, une femme endormie, pourvue d'ailes de chauve-souris, entourée de

8 *Ibid.*, p. 117–118 ; Federico Rausa, « "Li disegni delle statue et busti sono rotolate drento le stampe": l'arredo di sculture antiche delle residenze dei Gonzaga nei disegni seicenteschi della Royal Library a Windsor Castle », dans Rafaella Morselli (dir.), *Gonzaga - La celeste galleria, I: Le raccolte*, cat. exp. (Mantoue, Palais Te ; Palais Ducal, 2 sept.–8 déc. 2002), Genève/Milan, 2002, p. 67–91, p. 71 pour l'identification.

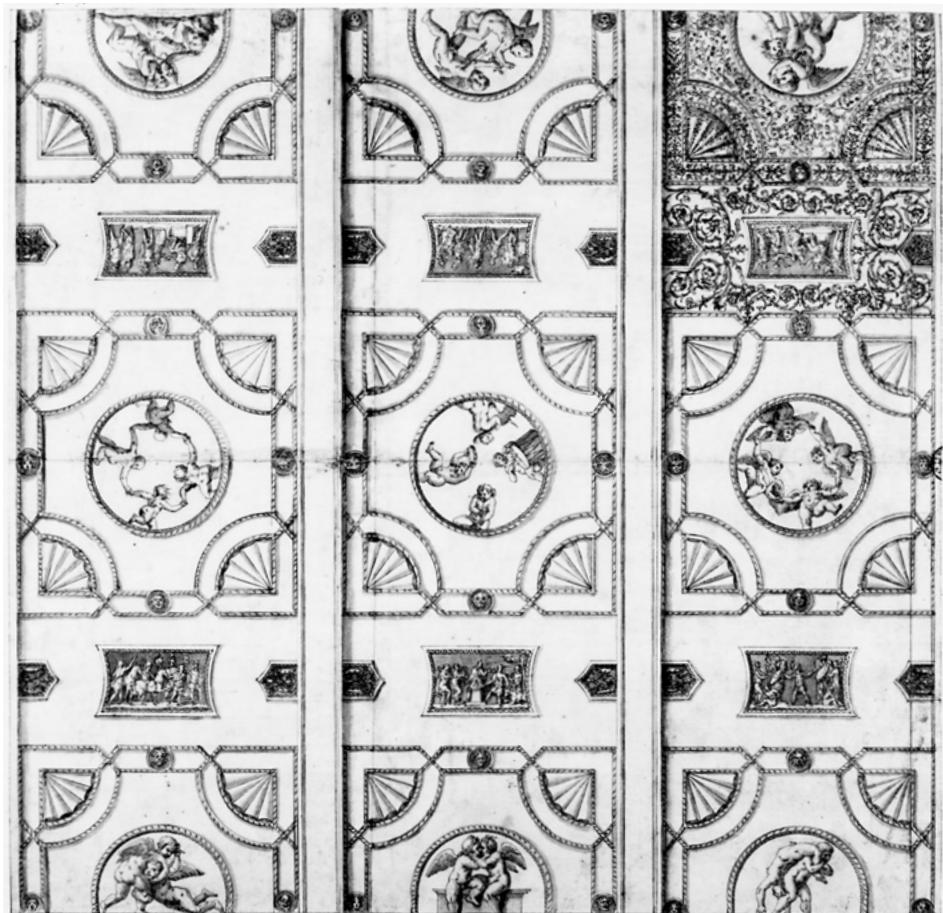


5 Ippolito Andreasi, *Loggia dei Marmi, paroi sud*, 1567, pierre noire et lavis, Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, Sammlung der Kunstakademie

putti, d'une clepsydre et de festons de pavot. En-dessous, un bas-relief figurait Ganymède derrière le trône de Jupiter. Il s'agit là d'un montage entre un antique (le trône) et une figure moderne (Ganymède) dont seul le marbre antique est aujourd'hui conservé. Les deux niches placées dans les embrasures étaient occupées à gauche par une statue féminine non identifiée et à droite par une représentation de Mercure.

Les murs nord et sud (fig. 4 et 5) reçoivent dans les écoinçons des arcs un cycle de douze figures masculines ailées en stuc figurant les âges de la vie, depuis l'enfance jusqu'à la mort. Le décor de ces deux parois est également complété par des pièces de collection : deux bustes d'empereurs placés sur des consoles encadrant la baie centrale du mur sud : à gauche Aelius et à droite Lucius Verus ; mais aussi, côté nord, un buste de l'impératrice Giulia, épouse de Titus, auxquels s'ajoutent deux bustes non identifiés, un bas-relief antique représentant un combat d'Amazones sur le linteau de la porte menant à la Sala di Troia, et dans les niches, à gauche, une *Venus pudica* (aujourd'hui disparue) et, à droite, une *Venus genetrix*. Chose importante pour nous, la statue de la *Venus genetrix*, aujourd'hui conservée au Kunsthistorisches Museum de Vienne, est désormais privée de ces ajouts Renaissance (la tête et les deux bras), signe d'une mécompréhension des enjeux gouvernant ces restaurations.

Dernier élément du décor (fig. 6), la voûte, également rythmée par trois travées, est décorée de trois *oculi* peints à fresque avec des scènes de putti dansant, et de six cartouches en stuc figurant des scènes romaines de sacrifice, de triomphe ou de soumission.



6 Ippolito Andreasi, *Loggia dei Marmi, voûte*, 1567, pierre noire et lavis, Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, Sammlung der Kunstakademie

Comme le révèle une analyse des caractéristiques iconographiques et ornementales de l'ensemble, la loggia est traversée par une problématique politique. La disposition des statues et des reliefs antiques et modernes dans le décor qui leur sert ici d'écrin, de même que la modification par ajouts de certaines sculptures – la figure moderne de Ganymède qui vient compléter le trône antique de Jupiter (fig. 3) ; la tête et la pomme de la *Venus genetrix* (fig. 4) –, indiquent en effet que ces œuvres assumaient une fonction symbolique se surajoutant à leur valeur esthétique. Cette dimension symbolique ressortit au thème du Temps qui sert de fil rouge au dispositif décoratif. L'horloge (fig. 2), qui comme nous l'avons vu est un élément rarement intégré au décor à cette époque, est là pour le souligner. Pour le dire simplement, le décor donne figure, par entrecroisement, à une structure du monde où les

principes physiques régissant l'univers rythment et ordonnent le temps politique. La représentation du Temps, de la génération et de la corruption dessine un ordre cosmique auquel les hommes sont soumis dans leur être « biologique » et « politique ».

Dans les bas-reliefs de la paroi est, les époux Ops et Saturne réunissent les deux termes d'une alchimie universelle créatrice d'éternité : le principe d'abondance et de fertilité avec Ops d'une part ; et l'idée du Temps, corrupteur de toutes choses, avec Saturne dévorant ses enfants d'autre part. Ces deux divinités trouvent une correspondance dans les bas-reliefs ouest, ceux du *Jour* et de la *Nuit*, mais aussi dans les douze personnifications des âges de la vie placées dans les écoinçons des parois sud et nord. Les scènes à l'antique de la voûte (fig. 6) renvoient quant à elles aux différents rituels qui scandent l'année (sacrifices, triomphes, jugements ou délibérations) ; elles représentent, pour le dire autrement, cette « distribution des temps » chantée par Ovide dans ses *Fastes*⁹.

Il est à noter que cette inscription de l'histoire des hommes dans le temps cosmique s'étend, au-delà du référent antique, au cas mantouan contemporain comme le laissent entrapercevoir plusieurs détails du décor. On trouve en effet quantité d'ornements faisant écho à la situation géographique lacustre du territoire gouverné par Federico Gonzaga : des roseaux, des libellules, des rongeurs, un cygne (fig. 7), une personnification de fleuve (fig. 8), etc. Dans ce même registre topique, le bas-relief figurant *Manto à la source du Tibre* (fig. 3) allégorise cette harmonie cosmique en associant les origines de Mantoue à l'histoire naturelle. Aux dires de Virgile, c'est en effet de l'union d'une femme et d'un fleuve que serait né Ocnus, le fondateur de la cité¹⁰. L'histoire de la ville est donc indéfectiblement liée à cette rencontre de l'homme et de la *physis*.

L'accumulation de tous ces éléments – les figures mythologiques, allégoriques et historiques liées au cours tant physique que politique du temps – offre la vision d'un cosmos mû par un temps cyclique dans lequel les gouvernements anciens et modernes se réverberent.

Cette mise en parallèle ou *synkrisis* résulte non seulement de l'entremêlement des registres iconographiques antiques et modernes, mais encore, et peut-être surtout, de l'incomparable manière de Giulio Romano. On songe en effet aux mots bien connus de Pietro Aretino qui, dans une lettre adressée à son ami Giulio Romano en juin 1542, recourt à un double oxymore pour qualifier les concepts de l'artiste d'« antiquement modernes » et de

9 Ovide, *Les Fastes*, éd. et trad. du latin par R. Schilling, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1992, p. 1 : « Tempora cum causis Latium digesta per annum, Lapsaque sub terras ortaque signa canam » (La répartition des fêtes au long de l'année du Latium et leurs origines, le lever et le coucher des astres sous la terre, voilà l'objet de mon chant.)

10 Virgile, *Énéide*, éd. et trad. du latin par J. Perret, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1980, livre X, vers 198–201, p. 50 : « Ille etiam patriis agmen ciet Ocnus ab oris, fatidicae Mantus et Tusci filius amnis, qui muros matrisque dedit tibi, Mantua, nomen » (Celui-là encore, Ocnus, amène une troupe des rives de sa patrie, il est fils de Manto, la prophétesse, et du fleuve étrusque ; il t'a donné tes murs, Mantoue, et le nom de sa mère.)



7 *Cygne*, vers 1572–1579, Galleria dei Mesi, Mantoue, Palais Ducal

« modernement antiques »¹¹. L'expression du poète et épistolier désigne très précisément cet entremêlement des temps, pour ne pas dire ce chamboulement de l'ordre temporel qui, en transformant le passé en présent et le présent en passé, finit par effacer la distinction ontologique qui sépare l'avant de l'après.

Cette signification symbolique de l'ensemble décoratif ne pouvait évidemment pas échapper à Guglielmo Gonzaga au moment où il décide de transformer la loggia en galerie (fig. 9)¹². C'est donc à partir de cette conception du monde et du temps politique que le projet d'accroissement est mûri et réalisé par les préfets des fabriques Giovan Battista Bertani puis Pompeo Pedemonte entre 1572 et 1579. Rappelons-le, la Galleria dei Mesi est

11 « Onde chi vede le fabrike e le istorie uscite da lo ingegno e da le mani vostre, ammira non altrimenti che' egli scorgesse le case degli iddi in esempli e i miracoli de la natura in colori. Preponvi il mondo ne la invenzione e ne la vaghezza a qualunque toccò mai compasso e pennello. E ciò direbbe anche Appelle e Vitruvio s'eglino comprendessero gli edifici e le pitture che avete fatto e ordinato in cotesta città rimbellita, magnificata dallo spirito dei vostri concetti *anticamente moderni e modernamente antichi*. » Nous soulignons Pietro Aretino, *Lettere sull'arte*, Ettore Camesasca (éd.), Milan, Edizioni Del Milione, vol. 1, 1957 (1526–1542), p. 215. Sur ces qualités chez Giulio Romano, voir Ernst H. Gombrich, « Zum Werke Giulio Romanos », *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, vol. 8, 1934, p. 121–150.

12 L'implication de Guglielmo dans le projet d'extension ne fait aucun doute, comme en témoignent les documents rassemblés par Brown (« Bishop Gerolamo Garimberto... », art. cit., p. 49, documents 1, 2 et 5).



8 *Dieu fleuve*, vers 1572–1579, Galleria dei Mesi, Palais Ducal

projetée à la demande du duc en 1572 pour raccorder la Corte Nuova à la Corte Vecchia, autrement dit pour rattacher les anciennes parties du palais à celles nouvellement construites afin d'instaurer une continuité entre ses propres entreprises édilitaires et celles de ses prédécesseurs¹³. Le principe adopté est dès lors de dédoubler la loggia dans la longueur en reprenant strictement le parti architectural et décoratif de Giulio Romano.

Cette reprise – on peut aisément le comprendre – a pour objectif de gommer toute différence entre les deux parties composant l'espace. Pour y parvenir, les décorateurs réalisent ce que l'on peut appeler une greffe du nouveau sur l'ancien en œuvrant à trois niveaux distincts : ceux du style, de l'iconographie et du dispositif d'exposition. Les peintres et stucateurs qui travaillent sous la houlette de Pedemonte adoptent d'abord le vocabulaire antiquisant de Giulio Romano, le canon de ses figures et le répertoire de ses éléments ornementaux (ce mélange de modules à l'antique et d'éléments naturalistes). On peut en

13 Dans son *Edificazione di Mantova* publiée en 1586, Rafaello Toscano parle de l'accroissement des œuvres de Federico Gonzaga par son fils Guglielmo (Rafaello Toscano, *L'Edificazione di Mantova e l'origine dell'antichissima Famiglia de' Prencipi Gonzaga e d'altri nobilissime Famiglie di detta Città, con gli edifici, e cose memorabili, che in quella si veggono*, Padoue, Lorenzo Pasquati, 1586). Guglielmo n'a cessé d'inscrire son règne dans celui de ses aïeux en restaurant leurs bâtiments ou en conservant l'intégrité de leurs collections. Voir Brown, « Bishop Gerolamo Garimberto... », art. cit., p.49 ; Clifford M. Brown, *La Grotta di Isabella d'Este: un simbolo di continuità dinastica per i duchi di Mantova*, Mantoue, G. Arcari, 1985, p.24–27.



9 Vue de la Galleria dei Mesi (côté ouest, avec les trois travées ajoutées sous le règne de Guglielmo Gonzaga), 1572–1579, Mantoue, Palais Ducal

particulier observer la reprise des motifs de roseaux et de fleurs lacustres, ou encore du réseau végétal structurant les cadres de la voûte et des parois. Par cette redite, quiconque traverse la galerie d'est en ouest (fig. 9) ignore que plus d'une trentaine d'années sépare les trois premières travées des trois dernières. À cette unité stylistique « antique moderner » et « modernement antique » se superpose ensuite une reprise du thème principal du décor de Giulio, à savoir l'entremêlement des temps physique et politique. Pedemonte ajoute au cycle des âges de la vie un cycle relatif au cours des astres en choisissant de représenter, sur les murs nord et sud des trois travées supplémentaires, les signes du zodiaque accompagnés des divinités planétaires (fig. 10) : Apollon, Mars, Vénus et Jupiter. Enfin, troisième et dernier lieu de la greffe : la relation entre l'écrin décoratif et la collection. Dès le début du chantier, Guglielmo ordonne à ses conseillers, ambassadeurs et agents à Rome de se mettre en quête de nouveaux antiques – en particulier des bustes de douze empereurs romains – afin de pouvoir les exposer dans la Galerie¹⁴. Aurelio Zibramonti, Decano Cavriani, Camillo Capilupi ou encore Gerolamo Garimberto sont à pied d'œuvre, et au début de l'année 1573 plusieurs statues et têtes antiques sont achetées par l'intermé-

14 Brown, « Bishop Gerolamo Garimberto... », art. cit., p. 44–49.



10 *Signes du Zodiaque : Bélier et Taureau*, vers 1572–1579, Galleria dei Mesi, Mantoue, Palais Ducal

diaire de l'antiquaire Giovanni Antonio Stampa¹⁵. Après de longues tractations pour leur exportation et la mise en place de leur transport, trente-trois pièces rejoignent Mantoue en août 1574, dont vingt-deux têtes d'empereurs, une statue de Vénus, une statue de Persée, trois bas-reliefs représentant des putti, ou encore une histoire du Temps¹⁶. Une partie de ces œuvres s'accordent parfaitement aux thèmes développés dans la galerie (le Temps, le pouvoir temporel, la *renovatio imperii*) et y seront effectivement placées. Mais comme l'indique une lettre de Sangiorgio à Cavriani datée du 7 mai 1573, non sans que les sculptures antiques incomplètes aient fait l'objet de restaurations ou de montages pour être présentées au sein des collections ducales¹⁷. Là encore, en « restaurant » ou en complétant les antiques, les superviseurs du projet (le comte Sangiorgio et le préfet des fabriques Pedemonte) organisent littéralement une confusion des temps. La restauration n'est pas seulement opérée pour des raisons esthétiques – on sait que le fragmentaire ne contrevenait pas au goût et à l'esthétique de la Renaissance. Elle l'est aussi pour instaurer une continuité entre l'ancien et le moderne. La restauration est ici *restitutio* au sens latin du

15 *Ibid.*, p.51–52.

16 *Ibid.*, p.45.

17 *Ibid.*, p.52, doc. 21.

terme, c'est-à-dire, comme l'écrit très justement François Hartog, « une ré-fection, une nouvelle fabrication à partir d'un double », permettant de ménager un passage, une transition subtile, entre deux temps objectivement disjoints mais conceptuellement conjoints¹⁸. Tout le projet politique des Gonzaga repose – de manière on ne peut plus commune, disons-le – sur cette reconnexion. Reconexion liée au régime d'historicité spécifique de la Renaissance, qui visait justement à restituer le temps glorieux de l'antique Rome¹⁹. Il faut toutefois noter que la réussite de ce projet de *renovatio* passe en premier lieu pour Guglielmo par la reconnexion avec le temps de son prédécesseur. Rappelons que Guglielmo est parvenu au pouvoir en 1556 en raison de la mort de son frère Francesco (1549) et au terme d'une régence de plus de seize années de son oncle Ercole. Pour asseoir sa légitimité, parfois disputée lors de son installation, il lui fallait donc réduire la distance temporelle qui le maintenait séparé du règne de son père²⁰.

Fort de ces précisions, il nous est donné de comprendre l'absence patente de « modernité » du décor. Son archaïsme, pour ne pas dire son anachronisme, répond à un réel souci politique, celui de la stabilisation et de la conservation de l'État, qui passe précisément par l'instauration d'une continuité dynastique. En restaurant le monument de son père, comme son père avait restauré les monuments antiques, Guglielmo ajoute des ornements supplémentaires à la somme des *ornamenta* qui illustraient et paraient déjà le palais. Ce faisant, il « réaffirme », pour reprendre les mots d'Hartog, « l'intention qui avait présidé » à l'édition de la loggia de Federico (celle d'une *translatio imperii*), « en la prenant à son propre compte » et en y inscrivant « sa propre légitimité »²¹.

L'efficacité de cette opération – sa vraisemblance pourrait-on dire – repose essentiellement sur une chose : la discréption de la greffe grâce à laquelle le décor voulu par Guglielmo s'ente sur celui de Federico. On touche ici encore un point fondamental. Je rappellerai en effet, avec Falguières, que la problématique des *ornamenta*, telle qu'elle se dessine dans l'antiquité romaine et telle qu'elle est réactivée à la Renaissance par Alberti dans son *De re aedificatoria*, est indexée aux modes d'attache des ornements. Falguières signale notamment « qu'Alberti, s'il élude toute définition des *ornamenta* pour n'en livrer qu'une énumération (colonnes, chapiteaux, plaques de marbre, pavements et dallages précieux, façades, statues, fresques, poutres, tuiles, architraves de bronze ou d'or, antéfixes, ornements de faîte...), accorde une attention scrupuleuse et prolixe au répertoire de leurs modes d'attache, à leurs différents types de clouage (clous, éclats de pierre dure, etc.) ou d'encollage

18 François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2003, p. 172–173.

19 Rappelons qu'un régime d'historicité selon François Hartog est « l'expression d'un ordre dominant du temps. Tissé de différents régimes de temporalité, il est [...] une façon de traduire et d'ordonner des expériences du temps – des manières d'articuler passé, présent et futur – et de leur donner sens ». Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité...*, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

20 Sur le règne de Guglielmo, voir Cesare Mozzarelli, *Mantova e i Gonzaga: dal 1382 al 1707*, Turin, Utet, 1987, p. 61–72.

21 Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité...*, *op. cit.*, p. 173. Nous soulignons.

(cire, poix, résine, mastic, gommes), aux modes de découpe et d'assemblage qui en règlent l'usage, comme il consacre à leur pose et à leur dépose, à leur mobilisation et à leur transport l'essentiel de son traité des engins et des machines (livre VI) »²².

Pour connaître le statut des ornements, il importe donc de savoir de quelle façon ils se rattachent et se fixent au bâti. Or, en l'espèce, leur couture s'effectue sur le mode de la greffe. C'est d'ailleurs précisément en ce point qu'esthétique et politique se nouent au sein du palais ducal de Mantoue. La vraisemblance de la fiction politique tissée par Guglielmo repose sur un savoir-faire artistique, un art de la transition – ou *harmogé* selon la terminologie forgée par Jackie Pigeaud dans son très bel ouvrage *L'art et le vivant* – qui autorise, par le mélange subtil des couleurs et des substances, l'ajointement de deux entités pourtant distinctes²³. La suture est la rêverie artistique qui permet de transformer l'hétérogène (la somme des éléments qui compose le tout) en une unité patrimoniale et dynastique.

Le décor peint, les statues et les bas-reliefs forment un ensemble où l'antique et le moderne, le passé et le présent s'épousent sans qu'il ne soit possible de distinguer immédiatement les différentes strates temporelles qui le composent : les statues antiques comportent des restaurations modernes, les bas-reliefs contemporains ressemblent à des artefacts antiques et le décor peint à la fin des années 1570 ne se distingue pas de celui de 1540. En opérant un accroissement de la Loggia dei Marmi par duplication, les artistes au service de Guglielmo font de la Galleria dei Mesi un miroir du temps princier : ce temps replié sur lui-même qui, par sa forme et son mode d'attache, produit les conditions de son éternité.

22 Falguières, « L'ornement du droit... », art. cit., p.7.

23 Jackie Pigeaud, *L'art et le vivant*, Paris, Gallimard, 1995, p.207 et suiv. : « *l'harmogé* est le moment le plus raffiné de la distinction, celui où elle se fait non plus par opposition brutale, mais par le passage qui doit révéler et cacher à la fois ». En italique dans le texte.

RECENT RESTORATION PRACTICES

PRATIQUES RÉCENTES DE LA RESTAURATION

Neville Rowley

TRANSPARENCE OU OPACITÉ

Restaurer la Renaissance italienne (xx^e–xxi^e siècles)

Quand le présent colloque avait été initialement programmé, au printemps 2020, j'avais à l'esprit de présenter une sculpture à demi-oubliée du Bode-Museum, à savoir un buste de bronze représentant Ludovic Gonzague et autrefois attribué à Donatello puis à Leon Battista Alberti. L'œuvre m'intéresse toujours au plus haut point, notamment de par son appartenance à la catégorie des trop nombreuses sculptures italiennes de la Renaissance prises pour des faux au xix^e comme au xx^e siècles alors qu'elles sont parfaitement authentiques¹. Cependant, quand il allait être clair que ce colloque allait bien avoir lieu un an plus tard, j'ai eu des scrupules à en faire le sujet de ma communication. Pourquoi ne pas m'extraire pour une fois de ma condition de conservateur des musées berlinois, parlant sans cesse d'œuvres dont j'ai la charge et qu'à force de trop fréquenter j'ai l'impression de ne plus vraiment voir ? Bref, comme tout le monde, j'ai essayé de « penser le monde d'après ». On allait voir ce que l'on allait voir.

Cet optimisme fut entretenu par le thème du colloque, qui m'avait fait revenir en mémoire un article que j'avais publié il y a une quinzaine d'années dans les actes d'un colloque parisien à la diffusion assez confidentielle, et qui essayait de mettre au jour les enjeux tout autant esthétiques qu'idéologiques des restaurations de fresques florentines de la première moitié du xv^e siècle². Ainsi des fresques de Masaccio à la chapelle Brancacci dans l'église des Carmes de Florence, qui avaient pu être comprises, au milieu du xx^e siècle, comme une prémonition du clair-obscur caravagesque, tant elles étaient encore couvertes de la suie de l'incendie qui avait ravagé l'église en 1771 ; telle était la lecture de deux des thuriféraires de Masaccio et de Caravage à l'époque, Roberto Longhi et Pier Paolo Pasolini, le second ayant été brièvement l'élève du premier³. En 1990, la restauration de la chapelle Brancacci

1 Sur ce buste, je renvoie à Neville Rowley, *Donatello berlinese*, Rome, Officina libraria, 2022, p. 68–73.

2 Neville Rowley, « La redécouverte de la couleur dans les peintures murales du Quattrocento. Le fait des restaurations ? », dans *Couleur & Temps. La couleur en conservation et restauration*, actes de colloque (Paris, Institut national du patrimoine, 21–24 juin 2006), Champs-sur-Marne, SFIIC, 2006, p. 53–65.

3 Sur le lien entre Longhi et Pasolini, qu'il me soit permis de renvoyer ici uniquement à Francesco Galluzzi, « Longhi contemporaneo: dal Caravaggio a Cimabue (con Pasolini) », dans Neville Rowley

allait faire apparaître un « *Masaccio nuovo* », un *Masaccio* neuf, clair et lumineux, plus en écho non plus avec Caravage, mais avec des peintres du milieu du xv^e siècle que l'on considérait auparavant presque comme des antagonistes, et notamment Piero della Francesca⁴. *Masaccio* était-il sombre ou clair ? Cela dépendait des époques, et surtout des restaurations.

J'avais donc pour objectif de parler de certaines restaurations récentes avec la même liberté de ton qui était la mienne à l'époque ; d'évoquer ma surprise quand j'ai vu le retable de l'*Annonciation* de Fra Angelico au Museo del Prado de Madrid lors de la magnifique exposition consacrée au peintre en 2019 – et dans laquelle l'œuvre était tellement étincelante qu'elle se détachait de toutes celles réunies pour l'occasion, y compris des autres créations du maître⁵. Et que pouvait-on dire de la *Résurrection* de Piero della Francesca à Sansepolcro, « le plus beau tableau du monde » selon Aldous Huxley, récemment nettoyée et dont les photographies disponibles en ligne montrent des couleurs saturées évoquant presque un photomontage⁶ ? Autant j'avais vu l'*Annonciation* du Prado restaurée, autant il me fallait faire le voyage de Sansepolcro, et reprendre ce que John Pope-Hennessy avait appelé « la piste de Piero della Francesca »⁷. Chose difficile en période de pandémie.

D'autant que je me suis rendu compte que mon expérience de conservateur m'incitait à présent, plus que je ne l'aurais cru, à la prudence. Il ne faut pas voir ici seulement un corporatisme craintif destiné à préserver mes relations avec certains collègues des musées (il y a parfois un peu de cela, je l'avoue), mais aussi une manière différente de procéder et donc de penser : je me suis rendu compte que les restaurations dont j'ai eu la charge pouvaient parfois porter à la critique par manque d'éléments de jugement. Ainsi de ce *Jeune homme endormi* d'Andrea del Verrocchio (fig. 1), que le Bode-Museum de Berlin avait prêté en 2019 à la grande exposition sur l'artiste organisée conjointement par le Palazzo Strozzi et le Museo Nazionale del Bargello de Florence, puis par la National Gallery of Art de Washington, en le nettoyant pour l'occasion⁸. Quelque visiteur de l'exposition, se souve-

(dir.), *Roberto Longhi: frammenti di maschere*, Pise, ETS, 2016, p. 123–137 (*Predella. Journal of Visual Arts*, 10, 2014).

- 4 Voir notamment Keith Christiansen, « La Chapelle Brancacci restaurée. *Masaccio nuovo* », *Connais-sance des arts*, 466, 1990, p. 92–103.
- 5 Sur l'exposition, voir Carl B. Strehlke (dir.), *Fra Angelico and the Rise of Florentine Renaissance*, cat. exp. (Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, 28 mai–15 sept. 2019), Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, 2019. Sur la restauration proprement dite, voir Almudena Sánchez Martín et Gemma García Torres, « The Conservation of Fra Angelico's Prado Annunciation », dans Carl B. Strehlke (dir.), *Fra Angelico: The Annunciation Altarpiece in the Museo del Prado*, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, 2019, p. 45–52.
- 6 Aldous Huxley, *Chemin faisant*, Paris, Stock, 1945 (1925), p. 174–185. Sur la restauration, voir Paola Ilaria Mariotti, « Il restauro della Resurrezione di Piero della Francesca », *OPD restauro*, n° 31, 2019 (paru en 2020), p. 82–93.
- 7 John Pope-Hennessy, *The Piero della Francesca Trail*, New York, Thames and Hudson, 1991.
- 8 Voir respectivement Francesco Caglioti et Andrea De Marchi (dir.), *Verrocchio: il maestro di Leonardo*, cat. exp. (Florence, Palazzo Strozzi et Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 9 mars–14 juillet 2019), Venise, Marsilio, 2019, p. 190–191 cat. 6.3 ; Andrew Butterfield (dir.), *Verrocchio: Sculptor and Painter of Renaissance Florence*, cat. exp. (Washington, National Gallery of Art, 15 sept. 2019–12 janv. 2020), Washington, National Gallery of Art, 2019, p. 162–167 cat. 16.



1 Andrea del Verrocchio, *Jeune homme endormi* (après la restauration achevée en 2019), vers 1470–1475, terre cuite avec restes de polychromie, 36 × 67 × 25 cm, Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst (exposé au Bode-Museum), inv. 112

nant de l'état antérieur du *Jeune homme*, se sera certainement demandé si la statuette avait vraiment besoin de perdre sa teinte « façon bronze » (fig. 2) pour une couleur terre cuite incontestablement plus crue⁹.

Dans ce cas, se rejouait un débat éternel ayant trait à l'histoire des restaurations, à savoir la question du maintien de la patine d'une œuvre, selon qu'on la considère ou non comme partie intégrante de la création originale. Il n'est pas dans mes intentions de revenir sur ce phénomène amplement étudié, notamment en ce qui concerne l'Angleterre d'après-guerre et ce que l'on a nommé la « *cleaning controversy* », mais de proposer d'appliquer un modèle à cette dualité, en reprenant le titre d'un ouvrage marquant dû à l'historien de l'art lausannois Philippe Junod : *Transparence et Opacité*¹⁰.

9 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques. I. Le Cru et le Cuit*, Paris, Plon, 1964 ; Philippe Sénéchal, « L'éclat du sombre ? Terres cuites façon bronze de la Renaissance italienne », *Techné*, 36, 2012, p. 26–33.

10 Philippe Junod, *Transparence et Opacité. Essai sur les fondements théoriques de l'art moderne. Pour une nouvelle lecture de Konrad Fiedler*, Nîmes, Éditions Jacqueline Chambon, 2004 (1976). Sur la « *cleaning controversy* », voir Alessandro Conti (dir.), *Sul restauro*, Turin, Einaudi, 1988.



2 Andrea del Verrocchio, *Jeune homme endormi* (avant la restauration achevée en 2019)

Je n'entrerai pas dans les subtilités de la pensée de Konrad Fiedler, intimement liée – selon Junod – aux fondements théoriques de l'art moderne, mais me bornerai à constater que les partisans des restaurations spectaculaires mettent presque toujours en avant la transparence, visant à faire accéder le spectateur à l'acte créateur, qui aurait été recouvert par des décennies voire des siècles d'opacité (à savoir des couches de peinture, de vernis, de poussière ou des agents atmosphériques). Les opposants font quant à eux valoir l'origine potentiellement historique de cette patine : en revenant à cette origine supposée, on éliminait parfois, et sans même s'en préoccuper, les vernis posés par le peintre, on écorchait cette « *pelle* », cette « *peau* » appliquée sur les sculptures que même un apôtre de la blancheur comme Antonio Canova considérait comme fondamentale.

La teinte sombre du *Jeune homme* de Verrocchio était la conséquence du noircissement d'une couche de cire que l'on avait appliquée sur la sculpture dans les années 1960 ; sous celle-ci furent décelées des traces (éparses) de deux véritables couches picturales bien plus anciennes, la première blanche, la seconde brune. Cette donnée n'était pas inconnue des générations précédentes, mais un enlèvement de la patine avait été jugé par trop risqué :



3 Attribué à Luca della Robbia, *Vierge à l'Enfant entourée d'anges* dite *Lunette Alessandri* (après la restauration achevée en 2019), vers 1430–1435, terre cuite polychromée, 109,5 × 130,5 × 17 cm, Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst (exposée au Bode-Museum), inv. 139

l'équilibre esthétique permis par ce « jus » aurait été irrémédiablement perdu, pensait-on¹¹. Quinze ans plus tard, le même musée a considéré que garder cette patine de cire relevait du fétichisme inutile. Les jugements évoluent avec les époques, on le sait, mais pas uniquement : au moment de la restauration du *Jeune homme*, une lunette de terre cuite également au Bode-Museum et sans doute due au jeune Luca della Robbia (fig. 3) était aussi restaurée, mais en gardant cette fois sa teinte sombre, les analyses ayant démontré qu'il s'agissait d'une véritable couche picturale appliquée anciennement sur le relief¹². Deux mesures en apparence divergentes appliquées par le même musée au même moment, dans le but apparemment cohérent de restituer à l'œuvre une plus grande lisibilité : voilà qui incite à la prudence.

Si chaque choix de restauration résulte donc d'une dynamique complexe et ne doit pas se résumer à une simple alternative entre prudence et témérité, loin de moi l'idée de

11 Rapport de Bodo Buczynski, 23 janvier 1984, Archives du département de restauration de la Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. 112.

12 Sur cette restauration, voir Carsten Schneider, « The "Alessandri Madonna" in the Sculpture Collection of the Berlin State Museums: "Fake" or "Original"? Research and Restoration of a Terracotta Relief Attributed to Luca della Robbia », *Predella. Journal of Visual Arts*, 50, 2021 (paru en 2022), p. 43–55.

sous-estimer les tendances de fond qui parcourent l'histoire de la restauration – et qui sont intimement liées à des traditions culturelles. Peu de cas sont aussi exemplaires que les statues dispersées ornant autrefois le magnifique tombeau du doge Andrea Vendramin, réalisé par le sculpteur vénitien Tullio Lombardo dans les années 1490¹³. En octobre 2002, l'*Adam* conservé au Metropolitan Museum of Art de New York tombait de son piédestal et se brisait en mille morceaux – et même bien plus. Après douze années d'une patiente restauration, la sculpture regagnait triomphalement les salles de son musée, où elle trône depuis lors en majesté (fig. 4)¹⁴. Bien malin qui pourra déceler dans la sculpture les traces d'un tel traumatisme. Résumer les restaurations aux États-Unis à une telle entreprise serait certainement excessif, mais pas totalement faux, tant l'attention y est généralement mise sur ce qui rend une œuvre attractive, et non sur les traces de ses vicissitudes passées.

On ne saurait être plus éloigné comme parti pris des deux *Pages porte-blason* qui couronnaient autrefois le tombeau Vendramin, et qui ont gagné Berlin dès la première moitié du XIX^e siècle. Ceux-ci, apolliniens avant la Seconde Guerre mondiale (fig. 5) se retrouveront calcinés après celle-ci (fig. 6). Victimes, à l'instar de centaines d'œuvres d'art, des incendies du bunker de Friedrichshain au mois de mai 1945, les deux *Pages* furent alors transformés en fantômes, condamnés pendant des décennies à hanter les réserves du Bode-Museum, trop fragiles pour être exposés et même contraints d'être allongés sous peine de se transformer en poussière¹⁵. Une longue restauration a entrepris de consolider leur matière afin de les présenter en position verticale pour la première fois depuis quatre-vingts ans. Elle vient à peine d'être achevée, et les *Pages* ont pu être installés dans les salles du Bode-Museum au printemps 2021 (fig. 7)¹⁶. Comme celle du Metropolitan Museum, cette restauration a visé à redonner à ces sculptures une partie de leur état d'origine, à savoir leur position verticale. Mais la comparaison s'arrête là bien entendu. Aucun visiteur du Metropolitan ne peut se douter de l'accident de 2002 s'il n'en a pas par ailleurs pris connaissance ; aucun visiteur du Bode-Museum ne peut croire qu'il n'est pas arrivé quelque chose de tragique à ces sculptures, les incendies de 1945 étant par ailleurs dûment expliqués par des cartels : même si le corps de ces deux grands brûlés a été retouché ça et là, le trauma-

13 Sur ce monument, voir Anne Markham Schulz, *The Sculpture of Tullio Lombardo*, Londres/Turnhout, Harvey Miller, 2014, p. 46–66.

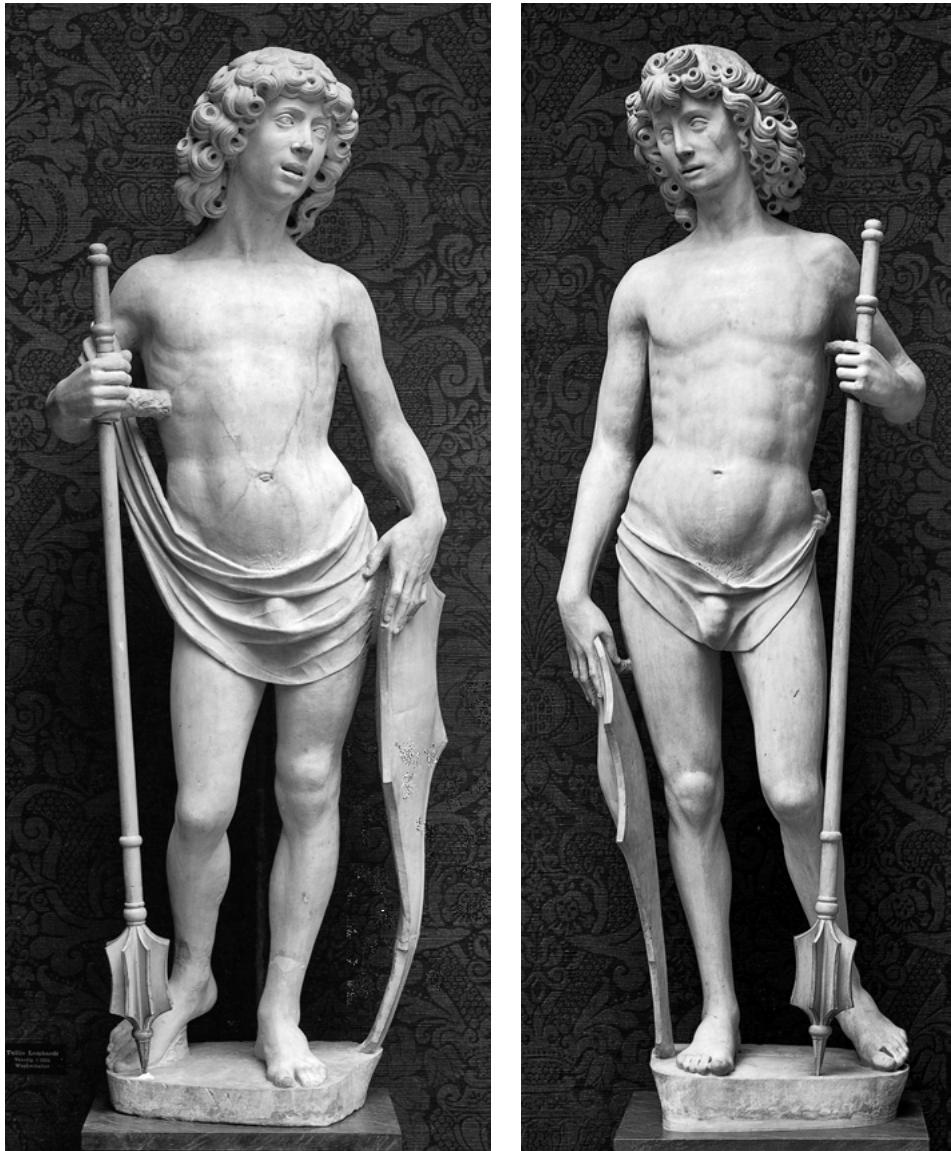
14 Sur cette restauration, voir Carolyn Riccardelli, Jack Soultanian *et al.*, « The Treatment of Tullio Lombardo's *Adam*: A New Approach to Conservation of Monumental Marble Sculpture », *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, vol. 49, 2014, p. 49–116.

15 Les deux *Pages* n'ont été montrés au public que le temps d'une exposition (durant laquelle fut prise la fig. 6) : voir Julien Chapuis et Stephan Kemperdick (dir.), *Das verschwundene Museum. Die Verluste der Berliner Gemälde- und Skulpturensammlungen 70 Jahren nach Kriegsende*, cat. exp. (Berlin, Bode-Museum, 19 mars–27 sept. 2015), Petersberg, Imhof, 2015, p. 96–97. Voir aussi Michael Knuth, « I 'Paggi' del Monumento Vendramin nel museo di Berlino: storia e stato di conservazione », dans Matteo Ceriana (dir.), *Tullio Lombardo: scultore e architetto nella Venezia del Rinascimento*, actes de colloque (Venise, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 4–6 avril 2006), Vérone, Cierre, 2007, p. 15–22.

16 Les enjeux de cette restauration avaient été évoqués par Paul Hofmann, Neville Rowley et Daniel Sandles, « Die Restaurierung der beiden Schildträger von Tullio Lombardo in der Berliner Skulpturensammlung », *Restauro*, n° 1, 2019, p. 26–37.



4 Tullio Lombardo, *Adam* (après la restauration achevée en 2014), vers 1490–1495, marbre, h : 192 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 36.163



5 Tullio Lombardo, *Pages porte-blason* (état d'avant-guerre au Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum), vers 1490–1495, marbre, h : 168,5 cm et 171,5 cm, Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. 212 et 213



6 Tullio Lombardo, *Pages porte-blason* lors de l'exposition « Das verschwundene Museum » (Berlin, Bode-Museum, 19 mars-27 sept. 2015)



7 Tullio Lombardo, *Pages porte-blason* (après la restauration achevée en 2021), Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst (exposés au Bode-Museum)

tisme est tout autre que la chute d'un socle, et il n'est bien sûr pas question, à Berlin, de faire comme si la Seconde Guerre mondiale n'avait pas existé. L'opacité des traces de brûlures doit ainsi être comprise comme un besoin de transparence par rapport à l'histoire allemande.

Il serait extrêmement instructif de remonter l'*Adam* du Metropolitan et les *Pages* de Berlin sur leur tombeau d'origine, initialement érigé dans l'église des Servites de Venise puis déplacé au début du xix^e siècle dans celle des Santi Giovanni e Paolo. Essayons d'imaginer notre réaction à la vue d'un *Adam* dans une niche du premier niveau, sans doute bien plus blanc que le reste des statues vénitiennes, qui conservent en partie leur polychromie ancienne en plus d'une consistante couche de poussière propre à ce type de lieu : le jugerait-on plus beau que le reste de l'œuvre, ou au contraire sonnerait-il faux ? Quant aux *Pages* de Berlin, ils seraient installés tout en haut de l'immense construction : à cette distance, les croirait-on simplement recouverts d'une épaisse couche de saleté ?

Si une telle réunion est évidemment impensable, l'*Adam* de New York et surtout les *Pages* de Berlin n'étant certainement pas en mesure d'être déplacés vus les traumatismes subis, nombre d'expositions temporaires permettent de vérifier les écarts tangibles entre des œuvres qui, à l'origine, devaient présenter un aspect des plus similaires – moyen commode de mesurer la transparence ou l'opacité des objets exposés. Je me limiterai ici à un artiste directement lié à Tullio Lombardo et à la Venise de la fin du xv^e siècle, mais du côté de la peinture : Giovanni Bellini. Les tableaux de Bellini ont souvent été comparés à la blancheur marmoréenne des sculptures de Tullio ; ils doivent leur transparence non pas à leur matière mais à leur médium : l'huile. Je ne connais pas de meilleure démonstration d'une telle transparence qu'une célèbre photographie de Thomas Struth (fig. 8), prise dans l'église San Zaccaria de Venise en 1995 et dans laquelle le retable de Bellini, au centre, semble comme éclairé de l'intérieur, tandis que les peintures de la fin du xvi^e siècle qui l'entourent sont d'une déprimante opacité. Beaucoup de restaurateurs ont parfois vu Tullio Lombardo plus blanc qu'il ne l'était véritablement ; de même, restaurer un Bellini veut dire souvent partir à la recherche d'une transparence perdue, pour le meilleur ou pour le pire¹⁷.

Si un tel objectif pose en effet question, c'est parce que la majorité de ces œuvres de plus de cinq siècles d'existence a naturellement subi des dommages conséquents. Les restaurations sont souvent confrontées à un dilemme : faut-il entièrement dépouiller une œuvre de ses repeints et vernis successifs (en risquant au passage d'endommager les vernis originaux, sans parler de la couche picturale proprement dite), quitte à parvenir à un état lacunaire qui n'aura que peu à voir avec celui d'origine, ou bien se contenter d'une prudence qui s'apparente souvent à de l'attentisme passif ? On peut se poser la question devant le *Christ mort entouré de quatre anges* de Giovanni Bellini conservé au Museo della Città de Rimini (fig. 9), et restauré à la fin des années 1970 par Ottorino Nonfarmale : contrairement à ce que laisse penser le patronyme du restaurateur, l'œuvre a assez souffert d'une

17 Sur la recherche de la transparence perdue dans les restaurations des œuvres de Bellini, voir notamment Rona Goffen et Giovanna Nepi Scirè (dir.), *Il colore ritrovato: Bellini a Venezia*, cat. exp. (Venise, Gallerie dell'Accademia, 30 sept. 2000–28 janv. 2001), s.l., Electa, 2000 ; et son compte rendu par Manlio Brusatin, « La mostra di Giovanni Bellini alle Gallerie dell'Accademia: "il colore ritrovato", forse », *Venezia arti*, n° 14, 2000 (paru en 2003), p. 92–94.



8 Thomas Struth, *San Zaccaria, Venice*, 1995, photographie, 181,9 × 230,5 cm

telle opération¹⁸. Elle est encore aujourd’hui présentée au public de la sorte, c'est-à-dire sans cadre, sans retouches (ou presque), et même sans support de bois. Pour faire un italienisme : il s’agit d’un Bellini « *ridotto all’osso* », c'est-à-dire « réduit à l’os ».

J'avoue ne pas être particulièrement gêné par l'état du *Christ* de Rimini, sans doute parce que j'ai grandi à Paris à la fin du xx^e siècle, et que les « dérestaurations » étaient la norme pour nombre d'œuvres italiennes du xv^e siècle du Musée du Louvre. Dans ce tableau, je vois avant tout un chef-d'œuvre capital de Giovanni Bellini, que je voulais absolument montrer à Berlin lors d'une exposition sur Mantegna et Bellini organisée en partenariat avec la National Gallery de Londres entre 2018 et 2019, à côté d'un relief de même sujet réalisé par Donatello et conservé au Victoria and Albert Museum de Londres, une juxtaposition qui n'avait jamais été faite auparavant¹⁹. Dans l'exposition berlinoise, le *Christ* de Rimini

18 Sur cette restauration, voir Daniele Benati, « *Cristo morto sorretto da quattro angeli* », dans Carlo Volpe (dir.), *Pittura a Rimini tra gotico e manierismo: recupero e restauro del patrimonio artistico riminese: dipinti su tavola*, cat. exp. (Rimini, Museo Civico, Sala delle Colonne, août–oct. 1979), Rimini, 1979, p. 40–41.

19 Ladite juxtaposition avait été suggérée par Mattia Vinco dans Andrea De Marchi, Andrea Di Lorenzo et Lavinia Galli Michiero (dir.), *Giovanni Bellini: dall’icona alla storia*, cat. exp. (Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, 9 nov. 2012–25 fév. 2013), Turin, Umberto Allemandi, 2012, p. 71. Sur l'exposition « Man-

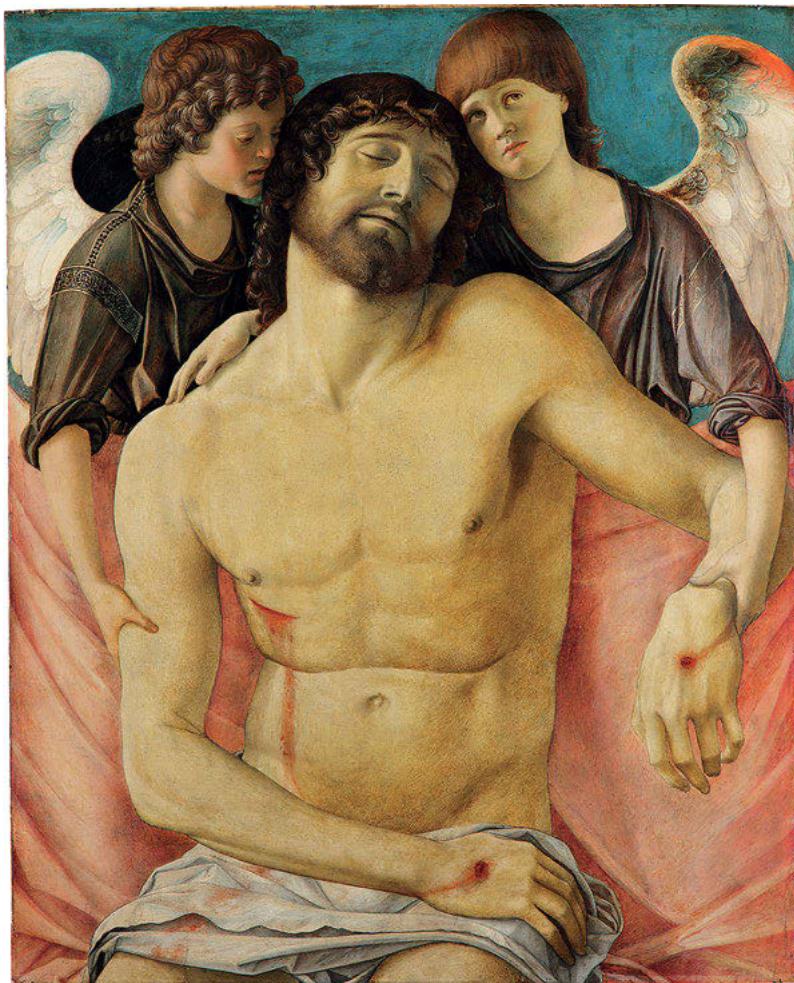


9 Giovanni Bellini, *Christ mort entouré de quatre anges*, vers 1470–1475, huile sur bois transposé sur toile, 92 x 132,5 cm (surface peinte : 80,5 x 120 cm), Rimini, Museo della Città, inv. 18PQ

se trouvait également accroché à côté d'un autre *Christ* de l'artiste, conservé à Berlin (fig. 10). Si les deux œuvres ont la même iconographie et datent de la même époque, tout les sépare par ailleurs : le *Christ* berlinois a aussi subi des dommages conséquents par le passé, mais ceux-ci ont été recouverts par des retouches déjà anciennes, plus un vernis aujourd'hui jauni qui donne à l'image une apparente cohérence, mais voile bien entendu la fameuse transparence bellinienne²⁰. Quel état fallait-il préférer : la ruine lacunaire mais authentique ou la stratigraphie de nombreuses époques s'étant échiniées à redonner vie à un tableau bien mal en point ? Je n'ai pas la réponse. De toutes les visites que j'ai pu faire

tegna et Bellini », voir Caroline Campbell, Dagmar Korbacher *et al.* (dir.), *Mantegna & Bellini*, cat. exp. (Londres, National Gallery, 1^{er} oct. 2018–27 janv. 2019 ; Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, 1^{er} mars–30 juin 2019), Londres, National Gallery Company, 2018.

20 Quant au cadre, ce n'était évidemment pas celui d'origine, mais un cadre de style néo-Renaissance accolé au tableau depuis les années 1950. À l'occasion du bicentenaire de l'acquisition par la Gemäldegalerie de la collection Solly, le *Christ* de Bellini fut de nouveau présenté avec son cadre conçu par Karl Friedrich Schinkel pour l'ouverture des musées berlinois en 1830. Voir à ce sujet Robert Skwirblies, « Ein "Gemälde-Vorrath" als Krisengewinn und Kulturinvestition. Wie Edward Solly dem Berliner Museum zu seiner Gemäldegalerie verhalf », dans R. Skwirblies, R. Contini *et al.* (dir.), *Die Sammlung Solly. Vom Bilder-“Chaos” zur Gemäldegalerie*, cat. exp. (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, 3 nov. 2021–30 janv. 2022), Berlin/Munich, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2021, p. 25, 28, fig. 14.



10 Giovanni Bellini, *Christ mort porté par deux anges*, vers 1470–1475, détrempe et huile sur bois, 82,9 × 66,9 cm, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, Kat.Nr.28

de l'exposition, pas une fois je n'ai manqué de signaler cette tension latente, et d'interroger mes visiteurs sur leurs préférences, sans qu'un consensus clair ne se dégage jamais.

Un tel exemple n'a pas pour but de laisser croire qu'en Italie, on décape, tandis qu'en Allemagne, on ne touche jamais à rien. L'intervention subie par le *Christ* de Rimini n'est plus la norme en Italie, et l'on parle depuis quelque temps de le restaurer à nouveau ; à Berlin, l'attitude envers les œuvres de Giovanni Bellini a beaucoup évolué au cours des dernières décennies, comme en témoigne un autre *Christ mort*, cette fois entre la Vierge et



11 Giovanni Bellini, *Christ mort entre la Vierge et saint Jean*, vers 1490–1495, huile sur bois, 68 × 86 cm, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, Kat.Nr. 4

saint Jean, et lui aussi très endommagé (fig. 11). Ces lacunes étaient connues de longue date, notamment dans le visage de la Vierge (fig. 12) ; en 1992, on considérait que toute dérestauration n'était envisageable que si elle était menée par le plus célèbre restaurateur de l'époque, Mario Modestini²¹. Celui-ci vivait alors à New York et avait plus de quatre-vingts ans ; venir à Berlin pour une telle mission n'était guère envisageable. La chose en resta là pendant une quinzaine d'années, jusqu'à ce qu'une autre génération muséale décide d'intervenir selon ce plan consistant à « re-fabriquer un tableau original » – à l'anglo-saxonne, pourrait-on dire en caricaturant. Mais n'est pas Modestini qui veut : les visages restaurés sont bien loin de la qualité de Giovanni Bellini, au point de faire passer à

21 Archives du département de restauration de la Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (« Bellini, Giovanni. Die Beweinung Christi. Um 1495. Kat.Nr. 4 » ; voir notamment une lettre de Mario Modestini à Henning Bock, directeur de la Gemäldegalerie, 6 septembre 1992). Sur Modestini, voir Dianne Dwyer Modestini, *Masterpieces*, Cadmo, 2018.



12 Détail de la figure 11 pendant la restauration achevée en 2006

première vue cette œuvre authentique pour une copie d'atelier. Ce résultat mitigé explique sans doute en partie pourquoi personne ne s'est empressé, depuis lors, d'intervenir sur l'autre *Christ* de Berlin (fig. 10).

Si le *Christ mort entre la Vierge et saint Jean* ne faisait pas partie de l'exposition « Mantegna et Bellini » elle-même, l'œuvre était incluse dans une petite présentation attenante, organisée par la restauratrice en chef de la Gemäldegalerie, Babette Hartwieg, et consacrée justement aux problèmes de conservation²². Le tableau phare de cette salle était également un Bellini autographe mais en très mauvais état, le *Doge Leonardo Loredan entre*

22 Cette exposition fut à la base d'un volume d'essais : Babette Hartwieg et Neville Rowley (dir.), *Zu Mantegna und Bellini. Provenienz, Kunsttechnologie und Restaurierung von Werken der Berliner Ge-*



13 Giovanni Bellini, *L'Assassinat de saint Pierre Martyr* (après la restauration achevée en 2018), vers 1505–1507, huile sur bois, 99,7 × 165,1 cm, Londres, National Gallery, inv. NG812

quatre dignitaires, tableau acquis durant l'époque nazie et imprudemment dérestauré après la Seconde Guerre mondiale²³. Cette opération est toujours des plus visibles sur les manteaux de deux des personnes accompagnant le doge, et qui sont peut-être les fils de ce dernier : la tâche a été interrompue en chemin, quand on s'est rendu compte que, sous les repeints, il n'y avait rien, ou plus grand chose²⁴. La conséquence d'une telle restauration avortée aura été de laisser croupir l'œuvre dans les réserves de la Gemäldegalerie pendant sept décennies ; avec ses repeints anciens, elle aurait été au moins digne d'une galerie d'études. Le Loredan payait ainsi un double tribut, au dommage subi s'ajoutant un silence gêné sur plusieurs générations. Il n'était pas concevable pour moi d'organiser l'exposition

- mäldegalerie*, Petersberg, Imhof, 2022. Certaines des réflexions ici présentées sont aussi discutées dans Neville Rowley, « Mantegna & Bellini in Berlin. Ein Rückblick », *op. cit.*, p. 128–137.
- 23 Sur l'acquisition du tableau, voir Hanna Strzoda, « Giovanni Bellini, "Der Doge Loredan mit vier Begleitern" aus der Sammlung Marczell von Nemes » dans Hartwig et Rowley (dir.), *Zu Mantegna und Bellini...*, *op. cit.*, p. 86–101.
- 24 Sur les tentatives d'identification des personnages, voir Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli, *Giovanni Bellini e la pittura veneta a Berlino: le collezioni di James Simon e Edward Solly alla Gemäldegalerie*, Vérone, Scripta, 2015, p. 156–165. Sur les différentes restaurations, voir Babette Hartwig et Felicitas Klein, « Giovanni Bellini, "Der Doge Loredan mit vier Begleitern". Spurensuche zur Entstehungs- und Restaurierungsgeschichte des grossformatigen Wandbildes », dans Hartwig et Rowley (dir.), *Zu Mantegna und Bellini...*, *op. cit.*, p. 68–85.

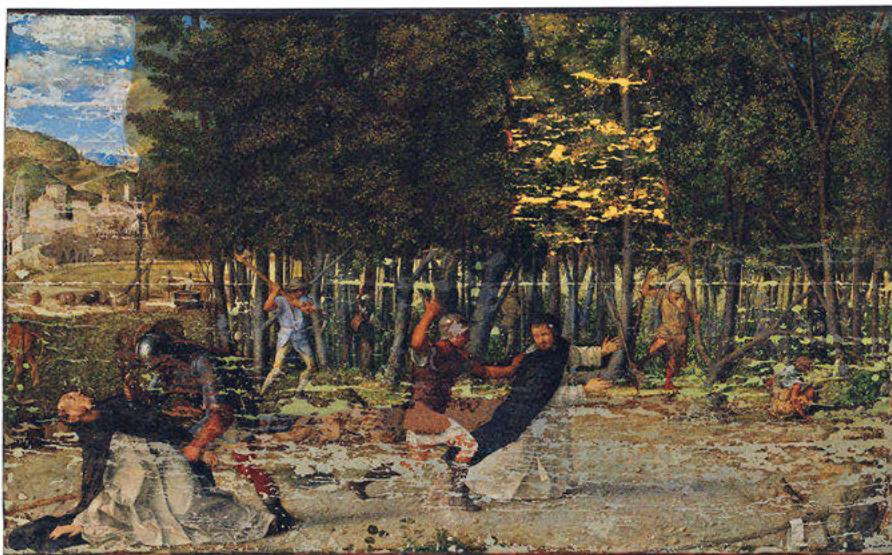


FIG. 272 NG 812, during further cleaning and initial underpainting (March 2016).



FIG. 273 NG 812, during further cleaning and initial underpainting (April 2016).

14 Giovanni Bellini, *L'Assassinat de saint Pierre Martyr* (étapes de la restauration achevée en 2018), Londres, National Gallery, dans Jill Dunkerton, « Restored to the Light: Giovanni Bellini's "The Assassination of Saint Peter Martyr" », *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, n° 39 (*Giovanni Bellini's Painting Technique*), 2018, p. 120

« Mantegna et Bellini » avec le prêt de « l'autre Loredan », le chef-d'œuvre de la National Gallery de Londres, sans faire une place à celui-ci dans nos galeries. Reconnaître ses propres erreurs, fût-ce à l'échelle d'une institution, c'est aussi cela la transparence.

Si les restaurations comportent donc toujours des risques, je suis convaincu qu'il y en a tout autant à laisser les œuvres anciennes se dégrader inexorablement alors que l'on est encore en mesure de les préserver. Il ne fait aucun doute que certaines restaurations peuvent aussi être des révélations, ce que l'exposition « Mantegna et Bellini » a pu démontrer à deux reprises : à Berlin, une *Résurrection* de Francesco Bissolo a facilement perdu sa couche de vernis jauni posée à la fin de la guerre, révélant ce qui est sans doute l'un des chefs-d'œuvre du peintre, grandement influencé par Bellini et par le jeune Titien²⁵. Mais le projet le plus spectaculaire fut certainement celui qui concerne l'*Assassinat de saint Pierre Martyr* de Giovanni Bellini à la National Gallery de Londres (fig. 13), un tableau presque entièrement repeint au début du xix^e siècle et considéré de ce fait par la plupart des experts comme un travail d'atelier²⁶. Si les analyses préliminaires montraient clairement l'étendue du désastre subi par le panneau, les bribes que l'on discernait sous les repeints étaient d'une très grande qualité, révélant la main du maître : décision fut prise de combler les lacunes dans un style et une technique ressemblants autant que possible au peintre vénitien. Plutôt que de « dérestaurer » l'ensemble du tableau puis de s'atteler à le repeindre, la restauratrice londonienne Jill Dunkerton s'est attelée à son travail partie par partie (fig. 14), afin d'éviter que la vue du tableau défiguré n'incite quelque *trustee* paniqué à interrompre l'opération en cours. Un processus de restauration en partie opaque, pour un résultat qui est un modèle de transparence : ce n'est pas le moindre des paradoxes d'un tableau qui peut autant passer pour un chef-d'œuvre retrouvé de Giovanni Bellini que pour un panneau peint pour une grande part au xx^r siècle. Je serais curieux de connaître le jugement de la postérité à ce sujet.

25 Sur cette restauration, voir Nicola Müller, « Francesco Bissolo, "Die Auferstehung Christi". Wiederentdeckung und Restaurierung eines Gemäldes aus der frühen Sammlungsgeschichte der Gemäldegalerie », dans Hartwig et Rowley (dir.), *Zu Mantegna und Bellini...*, op. cit., p. 112–127.

26 Sur cette restauration, voir Jill Dunkerton, « Restored to the Light: Giovanni Bellini's "The Assassination of Saint Peter Martyr" », *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, n° 39, 2018, p. 106–123.

Victor Lopes

LA MISE AU TOMBEAU DE VÉRONÈSE

Traces, histoire matérielle et restauration

La mise au tombeau – aujourd’hui conservée au Musée d’art et d’histoire de Genève et attribuée au peintre vénitien Paolo Caliari (1528–1588), dit Véronèse¹ – fut offerte en 1696 à Louis XIV par le nonce du pape Innocent XII, le Vénitien Daniele Dolfin (1653–1704) (fig. 1). Transférée au château de Versailles, la peinture subit alors une double transformation : symbolique et matérielle. Conçue comme œuvre de dévotion – si l’on tient compte de son iconographie et de ses dimensions réduites en regard des œuvres produites par le peintre et son atelier à la même époque – elle devient tour à tour cadeau diplomatique et tableau de collection. Ce changement de statut et de fonction se matérialise par une première adaptation du format, de manière à l’intégrer comme dessus de porte dans le salon de « l’Œil-de-bœuf » des appartements privés du Roi.

Un second tableau – présenté à Versailles en pendant de notre œuvre – subira le même sort par l’ajout de quatre bandes latérales (surlignées en noir dans l’image). Cette *Adoration des bergers*, considérée à l’époque comme de la main de Véronèse est aujourd’hui conservée aux Musées Royaux des Beaux-arts de Belgique (fig. 2).

L’ajout de bandes de toile latérales sur notre tableau, réalisé entre 1698 et 1701 pour permettre l’agrandissement du format, est dû au peintre et restaurateur Antoine Paillet (1626–1701), en charge de la conservation des collections royales². La description faite dans les inventaires réalisés dès 1702 par Jean-Aimar Piganiol de La Force³, par Nicolas Bailly entre 1709 et 1710, puis par Nicolas Bernard Lépicié en 1754 confirment ces nou-

- 1 Frédéric Elsig et Mauro Natale (dir.), *Peintures italiennes et espagnoles. XIV^e–XVIII^e siècles*, cat. exp. (Genève, Musée d’art et d’histoire, 26 juin–31 déc. 2015), Cinisello Balsamo (Milan), Silvana Editoriale, 2015, p. 124–125.
- 2 Frédéric Elsig, Victor Lopes et Stefano Volpin, « Regards croisés sur la *Mise au tombeau* de Véronèse », *Genava. Revue des Musées d’art et d’histoire de Genève*, 59, 2011, p. 61–65.
- 3 Jean-Aimar Piganiol de La Force, *Nouvelle description des châteaux et parcs de Versailles et de Marly*, Paris, Didot, 1764, I, p. 256–257, cité par Mauro Natale, *Peintures italiennes du XIV^e au XVIII^e siècle. Catalogue raisonné des peintures*. Musée d’art et d’histoire, Genève, Musée d’art et d’histoire, 1979, p. 26, n. 3.



1 Paolo Caliari (1528–1588), dit Véronèse, *La mise au tombeau*, vers 1575–1580, huile sur toile, 91,2 × 133,7 cm, Genève, Musée d'art et d'histoire, MAH 1825-0003

velles dimensions – évaluées à « 3 pieds 10 pouces, sur 4 pieds 10 pouces de large » – soit 130,45 × 165 cm.

Saisie à la Révolution et conservée provisoirement au Muséum central des Arts à Paris, *La mise au tombeau* est « réduite » en 1802 à ses dimensions actuelles lors du traitement du support que réalise le célèbre rentoileur parisien François-Toussaint Hacquin (1756–1832). À cette occasion la peinture est également retouchée par le peintre-restaurateur Edme-André Michau (1751–1826) avant d'être envoyée à Genève le 25 ventôse de l'an XII (16 mars 1805). Alors que cette seconde intervention structurelle et esthétique rétablit le format « originel » de l'œuvre en vue de son envoi, l'œuvre se charge d'une dimension politique. En effet, Genève à l'instar des villes de Bruxelles et Mayence est annexée à la France, pour devenir le chef-lieu du nouveau département du Léman. La politique d'intégration de nouveaux territoires passe par la promotion des valeurs culturelles de l'État français et se matérialise par la création de « musées de provinces ». Le premier préfet du ce nouveau département du Léman, Ange-Marie d'Eymar (1740–1803), considère en effet que l'envoi d'un premier lot de dix-neuf peintures, dont *La mise au tombeau* fait partie, doit



2 Anonyme (autrefois attribué à Véronèse), *Adoration des bergers*, vers 1575–1580, huile sur toile, 122 × 195 cm, Bruxelles, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique

permettre de « réveiller l'esprit public » et « entretenir l'amour de la patrie », renforçant ainsi le sentiment d'union nationale⁴.

Avant son envoi, notre toile est donc démontée de son ancienne structure fixe et tendue sur un nouveau châssis à extension plus moderne. Les recherches menées sur l'histoire de la restauration des peintures en France et plus particulièrement au Muséum central des Arts à Paris nous renseignent sur l'organisation de ce travail⁵. Quant à Hacquin – formé par son père Jean-Louis, ébéniste – il devient une figure centrale dans le développement de la restauration à Paris, puisqu'au-delà de sa pratique d'atelier il rédige en 1798 des *Mémoires* consacrés à la conservation des œuvres, où il rend public des développements techniques et des recettes liés à son activité de rentoileur. Établi dès 1788 au Louvre, il

4 Camille Jaquier, « Le décret Chaptal et la collection de tableaux envoyée à Genève », *Genava. Revue des Musées d'art et d'histoire de Genève*, 60, 2012, p. 99–110.

5 Sur le sujet voir Noémie Étienne, *La restauration des peintures à Paris (1750–1815). Pratiques et discours sur la matérialité des œuvres d'art*, Rennes, PUR, 2012.



3 Revers du tableau de Paolo Caliari (1528–1588), dit Véronèse, *La mise au tombeau*, vers 1575–1580, avec la toile de rentoilage et le châssis datant de l'intervention du rentoileur parisien Hacquin (1802)

succède en 1798 à Jean-Michel Picault et assume la direction du principal atelier de restauration. Il est assisté dans son travail par de nombreux restaurateurs de couche picturale, de couturiers et de menuisiers. Les factures, conservées aux Archives nationales, relatives aux envois napoléoniens révèlent notamment le nom de deux menuisiers : un certain Nadreau – chargé de fournir le bois, de restaurer les encadrements et de réaliser les caisses de transport – mais également celui du menuisier Renié, chargé de réaliser les châssis à extension, correspondant au modèle de notre tableau (fig. 3).

Les indices matériels nous ont conduits à les comparer avec l'ensemble des œuvres reçues en 1805. Des dix-neuf tableaux envoyés à Genève par Napoléon⁶, dix auraient fait l'objet d'un traitement du support à Paris. Seuls deux tableaux conservent aujourd'hui leurs anciens rentoilages et leurs anciens châssis. En effet, entre 1963 et 1964, les huit autres peintures sur toile ont été désentoilées, pour être le plus souvent rentoilées à la cire et leurs

6 Édouard Chapuisat, « Napoléon et le musée de Genève », *Nos anciens et leurs œuvres. Recueil genevois d'art*, 1914, p. 3–71 ; Renée Loche et Maurice Pianzola, « Les tableaux remis par Napoléon à Genève », *Genava. Revue des Musées d'art et d'histoire de Genève*, 12, 1964, p. 247–296 ; Jaquier, « Le décret Chaptal... », art. cit.

châssis systématiquement remplacés. Seuls *La mise au tombeau* et le tableau de Peter Thys (1624–1677), *Le Temps et les Parques*, étudié et restauré dans le cadre du catalogue des peintures flamandes et hollandaises du Musée, conservent aujourd’hui encore leurs rentoilages parisiens⁷. La typologie des deux structures en bois de conifère répond aux mêmes critères de fabrication. L’épaisseur des montants sont identiques. La présence de deux chevilles au croisement des renforts, les éléments montés à mi-bois et embrevés dans l’épaisseur des traverses et les clefs d’angles, en bois de chêne, sont parfaitement identiques (fig. 3).

Dès 1788, Hacquin reçoit la permission d’installer dans les greniers du Louvre des métiers à tisser qui lui permettent de réaliser des toiles qu’il vend à des peintres ou utilise comme support de rentoilage. Les deux toiles employées pour nos deux tableaux sont certainement issues de cette production. Elles répondent en effet aux mêmes caractéristiques techniques, soit une armure simple présentant une densité de dix à onze fils par centimètre carré. Relevons enfin que l’unique inscription « genève » réalisée à la pierre noire sur la traverse centrale pourrait correspondre à la mise en caisse et à l’envoi de l’œuvre à Genève.

La technique de rentoilage traditionnelle française implique l’usage de tirants de papier, appliqués sur les quatre bords. Dans le cas de *La mise au tombeau*, ces bordures de papier ont été conservées. Elles ont été extraites de feuilles longues de 48 cm, imprimées mais non découpées. L’identification du texte imprimé – durant le traitement de conservation-restauration du tableau – et sa disposition nous a permis de reconnaître l’ouvrage à partir duquel les tirants ont été réalisés (fig. 4). Il s’agit d’une traduction en langue française du Livre III des *Métamorphoses d’Ovide*, racontant l’histoire de Narcisse. Cette édition bilingue, en langues latine et française, correspond à la seconde édition de 1796 de la traduction de Jean-Jacques Barrett (1717–1792), publiée pour la première fois en 1777⁸.

Quant à la technique et aux matériaux de rentoilage, c’est à dire à l’application d’une toile de renfort au revers de la toile originale, ils correspondent à un rentoilage à la colle de pâte. Sa composition est clairement décrite par Hacquin dans un écrit qu’il rend public en 1798 :

Pour le rentoilage « ordinaire » la colle est à base de farines (seigle et froment) délayés avec de la bière, du jus d’ail, fiel de bœuf et colles animales⁹.

- 7 Victor Lopes et Emiliano Ricchi, « Peter Thys. Le Temps et les Parques », dans Frédéric Elsig (dir.), *L’art et ses marchés. La peinture flamande et hollandaise (xvii^e et xviii^e siècles) au Musée d’art et d’histoire de Genève*, cat. exp. (Genève, Musée d’art et d’histoire, 1^{er} oct. 2009–29 août 2010), Paris, Somogy, 2009, p. 114–116.
- 8 Ovide, *Métamorphoses. Traduction nouvelle, avec le latin a coté [sic]. Nouvelle Édition retouchée avec soin. Par Barrett*, 2 tomes, Tome I, Livre III, Paris, Barbou, 1796 (1777).
- 9 François-Toussaint Hacquin, *Mémoire relatif à la conservation des tableaux pour l’impression des toiles et des fonds en bois, avec des moyens de préparation qui en assurent la réussite*, 22 mai 1798 (3 prairial an VI), Paris, Archives des Musées Nationaux, P16.



4 Détail des tirants obtenus à partir de l'édition des *Métamorphoses d'Ovide, Traduction nouvelle, avec le latin a coté [sic]. Nouvelle Édition retouchée avec soin. Par Barrett, 2 tomes, Tome I, Livre III, Paris, Barbou, 1796*

Après son arrivée en 1805 dans la cité calviniste, le tableau est conservé en l'église Saint-Germain avec d'autres œuvres religieuses, avant de rejoindre le Musée Rath, inauguré en 1826 et dirigé alors par la Société des Arts – organisme fondé en 1776 pour le développement et l'émulation artistiques à Genève.

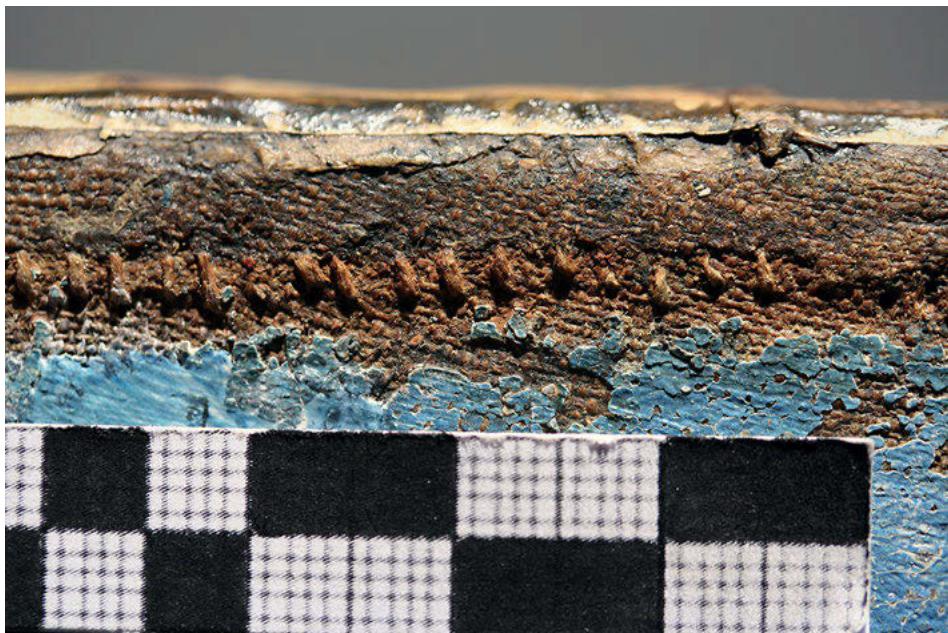
La présentation du tableau dans l'allée centrale de ce nouveau temple des arts, reproduite dans l'aquarelle qu'Alphée de Regny (1799–1881) réalise vers 1850, témoigne de son nouveau statut muséal – à la fois objet de délectation et support d'apprentissage pour les jeunes générations de peintres qui viennent observer et copier les maîtres anciens (fig. 5). Cette pratique est confirmée par une copie de *La mise au tombeau* que réalise Barthélémy Bodmer (1848–1904) à la fin du xix^e siècle, à l'échelle 1:1 et conservée dans les collections du Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève (fig. 6).



5 Alphée de Regny, *Intérieur du Musée Rath*, vers 1850, aquarelle sur papier, 21,2 × 32,4 cm, Genève, Musée d'art et d'histoire, MAH 1980-0272



6 Barthélémy Bodmer, *Copie de La mise au tombeau*, fin xix^e siècle, huile sur toile, 92 × 135,5 cm, Genève, Musée d'art et d'histoire, MAH 1912-5991



7 Détail de la couture de (1) réalisée pour l'ajout des bandes de toile latérales lors de l agrandissement du support entre 1698 et 1701

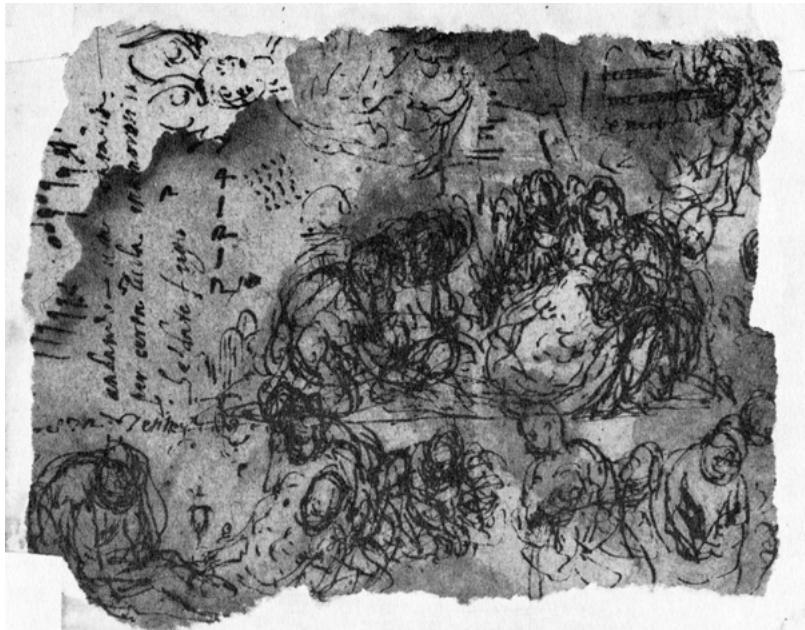
Matériaux et techniques

La peinture, aujourd’hui montée sur son châssis parisien en bois de conifère, est réalisée sur une fine toile de lin d’armure simple. Diminuée dans sa hauteur, elle présente les traces des anciennes coutures réalisées par Paillet sur les quatre bords latéraux (fig. 7).

La préparation se compose d’une colle animale et d’une charge minérale à base d’ocre claire ou de terre argileuse pauvre en oxydes de fer. Ce type de matériau n’a jamais été identifié dans la production de Véronèse. En effet, les charges les plus courantes se composent de gypse (sulfate de calcium) ou plus rarement de calcaire (carbonate de calcium). Cette première couche, qui comble à peine les interstices de la toile, correspond à une pratique identifiée dans d’autres œuvres de l’artiste comme *Le repas chez Levi* (1573), conservée aux Gallerie dell’Accademia de Venise¹⁰.

Quant à l’existence d’un dessin sous-jacent, la réflectographie infrarouge a permis de révéler quelques lignes librement esquissées au pinceau et à l’encre noire. Aucun procédé de transfert n’a été identifié. La peinture ne présente pas de repentirs majeurs à l’exception

10 Elsig, Lopes et Volpin, « Regards croisés... », art. cit.



8 Paolo Caliari, dit Véronèse, *Étude de la composition*, vers 1575–1580, encre sur papier teinté, collection privée

de l'angle supérieur droit du tombeau, ajouté pour lui donner une largeur cohérente. En 1984, Richard Cocke met en relation *La mise au tombeau* de Genève (fig. 1) avec deux dessins conservés dans des collections privées¹¹. Le premier, esquissé à l'encre au dos d'une étude de figure féminine, met en place la composition et l'attitude de certains personnages (fig. 8). Le second réalisé à la pierre noire et à la craie projette avec un plus grand soin et à la même échelle la figure du vieillard, qui pourrait être identifié comme Nicodème enveloppant les jambes du Christ (fig. 9).

La couche picturale originale, dont le liant est à base d'huile de lin, présente une séquence de travail et un choix de pigments propre au maître vénitien. Les analyses ont en effet confirmé l'emploi d'un jaune d'orpiment, employé pour le manteau de Marie-Madeleine au premier plan (fig. 10), d'un bleu d'azurite dans le ciel et d'un vert de malachite

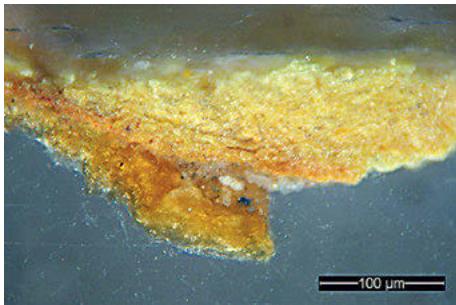
11 Richard Cocke, *Veronese's Drawings: A Catalogue Raisonné*, Londres, Sotheby Publications, 1984, p. 260–263, n° cat. 111–112 ; Elsig, Lopes et Volpin, « Regards croisés... », art. cit.



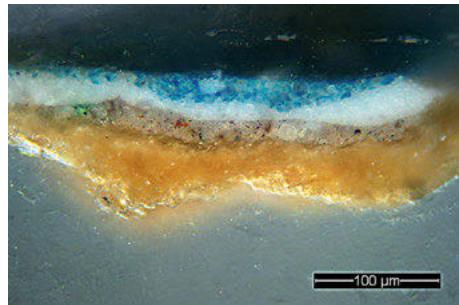
9 Paolo Caliari, dit Véronèse, *Étude de tête d'homme*, vers 1575–1580, pierre noire et craie sur papier bleu, 12,7 × 11,9 cm, collection privée

appliqué systématiquement pour la végétation¹². Ces trois pigments distinguent Paolo Caliari de ces contemporains qui utilisent plus communément le jaune de plomb et d'étain, le bleu d'outremer et le vert-de-gris (acétate de cuivre). La palette de notre tableau présente la presque totalité des couleurs disponibles sur le marché vénitien. En effet, les analyses révèlent l'emploi de pigments comme le blanc de plomb pour le voile de Marie, le jaune de plomb et d'étain ou *giallorino* (de type I constitué d'un pur oxyde double) pour la flamme de la torche, du réalgar pour le manteau du serviteur tenant la torche, des terres naturelles

12 Les analyses ont été réalisées par Stefano Volpin en octobre 2010. L'identification des pigments a été réalisée à l'aide de la spectrométrie de fluorescence X (SFX, modèle Niton XL3 t GoldD+, Thermo Fischer Scientific Inc.), alors que cinq échantillons ont été analysés en section stratigraphique au microscope électronique à balayage (SEM-EDS), en microscopie infrarouge à transformée de Fourier (FTIR), en spectroscopie micro-Raman et par diffraction des rayons X (DRX). Le liant a été identifié par chromatographie en phase gazeuse couplé à la spectrométrie de masse (GC/MS).



10 Stratigraphie d'un microprélèvement de peinture dans le manteau de Marie-Madeleine avec une couche épaisse de jaune d'orpiment



11 Stratigraphie d'un microprélèvement dans le manteau de la Vierge réalisé à partir d'un glacis de bleu outremer sur une impression de blanc de plomb pur

et des ocres, un noir de charbon, du cinabre, une laque organique rouge, du bleu d'outremer appliqué en glacis sur le manteau de la Vierge (fig. 11) et enfin une couleur peu commune : un jaune pâle de litharge couvrant la tunique de Joseph d'Arimathie.

La séquence de travail et la facture témoignent d'une parfaite maîtrise technique. Les couches colorées sont appliquées de manière large et couvrante sur la préparation ou plus transparente sur la base claire posée localement dans le manteau de la Vierge. Leurs superpositions et leurs épaisseurs créent des effets extrêmement variés, où l'application de glacis est renforcée par des touches finales opaques et vigoureuses.

Quant à l'état de conservation du tableau, il faut attendre le commentaire du restaurateur genevois Henri-Paul Boissonnas (1894–1966) qui, dans une lettre adressée au conservateur Louis Hautecœur (1884–1973) et datée du 8 juillet 1947, écrit :

Ce tableau sur toile, peint assez mince, est criblé d'anciennes usures et de petits trous par suite d'écaillage de la couche de la préparation. La plupart de ces dégâts anciens ont été retouchés et ces retouches ont foncé. Ces retouches sont d'une matière assez tenace. Le nettoyage sera rendu plus long et les retouches pour aveugler les milliers de lacunes exigeront un travail long et minutieux¹³.

Réalisé avec des pigments instables qui ont conduit à un éclaircissement des couleurs¹⁴, ce travail « long et minutieux » a dû être éliminé en 2010 lors de la dernière intervention. En

13 Lettre d'Henri-Paul Boissonnas à Louis Hautecœur datée du 8 juillet 1947, Archives atelier de conservation-restauration peinture, MAH Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève.

14 L'analyse de ces matériaux de restauration a permis d'identifier l'emploi de craie et de colle animale pour les mastics et du blanc de titane appliqué comme base claire. Quant aux couleurs fugaces, il s'agirait de couleurs de synthèse.

effet, le traitement a conduit au retrait d'un vernis terpéniq[ue], oxydé et jauni, et à l'élimination des retouches altérées débordant sur la couche originale. Cette étape a mis à jour la présence de repeints plus anciens à base de bleu de Prusse, appliqués sur le manteau de la Vierge et dans le ciel correspondant peut-être aux retouches de 1802. Notre intervention a également permis de rétablir certains détails iconographiques comme les blessures sur le front du Christ produites par la couronne d'épines ou les visages, à peine esquissés, des deux femmes peintes à l'arrière-plan. La pose de fin mastic traditionnel constitué de craie et de colle animale, est venue structurer les lacunes pour permettre une réintégration de type mimétique à l'aquarelle.

Conclusion

L'étude et le traitement de conservation-restauration de cette œuvre de Véronèse s'est inscrite dans un programme de revalorisation matérielle et scientifique de la peinture ancienne au Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève. Ce programme, débuté avec le fonds des peintures flamandes et hollandaises (xve–xviiie siècles), puis italiennes et espagnoles (xiv^e–xviii^e siècles), se poursuit aujourd'hui avec le fonds de peintures françaises du xix^e siècle. Sur ce modèle, où se croisent les regards du conservateur-restaurateur, de l'historien de l'art et du chimiste, les observations matérielles sont confrontées aux données écrites. Observer et interpréter les traces présentes sur les matériaux constitutifs des tableaux permet alors de rétablir des informations ignorées et porteuses de connaissance, où la « petite » et la « grande » histoire d'une œuvre se complètent.

**A COLONIAL RENAISSANCE?
UNE RENAISSANCE COLONIALE ?**

Beat Wyss

NOVA ATLANTIS

The Colonial Renaissance

The magical workings of mythical topoi derives from their haziness, their unclear provenience. A case in point is Atlantis, both a catchword and a commonplace. My proposal is to locate the concept in its raw state of a commonplace before excavating it, layer by layer, in an archeological manner. I will start with the moment in my youth when I first heard about Atlantis—not in an ancient Greek lesson at grammar school, but on the radio. The messenger of the flooded island was the Scottish songwriter and guitarist Donovan. His song revealed to me that there were more exciting things to learn from ancient Greece than the declension of irregular verbs. (Incidentally, I failed to notice the swastika on the record cover, which bears testimony to the inconscient cohabitation of hippie ideals and early 20th-century *Lebensreform* mentality.)

My early associations with Atlantis are, more generally, related to music: one of Switzerland's first jazz cafés opened in my hometown Basel and is called... Atlantis. Surrealists would call it a *hasard objectif*—an objective coincidence—that this club was initially founded as an African souvenir shop in 1947, the year of my birth. The club even featured an alligator in a terrarium, with feeding times displayed at the bar. It is by no way my intention to connect art history to astrological esotericism; rather, by tying my birth coordinates to the history of the perception of the object of my research, I merely try to pinpoint its motivation. For anything we discover in our scholarly zeal is always shaded by our primary, unconscious motivation—a fact one should always keep in mind to avoid any naive belief in objectivism. I call this method “archeological,” in keeping with Michel Foucault’s use of the term in his analysis of historically overlapping structures of knowledge.

Foucault speaks of the “archaeology of knowledge”¹: before we access the ancient object we have in mind, we have to unearth it. Important as it is to find the hidden treasure, archaeology also has to consider the layers of dust and debris covering it: they tell the story how an ancient object got to the state in which it was found. When digging through the

1 Michel Foucault, *L'Archéologie du savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1969.

recent layers of dust on Plato's Atlantis, one example that comes to mind is the eponymous holiday resort in Dubai that stands on the artificial island of Palm Jumeirah. Quite in line with the Atlantis iconography is the Orientalist touch of the gate in the shape of a monumental horseshoe bridging the two central towers reminiscent of Maghrebi minarets. After its opening in the fall of 2008, the owner of the resort, the South African hotel tycoon Solomon Kerzner, admitted that the 28-million-dollar launch party, attended by celebrities such as Beyoncé and David and Victoria Beckham, would have been planned as a rather more modest event had one foreseen the imminent crash of Lehman Brothers and its devastating consequences on the global economy. In another spell of bad luck, the official launch was threatened by a fire that damaged the hotel lobby—a signal sent by Jupiter to mark his disapproval of this hybrid re-enactment of Atlantis? In any case, such a foreboding would neatly tie in with Plato's original saga.

Ten years earlier, Kerzner had built his first Atlantis hotel on Paradise Islands, Bahamas, in a similarly postmodern Orientalist style. It ranks fourteenth among the world's biggest holiday resorts and features the most expensive suite in global tourism, to the tune of 25,000 dollars per night. Does not Plato teach us that Atlantis is all about sizes and records?

There are thousands of hotels worldwide called Atlantis. The maritime, Oriental character of the ancient model has inspired countless modern variations in the holiday and leisure sector. (Atlantis is commonly located in the Orient or, since Francis Bacon, in the Pacific Ocean, but more recent projections include other galaxies and remote solar systems.) Even more than on tourism, Plato's saga has left a durable mark on literature and film; the story of a sunken city is the incunabulum of science fiction and fantasy novels.

The TV series *Stargate Atlantis*, broadcast by the Sci-Fi Channel from 2004 to 2008, is one of the most recent examples of this appropriation. Its story follows an expedition of astronauts to the Lost City of Atlantis in the Pegasus Galaxy, where human populations have been discovered. They live on a swimming city built as an armored space cruiser with skyscrapers. The city needs to be mobile because it is threatened by the hostile anthropophagous race of the Wraiths. The earthly astronauts forge an alliance with the Ancients and together they fend off an attack on planet Earth by the evil Wraiths. The austere, high-tech aesthetic of *Stargate Atlantis* is not far removed from its antique predecessor: anything but a leisurely place, the Platonic Atlantis is a colonialist power state led by warrior rulers.

After considering these few examples of Atlantis's prolific afterlife, the question remains if these are instances of a "renaissance" in the literal understanding of the term. I would argue that they are rather "leftovers" evidencing the survival of antique topoi. In Aby Warburg's words, they testify to the afterlife (*Nachleben*) of antiquity.² Nevertheless, I felt

² See Aby Warburg "Dürer and Italian Antiquity" (*Dürer und die italienische Antike*, 1906), in *Id., The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the Italian Renaissance*, 2, trans. David Britt, Los Angeles, The Getty Research Institute Publication Programs, 1999, pp. 533–58.

it was essential to introduce them first as the rubble of our archeological excavation site; critical archeologists and art historians must not behave like greedy treasure seekers. The analysis of antique afterlife in modernity helps us to draw a clear distinction between "renascences" and "Renaissance," as defined by Erwin Panofsky.³

In the past thirty or so years, Warburg has enjoyed a tremendous popular afterlife that has cast a shadow over Panofsky's conception. Deemed too conservative or anti-modernist, Panofsky did not fit in with the postmodernist zeitgeist of "anything goes." The old-fashioned art historian at Princeton University heeded Heinrich Wölfflin's admonishment: "Not everything is possible at all times."⁴ But against Warburg's overwhelming popularity, Panofsky's arguments did not stand a chance. Georges Didi-Huberman famously criticized Panofsky as an "exorcist high priest" who dispelled the Dionysian spirit that Warburg shared with Friedrich Nietzsche.⁵ Warburg's *Nachleben* is indeed redolent of the *Ewige Wiederkunft*, Zarathustra's eternal recurrence.⁶ Although I harbor sympathies for Nietzsche and Warburg, in this specific case, I tend to agree with Panofsky: there are many "renascences" but only one Renaissance, at least in Europe. I shall therefore act as *advocatus diaboli* in defense of the "exorcist." I will defend Panofsky by taking up his own argument, which explains the medieval "renascences" by means of a highly plausible modern metaphor. Panofsky compares the Carolingian revivalist movement with a man whose car has broken down and who falls back on an old car inherited from his grandfather. This old vehicle, "when reconditioned [...], will still give excellent service and may even prove more comfortable than the newer model ever was. In other words, the Carolingians approached the Antique with a feeling of legitimate heirs who had neglected or even forgotten their property for a time and now claimed it for precisely those uses for which it had been intended."⁷

This kind of revival denotes a *restauratio*, an act of palimpsestical overwriting of the antique model. Panofsky calls it "the principle of disjunction": it avoids stylistic purity and intertwines antique forms with a contemporary understanding.⁸ In this sense, the previously mentioned late modern and postmodernist examples of Atlantis, reoccurring in the shape of jazz bars, luxury hotels, and spacecraft, appear to recycle an antique notion with contemporary comfort through a kind of pragmatic bricolage that neglects the deeper meaning of the myth in question. Renaissance, instead, is the exact opposite of these

³ Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*, New York, Harper & Row, 1972 (1960).

⁴ "Nicht alles ist zu allen Zeiten möglich." Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der neueren Kunst*, Munich, Hugo Bruckmann Verlag, 1915, pp. 11–2.

⁵ "Grand-prêtre exorciste." Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'image suivante. Histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 2002, p. 96.

⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, in K. Schlechta (ed.), *Werke in drei Bänden*, 2, Munich, Carl Hanser Verlag, 1966 (1883), pp. 461–7.

⁷ Panofsky, *Renaissance...*, p. 109.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

"renascences," which content themselves with adjusting an old tool. Its evocative definition is one of the most poetic passages in Panofsky's writings:

The Renaissance came to realize that Pan was dead—that the world of ancient Greece and Rome [...] was lost like Milton's Paradise and capable of being regained only in the spirit. The classical past, for the first time, was a totality cut off from the present; and, therefore, as *an ideal* to be longed for *instead of a reality* to be both utilized and feared.⁹

Historical distance informs the archaeological attempt to unbury the past from the rubble of bygone centuries. The awareness of a tremendous time lag makes it possible to eschew the problem of censorship by disjunction and to reconnect with forms and contents of antiquity. Panofsky attributes to the Renaissance an "enduring quality"¹⁰ whose nature is "total and permanent."¹¹

His conception of the Renaissance, which he identifies with the early modern circles of humanist erudition, is no doubt highly idealistic and fails to include its political dimension, which brought forth the cultural instrument of absolutism. Jacob Burckhardt, one of the first scholars of Renaissance theory,¹² already diagnosed the rise of antique role models in Northern Italy as a symptom of a loss of dynastic legitimacy. Renaissance policy aimed for an imaginary authorization of rulership, tendentially beyond parliamentary or dynastic conventions. This explains why there was no Renaissance in Britain, where political legitimacy was expressed with Gothic means. Inigo Jones, the initiator of Palladianism, was the architect of Charles I, who was decapitated because he dared to introduce absolutist manners in England.

Let us now enter the realm of Renaissance via a specific colonial case example, the New Atlantis, a term coined by Francis Bacon in the book of the same name published posthumously in 1627.¹³ His is a vision that is literally and geographically rooted in the Atlantis imagined by Plato. In the *Timaeus* and *Critias* dialogues, an Egyptian high priest reports its exact location:

For in front of the mouth which you Greeks call "the pillars of Heracles," there lay a land which was larger than Libya and Asia together. [...] But that yonder is a real ocean, and the land surrounding it may most rightly be called, in the fullest and truest sense, a continent [*ηπειρος*].¹⁴

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 113 [my italics].

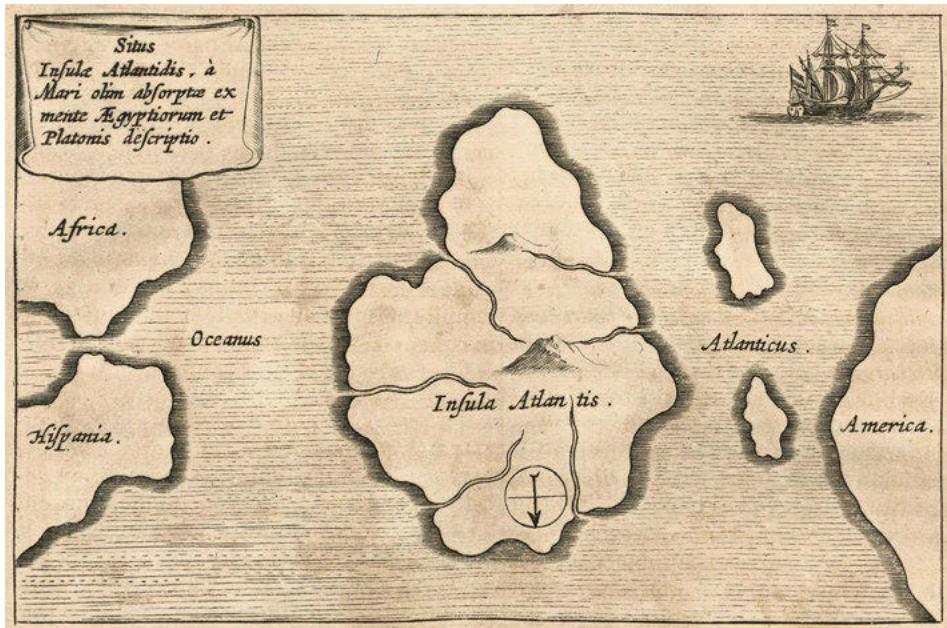
¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹² Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien. Ein Versuch*, Basel, Schweighauser, 1860.

¹³ Two Classic Utopias: *The New Atlantis* by Francis Bacon and *The City of the Sun* by Tommaso Campanella, Mineola, N.Y., Dover Publications, 2003, pp. 3–40.

¹⁴ Plato, *Timaeus*, in J. Burnet (ed.), *Platonis Opera*, IV, Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 1902, 24e–25a.



1 Athanasius Kircher, *Situs Insulae Atlantidis, a mari olim absorpta ex mente Aegyptiorum et Platonis descriptio*, 1664, engraving, 10 × 15 cm, in *Mundus subterraneus*, Amstelodami, apud Ioannem Ianssonium et Elizeum Weyerstraten, 1664, liber secundus technicus, p. 82

Around 1664, the German Jesuit and polymath Athanasius Kircher, professor at the Collegio Romano, created a map after Plato's description that included the shores beyond the Atlantic Ocean, which had meanwhile been discovered by Christopher Columbus (fig. 1). We shall see that some scholars correlated the mythical Atlantis with the New Indies called America. The author of the map could not have imagined that these colonies would once become the dominant continent on the globe.

According to Plato's narrative, Atlantis had been founded 9,000 years before his own lifetime, together with ancient Athens, the former by Poseidon, the latter by Athena. Atlantis and ancient Athens both had a highly stratified society. Not unlike the ideal state described in the *Res Publica* dialogue, both cities were gated communities: the ruling class and the class of guardians were strictly separated from the average citizens and peasants. This social segregation becomes apparent in the urban structure of Atlantis, in the way the acropolis, the central domain of the kings, the domain of their guards, and the sector of the lower class are separated by circular harbor basins. The Egyptian priest praises the original caste system of ancient Athens and Atlantis,¹⁵ which is similar to the social patterns in old Egypt.

15 Plato, *Timaeus*, 24.

The twin states were enemies. While ancient Athens incorporated all the virtues of an ideal city, Atlantis was the realm of evil. Its nature was luxurious and colonially aggressive. When Plato stresses that his ancient compatriots won the war without any help from confederates, he has in mind the battle of Marathon, in which the Athenians brought the dominant Persian army of Darius the Great to a halt in late summer 490 BCE. Translated into contemporary *Realpolitik*, the war between Atlantis and Athens reminded Plato's readers of the Persian Wars.

Finally, the end of Atlantis came about by heavenly will. Its decline was precipitated by illegitimate power and insatiable desire (*πλεονεξία*). Its downfall coincides with the moment in a society when the spirit of democracy—which Plato rated poorly—spreads, spurred by the envy of the poor who discover the greediness of the rich. But democracy, in such times, soon turns into tyranny, the worst mode of governing. When this happened to Atlantis, Zeus and the Olympians decided to destroy it.¹⁶ It was swallowed by the sea and vanished from the surface of Earth: “wherefore also the ocean at that spot has now become impassable and unsearchable [ἀπορον καὶ ἀδιερεύνητον γέγονεν], being blocked up by the shoal mud which the island created as it settled down.”¹⁷

And so the story ends, according to the narrator. This prompts the question why Atlantis has a completely different image today, representing almost the contrary of Plato's intended message. How could an imperialistic warrior state become a projection surface for wellness enthusiasts, jazz aficionados, and hippies preaching “love, not war”? Is this astonishing transformation simply due to illiteracy or a misreading of the source? If so, that would still not explain everything. Historiography is best approached with a hint of skepticism, as any research or knowledge is biased by contemporary interests and epistemic premises.

The paradigmatic change from an evil to an ideal Atlantis can be precisely dated to Bacon's early utopian novel *Nova Atlantis*.¹⁸ In this travel report in the shape of a dialogue, the author explicitly refers to Plato's saga. Bacon identifies ancient Atlantis with America, and the Native Americans with degenerated survivors of an apocalyptic catastrophe. The English philosopher also corrects Plato, stating that Atlantis was not sunken but struck by a devastating flood.

Bacon is certainly not the first author to put forth this geographical identification, a hypothesis that harks back to the times of Columbus. Bartolomé de las Casas, the first bishop of the Mexican province of Chiapas, named by Emperor Charles V, recognized in the American continent the ruins of Atlantis. The Dominican monk paralleled its fate with

16 Plato, *Critias*, in J. Burnet (ed.), *Platonis Opera*, IV, Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 1902, 121c.

17 Plato, *Timaeus*, 25d. English translation quoted from *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, 9, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, London, William Heinemann, 1925, n. p.

18 Bacon, *The New Atlantis...*, pp. 3–40.

the biblical deluge, qualifying it as a divine judgement by God the Creator. In his account, the Atlanteans were punished for their loss of virtuousness:

It remained in a much prosperous and felicitous state for many centuries, so long as the people committed themselves to the worship of God, the upholding of just laws, and the practice of virtue, but when, with their corrupt affections and guilty customs, they ceased and forgot these practices and virtuous solicitude, with a flood and terrible earthquake of one day and one night, the once so prosperous and felicitous island [...] sank.¹⁹

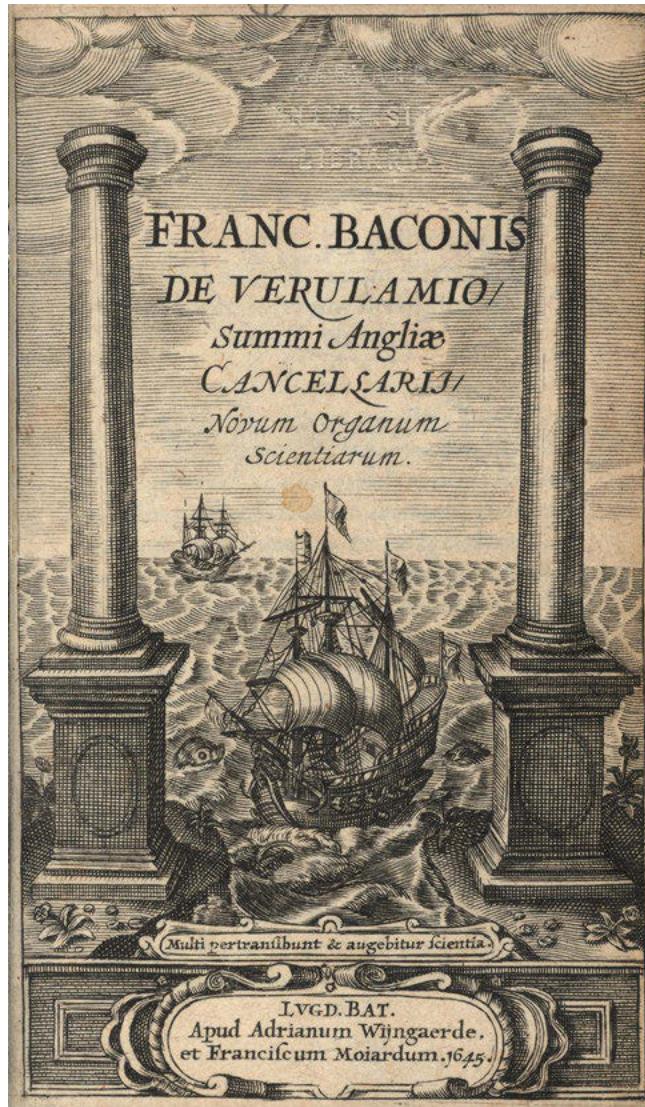
For centuries after the catastrophe, the ocean westwards of Gibraltar was no longer navigable. According to Las Casas, Plato's report was authentic, its credibility confirmed by antique authors such as Pliny and Seneca, and even Saint Augustine. Las Casas believed that the former Atlantis extended from southern America to the Canary Islands. Most remarkable is the Dominican's assumption that Columbus's confidence in a western way to the Indies derived from his reading of Plato's *Timaeus* dialogue: "Christopher Columbus may have inferred from Plato that said Atlantic Island seemed like a doorway to other nearby islands and to the mainland [...]."²⁰

This hypothesis is not as far-fetched as it seems. There are in fact several connections between Las Casas and Columbus. Las Casas authored the first duplicate of the diary and logbook of the 1492 exploration, and his father Pedro had accompanied Columbus on his second travel to Hispaniola; during the crossing, there would have been plenty of time to discuss any such proposition. Besides, the brave seafarers believed that the mountain tops of the submerged Atlantis formed islands above the water level that could be used for stopovers in the crossing of the ocean. In other words, on his way towards the great unknown, the fearless "discoverer" placed his confidence in a completely fictitious antique myth.

Bacon was no less assertive when he adopted the personal motto of the last emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V: the emblem of the two Pillars of Heracles represents the sea gate between the rock of Gibraltar on the Spanish shore and the mountain in Morocco known as Jebel Musa (fig. 2). The inscription "*plus oultre*" (further beyond) al-

19 Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, 1, VIII, Madrid, Imprenta Miguel Ginesta, 1875 (1552), pp. 73–4: "En el cual estado prosperísimo y felicísimo creció y permaneció por muchos siglos, en tanto que al culto divina y à la guarda de las justas leyes y al ejercicio de la virtud las gentes della se dieron, pero despues que aquellos ejercicios y solicitud virtuosa, sus corruptas afecciones y costumbres culpables, dejaron y olvidaron, con un diluvio y terrible terremoto de un dia y una noche con sus corruptas afecciones y costumbres culpables, dejaron y olvidaron, con un diluvio y terrible terremoto de un dia y una noche, la isla tan próspera y felice [...] se hundieron."

20 Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*..., pp. 78–9: "el Cristóbal Colon pudiese haber leido por el Platon que de la dicha isla Atlántica parecia puerta y camino para otras islas comarcanas y para la tierra firme [...]."



2 Anonymous, Frontispiece of Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum Scientiarum*, Leiden, Adrianus Wijngaerde and Franciscus Moiardus, 1645, Cambridge, MA, Houghton Library, Harvard University (EC. B1328.620ib)

luded to the fact that Charles's power spanned from Eastern Europe to the New Indies, covering an empire where the sun never set.

The colonists on Bacon's fictive Bensalem Island form a society dedicated to scientific experimenting. The scholars are organized as a conspiratorial fraternity that conducts experiments in the House of Solomon, so named in reference to the wise biblical king. Bacon's *Nova Atlantis* transliterates Plato's island into an exemplary site of the empirical turn of

the early modern period. The philosopher, whose thinking was rooted in Anglo-Saxon pragmatism, proposed to abandon the fruitless study of the humanistic canon of scriptures in favor of an experimental reading in the “Book of Nature.”

For the contemporary reader, however, who is aware of the countless crimes committed by reckless technocracy, his motto bears a cynical connotation. Ironically, Bacon himself became a victim of his scientific radicalism: while trying to prove the conservatory effects of snow on chicken meat, he caught a cold and died from pneumonia.

The empirical turn can also be traced in the editing history of the imperial motto, which today adorns the Spanish coat of arms. The wording stems from antiquity: Heracles, upon forcing Atlas to shoulder the firmament, built two columns near the Straits of Gibraltar that bore the warning “*Nec plus ultra*”—nothing further beyond. By doing so, he marked the western end of the known world (fig. 3). Plato respects the mythical admonishment when, in *Timaeus*, he declares the ocean beyond the street of Gibraltar to be “impassable and unsearchable.”²¹

In the age of global colonial expansion far beyond the *mare nostrum*, Heracles’s warning was dismissed. The seafaring nations cancelled the “*nec*” in the wording, turning an admonition into an affirmation: “*plus ultra*”—further beyond! Westerners and the Westernized are descendants of this profound empirical turn, which initiated the surveying and mapping of the globe. The maxim “*plus ultra*” has conquered the world as a call for technological progress. For us, Atlantis is that New Atlantis prophesized by Bacon, and meanwhile realized by the capitalist economy. Despite its ubiquity, the name Atlantis has retained the exotic flavor of an ancient, fabulous place. As a label for music venues and holiday resorts, the sunken island evokes a vague promise of enchantment.

In his role as governmental adviser, Bacon was actively involved in the British policy of North American colonization. He submitted a report on the overseas province of Virginia in 1609 and drafted a charter for the colonization of Newfoundland. A post stamp, released in 1910, commemorates the philosopher’s role in establishing the English colony on the island now part of Canada.²² There is also a geographical trace of his New Atlantis in Pennsylvania, namely, the town of Bensalem, northeast of Philadelphia, founded in 1692.

The British colony became a refuge for all kind of religious dissenters. William Penn founded the Quaker colony, which promoted religious tolerance and good relations with the Native Americans. The English King Charles II had granted William this generous charter to pay off the considerable debts he owed to his father, Admiral Penn, and, by the same token, to rid his country of all kinds of so-called “heretics.” The “holy experiment” in Philadelphia represented a mixture of scientism, mystics, and political tolerance. It attracted people such as Johannes Kelpius (1667–1708), a German-Romanian mystic,

21 Plato, *Timaeus*, 25d.

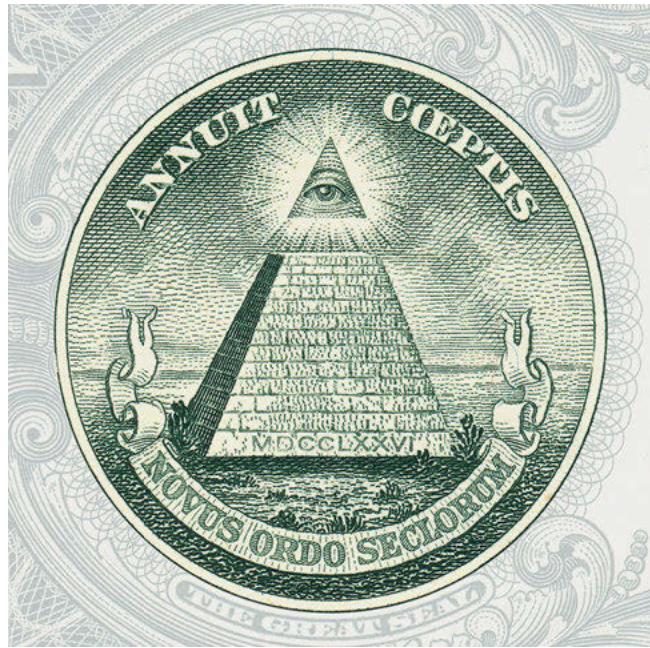
22 Alfred Dodd, *Francis Bacon’s Personal Life Story*, 2, London, Rider & Son, 1986 (1949), pp. 157–8, 425, 502–3, 518–32.



3 Assisted by Athena, Atlas shoulders the firmament, outwitted by Heracles, metope from the temple of Zeus, 460 BCE, Olympia, Archaeological Museum

musician, and writer from Sighișoara/Schäßburg, who founded the Society of the Woman in the Wilderness. Following the example of Saint Mary of Egypt—also known as Maria Aegyptiaca, the Paleochristian hairy hermit of the desert of the Jordan Valley—the Hermits of Mystics settled in Wissahickon Valley, in Northwest Philadelphia, where they practiced botany, alchemistic Hermetism, and astronomy. The model for these utopian settlers in Philadelphia was *Nova Atlantis*—Bacon's novel anticipated the lifestyle of chaste and pious scientists in the virulent spirit of Rosicrucianism.

Inspired by religious messianism, both Bacon's utopian novel and the real-life settlers testify to the dialectic of the empirical turn—the “Dialectic of Enlightenment” explored by



4 *The Great Seal—Annuit cœptis*, reverse of the United States one-dollar bill (detail), 1935

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno.²³ On the one hand, empirical science replaced religion as a legitimizing instrument of political power; on the other hand, science became a natural religion. Mysticism and empiricism are twins. The common denominator of spiritual speculation and scientific experiment was alchemy; this occult science peaked at around 1627 with the publication of *Nova Atlantis*. The physicist and mathematician Isaac Newton, a leading intellectual of the time, embodied this ambiguous connection between natural theology and natural science.

Take the one-dollar bill (fig. 4). Emitted in the wake of the New Deal in 1935, its design summons the American ideals of freedom. Its reverse is adorned by the Great Seal of the United States, designed in 1782, six years after its declaration of independence from the British colonial power. The idea for the emblem stems from Vice-president Henry A. Wallace, and was approved by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, both freemasons of the 32nd degree.

Most of the founding fathers of the USA were masons. As its first diplomat, Benjamin Franklin (fig. 5), brother mason since 1731, represented the young independent state

23 Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente*, Amsterdam, De Munter, 1947.

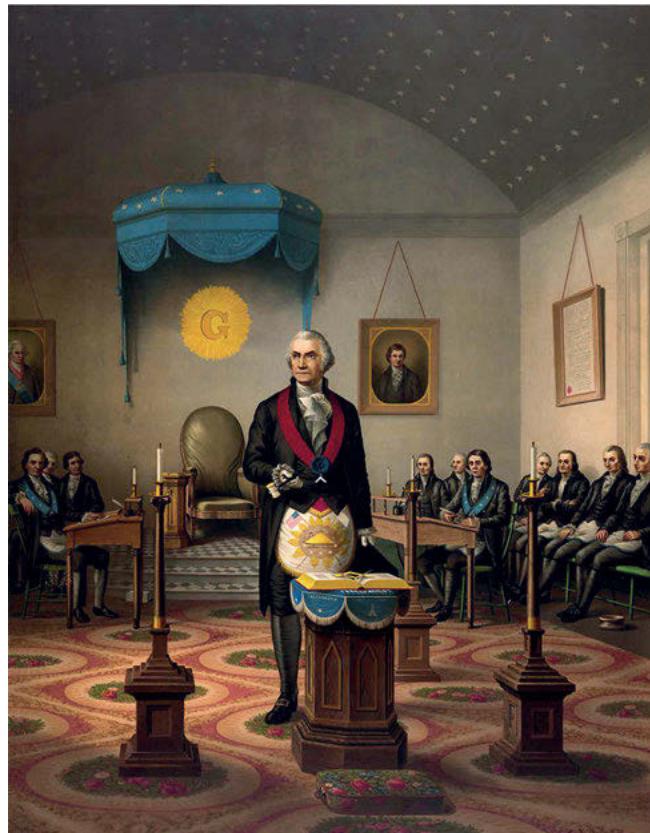


5 Alexander Handyside Richie, *Benjamin Franklin*, engraving after a portrait by Charles Nicolas Cochin (1777), 19th century

overseas in Paris. He charmed the locals when he was seen donning a fur hat instead of a wig, conjuring the image of a “noble savage” from the prairie. By doing so, the enlightened politician and intellectual symbolically “cannibalized” the notion of American nativeness. The polymath scientist, inventor, and politician represented the New Atlantean ideal of the illuminated intellectual handling the levers of power. After affiliating with masonic lodges in France upon his arrival, Franklin was elected member of the Loge des IX Sœurs. Ceremonially acting as Voltaire’s godfather, he assisted at the initiation of the aged philosopher on February 7, 1778. (Four months later, the author of *Candide* passed to “the Grand Lodge beyond.”)²⁴ The Grand Orient de France, the mother lodge of continental masonry, emphatically supported both the American and the French Revolutions.

An anonymous print shows President George Washington wearing a masonic apron and holding a gavel in his right hand (fig. 6). The image commemorates the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington Capitol in 1793. (Incidentally, the White House was built in part by black Slaves.) Masonry understood itself to be the hidden cornerstone of society. Illuminated policy operates undercover but in favor of public benefit. Subversive activity for the good of mankind: from masonic lodges to communist politburos, social innovations and revolutions are enacted in the mode of clandestine benefaction. The conspiratorial habit is constitutive of modern messianic political practice.

²⁴ See Julius F. Sachse, “The Masonic Chronology of Benjamin Franklin,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 30/2, 1906, pp. 238–40.



6 Anonymous, *George Washington as Master Mason of the Alexandria Virginia Masonic Lodge at the meeting of September 18, 1793*

The *topos* of the enlightened ruler brings into play an iconographic element that also shifted from early modern absolutism to a colonial legitimization strategy: mythical ancestry. The claim of Trojan heritage dates back to the Roman gentry, among whom it was common to trace one's genealogy back to Aeneas. Virgil reports that the Trojan hero emigrated with his clan to Italy after his hometown on the shores of Asia Minor had been destroyed by Greek invaders. During the Renaissance, this mythopoetical concept became a commonplace among European high nobility. That masonically inspired Republicans should adopt a habit of the *Ancien Régime* they claimed to have overcome is but another dialectical twist of Enlightenment.²⁵ Ideas of longevity are politically unspecific. Like kings and princes, the settlers of North America recognized Aeneas as their allegorical ancestor. This brings us back to the reverse side of the Great Seal (fig. 4): above the pyramid appears

25 See Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung...*

the motto "*Annuit coeptis*"—He [God] favors our undertakings. It quotes a verse from Virgil's *Aeneid*: "All-powerful Jupiter, bless now this my first trial of arms."²⁶

With these words, Ascanius, son of Aeneas, asks the Olympian to guide the arrow he is about to shoot at Remulus Numanus, the chief of the native Rutulians. Jupiter answers his prayer; Ascanius thus kills the first native of the land that will be called Latium by the Trojan colonists. The Great Seal of the United States of America is emblazoned with the founding myth of the Roman Empire: in much the same way as the Trojan invaders superseded the Etruscan inhabitants of the Italian peninsula, the European settlers built a new Rome by crushing the American Indians' resistance. Their killing is condoned by God.

The idea for the inscription came from Charles Thomson (1729–1824), a Latin tutor at the Philadelphia Academy. Thomson belonged to the radical Sons of Liberty, the clandestine political organization that staged the Boston Tea Party protest against British colonial administration in 1773. The rawboned, devout Bible translator and patriot had immigrated from North Ireland as a destitute ten-year-old orphan. As common wisdom has it, getting off to a bad start in life either makes you or breaks you—Thomson attained the biblical age of 95. He drew his strength from the unshakable conviction that God had destined America to him and his kind as their "promised land."

During the French and Indian War (1754–63), the East Coast of the American continent was shaken by conflicts between French and British troops, who used Native American tribes as cannon fodder in their wars. Thomson acted as secretary to Teedyuscung, referred to as "King of the Delawares," at the signing of the Treaty of Easton (1758) between the colonial governors of Pennsylvania and New Jersey and thirteen Native American nations representing the Iroquois, Lenape, and Shawnee. The agreement specified that in return for ancestral lands, the Native nations would refrain from collaborating with the French army. The French and Indian War was the equivalent of the Seven Years' War (1756–63) in Europe. Military operations were accompanied by massacres, committed by all parties involved and fueled by the fanaticism of ethnic cleansing. The victory of the British put an end to the French colonies in North America. It also weakened the position of the Native Americans who, having cooperated with the French side, now counted among the defeated and fell by the wayside of America's glorious future.

The motto in the Great Seal is informed by this experience: Jupiter has answered the prayers of the white settlers. The reverse of the Great Seal, referring to a mythical ancestor of colonization, operates as a congruent image (*Deckbild*) in the Freudian sense: it covers up the dirty work required to achieve a utopian ideal.

Let us now have a closer look at the pyramid itself, whose unfinished top is superseded by the All-Seeing Eye, the divine organ of providence. As previously mentioned, the Great

²⁶ "Iuppiter omnipotens, audacibus adnue coeptis." F. A. Hirzel (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis Opera: Aeneidos*, IX, 625, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959, n. p. English translation quoted from Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. David West, London, Penguin, 1990, p. 568–9.

Seal on the new one-dollar bill was intended to confirm the New Deal with the working classes, to renew the *Novus ordo seclorum*, as the inscription states, paraphrasing a line from Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue*: "A great order of ages is born anew."²⁷

The *Fourth Eclogue* praises the age of shepherds that marks the beginning of the history of mankind. The settlers of America saw themselves as returning to this innocent state of being. Their feet touched the virgin soil of the New World, where they founded a new society. This moment is dated on the pyramid's fundament to 1776, the age zero of the United States of America. To symbolize the advent of novelty by what is in effect a tomb is in line with the dialectical spirit of modernity. Utopist announcements present the future as a recurrence of an ideal past—there is no better illustration of Walter Benjamin's definition of the dialectical image. The one-dollar bill shows the revolutionary act as a "*Tigersprung ins Vergangene*,"²⁸ a tiger's leap into the past.

Benjamin's metaphor corresponds with the late Latin term of *revolutio*, the act of revolving something back to a previous state. In a prolific way, Nicolaus Copernicus used the term for his astrological observations in *De revolutionis orbium coelestium*, published at Nuremberg in 1543: like the heavenly planets, a progressing society performs a loop forward and at once backwards to its future state of being. Plato constructs the same kind of temporal sequence by interconnecting the *Res Publica* and the *Timaios* dialogues. The former describes the structure of Athenian society in a future ideal state, while the latter asserts the feasibility of such a condition based on the argument that it was already experienced by Athens in a remote past.²⁹

Every innovation, every "tiger's leap," whether of political or simply aesthetic nature, operates a purposeful backward roll that provides it with a veneer of legitimacy. In this sense, "Renaissance" is a *cultural technique*.³⁰

As the turmoil after the US presidential election in the fall of 2020 has shown, the Renaissance ideal of a New Atlantis is of "enduring quality," to borrow Panofsky's words.³¹ The image of the self-confident trapper wearing a fur hat, the trophy of a proud, independent hunter in a free land he calls his own, bridges the generations from the Bostonian Franklin to the "Bison Man" from Arizona (fig. 7).

The vision of the "promised land" was developed under the premise of white supremacy. The same Thomas Jefferson who wrote that "all men are created equal [...]"³² listed among his properties the names of the 163 black slaves working at his Monticello plantation.

27 "Magnus ab integro seclorum nascitur ordo." Hirzel (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis Opera: Ecloga*, IV, 5.

28 Walter Benjamin, *Über den Begriff der Geschichte*, in H. Schweppenhäuser et al. (eds.), *Gesammelte Werke*, I, 2, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1991, p. 701.

29 Plato, *Timaeus*, 19b–19c.

30 See Beat Wyss, *Renaissance als Kulturtechnik*, Hamburg, Philo Fine Arts, 2015.

31 Panofsky, *Renaissance...*, p. 108.

32 *The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 4, 1776 [URL: <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>].



7 Jake Angeli (QAnon Shaman), seen holding a QAnon sign at the intersection of Bell Rd. and 75th Ave. in Peoria, Arizona, on October 15, 2020

The “Great Dream” of both Americas—the Northern settlements and the Southern latifundios—led to the marginalization and extermination of the indigenous peoples and to their substitution by black slaves in order to make the vast continents economically prosperous. Even the pious Dominican bishop Bartolomé de las Casas, pressured by powerful Creole landowners, used his religious authority to argue in favor of slave trade from Africa. Columbus’s insistent arguments for further expeditions were not so much motivated by the desire to increase the geographical knowledge of the world as by the prospect of cheap human resources and precious metals.

The ideal of the New Atlantis acted as a Freudian *Deckbild* that helped to veil the actual violence with which it was pursued. But there are signs that the veil is coming down, as contest by those who have been excluded from this “renascence” is growing.

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CREDITS

Cover Image

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This ancient statue, which shows the river god in a traditional reclining pose, can be dated to the time of Emperor Hadrian. The fragmentary sculpture was restored in the early 16th century and several parts were added, including the impressive bearded head. A small lion's face inside the vase and the Medici ring around it were also part of this restoration as an homage to Florence, the home of the two Medici popes Leo X (1513–1521) and Clement VII (1523–1534). The restored statue represents the River Arno in Florence. In later centuries, the river god was misunderstood as the River Tigris. The sculpture is documented in the Cortile delle Statue since 1532, where it sits atop an antique Amazon sarcophagus and forms part of a fountain.

Kathleen W. Christian

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Beat Wyss

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