

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Il patrimonio artistico del Quirinale. Vol.I: Pittura antica. La quadreria. Vol.II: Pittura antica. La decorazione murale by Giuliano Briganti, Laura Laureati and Ludovica Trezzani

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whelming success and were followed by half-length philosophers and beggars. Bellotti seems to have made a finished drawing of a head (?and of hands) from life, and to have used it for numberless versions of varying quality and price for a growing market.

Bellotti's contemporaries were thrilled by the painstaking reproduction of wrinkles, flabbiness, emaciation, and his aim was to provide just that. His purpose when painting *Medea and Jason* was to show a male nude withering on one side and blooming on the other. Did he ever feel the ascetic dignity that often flickers through a decaying body? Were the few 'emblematic' figures he painted that move us today in the least moving to him? One cannot help wondering whether they turn out to be striking human testimonies for us because of his indifference to his sitters – in short because of his lack of empathy and imagination. Oddly enough, in his two self-portraits he carefully eschewed psychological insight. There, he distorted his features into jocular metaphors of 'Stupore' and 'Allegria' – a trick which enabled him to promote his skill as physiognomist, as well as popularising a mask of himself, in duly duplicated, fashionable 'teste di carattere o di capriccio'.

Bellotti flaunted his ability as a portraitist but his supposed call to Paris by Cardinal Mazarin is doubtful, and his work for the Duke and Duchess of Bavaria (well documented by Jutta Rosengarten in her supplement) was limited to thirty-six working days. He knew how to elicit publicity from the literati and how to ingratiate himself as a courtier, but his effigies are conventionally proper and dull. He made a living in Milan as art teacher to the Spanish governor (1670–74) and was appointed by Carlo Ferdinando Gonzaga of Mantua as Superintendent of his (depleted!) galleries from 1681 onwards. According to Isabella Lechi, who offers a survey of art collecting in Northern Italy, no mention can be found of pictures commissioned from Bellotti by the Duke of Mantua; nor does Bellotti's name turn up in the inventories of historic collections in Venice and Verona. His work tended to attract the Austrian and Spanish ambassadors in Venice (Count H.J. Czernin and the Marquis of Mancera), new collectors on the make, or plain merchants such as Paolo del Sera, who hunted down old masters but also kept abreast of new trends. Several pictures ended up in the Accademia dei Concordi at Rovigo.

Luciano Anelli sets himself the task of sorting out a large stock of kindred canvases. His caution and sensibility when assessing quality and authorship are admirable, and his method of interpreting Bellotti's pictures according to the literary sources of the time is highly commendable. He brings to our attention Italianised Northerners such as the little known Jan de Herdt, active in and around Brescia in the 1650s, yet curiously ignores the 'emblematic' half-length old women by Stomer, who was active in Northern Italy at the time. He cogently disproves Minna Heimbürger's claims about the leadership of Eberhard Keilhau (Monsù Bernardo). He refrains from lingering over 'pauperismo' in and outside Italy, and provides instead an avalanche of information

about the artistic situation in and around Brescia. Since 1976 he has been publishing almost yearly his punctilious researches on that subject, and this book will be a stand-by for art-historical reference. Unfortunately it is not easy to consult, because the text is arranged by subject matter (Self-portraits, Fates, History, Anatomy, Philosophers . . .) and each chapter is like a lecture, in which the lecturer assumes that the audience is new to the topic or has forgotten what had been said before. In chapter after chapter, the reader is confronted with the same quotations, the same illustrations, the same arguments, in a slightly modified context. The topographical index lists 171 pictures (mostly homeless), provides small black-and-white reproductions and refers to the better plates in the text. The relevant commentary to each item must be searched for at random in the various chapters. The index of names is neither 'analytic' nor complete.

LUISA VERTOVA

Il patrimonio artistico del Quirinale. Vol.I: Pittura antica. La quadreria. Vol.II: Pittura antica. La decorazione murale. Edited by Giuliano Briganti, Laura Laureati and Ludovica Trezzani. 335 and 245 pp., both including numerous col. and b. & w. pls. (Electa, Milan, 1993), L.It.250,000.

These two volumes on the mural decorations and collection of paintings at the Quirinal go well beyond what might be expected of an up-to-date catalogue of the important contents of a somewhat inaccessible building. It was the late Giuliano Briganti who, in a celebrated volume published some thirty-five years ago, first mapped out the attributional problems, confirmed the participation of various artists, and established the chronology of this major artistic monument. In initiating the new series of Quirinal catalogues of which these two volumes form part, he was determined that they should benefit from a return to first principles and should take the opportunity to confront unresolved questions in the light of advances in knowledge made during the intervening years. He did not, alas, live to complete the task, and his collaborators, Laura Laureati and Ludovica Trezzani, have done well to reprint parts of his 1962 text at the beginning of the volume on the decorative painting. Briganti's critical acumen and the intelligence with which his attributions are put forward remain remarkable, but it is greatly to be regretted that his original notes have been silently omitted (only the bibliographical references are incorporated in the new entries): they provided a valuable critical commentary to the original text, which here seems denuded.

The catalogue of the paintings treats those now belonging to the Palace but, although the building was a papal seat from the end of the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, only a few of them are of papal origin, many having come from the Savoy collections (a section is dedicated to Savoy

portraits) after the building became the official residence of the Italian monarchy. The individual entries are strong on provenance and give up-to-date bibliographies for paintings that are sometimes very little known and some of which have never previously been reproduced. There are, of course, many famous works as well: the *Madonna and Child* by Lotto; the *Madonna and saints*, here confirmed as by Innocenzo Tacconi, in which the landscape is almost worthy of Annibale Carracci and comparable with the background of the Herrera altarpiece now in S. Maria di Monserrato; the two exceptional young saints by Vouet which emerged at the monographic exhibition devoted to that artist in 1991; and the magnificent altarpiece by Lanfranco executed for the Quirinal when the painter was working in the Sala Regia and rediscovered by Briganti in 1962 – as were the *Annunciation* by Maratta and the delicate late Batoni *Mystic marriage of St Catherine*.

A Savoy provenance has now been established for a *St John the Baptist with an angel* attributed to Bernardo Castello, the two canvases by Sebastiano Ricci and the series of six overdoors with stories of Æneas by Giaquinto. There are also some previously unpublished pictures and new attributions: these include a Caravaggesque *St Jerome*, proposed as possibly French, whose author seems rather close to Douffet; a probable self-portrait by Giovanna Garzoni; a rediscovered *bozzetto* for a fresco by Baciccio; four canvases attributed to Brescianino delle Battaglie, and two paintings ascribed to Giuseppe Nogari.

The very interesting volume dedicated to the mural paintings allows one to follow the whole sweep of the curiously changeable path followed by papal patronage at the Quirinal from the beginning of the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century. The first major campaign, initiated by Paul V, was outstanding for its breadth and grandeur, including Bolognese as well as Caravaggesque painters at a time when no dichotomy between their styles was yet felt. From Reni to Lanfranco and Saraceni, the artists summoned by this Borghese pope left in the Quirinal an extremely valuable testimony to the development of painting in Rome during the first two decades of the Seicento.

Richly illustrated, the catalogue entries on the major Seicento cycles trace the critical fortunes of the artists, as well as furnishing new iconographic insights (for example the identification of the Virtues in the Sala Regia and of the female figures in the Sala di Antonio Carracci) and pinpointing various problems still to be solved. In the case of Guido Reni's masterpiece, the Chapel of the Annunciation – which he painted after he had proved himself with the S. Gregorio commission, here too calling on the assistance of various other artists – the thornier attributional points now seem to be resolved with Erich Schleier's assignment of the *Presentation in the Temple* lunette (which was to be so influential on Vouet's *St Francis receiving the habit* in the Alaleoni chapel) to Lanfranco, and of the *Annunciation to Joachim* lunette to Antonio Carracci. The difficult task of distinguishing the various hands in the beauti-

ful frieze in the Sala Regia, now that the contributions of Lanfranco, Saraceni, Turchi, Ottino, Bassetti and Agostino Tassi (first studied by Roberto Longhi) have been established, appears almost complete, apart from a few minor puzzles (Spadarino's interventions are still controversial). It remains, however, to identify the painter of the female figures in the Sala di Antonio Carracci, who used to be identified as Orazio Gentileschi, active at the Quirinal in the lost decorations of the Sala del Concistoro, which are assumed to have provided a model for these figures, although their quality is not up to Orazio himself. The youthful armsbearers in the centre of the ceiling are assigned to the same hand in the entry, though in both execution and style they seem instead to come closer to the synthesis between Caravaggesque and Reniesque models that was widely diffused in Rome at this time.

After Paul VI's outstanding contribution, the interventions of Urban VIII seem rather minor in tone, notwithstanding the charm of the views of Papal buildings by M.T. Montagna and S. Laghi, to whom the authors also now assign other works in the palace. The level of quality and grandeur rises with the Gallery of Alexander VII which saw the major artists of the time engaged under Pietro da Cortona's supervision, in a project whose diversity of styles is here rightly underlined: the compositions of Mola and the young Maratta are particularly fine.

A new peak was reached in the next century by Panini's airy landscapes with fantastic architecture of 1721 and in the remarkable coffee-house commissioned by Benedict XIV, erected by Fuga and decorated with paintings by Batoni, Masucci and Panini; it is discussed here in a fine essay by Rossella Pantanella that documents a hidden moment of precocious Anglophilia in eighteenth-century Rome. Transformed into an Imperial Palace by a Napoleonic decree of 1809, the Quirinal then became the object of one of the rare internationally important episodes in Italian Neo-classical patronage: in preparation for a planned sojourn by Napoleon which never materialised, decorations were carried out between 1812 and 1813 in various rooms, including freely painted Pompeian temperas by Felice Giani, Bertel Thorvaldsen's celebrated frieze of the *Triumph of Alexander*, and works by Pelagio Pelagi and Ingres, who painted for this site the *Triumph of Ossian* later transferred to Montauban.

There are many new nuggets of information in these volumes, such as the identification of the early involvement of the Arpinesque painter Cesare Rossetti and of Annibale Durante's rôle receiving payments for Bernardo Castello. These discoveries have mostly been made among the accounts of payment for the palace's decoration, and several unpublished documents are included in an Appendix.

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Vivre et peindre à Rome au XVIII^e siècle (Collection de l'École Française de Rome – 217). By Olivier Michel. 638 pp. incl. 35 b. & w. ills. (Scuola Tipografica, Rome, 1996). ISBN 2-7283-0354-1.

The publication of this volume establishes Olivier Michel as the reigning doyen of Roman eighteenth-century studies and is an impressive tangible reminder of the breadth and importance of his contributions to this subject. Librarian at the École française de Rome from 1968 to 1990 and now working under the auspices of the Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Michel for more than thirty years has studied the artistic activities of the French in Rome from the time of Maratta to Canova. His published bibliography lists eighty-three books, articles, and essays (and is already out-of-date), and he has produced an equal number of reviews for the *Bulletin des bibliothèques de France*, *Revue des études italiennes*, and the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*.

Thirty-five of the author's most important studies are gathered here and several are published for the first time. They are arranged in logical and chronological order within several sections: methods of research; the daily life of artists and their relations with the Roman academies, artistic and literary; studies of French artists active in Rome, notably the directors of the French Academy at Rome, Vleughels and Natoire, as well as Subleyras, Lallemand, Gamelin, and the sculptor Poncet; Italian artists (Conca, Giaquinto, Anesi and Domenico del Frate) and Austrians resident in the Eternal City (Wörndle, Knoller, Maron and Unterberger). The essays in the second half of the book range from studies of individual Roman churches and palaces to the artistic activities of the Torlonia family during the first half of the nineteenth century. Many of these originally appeared in relatively obscure publications and their presence together in a single volume lends them added coherence and weight.

Michel possesses an unrivalled command of the resources of the Roman archives relating to contemporary artistic life. In the tradition of the great archival scholars Noack, Orbaan, Hoogewerff and Bousquet, he has mined the parish registers for birth, baptismal, marriage and death notices, and he handles this complex material with the ease and flair of, say, Mitsuko Uchida playing a sonata by Mozart. The first essay, on the resources of the Archivio del Vicariato di Roma, underscores the breadth of Michel's understanding of contemporary Rome. He forges these sources into the brilliant essay that follows, 'La vie quotidienne des peintres à Rome au dix-huitième siècle'. Written originally as the text of a lecture delivered in Rome in 1974, the essay distils a lifetime of thought and experience and is fascinating (and required) reading for anyone interested in the artistic milieu of eighteenth-century Rome. A related important essay focusing more narrowly on the activities of the French in Rome, in particular the *pensionnaires* of the Académie de France, is also rescued from oblivion and brought up to date. Between his own archival efforts and a careful reading of the *Correspondance des*

directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome, he appears to know everything that transpired within the walls of the French Academy in Rome from its beginnings in a modest house on the Janiculum in 1666 through the salad days in the grandly-furnished quarters in Palazzo Mancini on the Corso until 1793.

The importance of this fine collection of studies extends beyond the narrow interests of the specialist: there is, for example, an admirable summary of the life and work of Subleyras (written with the author's wife and longtime collaborator, Geneviève Michel), which was published originally in the ephemeral '*petit journal*' accompanying the exhibition devoted to the artist in Paris in 1987. Michel's generosity to his fellow scholars is legendary and it is gratifying that the most significant results of his research have been brought together and published in this important volume.

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Bernardo Bellotto: Dresda, Vienna, Monaco (1747–1766). By Alberto Rizzi. 275 pp. incl. 92 col. pls. + 163 b. & w. ills. (Canal & Stamperia Editrice, Venice, 1996). ISBN 88-86502-15-X.

Alberto Rizzi, former director of the Accademia dei Concordi, Rovigo, staff-member of Soprintendenze in several cities, and cultural attaché in the Italian diplomatic service at Warsaw, has written extensively in recent years on Bernardo Bellotto. He is a great enthusiast of both the artist and his period, and he brings a sensitive appreciation to the painter's visual qualities as well as to the content of his paintings. He is particularly well informed, for example, about the details of court life in the cities depicted in Bellotto's German *vedute*. And he was responsible for the recent rediscovery of one of these – a beautiful landscape view of the Elbe Valley near Gamig of 1766 (no. 119 in his catalogue) – in the deposits of the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden.

This is the first of a proposed three-volume 'catalogue raisonné' of the paintings, prints and drawings of Bellotto. It focuses on the works the artist made for the courts of Augustus III, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, in Dresden, Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna, and Elector Maximilian III Joseph of Bavaria in Munich. The second volume will consist of a revision of the author's earlier study of Bellotto's views of Warsaw and other works from the last years of his life produced for the court of the last king of Poland, Stanislaus II Augustus Poniatowski (*La Varsavia di Bellotto*, Milan, 1990). The third will tackle some of the thorniest issues of connoisseurship in the field of later Italian painting, the painter's Italian views and the problem of separating his work from Canaletto's in paintings of the early 1740s.

The nearly-square format of the book (11 by 12 inches) permits Bellotto's large horizontal canvases to be illustrated almost full page, and the original version of each of the views is reproduced in colour against a