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Grasping at Shadows: Ancient Paintings in Renaissance and Baroque Rome

Hetty Joyce

For the student of classicism and ancient painting, the seventeenth century presents a perplexing situation. On the one hand, there was a remarkable revival, or rather an intensification, of interest in antique Roman painting among artists, scholars, and collectors. On the other hand, and in contrast to the sixteenth century, the influence of this interest on contemporary art has proved difficult to define. The present paper is an examination of the responses to ancient painting in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in order to clarify these issues and account for the apparent inconsistencies in practice.

Art theoretical writing from Alberti on was concerned very largely with divining the principles upon which the art of classical antiquity was created.¹ The ancients did not leave behind them a complete theoretical system, though aesthetic concepts are found in individual authors, particularly Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*. To collect these scattered observations into a large critical unity, observations that would serve as precepts for the improvement of modern art in approaching the attainments of its excellent predecessors, became one of the most important tasks for art theorists. This sought-after synthesis was greatly influenced by ancient philosophical, literary, and particularly rhetorical writing, in addition to the expected passages dealing specifically with works of art.

Although writers on sculpture and architecture were confronted with the same lack of ancient critical texts, with the single exception of Vitruvius's architectural treatise, they at least had the abundant if damaged remains of ancient sculpture and architecture before them in Italy. The total loss of ancient paintings, however—or at least of all the masterpieces so warmly praised by the ancient sources—confronted both theorists and artists with a *tabula rasa* onto which each could project his own image, based on varying interpretations of the ancient authorities. Panofsky viewed this loss as salutary for the spontaneity of Renaissance painting,² yet Renaissance artists felt irreparable bereavement. The bitter sense of the chasm between the past and the

present, both in regard to the virtues of the ancient artists and the high esteem in which they were held in their own time, is summed up in the Fourth Dialogue of Francisco de Hollanda, which takes place among a group of artists and Roman gentlemen. One of the guests, who has been entertaining the company with a lengthy monologue in praise of ancient works of art, proceeds to a reading of Pliny on the ancient painters. Finally Francisco can bear it no longer: "I rose from my chair," he says, "and took the book from him, swearing that not another word should be read so long as I was present nor anything further be said of a book which gave such honor to ancient painters and such envy to the moderns."³

About the year 1480, an accidental discovery was made on the Esquiline Hill of a group of ancient subterranean rooms which still preserved the painted, stuccoed, and gilded decoration of their vaults. The topography of ancient Rome was well enough understood that the earliest commentators recognized the complexity of the site, where the foundations of the Baths of Trajan were superimposed on Nero's palace, called the Domus Aurea, or Golden House, to which the newly discovered rooms belonged. Subsequently, however, the rooms became confounded with those of the Baths of Titus, actually located a little distance to the west, and it is by this name, or that of the Palace or House of Titus, that the paintings came to be identified through the eighteenth century.

The discovery of ancient relics was of course no novelty. But in place of the stained, abraded, monochrome surfaces of old marbles, artists could see here the fresh, vivid, and abundant revelation of the ancient artistic consciousness. Here, at last, was ancient Rome *in color*.

The use of motives drawn from the grottoes of the Domus Aurea and their dissemination by Pinturicchio, Raphael, Giovanni da Udine, and many others in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has been thoroughly documented by

Much of the research for this paper was done during my tenure as Andrew W. Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow in the History of Art at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, in 1989–90. I am very grateful to James R. McCredie and to the faculty and staff of the Institute for their generous and continuing support for my work. I am indebted also to Hilliard Goldfarb, Nina Mallory, Claire Pace, Donald Posner, and Helen Whitehouse for their critical reading of early drafts of the manuscript.

¹ The literature on this subject is vast. Fundamental studies are A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450–1600*, Oxford, 1940; R. W. Lee, "Ut pictura poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting," *Art Bulletin*, XXII, 1940, 197–269 (repr. New York, 1967); D. Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory*, London, 1947; E. Panofsky, *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory*, Columbia, S.C., 1968. See now also C. Goldstein, "Rhetoric and Art

History in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque," *Art Bulletin*, LXXIII, 1991, 641–652, with additional references.

² E. Cropper, *The Ideal of Painting*, Princeton, 1984, 173.

³ F. de Hollanda, *Four Dialogues on Painting*, trans. A. F. G. Bell, Oxford, 1928, 107. In the First Dialogue, Michelangelo declares that "no nation or people . . . can perfectly attain or imitate the Italian manner of painting (which is that of ancient Greece)" (Bell, 17), but it is to be understood that what Michelangelo meant by "painting" was painting and sculpture together, i.e., the figurative arts (D. Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art*, Princeton, 1981, 262). The word "pictura," or "picture," is used in the same sense by Franciscus Junius in his treatise *De pictura veterum* (on which see further below). The subject of the present study is painting in its narrower, modern sense.

Dacos and other scholars.⁴ Visits by artists and the curious to the underground chambers, which remained filled almost to their vaults by the debris of the Trajanic constructions and later accumulations, are recorded throughout the century. Curiously, for all the respect and wonder accorded to this rare and precious survival, no care whatever was taken to preserve the paintings. On the contrary, they were gradually effaced by the graffiti and torch smoke of the very people who came to admire them. So great, indeed, was the prestige of the Domus Aurea paintings that their rapid deterioration gave rise to the story, which persisted into the late eighteenth century, that Michelangelo, Raphael, and other masters had intentionally destroyed the frescoes after copying them, so that no one would be able to identify the source of their great art.⁵

According to Pirro Ligorio's treatise on grotesques,⁶ such paintings could be found in many places besides the Domus Aurea: within the city on the Quirinal and Palatine Hills and behind the Temple of Peace; in tombs on the many roads leading out of the city: the Labicana, Latina, Nomentana, Flaminia, Aurelia, Ostiense, Laurentina, and others; at the Tiburtine Villa of Hadrian; and also in the south, at Pozzuoli and Baia. Ligorio is not likely to have seen all these decorations himself,⁷ yet he ascribes to them all, whatever their date, location, or use, the same stylistic qualities: "diverse fantasticarie," with lovely colors and curious architecture interrupted by perspectives, and hybrid creatures formed of parts of plants and animals. Although Ligorio defines *grotteschi* as a type of ancient painting, evidently he recognizes no other, for he reports that they were used not only in crypts and crypto-porticoes, but everywhere in every room, great or small, beneath or above the ground.⁸

The knowledge of other ancient decorations is confirmed by the sketchbooks of a number of artists of the time. These can, however, be considered similar to those in the Domus Aurea only by using the loosest definition of *grotteschi*, to

mean any decoration based on vegetal forms and elaborately molded compartments, enriched with putti, pegasoi, and griffins. Amico Aspertini, Baldassare Peruzzi, Giuliano da Sangallo, Giovannantonio Dosio, and others recorded painted and stuccoed decorations in Rome, at Hadrian's Villa, and in scattered mausolea in the Roman campagna.⁹ These represent, however, a very small proportion of the drawings of antiquities that were made at the time.¹⁰ One must conclude, therefore, either that Ligorio exaggerated the number of grotesque decorations—his purpose in providing the long list of sites is to prove that such decorations were in general use in ancient times and were not confined to grottoes—or that the decorations, once found, survived only long enough for the report to reach Ligorio's ears, but not long enough for anyone to go and make a drawing. Almost all the recorded decorative paintings and stuccoes are from ancient vaults. There seems to have been very little preserved of painting on Roman walls.¹¹

The almost total lack of literary or graphic evidence of the knowledge of ancient wall painting in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has not prevented a number of scholars from suggesting that certain grandly conceived interiors featuring illusionistically rendered architecture were inspired by knowledge of Second-Style-type wall decorations, now lost.¹²

⁹ Besides the Domus Aurea, the most fully documented ancient decorations were the stuccoes in the Colosseum and at Hadrian's Villa. To Dacos's references for these and other monuments in and around Rome and in Campania (pp. 41–50, figs. 63–73) may be added: P. Werner, *Pompeji und die Wanddekoration der Goethezeit*, Munich, 1970, 15–24; M. de Vos, "La ricezione della pittura antica fino alla scoperta di Ercolano e Pompei," in S. Settis, ed., *Memoria dell'antica nell'arte italiana*, II, Turin, 1985, 351–380; H. Wurm, *Baldassare Peruzzi, Architekturzeichnungen*, Tübingen, 1984, pls. 448, 449; F. Borsi, et al., *Roma antica e i disegni di architettura agli Uffizi di Giovanni Antonio Dosio*, Rome, 1976, 107, no. 100; idem, *Giuliano da Sangallo: I disegni di architettura e dell'antico*, Rome, 1985, 201 (Cod. Vat. bar. 4424, fol. 39), 265–266 (Barb. fol. 39, fol. 13v), 310 (Tacc. Senese fol. 37r); E. Luparini, "Un libro di disegni di Giovanni Antonio Dosio, 2," *Critica d'arte*, xxv–xxvi, 1958, 64–66, figs. on pp. 53 (docs. 108v and 109), 60 (doc. 109v), 61 (doc. 111), 62 (doc. 114); H. Joyce, "Hadrian's Villa and the 'Dome of Heaven,'" *Mittelungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung*, xcvi, 1990, 349–352, pl. 105, no. 2.

¹⁰ A. Nesselrath, "I libri di disegni di antichità. Tentativo di una tipologia," in S. Settis, ed., *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, III, Turin, 1986, 89–147, esp. 94ff.

¹¹ A stuccoed tomb near Pozzuoli was decorated with putti and other winged figures (drawing by Martin van Heemskerck, Berlin Codex, fol. 58v; Dacos, 50, fig. 73); a tomb on Via Salaria, recorded in the Codex Pighianus, included scenes on the vault illustrating the myths of Alcestis and Apollo and Marsyas, and vintaging and other agricultural labors in the lunettes (H. von Hesberg, "'La Grotta nella via Salaria': Ein Ziegelgrab Antoninische Zeit in Rom," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, CII, 1987, 391–411, figs. 1–4, 8); see also Ashby (as in n. 7), pl. xiv, 2 (tomb lunette decorated with architecture and figures).

¹² Von Salis, 190–210; I. Bergström, *Revival of Antique Illusionistic Wall-Painting in Renaissance Art (Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, LXIII, 1957)*; P. P. Bober, *Drawings after the Antique by Amico Aspertini*, London, 1957, n. 6 on 21, 35; A. Blunt, "Illusionistic Decoration in Central Italian Painting of the Renaissance," *Royal Society of Arts Journal*, cvii, 1958, 309–326; T. E. S. Yuen, "The Biblioteca Graeca: Castagno, Alberti, and Ancient Sources," *Burlington Magazine*, cxii, 1970, 725–736. Schulz (as in n. 4), 40, concludes that "there is no doubt that [early Renaissance artists] did know examples of antique architectural illusionism, as represented by the second Pompeian style," while conceding that "we have no way of determining whether any 15th-century artist knew just such an antique scheme. None are recorded in their surviving sketchbooks or in contemporary memoirs. . . ." It should be noted that none of the known wall paintings cited in n. 11 above include trompe-l'oeil architecture.

⁴ Dacos; idem, *Le Logge di Raffaello*, Rome, 1977; idem, "La Loggetta du Cardinal Bibbiena: Décor à l'antique et rôle de l'atelier," in *Raffaello a Roma*, Rome, 1986, 225–236; F. Weege, "Das Goldene Haus des Nero," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, xxviii, 1913, 127–244; von Salis, 35–60; J. Schulz, "Pinturicchio and the Revival of Antiquity," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxv, 1962, 35–55; F. Piel, *Die Ornamente-Grotteske in der italienischen Renaissance*, Berlin, 1962; P. Morel, "Il funzionamento simbolico e la critica delle grottesche nella seconda metà del Cinquecento," in M. Fagiolo, ed., *Roma e l'antico nell'arte e nella cultura del cinquecento*, Rome, 1985, 149–178.

⁵ The story is related by Mancini, 102, and is repeated, noncommittally, by the anonymous commentator of the *Collection de peintures antiques qui ornoient les palais*, . . . Rome, 1781, preface.

⁶ The text of the autograph manuscript of the *Libro dell'antichità*, preserved in Turin, is published for the first time in Dacos, 161–182.

⁷ Dacos, 130, questions that Ligorio visited all the sites he enumerates. An archaeological manuscript by Ligorio in the Bodleian Library (Cod. Canonici Ital. no. 138) includes several drawings of or references to ancient painted and stuccoed decorations, mainly in tombs (T. Ashby, "The Bodleian MS. of Pirro Ligorio," *Journal of Roman Studies*, ix, 1919, 170–201).

⁸ Dacos, 161–162. Other Renaissance authors also mention ancient paintings, but their references add little to Ligorio's extended treatment of the subject (see Alberti, *Libri de re aedificatoria decem*, Bk. vi, chap. ix; Raphael, letter of 1519 to Leo X on the plan of ancient Rome, in V. Golzio, *Raffaello nei documenti*, Vatican City, 1936, 85; Vasari-Milanesi, v, 202–203; G. B. Armenini, *On the True Precepts of the Art of Painting*, ed. and trans. E. J. Olszewski, 1977, 264–265).

Among the Renaissance interiors most frequently cited as inspired by lost antique models are Castagno's fresco of famous men and women in the Villa Carducci at Legnaia (ca. 1450);¹³ the recreation of a colonnaded, marble-encrusted hall in the Sala del Mappamondo of the Palazzo Venezia (ca. 1490), sometimes attributed to Mantegna;¹⁴ Baldassare Peruzzi's Sala delle Prospettive in the Villa Farnesina (1519);¹⁵ and Veronese's frescoes in the Villa Barbaro at Maser (1558–60).¹⁶ These interiors differ greatly from each other in date as well as appearance, and they have been considered in detail by others.¹⁷ The point that is most relevant to the present matter is that the appearance of each of them may be satisfactorily "explained" without recourse to a lost ancient model.

Castagno's *Uomini famosi* (Fig. 1), which has been compared to Second-Style decorations like those from the Villa of the Mysteries and the Villa at Boscoreale, is only one of many such cycles that were created during the fifteenth century in such diverse Italian centers as Milan, Naples, Siena, Padua, Florence, and Venice. An expression of civic humanism, images of men of the past were regarded as a visual inspiration to similar heroic virtues in the present. There was ample evidence in ancient authors that the ancients displayed statues of venerable men in their public and domestic buildings, which suggested the architectural framework for the painted display in public buildings and princely palaces in the Renaissance.¹⁸

The inspiration for the trompe-l'oeil architecture of the sixteenth century, like Peruzzi's Sala delle Prospettive (Fig. 2), ought to be attributed rather to the revival of ancient drama beginning in the late fifteenth century, which required the development of appropriate settings.¹⁹ Peruzzi

himself painted decorations for a magnificent theatrical spectacle in honor of Giuliano de' Medici, performed on the Campidoglio in 1513, and designed the scenery for another performed in the Vatican the following year.²⁰ The connection with scene design may be even closer in the Villa Barbaro (Fig. 4), for Palladio's illustrations for Daniele Barbaro's edition of Vitruvius (1556) include a reconstruction of an ancient *scenae frons* very similar to Veronese's "sets" for Maser (Fig. 3).²¹ If any justification were needed for using these motifs in a domestic setting, Vitruvius provides it in the familiar passage in Book VII in which he describes the representation of "the forms of buildings, and of columns, and projecting and overhanging pediments; . . . façades of scenes in the tragic, comic, and satyric style; . . . and of landscapes, mythological episodes, and other subjects reproduced on similar principles from real life."²²

The place of such decorations within the continuous development of spatial representation in the Renaissance; their wide dispersion and diversity; the inspiration provided by the ancient literature on architecture and decoration; and, finally, the revival of ancient drama, with its requirement for large-scale illusionistic scenery in the antique manner, all sufficiently account for the appearance of trompe-l'oeil architectural decorations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.²³ Even if a few examples of Second-Style wall painting were known to Renaissance artists, their survival could hardly account for a phenomenon of such magnitude.²⁴

The use of illusionistic architecture of this kind can even be viewed as a Vitruvian antidote to the "strange daydreams" of the *grotteschi*.²⁵ The meaning, value, and use of grotesques was, in fact, the subject of a continuing debate throughout the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth, springing

¹³ Bober and Rubenstein, 37, figs. 8, 9; M. Saloni, "Gli affreschi di Andrea del Castagno ritrovati," *Bollettino d'arte*, IV, 1950, 295–308.

¹⁴ "... Sometimes, but without good reason, connected with the name of Mantegna"; Blunt (as in n. 12), 312; F. Hermanin, "La Sala del Mappamondo nel Palazzo di Venezia," *Dedalo*, XI, fasc. 8, Jan. 1931, 457–481.

¹⁵ Von Salis, 208–209.

¹⁶ G. Zorzi, *Le ville e i teatri di Andrea Palladio*, Venice, 1969, 169–181, figs. 322–325.

¹⁷ Blunt (as in n. 12); S. Sandström, "Levels of Unreality: Studies in Structure and Construction in Italian Mural Painting during the Renaissance," *Figura*, n.s. IV, 1963. Schulz's study (as in n. 4) is concerned with the genesis of illusionistic painting, though he does not discuss these particular monuments.

¹⁸ C. L. Joost-Gaugier, "Poggio and Visual Tradition: *Uomini Famosi* in Classical Literary Description," *Artibus et historiae*, XII, 1985, 57–74. M. Horster, *Andrea del Castagno*, Oxford, 1980, 30, notes the similarity of isolated architectural motifs in Second-Style paintings, but concludes, "Only Roman triumphal arches . . . could have served as a partial model for the painted architecture, for there life-size figures stood in rectangular niches flanked by pilasters decorated with acanthus-scrolls and composite capitals. But the series of painted life-size figures standing in rectangular niches decorated *all'antica* remains the invention of the young Castagno."

¹⁹ R. Krautheimer, "The Tragic and Comic Scene of the Renaissance: The Baltimore and Urbino Panels," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, XXXIII, 1948, 327–346; K. Neijendam, "Le Théâtre de la Renaissance à Rome," *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici*, v, 1969, 103–197. In antiquity, too, scene painting provided an important impetus for the development of architectural perspective (A. M. G. Little, "Perspective and Scene Painting," *Art Bulletin*, XIX, 1937, 487–495; H. G. Beyen, *Die Pompejanische Wanddekoration*, I, The Hague, 1938, 279ff; A. Barbet, *La Peinture murale romaine*, Paris, 1985, 44–45). J. White discusses spatial design in

antiquity in *The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space*, London, 1957, 236–273. He sees no direct connection between the ancient and Renaissance practice of perspective, tracing an independent development for the latter beginning with Cimabue.

²⁰ Vasari reports that the spatial illusion and ornaments were so convincing that Peruzzi's scenery seemed "non . . . dipinta, ma vera" (C. Ricci, *La scenografia italiana*, Milan, 1930, 11–12, pls. I–IV); Wurm (as in n. 9), pl. 3.

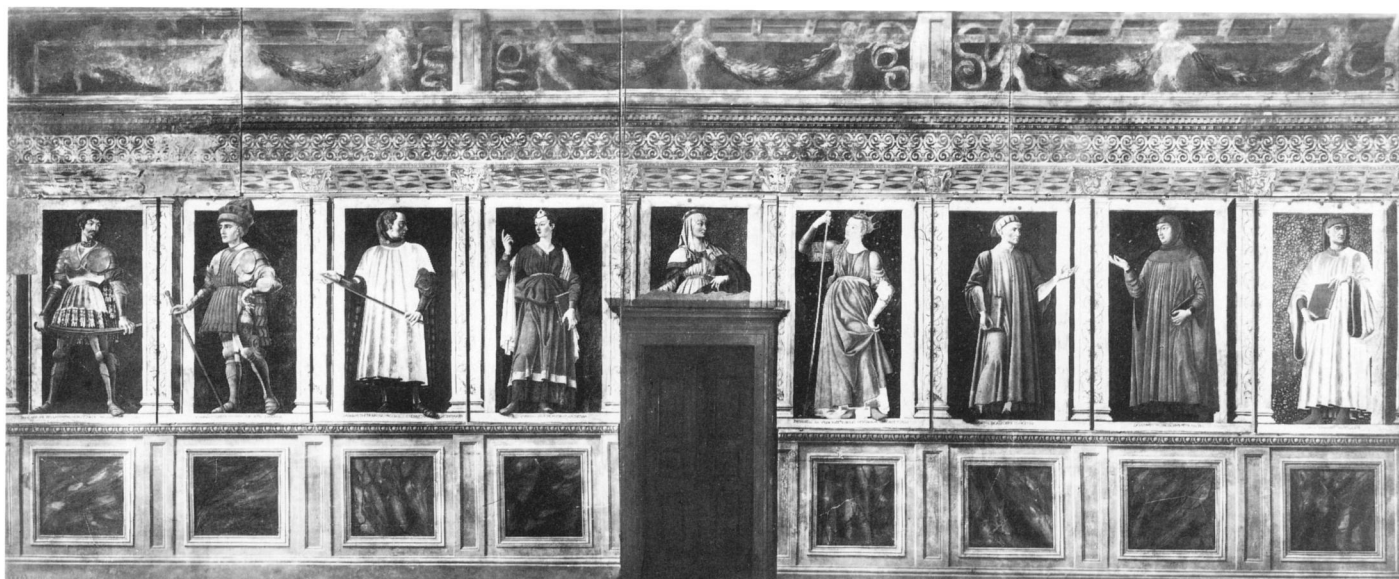
²¹ G. Zorzi, *Disegni delle antichità di Andrea Palladio*, Venice, 1959, 113–120, fig. 293. Although it has been argued that Veronese's decorations were executed without consultation with Palladio and perhaps even against his wishes (L. Puppi, *Andrea Palladio*, Milan, 1973, 315–316), Palladio himself designed similar fresco decorations for the Villa Godi at Lonardo, suggesting his probable approval of, if not participation in, Veronese's designs for Maser (D. Lewis, *The Drawings of Andrea Palladio*, Washington, D.C., 1981, 154–158, cat. no. 89).

²² Schulz (as in n. 4), 39–42, describes the influence of the writings of Vitruvius and Pliny on Renaissance wall painting, observing that "Veronese's frescoes at Maser . . . are as so many illustrations of the subjects for wall painting itemized by Vitruvius and Pliny."

²³ The actual remains of ancient architecture, so avidly drawn and measured by Renaissance artists, doubtless also played a role in the development of this style.

²⁴ This conclusion is also reached by Sandström (as in n. 17), 141–146, 151, n. 73. E. K. Waterhouse suggests, in a comment on Blunt (as in n. 12), 326, that the 16th-century preoccupation with the *paragone* inspired these artists to demonstrate how much more painting could do than sculpture, or, one might add, than architecture itself.

²⁵ The influence on Peruzzi of Vitruvius's strictures is discussed by Sandström (as in n. 17), 143, but should not, perhaps, be stressed too much: Peruzzi was a master of grotesque decoration as well (Dacos, 113–115, figs. 182–183).



1 Andrea del Castagno, *Uomini famosi*. Legnaia, Villa Carducci (photo: Alinari)



2 Baldassare Peruzzi, Sala delle Prospettive. Rome, Villa Farnesina (from P. d'Ancona, *The Farnesina Frescoes at Rome*, Milan, 1955, pl. 44)

from Vitruvius's sharp criticism of the decadent taste of his own day, which approved monstrosities in place of "truthful representations of things which actually exist."²⁶ Condemned by Vitruvian classicists like Barbaro,²⁷ grotesques were defended by Vasari on the grounds of artistic license: in

this view, the freedom allowable to the artistic imagination is validated by ancient precedent.²⁸ Later in the century, under the influence of the ideas of the Counter-Reformation, grotesques are approved only as subsidiary decoration and only if they conform to certain rules of moderation and reason.²⁹

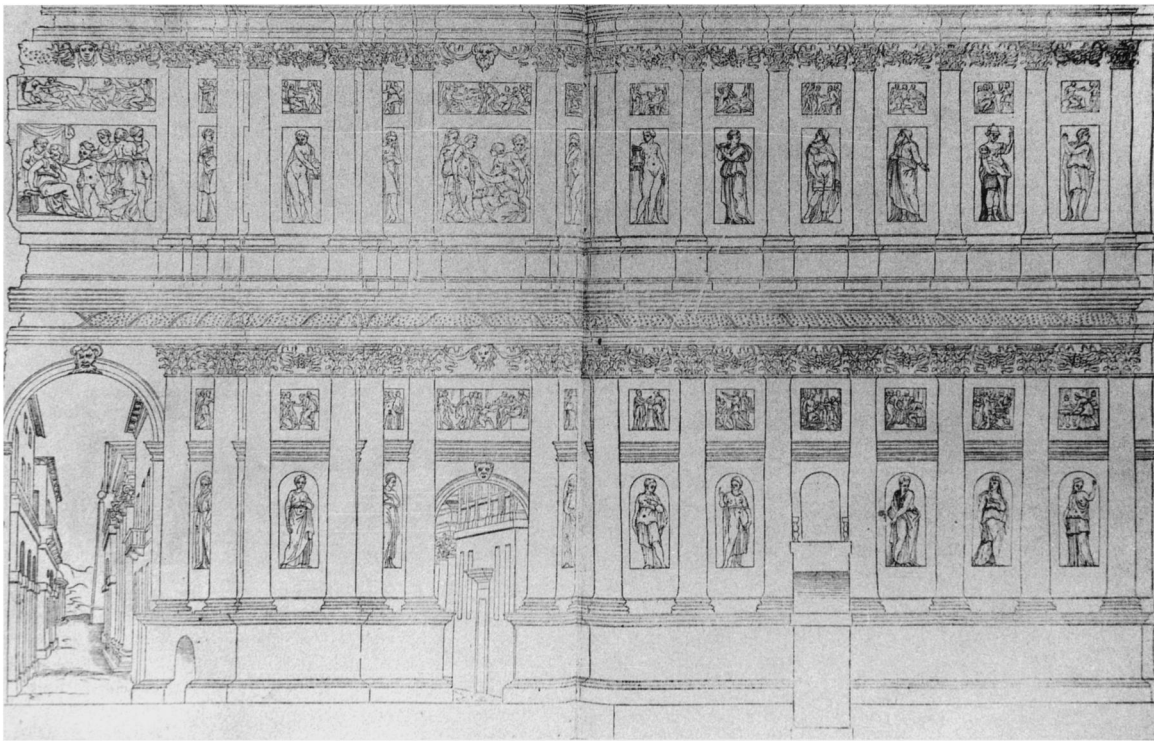
²⁶ Vitruvius, *De architectura*, Bk. vii, chap. v. Horace also criticized grotesques at the beginning of the *Ars poetica* (Dacos, 122–123). Dacos surveys the critical debate over grotesques in the 16th century, pp. 121–135, as does Morel (as in n. 4), 169–178.

²⁷ D. Barbaro, ed., *De architectura*, Venice, 1556, 188.

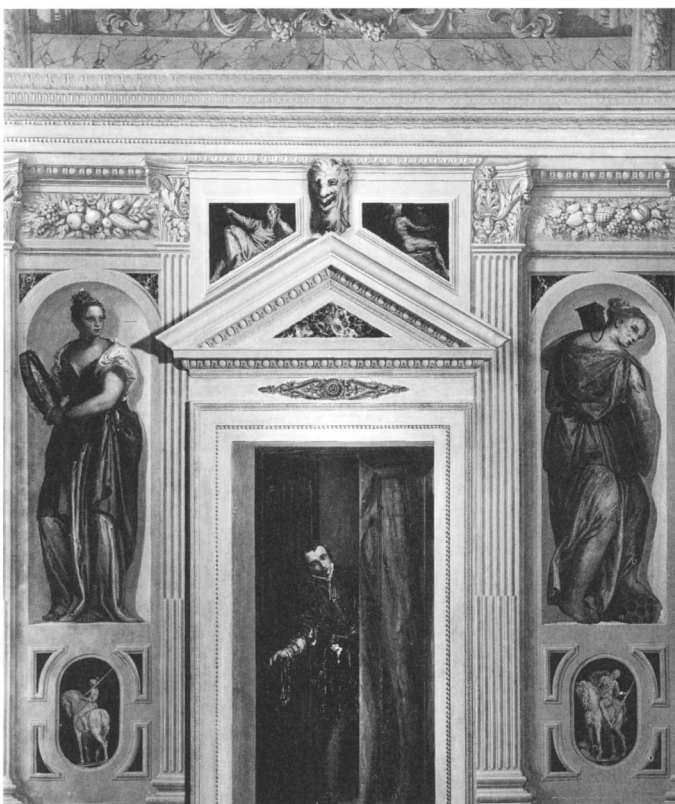
²⁸ Vasari-Milanesi, I, 193–194. In Francisco de Hollanda's Third Dialogue, Michelangelo defends grotesques in similar terms, stating that "poets and painters have license to dare, that is to dare do what they choose." He concludes, "And this insatiable desire of man sometimes prefers to an ordinary building, with its pillars and windows and doors,

one falsely constructed in grotesque style, with pillars formed of children growing out of the stalks of flowers, with architraves and cornices of branches of myrtle and doorways of reeds and other things, all seeming impossible and contrary to reason; yet, it may be really great work if it is made by a skillful artist" (Bell [as in n. 3], 60–63); see also Summers (as in n. 3), 129–143.

²⁹ Armenini (as in n. 8), 292–298; G. A. Gilio, *Dialogo nel quale si ragiona degli errori e degli abusi de' pittori circa l'istorie*, Camerino, 1564 (P. Barocchi, *Scritte d'arte del cinquecento*, Milan and Naples, 1971–73, II, 18).



3 Andrea Palladio, *scenae frons* (from Zorzi, *Disegni delle antichità di Andrea Palladio*, fig. 293)



4 Paolo Veronese, *La Crociera* (detail). Maser, Villa Barbaro (photo: Alinari)

Finally, Ligorio approves them, but only because they are believed to express hidden meanings, like Egyptian hieroglyphs. Most of Ligorio's treatise on grotesques is actually devoted to the explication of these arcane symbols.³⁰ Ligorio's learned approach is supplanted by Gabriele Paleotti's literal interpretation of grotesques: they are monsters, whose

appearance must revert to their original use in sanctuaries of gods of the underworld.³¹ They are infernal, and thus to be condemned.

The mysterious quality of the *groteschi* that had formed so large a part of their appeal early in the century—the piquant contrast between the vitality of their conception and the dark caverns in which they were to be found—changed by the end of the sixteenth century to superstitious dread. Although the rooms of the Domus Aurea remained accessible throughout the seventeenth century, the very scarcity of visitors, as compared to the perpetual flow of visitors in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, proves that the *groteschi* had lost their charm.³²

The sixteenth-century debate over the meaning and uses of grotesques is of particular interest, for it combines com-

³⁰ Dacos, 129–133. The paintings themselves are not of much interest to Ligorio, beyond providing the occasion for his detailed commentaries on ancient mythology and iconography. As Dacos observes (p. 131), some of Ligorio's descriptions are anachronistic, reflecting Renaissance rather than ancient iconography, and one cannot help wondering if he has invented at least some of the paintings. Ligorio's activity as a forger of ancient inscriptions and medals is well known (Mandowsky and Mitchell, 49–51). The apparent paradox of Ligorio's lifetime of labor as an *antiquario* and his "imaginative interference with the physical remains of antiquity" is best resolved by R. W. Gaston: "In the final analysis, Ligorio's vision of classical antiquity went beyond archaeology and beyond the facts. He obviously dreamed of finding more of it than he found in a lifetime of searching" (R. W. Gaston, ed., *Pirro Ligorio: Artist and Antiquarian*, Florence, 1988, 16). The search for ancient paintings would have required even more "vision" than the search for inscriptions and medals.

³¹ G. Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre et profane diviso in cinque libri*, Bologna, 1582, in Barocchi (as in n. 29), 435–439; Morel (as in n. 4), 174–176.

³² In contrast to the several dozen inscribed names datable to the 15th and 16th centuries, only nine can be assigned to the 17th, and two of these are doubtful (Dacos, 143–160). Grotesque decorations were already losing favor in the last two decades of the 16th century, as Morel (as in n. 4), 176–178, demonstrates.



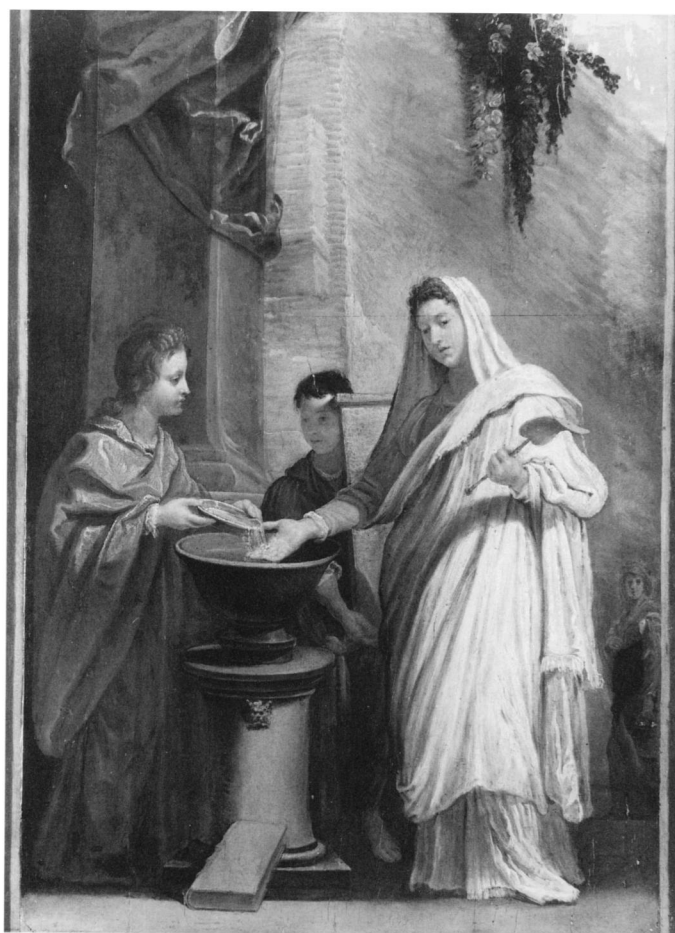
5 Aldobrandini Wedding. Vatican, Museo Profano (photo: Alinari)

mentary on an ancient authority with the actual experience of a group of ancient paintings in their original setting.³³ Although Vitruvius had long been dead by the time Nero built his palace, it was not doubted that the monstrosities condemned by Vitruvius were the very paintings that were before their eyes. The only question, then, was one's response to Vitruvius's conservatism. The only writer to argue against this identification was the Swedish philologist Johannes Schefferus, whose *Graphice, id est de arte pingendi* was published in 1669.³⁴

Schefferus's work is one of a long series of studies of the ancient figurative arts from the pens of men who were not themselves artists nor in many cases particularly concerned with art.³⁵ Professional scholars or learned amateurs, they culled the ancient sources for information relating not only to painting but to engraving, mosaic, and sculpture as well. These studies belong to an antiquarian tradition of inquiry into the remains of ancient civilization, to be distinguished from, though often overlapping, the work of art theorists during the same time. The most widely read and influential of these authors was Franciscus Junius, librarian to the Earl of Arundel, whose *De pictura veterum* was published in 1637.

Rubens, that most erudite of artists,³⁶ had probably met Junius in England in 1629 and was sent a copy of the book on its publication. Rubens's well-known letter of appreciation was written in elegant Latin, so that it could be used, as it subsequently was, in a later edition of Junius's book. After praising the admirable erudition, elegant style, and correct order of the work, Rubens continues:

But since those examples of the ancient painters can now be followed only in the imagination and comprehended



6 Domenico Fetti, copy after a part of the Aldobrandini Wedding. Prague, Castle Collections (photo: Paul Prokop, Československá Akademie Věd)

³³ See Morel (as in n. 4), 174.

³⁴ Schefferus rightly argued that Vitruvius objected not to the monsters with which the Renaissance identified the ancient decorative style, but rather to the (unnatural) representation of whole buildings supported by animals, reeds, and pipes (A. Ellenius, *De arte pingendi*, Uppsala, 1960, 125–126).

³⁵ The fundamental study of this literature is Ellenius (as in n. 34); see also K. Borinski, *Die Antike in Poetik und Kunsttheorie*, Leipzig, 1914–24;

A. Minto, *Le vite dei pittori antichi di Carlo Roberto Dati e gli studi erudito-antiquario nel seicento*, *Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Columbaria," Studi*, 1, 1952; P. Fehl, K. Aldrich, and M. R. Fehl, "Franciscus Junius and the Defense of Art," *Artibus et historiae*, III, 1981, 9–56.

³⁶ Rubens was a highly esteemed member of the "Republic of Letters," his opinion sought on a wide variety of matters: see M. van der Meulen, *Petrus Paulus Rubens Antiquarius*, Yorktown Heights, N.Y., 1975; Jaffé.



7 Anton van Dyck, sketches of the Aldobrandini Wedding, from the Italian Sketchbook, fol. 50v (courtesy Trustees of the British Museum)



8 Anton van Dyck, sketches of the Aldobrandini Wedding, from the Italian Sketchbook, fol. 51r (courtesy Trustees of the British Museum)

by each one of us, more or less, for himself, I wish that some such treatise on the paintings of the Italian masters might be carried out with similar care. . . . Those things which are perceived by the senses produce a sharper and more durable impression, require a closer examination, and afford a richer material for study than those which present themselves to us only in the imagination, like dreams, or so obscured by words that we try in vain to grasp them (as Orpheus the shade of Eurydice), but which often elude us and thwart our hopes. We can say this from experience; for how few among us, in attempting to present in visual terms some famous work of Apelles or Timanthes which is graphically described by Pliny or by other authors, will not produce something that is insulting or alien to the dignity of the ancients? But each one indulging his own talent will offer an inferior wine as a substitute for that bitter-sweet vintage, and do injury to those great spirits whom I follow with the profoundest veneration.³⁷

It has been suggested that Rubens's letter should be read as a subtle criticism that Junius's work was useless, since we do not know the painting of antiquity.³⁸ However, the sincerity of Rubens's recommendation, and of his expression of frustration, is confirmed by his own numerous reworkings, from classical texts and *ekphrases*, of pictures of ancient artists, many of them included in a frieze of paintings that he

designed for the façade of his studio.³⁹

In view of the purpose of Rubens's letter as an earnest but formal endorsement of Junius's theoretical work, it is not surprising that it makes no mention of one ancient painting that could be "perceived by the senses" and had produced a "sharp and durable impression" on Rubens when he visited Rome as a young man.

In 1604 or 1605, some men digging on the hill of S. Maria Maggiore in search of statues, marbles, and figures, discovered an ancient room with a piece of wall still standing on which was painted "una gratiosa, et bella historia a fresco" (Fig. 5). The painting, nearly 2.5m long and almost a meter high, was detached from the wall—perhaps the first ancient painting to be so removed, and a notable accomplishment,

³⁷ Letter of Aug. 1, 1637, in C. Ruelens and M. Rooses, *Correspondance de Rubens et documents concernant sa vie et ses oeuvres*, Antwerp, 1887–1901, vi, 179–180. The English translation used here is that of Magurn, 406–408.

³⁸ E.g., J. Gage describes the letter as an "appeal to practical experience over and against literary imagination" ("A Locus Classicus of Colour Theory: The Fortunes of Apelles," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XLIV, 1981, 1).

³⁹ E. McGrath, "The Painted Decoration of Rubens' House," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xli, 1978, 245–277. The sincerity of Rubens's praise is also confirmed by Fehl (as in n. 35), 32; *idem*, "Imitation as a Source of Greatness: Rubens, Titian, and the Painting of the Ancients," in *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens*, ed. G. Cavalli-Björkman, Stockholm, 1987, 107–132, esp. 112.

considering its size—and taken to the villa of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini at Monte Magnanapoli, where it was soon set up in a loggetta in the garden.⁴⁰ It has been known ever since as the “Aldobrandini Wedding.” In 1607, its excellent color, state of preservation, and “gusto singolare” were enthusiastically described by Federico Zuccaro, who claimed to have been one of the first to see it and to have cleaned it diligently with his own hand.⁴¹

The earliest preserved copy is a youthful work (ca. 1611) of the Roman painter Domenico Fetti, whose panel, now in Prague, shows the three figures around the basin on the left of the fresco (Fig. 6).⁴² The painting is not a literal rendering of the group but a free interpretation: Fetti adds vegetation trailing over a high brick wall, rich drapery hanging over the pillar, and a fourth figure in the background. Furthermore, Fetti manages to imbue the scene with a charming air of breathless solemnity, which is quite lacking in the original.

Van Dyck also drew the Wedding during his trip to Italy in 1622–23 (Figs. 7–8).⁴³ One of the most striking aspects of his “Italian Sketchbook” is the virtual absence of drawings after the antique, for Van Dyck was notoriously uninterested in studies after the antique or after Raphael, the usual program for Northern artists visiting Rome. Thus his attention to the Wedding is significant. Yet, like Fetti, he was not concerned to have a true and detailed copy of it: it was the striking pose and gesture that he chose to record, and he also made a number of color notes. One wonders if he did not see this as an opportunity to capture an event in the lives of the ancient Romans, just as his sketchbook records many scenes of contemporary Italian life.

Seventeenth-century copies in oil of the ancient fresco are almost commonplace.⁴⁴ One in the Galleria Doria Pamphilj and another in Chartres were long attributed to Poussin but have been rejected by Haskell and by Blunt, who observes that while Poussin’s admiration for the fresco is attested by Félibien, nowhere does Félibien say that Poussin copied it.⁴⁵

Pietro da Cortona made a watercolor copy of the Wedding for Cassiano dal Pozzo (Fig. 9),⁴⁶ probably in 1623 or 1624, which was engraved by Bernardino Capitelli in 1627 (Fig. 10).⁴⁷ In a letter dated June 2, 1628, the French scholar Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc thanks Cassiano for the engraving, which he finds much more accurate than a copy in oils that he had already seen.⁴⁸ However, he is much disturbed by the mirror reversal of the engraving, for it interferes with his interpretation of the gestures of the sacrificers, and begs that a counterproof be made for him, providing the correct orientation, and also another copy painted with colors.⁴⁹

The Wedding was much on Peiresc’s mind that spring (he was working on a study of the Roman marriage rite), and he had already written to Rubens about it. Rubens’s letter to Peiresc of May 1628 continues a description of the painting, evidently begun in an earlier letter, now lost, recalling the coloring of the draperies, the attitudes of the figures, and some details of iconography.⁵⁰ He admits that his memory may be faulty—having seen the painting some two decades before—and asks for a colored drawing. The correspondence between the two friends was interrupted by Rubens’s diplomatic activities, which were resented by the French, and it was not until 1636 that Peiresc was able to send the drawing, after their friendship resumed. Rubens thanks Peiresc for “the copy of that ancient painting which was discovered in Rome in my youth, and being unique, was admired and adored by all lovers of painting and antiquity . . . and to tell the truth, you could not have made me a present more acceptable, or one that conformed more to my taste and my desire.”⁵¹

The first published image of the Wedding was made by “un sgratiato intagliatore di Venetia” to accompany the commentary by the Paduan humanist Lorenzo Pignoria, *Antiquissimae picturae quae Romae visitur typus a L. Pignorio . . . explicatus* (1630).⁵² Pignoria had addressed the work to

⁴⁰ On the architectural history of the Villa Aldobrandini and the installation of the ancient fresco, see C. Benocci, *Ville cinquecentesche romane sedi di collezioni artistiche: Villa Celmontana e Villa Aldobrandini a Monte-Magnanapoli*, Rome, 1989, 118ff, esp. 28.

⁴¹ “Et io che fui per sorte di quelli primi a vederla, e lavorla, et netarla di mio mano diligentemente la viddi così ben conservata, e fresca, come se fusse fatta pur all’hora, che n’hebbi un gusto singolare, e fui causa di farla portare alla luce” (F. Zuccaro, *L’idea de’ pittori, scultori e architetti*, Turin, 1607, Bk. II, 37–38). The fresco is now in the Vatican Museum Library: L. von Matt, *Die Kunstsammlung der Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*, Rome, 1969, 19ff (G. Daltrop). On the discovery and subsequent fortunes of the Aldobrandini Wedding, see R. Lanciani, *Storia degli scavi di Roma*, III–IV, 1912, 207–208; Nogara, 1–35; di Castro and Fox, 151–152; Nicolò and Solinas, 87–96.

⁴² E. A. Safarik, *Fetti*, Milan, 1990, 282–284, cat. no. 126. The panel was one of six (of various subjects) painted for Cardinal Ferdinando Gonzaga, Fetti’s first patron. It was probably the Cardinal who introduced Fetti to the Villa Aldobrandini. Safarik sees this work as significant for the artist’s future career, finding in it “il germoglio della sua opera più significativa, vale a dire le *Parabole*.” The photograph used for Fig. 6 was very kindly supplied by Pamela Askew.

⁴³ Nogara, fig. 1; Anton van Dyck, *Italiensches Skizzenbuch: Ein Nachauflage der 1940 von Gert Adriaan*, Vienna, 1965, 21, fols. 50v–51; C. Brown, *Van Dyck*, Oxford, 1982, 64ff, 72, fig. 60.

⁴⁴ Di Castro and Fox, 152; J. Thuillier, “Tableaux Poussinesques dans les Musées de Province française,” in *Actes du Colloque International Nicolas Poussin*, Paris, 1960, 285–300.

⁴⁵ F. Haskell and S. Rinehart, “The Dal Pozzo Collection. Some New Evidence,” *Burlington Magazine*, CII, 1960, 321, no. 41; A. Blunt, “Poussin and His Roman Patrons,” in *Walter Friedländer zum 90. Geburtstag*, Berlin, 1965, 62–63; J. Thuillier, *L’Opera completa di Poussin*, Milan, 1974, nos. R103 and R104, lists these as “Scuola pussiniana.”

⁴⁶ Drawing in pen and ink and wash: W. Vitzthum, “Roman Drawings at Windsor Castle,” *Burlington Magazine*, CIII, 1961, 518, fig. 40; A. Blunt, in E. Schilling, *German Drawings in the Collection of H. M. the Queen at Windsor Castle*, London, 1971, 106, cat. no. 349.

⁴⁷ The Siennese engraver had come to Rome in 1626 with a recommendation to Cassiano: A. Cornice, “Bernardino Capitelli,” in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, XVIII, Rome, 1975, 546–547; *Bernardino Capitelli (1589–1639)*, Siena, 1985, 32–33, 50, no. 7, 80, no. 34; Nogara, fig. 2; di Castro and Fox, 51, fig. 26; Nicolò and Solinas, 89. It is noteworthy that among the very few Domus Aurea graffiti datable to the 17th century, the names Cappitelli and Cappelletti have been identified “selon toute probabilité” with Bernardino Capitelli (Dacos, 141, 147, 158).

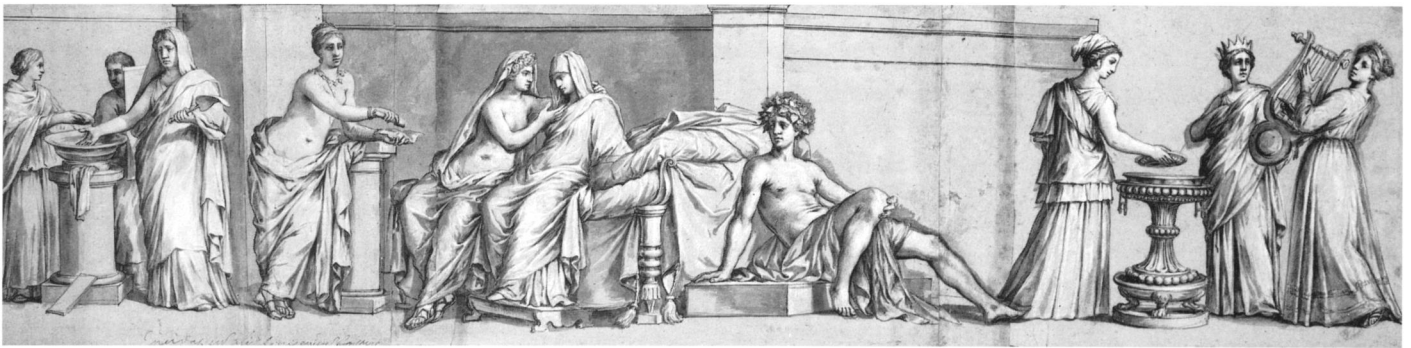
⁴⁸ For the life of Peiresc, see P. Gassendi, *Viri illustris Nicolai Claudii Fabri de Peiresc*, Paris, 1641 (summarized in J. Porcher, *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises au XVII^e siècle*, Paris, 1954, 792–793). For his correspondence, see C. Rizza, *Peiresc e l’Italia*, Turin, 1965; Jaffé; Lhote and Joyal.

⁴⁹ See Nicolò and Solinas, 89–91, for the correspondence between Peiresc and Cassiano relating to the Wedding; also Lhote and Joyal, 20–21, 45ff (letter of June 2, 1627), 57ff (letter of Feb. 28, 1629); Jaffé, 130–131.

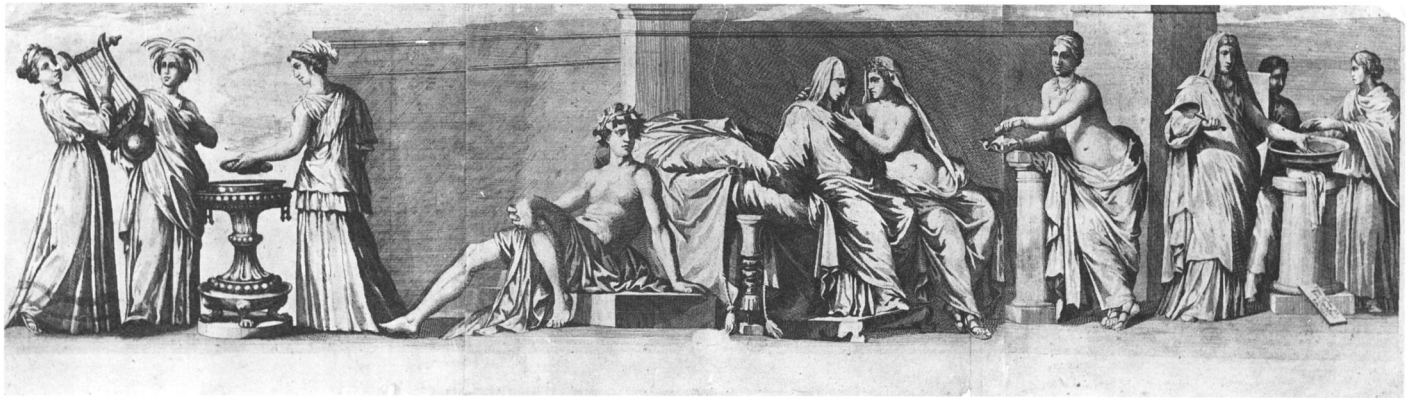
⁵⁰ Magurn, 263f; Nogara, 27, no. 1a.

⁵¹ Letter of Sept. 4, 1636, in Magurn, 405; Nogara, 27, no. 1b.

⁵² Nicolò and Solinas, 91–92.



9 Pietro da Cortona, copy of the Aldobrandini Wedding. Windsor Castle, Royal Library (© 1991, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)



10 Bernardino Capitelli, after P. da Cortona's drawing of the Aldobrandini Wedding. Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe (photo: G.N.S.)

Cassiano who, however, dismissed as “extravagant” Pignoria’s interpretation of the scene as the marriage of Stella and Violentilla from Statius’s *Silvae* 1. 2.

Zuccaro had praised the beauty of the painting, and Rubens “admired and adored” it, but the focus of interest among humanists, antiquarians, and painters was not its artistic merits but its iconography and well-preserved colors, which were the subject of minutely detailed studies.⁵³ Its documentary value is demonstrated by the separate drawing that Cassiano had made of one of the tripods, “of an elegance quite different from the others” (Fig. 11).⁵⁴

This same tripod also attracted the attention of Guglielmo Cortese, a pupil of Pietro da Cortona, who made a drawing of it (Fig. 12). Tripods were, indeed, the object of much

antiquarian interest at this time and the subject of a discourse by Peiresc.⁵⁵ Cortese also drew the central group of the Wedding (Fig. 13). He was not, however, interested in the two figures seated on the bed, who are only lightly sketched: rather it was the form of the bed itself and of its draperies that commanded his close scrutiny.⁵⁶

Peiresc was especially intrigued by the headdresses of the women in the Wedding, and he therefore looked forward “con impatienza grandissima” to the promised discourse of Girolamo Aleandro the Younger, who had the advantage of being able to study the original.⁵⁷ Great was Peiresc’s disappointment, then, that after Aleandro’s sudden death, no notes relating to the fresco were found among his papers.⁵⁸

⁵³ Color notes on the fresco, recorded by Giovanni Battista Doni and by Marzio Milesio Sarazani, are preserved in Naples and the Vatican. Nicolò and Solinas give the Doni *relazione* in appendix v, 110; for the *commenti* by Sarazani, see Nogara, 30–31. Even Fetti and Van Dyck shared this antiquarian perspective to a degree: while not interested in the scientific discovery of “facts,” they seem to have been attracted by the fresco’s apparent revelation of the private life of the ancient Romans.

⁵⁴ F. Solinas and A. Nicolò, “Cassiano dal Pozzo and Pietro Testa: New Documents Concerning the *Museo cartaceo*,” in Cropper, lxxvii, fig. III-n.

⁵⁵ “Dissertation sur un trepié par M. de Peiresc,” in P.-N. Desmolets and C. P. Goujet, *Continuation des mémoires de l’historien et d’histoire*, Paris, 1726–49, x, 243–277. Peiresc sent a copy of his essay to Rubens, whose illustrated response of Aug. 1630 is discussed by M. van der Meulen, “A Note on Rubens’ Letter on Tripods,” *Burlington Magazine*, cxix, 1977, 647–651.

⁵⁶ S. Prosperi Valenti Rodino, *Disegni di Guglielmo Cortese (Guillaume Cortois) detto il Borgognone nelle collezioni del Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe*, Rome, 1979, 98–99, nn. 267, 268; di Castro and Fox, 49,

151–153, nn. 84, 85. It is not possible to determine if Cortese’s drawings were made directly from the fresco or from a copy.

⁵⁷ Jaffé, 138 (letter from Peiresc to Aleandro of Mar. 2, 1629); Lhote and Joyal, 57ff (letter from Peiresc to Cassiano of Feb. 28, 1629). Aleandro, Cassiano, and the antiquarian Lucas Holstein examined the fresco repeatedly, for its colors offered valuable clues toward the interpretation of unfamiliar objects, particularly the crown worn by the central figure in the right-hand group: was it metallic or vegetal?

⁵⁸ Nicolò and Solinas, 90–91; Lhote and Joyal, 57, n. 2, 60, n. 9. The iconography and subject of the Aldobrandini Wedding are still actively disputed. For a review of earlier interpretations, and the suggestion that the wedding represented is that of Demetrius Poliorcetes and Phila (thus making the fresco a copy of an original of about 320 B.C.), see P. von Blanckenhagen and B. Green, “The Aldobrandini Wedding Reconsidered,” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung*, lxxxii, 1975, 83–98. The problematic leafy headdress is unique and remains unexplained. The unusually elegant tripod is actually a thymaterium, or incense-burner.



11 Drawing of the tripod from the Aldobrandini Wedding. Windsor Castle, Royal Library (© 1991, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)

Dating from about the same time as the discovery of the Wedding, but not engraved until much later, is the drawing by Annibale Carracci of a figural panel from the Volta degli Stucchi in the Domus Aurea, which had attracted little attention in the sixteenth century (Fig. 14).⁵⁹ The subject was long thought to be Coriolanus and his mother, though it was correctly identified by Winckelmann as the farewell of Hector and Andromache.⁶⁰ Annibale missed the head of the child in the woman's arms and interpreted the child's outstretched arms as the imploring hands of the woman. All later representations of the scene make the same errors. Annibale adds to the background an apsidal niche, a feature of the actual architecture of the room, but not of the painted scene, which takes place before the wall and gate of Troy. As the composition itself is unremarkable and must already have



12 Guglielmo Cortese, drawing of the tripod from the Aldobrandini Wedding. Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe (photo: G.N.S.)

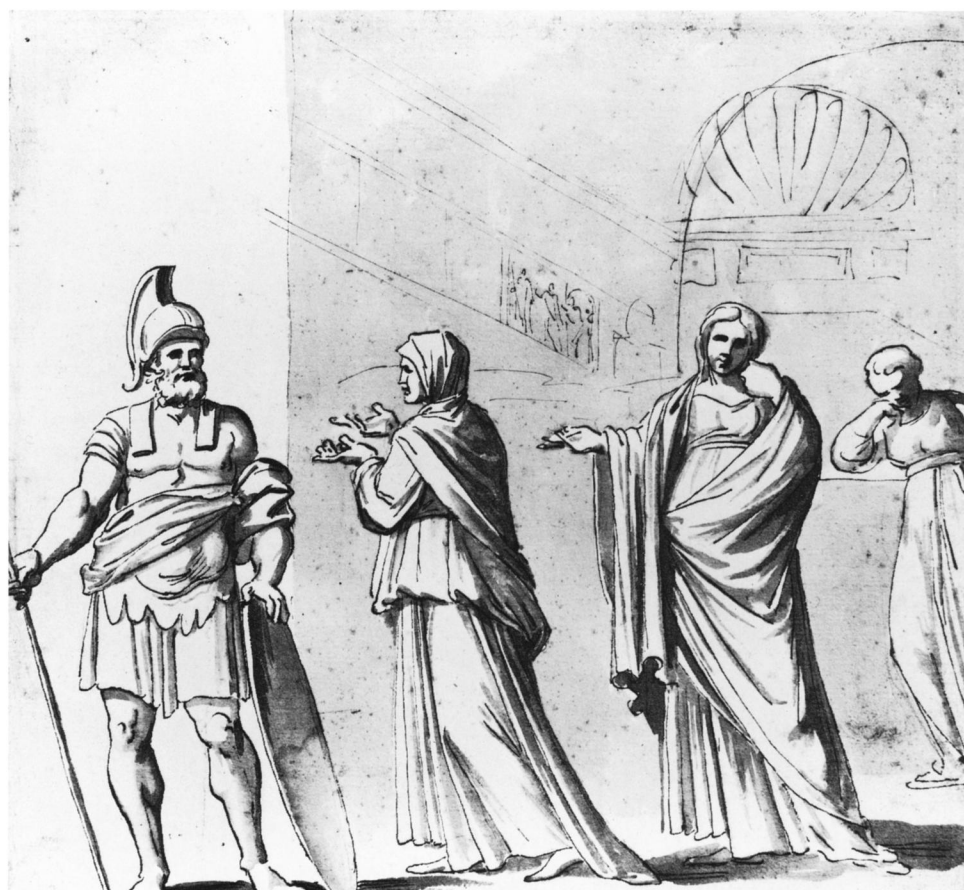


13 Guglielmo Cortese, drawing of the central part of the Aldobrandini Wedding. Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe (photo: G.N.S.)

4), 209–223, figs. 61, 63–67; von Salis, 53–56, pl. 6; Dacos, 18–22, figs. 7–8. The drawing was evidently made about 1604, a date implied by Bellori's phrase, "... già sessanta anni ..." (Bellori, 1664, 58 [p. 126 in the reprinted edition]): Annibale arrived in Rome in 1595; his ill health would have made an expedition to the Esquiline grottoes unlikely after 1605.

⁶⁰ J. J. Winckelmann, *Monumenti antichi inediti*, Rome, 1821, I, xxiii.

⁵⁹ R. Wittkower, *The Drawings of the Carracci in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle*, London, 1952, 171, no. 418A; Weege (as in n.



14 Annibale Carracci, "Coriolanus" from the Volta degli Stucchi in the Domus Aurea. Windsor Castle, Royal Library (© 1991, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)

been fairly dim, Annibale's attention may have been drawn by its supposed representation of a dramatic episode in Rome's history, unknown in any other visual source. Two other panels from this vault, one representing Amphitrite and another figural group usually interpreted as the meeting of Paris and Helen, were recorded later in the seventeenth century but never achieved the popularity of the "Coriolanus."⁶¹ Bellori, who later owned this drawing, wrote that the "Coriolanus" had been found in the same room in which the Laocoon had been discovered in 1506;⁶² this is not in fact the case,⁶³ but the association must have lent some lustre to the painting's reputation, as, of course, did the connection with Annibale Carracci.

Rubens's correspondence with Peiresc includes an interpretation of another ancient painting that had been found in late 1626 or early 1627 during excavation work for the Palazzo Barberini.⁶⁴ Urban VIII had purchased the Palazzo

Sforza alle Quattro Fontane in December 1625, with the intention of transforming the site into a property reflecting the magnificence of the Barberini. Earth-moving in the garden (the area where work was begun) uncovered an entire ancient room, its walls decorated with landscapes. The paintings were soon copied in oils by the Flemish painter Giovanni Francione,⁶⁵ a fortunate circumstance, for the largest and finest of the landscapes faded to invisibility soon after its exposure.⁶⁶ Various copies were made from Francione's, including two drawings now at Windsor (Fig. 15).⁶⁷ An engraving commissioned by Cassiano and Cardinal Barberini was ready by 1629 to accompany the commentary by the renowned antiquarian Lucas Holstein, which circulated in manuscript among the *eruditi* before its publication in 1676.⁶⁸

Peiresc had learned of the discovery almost immediately (he asked Cassiano for a copy of the ancient painting on July 1, 1627), but it was not until October 1635 that he received

⁶¹ Dacos, 18, 20.

⁶² Bellori, 1680, intro. 6. The caption to Bartoli's published engraving of the Carracci drawing explains that the niche does not belong to the ancient painting, but represents the one in which the Laocoon was found (P. S. Bartoli and G. B. Bellori, *Admiranda romanarum antiquitatum ac veteris sculpturae vestigia*, Rome, 1693, pl. 83).

⁶³ Dacos, 12, n. 5.

⁶⁴ For the construction history of the Palazzo Barberini alle Quattro Fontane, see P. Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces*, Cambridge, Mass., 1990, 173ff.

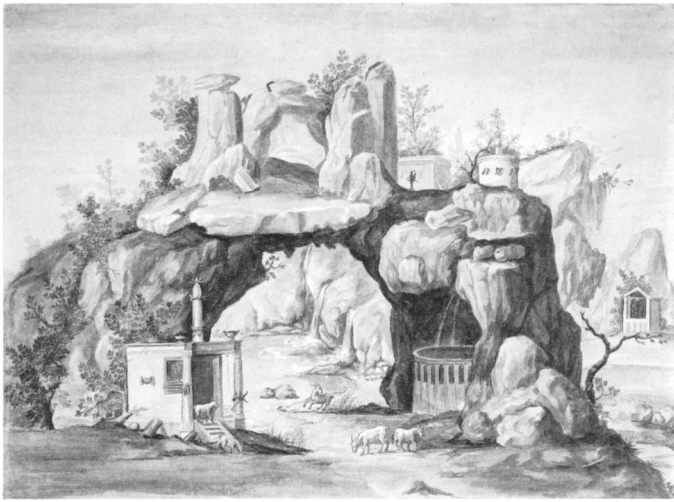
⁶⁵ Francione evidently made at least two copies in oils, a large one for Cardinal Barberini of ten by six *palmi* (M. A. Lavin, *Seventeenth-Century Barberini Documents and Inventories of Art*, New York, 1975, 111, no. 399) and a smaller one of seven by five *palmi* for Cassiano (Nicolò and Solinas,

87). Two other small landscapes were found in the same ancient chamber and copied for the Cardinal by Francione, but these have not been traced.

⁶⁶ Bellori, 1664, 58–59 (pp. 126–128 in reprinted edition): "L'originale svani all'aria e mancò in breve."

⁶⁷ Inv. nos. 19226 (Fig. 15), 19227 (Jaffé, fig. 17).

⁶⁸ *Vetus picturae nymphaeum referens commentariolo explicata a Luca Holsteinio*, Rome, 1676. Another engraving was made to accompany Holstein's text when it was republished in J. Graevius, *Thesaurus romanarum antiquitatem*, Leiden-Utrecht, 1697, cols. 1799–1802. The landscape was engraved again by P. S. Bartoli for G. P. Bellori, *Le pitture antiche delle grotte di Roma*, Rome, 1706, pl. 13 (republished, with additional engravings and Latin commentary, as *Picturae antiquae cryptarum romanarum*, 1738), through which it became very widely known.



15 Copy of the Barberini landscape. Windsor Castle, Royal Library (© 1991, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)

the engraving “di quella pittura antiqua, di maniera tanta diversa delle moderne. Et di tanto garbo.”⁶⁹ He deplored the destruction of the accompanying decoration and architecture, when the room might have been preserved entire, “per maggior veneratione del Palazzo.” The Barberini were apparently attracted by the possibility that the landscape indicated that the site on which their palace was then rising had had special significance in antiquity. Peiresc sought Rubens’s opinion on the matter and received a rather deflating reply: “I have looked with pleasure at the engraving of the antique landscape, which seems to me purely an artist’s caprice, without representing any place *in rerum natura*.” Rubens then notes the unnatural arrangement of the two superimposed arches, the insufficient space for all the buildings at the top of the hill, the lack of a path for priests and worshippers, and the uselessness of the nymphaeum, which pours out more water than it receives. He next analyzes the engraving as an antiquarian, identifying the buildings, on the basis of nearly illegible details, as dedicated to the nymphs and deities of the fields or mountains and perhaps a hero; the goats are sacred to some deity, too, as they graze without a shepherd. Rubens finally regards the painting as a professional artist, and here his judgment is rather severe: “The picture appears to have been painted by a good hand, but as far as optics are concerned, certain rules are not too accurately observed, for the lines of the buildings do not intersect at a point on a level with the horizon—or, to put it in a word, the entire perspective is faulty. . . . From this I conjecture that, notwithstanding the precise rules of optics laid down by Euclid and others, this science was not as commonly known then, or as widespread, as it is today.”⁷⁰

Rubens’s response to the Barberini landscape provides

⁶⁹ For the correspondence among Peiresc, Cassiano, and Rubens regarding the Barberini landscape, see Nicolò and Solinas, 84–87; Jaffé, 131–133, 140, 141; Lhote and Joyal, 51, 208, 211.

⁷⁰ Letter of Mar. 16, 1636, in Magurn, 403–404. In his “characteristically antiquarian” response to Peiresc’s report of Rubens’s judgment, Cassiano agrees that the antique painting is a picture “not of anything in particular but of a fantasy” and continues, “Nonetheless, it is agreeable to see the composition and to appreciate the richness of invention that



16 Peter Paul Rubens, *Feast of Venus* (detail). Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (photo: Museum)

one of the rare instances of a seventeenth-century artist applying his knowledge of an ancient painting to one of his own works, for in his *Feast of Venus* in Vienna Rubens supplies a “corrected” version of the nymphaeum (Fig. 16).⁷¹ The lofty natural arch of the ancient fresco becomes a grotto sheltering the nymphaeum, its curving mouth regularized

the ancients had when one perceives the wealth of ideas contained in such a sterile subject” (Jaffé, 132–133).

⁷¹ Jaffé, 132; P. Fehl, “Rubens’s ‘Feast of Venus Verticordia,’” *Burlington Magazine*, cxiv, 1972, 161, n. 12; K. M. Swoboda, “Des Rubens Venusfest in der Wiener Gemäldegalerie,” in *Kunst und Geschichte. Vorträge und Aufsätze (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband xxii)*, 1969, 222–223.



17 Claude Lorrain, copy of the Barberini landscape. London, British Museum (courtesy Trustees)

with cut stone blocks. The smaller arch above is transformed into the pedimented entrance to the temple rising behind, and serves also as a noble frame for the reclining deities of the spring. Here, then, Rubens has used the ancient landscape to enrich his re-creation of the ceremony described by Ovid, without, however, hesitating to set his own artistic judgment above that of his ancient (less capable) predecessor.

Claude Lorrain made a copy of the landscape that he inscribed "CLAV. Fecit/Romae/1661/paise antique" (Fig. 17).⁷² As the fresco was no longer visible by that time, Claude's very detailed drawing must have been made after a copy, and not from the fresco itself.

A dominating rock arch occurs in a number of Claude's drawings, most of them done in preparation for or after his *Coast View with Perseus and the Origin of Coral*, painted for Camillo Massimi in 1673.⁷³ Roethlisberger sees no direct connection, however, between the ancient landscape and these works, whose setting was inspired by the Arco di Miseno, on the coast of Fusaro, which Claude would have seen during his early years in Naples. Claude appears to have found the ancient landscape not an inspiration but a confirmation of his own vision of antiquity.⁷⁴

One of the most sensational discoveries of the early years of the seventeenth century was of a very large mosaic, over four meters high and nearly seven meters wide, which was found some time between 1588 and 1607 in the cellar of the Bishop's Palace at Palestrina.⁷⁵ The earliest antiquarian interest dates from 1614, when Prince Federico Cesi went to Palestrina, then the property of the Colonna family, to celebrate his marriage to Artemisia Colonna. Cesi was one of the founding members and first *Principe* of the Accademia dei Lincei, the first academy devoted to scientific investigation of the natural world. Impressed by the considerable remains of the Temple of Fortune and the mosaic, the significance of which spanned the fields of natural history and antiquity, Cesi ordered plans and drawings to be made. Cesi seems to have been the first to make the connection between the mosaic and a passage in Pliny's *Natural History* (xxxvi. 64. 189): "Mosaic pavements began as far back as the time of Sulla; in fact, one made of tiny scraps of stone, which he had laid in the sanctuary of Fortuna at Praeneste, exists to this very day." The identification of the mosaic with the reference in Pliny (a matter still disputed by scholars⁷⁶) undoubtedly enhanced the mosaic's interest for seventeenth-

⁷² British Museum no. Oo. 7-239; M. Roethlisberger, *Claude Lorrain: The Drawings*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968, 322, no. 862.

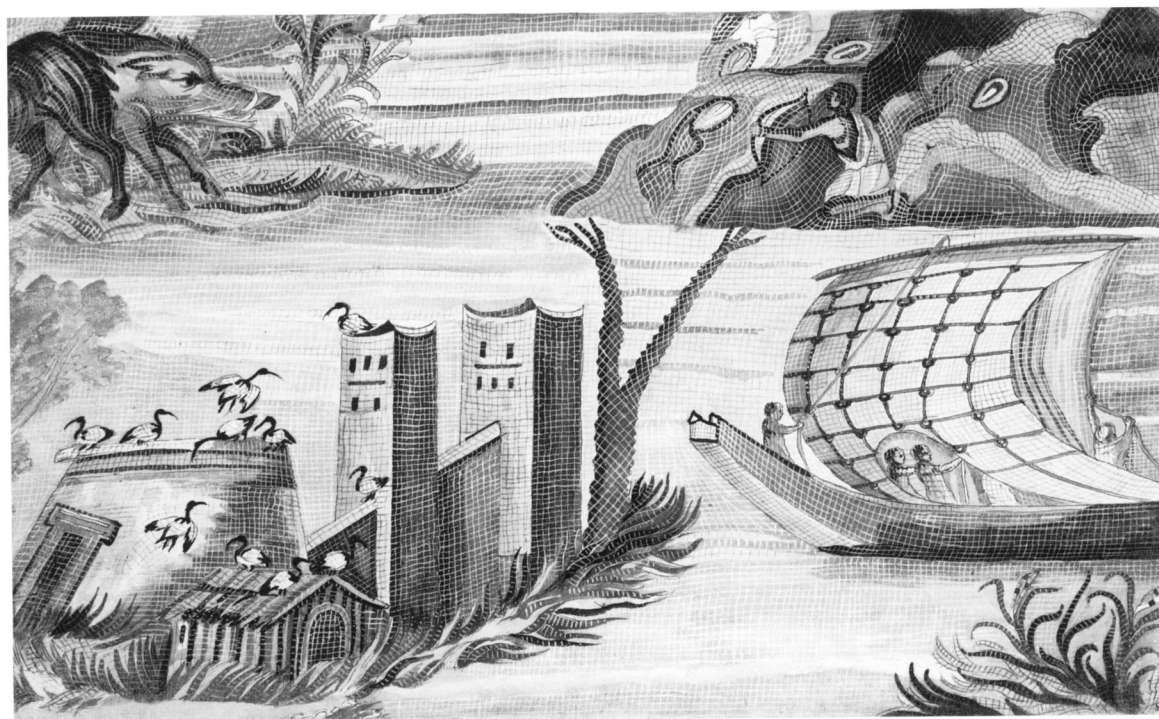
⁷³ LV184: Roethlisberger (as in n. 72), 391-393, nos. 1064-69; *idem*, *Claude Lorrain: The Paintings*, Vol. 1, New Haven, 1961, 433-436; H. D. Russell, *Claude Lorrain 1600-1682*, Washington, D.C., 1982, 286-294, D69-73; H. Langdon, *Claude Lorrain*, Oxford, 1989, 144, pls. 111, 112.

⁷⁴ Langdon (as in n. 73), 114, acknowledges the inspiration of the Neapolitan coastline and the appearance of the rocky arch motif in earlier works by Claude and also in early 17th-century frescoes, but maintains that the *Coast View with Perseus* achieves an unprecedented "antique grandeur." This quality she attributes to Claude's study of the

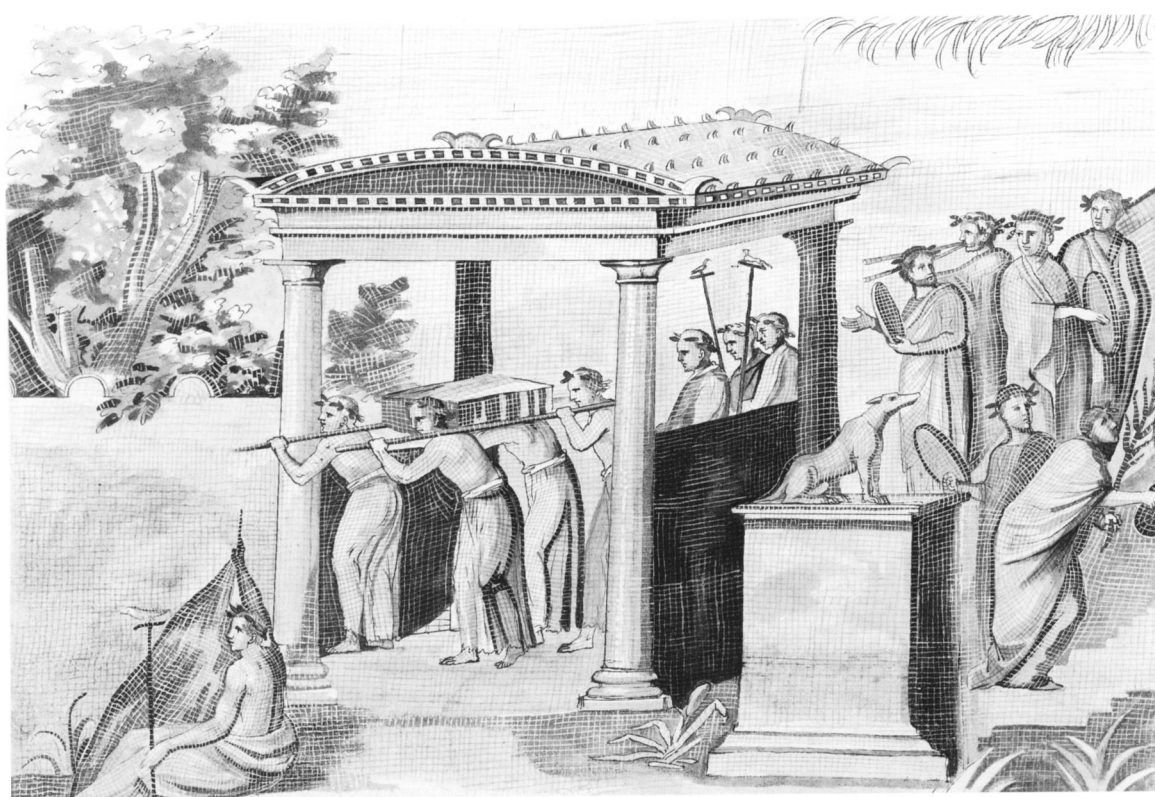
Barberini landscape, "which also shows an immense rock arch, though very different in effect." Langdon's "antique grandeur" seems, however, to be much more a characteristic of the classicizing landscape than of the ancient model, which Claude in any case probably knew only through a copy.

⁷⁵ See Whitehouse, with references to earlier literature; Nicolò and Solinas, 80-83.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5; P. G. P. Meyboom, "I mosaici pompeiani con figure di pesci," *Mededelingen van het Nederlandsch Historisch Instituut te Rom*, xxxix, 1977, 76-77.



18 Copy after a part of the Palestrina mosaic. Windsor Castle, Royal Library (© 1991, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)



19 Copy after a part of the Palestrina mosaic. Windsor Castle, Royal Library (© 1991, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)

century antiquarians, just as Vitruvius's reflections on decoration enriched the sixteenth-century debate over grotesques.

The mosaic was very difficult to examine *in situ*: as Cesi later wrote, "It was possible to see or draw only by torchlight and with water poured over [the surface] to aid visibility, and the washing down repeated frequently." In 1624–26 the Archbishop of Palestrina, Andrea Peretti, began the process

of removing the mosaic from the basement in pieces for transfer to Rome. The move was not popular with the local people, however, and was halted by Peretti's successor, probably while some of the fragments remained *in situ*. In the meantime, the pieces in Rome passed eventually to Cardinal Francesco Barberini. It was at some time during this period, and probably between 1626 and 1637, that copies were made

for Cassiano dal Pozzo (Figs. 18–19).⁷⁷ In 1640 the mosaic was sent back to Palestrina, a possession of the Barberini since 1630.⁷⁸ In the course of this second transfer, the boxes were propped the wrong way round, with the result that they dislodged and crushed the whole mosaic. With the help of Dal Pozzo's drawings, however, the mosaicist G. B. Calandra put it back together again in the Palazzo Barberini, in an apsidal room that had been prepared for its installation.⁷⁹

The mosaic is a large-scale Nilotic landscape in bird's-eye view (Fig. 20). The upper half represents the highlands of Ethiopia, inhabited by exotic animals, identified by Greek inscriptions, which are hunted by dark-skinned men. The river winds down through the rocky terrain to the marshes of the delta, dotted about with houses, huts, and temples and a variety of boats—punts, pleasure craft, and galleys—and populated by peasants, priests, soldiers, and fishermen.

The abundance of the images and the exoticism of the subject provided a rich source for commentators,⁸⁰ as well as authentic details for Nicolas Poussin, who used them in the background of his *Moses Rescued from the Nile* of 1647, in the *Holy Family in Egypt*, executed in the years 1655–57 (Fig. 21), and in the *Landscape with Two Nymphs and a Snake* of 1659.⁸¹ Poussin explains the background of the *Holy Family* in a letter to Paul Fréart de Chantelou, who had commissioned the painting: the procession of priests carries the bones and relics of their god Serapis; the building was made as a home for the ibis bird (see Figs. 18–19):

All this is not made thus because I imagined it, but is taken from the famous Temple of Fortune at Palestrina, the pavement of which is made of fine mosaic, and on which is depicted to the life the natural and moral history of Egypt and Ethiopia, and by a good hand. I put all these things into the painting in order to delight by their novelty and

variety and in order to show that the Virgin who is there represented is in Egypt.⁸²

A drawing by Poussin in a private collection in Paris, dating in the 1630s, shows just those details of which he writes in his letter to Chantelou (Fig. 22).⁸³ Although it is possible that Poussin drew directly from the fragmentary mosaic during its sojourn in Rome, it would have been consistent with his usual practice for him to have used the drawings made for dal Pozzo instead.

By his own testimony, then, Poussin includes the motifs from the ancient mosaic in order to please by new and interesting details and for the sake of geographical accuracy. Both Dempsey and Bätschmann see in the painting's blending of myth and history a still more profound significance than the artist himself claimed for it. For Dempsey, parallel layers representing the death of the old god, the veneration of Christ, and his conquest of Rome reflect the completion of a historical cycle in which "past, present, and future are blended into a single conception."⁸⁴ Or as Bätschmann puts it, "the combination of the two original settings of myth and historical subject . . . indicates that we are not dealing with a return to mythology or an insistence on history, but with the cancellation of both and the rediscovery of a myth beyond history."⁸⁵

It is interesting to contrast Poussin's use of details from the Palestrina mosaic with Rubens's use of the Barberini landscape in his *Feast of Venus*. Rubens might scrutinize the ancient painting for information concerning a Roman cult, but he considered the composition as a whole to be "purely an artist's caprice" and therefore amenable to correction, just as he might correct an assistant's faulty drawing. Poussin took the Nilotic mosaic to be true, however, believing that it depicted "to the life the natural and moral history of Egypt and Ethiopia," and he was thus able to employ its details to intensify the force of his reconciliation of myth and history. For both artists, the extent to which the painting or mosaic could be considered a factual record of antique life is of prime importance. As their judgments differ, so does the fidelity with which they employ their models.⁸⁶

Doubtless the most important figure in the revival of

⁷⁷ This is the view of Whitehouse, 8–9, who argues that the unfavorable conditions in which the mosaic existed *in situ* would have made watercolors of the high quality of the Windsor drawings impossible. If a few, inaccurate drawings were made under Cesi's patronage before the mosaic's removal to Rome, they have not survived (*ibid.*, 84–85, n. 46).

⁷⁸ It was at Francesco Barberini's expense that the mosaic was returned to Palestrina. For the construction history of the Palazzo Colonna-Barberini and documents relating to the installation of the mosaic, see Waddy (as in n. 64), 272ff, esp. 280. In a way, the mosaic's re-installation at Palestrina was a fulfillment of Peiresc's unrealized wish in regard to the Barberini landscape, that the remains of antiquity be preserved entire, *in situ*, "per maggior venerazione del Palazzo."

⁷⁹ S. Pieralisi, *Osservazioni sul mosaico di Palestrina*, Rome, 1885, 1–18; A. Gonzales Palacios, "G. B. Calandra, un mosaista alla corte di Barberini," *Ricerche di storia dell'arte*, CXII, 1976, 211–226.

⁸⁰ The most complete 17th-century account is J. M. Suarès, *Praenestae antiquae libri duo*, Rome, 1655. Suarès had been keeper of the Barberini Library until 1636, when he was named bishop of Vaison. Athanasius Kircher, an expert on Egyptian hieroglyphs, discussed the iconography of the mosaic in *Latium*, Rome, 1671.

⁸¹ C. G. Dempsey, "Poussin and Egypt," *Art Bulletin*, XLV, 1963, 109–119; Blunt, 314, pl. 240 and fig. 250b. For Poussin's antiquarian knowledge in general and its reflection in his paintings, see Blunt, 227–241; C. Dempsey, "The Greek Style and the Prehistory of Neoclassicism," in Cropper, xxxix–xlix; *idem*, "Poussin's 'Sacrament of Confirmation,' the Scholarship of 'Roma Sotteranea' and dal Pozzo's *Museum chartaceum*," in Solinas, 247–261; D. Jaffé, "Two Bronzes in Poussin's *Studies of Antiquities*," *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal*, xvii, 1989, 39–46.

⁸² Dempsey, 1963 (as in n. 81), 109–110; Blunt, 310–312; *Correspondance de Nicolas Poussin*, ed. C. Jouanny, Paris, 1911, 448–449.

⁸³ A. Blunt, "Further Newly Identified Drawings by Poussin and His Followers," *Master Drawings*, xvii, 1979, 134–136, pl. 12. The large coiled snake in the drawing is also from the Palestrina mosaic (Blunt, fig. 250e; Whitehouse, figs. 7a–b), but is a different one from that used as a model for the *Landscape with Two Nymphs and a Snake* (see n. 81 above): as Blunt observes (314, n. 3), "the snake . . . appears to have become something of an obsession with Poussin in his later years." Other drawings on the sheet illustrate passages in Pliny, Diodorus Siculus, and Strabo relating to panthers, crocodiles, and ichneumons.

⁸⁴ Dempsey, 1963 (as in n. 81), 113.

⁸⁵ O. Bätschmann, *Nicolas Poussin: Dialectics of Painting*, London, 1990, 83; see also 86–87.

⁸⁶ Both artists subject their models to a process of rationalization: even Poussin alters and rearranges his "facts" (Dempsey, 1963 [as in n. 81], 112–113). Yet the fragments of mosaic remain readily recognizable, perhaps for a quite down-to-earth reason. As Jaffé observes, "Poussin rarely quotes a precise archaeological fragment in his persuasive re-creations of the ancient world. When specific objects are accurately reproduced . . . they may be intentional references acknowledging erudite collectors" (Jaffé [as in n. 81], 46).



20 Nile mosaic. Palestrina, Museo Archeologico Nazionale (photo: Anderson)

interest in ancient painting in the first half of the seventeenth century, and a vital link in the chain connecting the scattered members of the "Republic of Letters," that international association of antiquarians and scholars, was Cavaliere Cassiano dal Pozzo, librarian and adviser to Cardinal Francesco Barberini and patron of Poussin.⁸⁷ Cassiano had received a law degree, but he had also studied the natural sciences and medicine at the University of Pisa. At Rome, he continued his scientific studies and began those investigations into classical antiquity for which he is now better known, applying the same criteria and methods to both disciplines. Beginning in the 1620s or perhaps even earlier, Cassiano purchased or

had copied the drawings and prints of earlier artists, and for many years he employed dozens of young draftsmen, including Pietro da Cortona, Domenichino, Pietro Testa, and Poussin himself, to copy antiquities throughout the city. The resulting "Museo Cartaceo," or "Paper Museum," eventually numbered over a thousand drawings bound in twenty-three volumes, divided according to subject matter. One of the albums, according to Baldinucci the work of Testa, but now attributed by some scholars to Pietro da Cortona and his workshop,⁸⁸ was devoted to figures taken from the ancient manuscripts of Virgil and Terence in the Vatican, the Palestrina mosaic, "and other things in color."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ The literature on Cassiano is large and growing rapidly, partly under the impetus of the current cataloguing project centered upon the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. The primary sources for Cassiano's life are Carlo Dati, *Della lodi del Commendatore Cassiano dal Pozzo*, Florence, 1664, and G. Lumbroso, *Notizie sulla vita di Cassiano dal Pozzo* (*Miscellanea de storia italiana*, xv), Turin, 1874. More recent literature on Cassiano and the Museo Cartaceo is given by Whitehouse, 85, n. 47, and Nicolò and Solinas, 63, n. 17; see in addition F. Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, New Haven and London, 1980, 98–114; Solinas and Nicolò (as in n. 54), lxvi–lxxxvi; and Solinas.

⁸⁸ Solinas and Nicolò (as in n. 54), lxxiv–lxxv.

⁸⁹ F. Baldinucci, *Notizie dei professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua . . .*, ed. F. Ranalli, v, 1847 (repr. Florence, 1974), 313 (life of Pietro Testa): "Egli dunque condusse di sua mano cinque gran libri . . . nel quinto finalmente si veggono le figure del Vergilio antico e del Terenzio della Vaticana, il musaico del tempio della Fortuna di Preneste, oggi Palestrina, fatto da Silla, ed altre cose colorite." For color reproductions of drawings from the Museo Cartaceo (a scene from the Vatican Virgil and a detail of the Palestrina mosaic), see F. Haskell, in *Quaderni Puteani*, 1, 1989, 2, fig. 2; 3, fig. 4.



21 Jean Dughet, after Nicolas Poussin, *Holy Family in Egypt*. Düsseldorf, Kunstmuseum der Stadt (photo: Museum)

22 Nicolas Poussin, sketches of the Palestrina mosaic and other subjects. Paris, private collection (from Blunt, *Master Drawings*, xvii, 1979, pl. 12)

Cassiano's original intention was to have the drawings engraved, to make the collection known to as many artists, virtuosi, and scholars as possible. This plan was soon abandoned, but the "Museo" remained an extraordinary archive, private yet accessible,⁹⁰ until its dispersal in the eighteenth century.⁹¹



⁹⁰ The richness of Cassiano's museum as a resource is reflected in Poussin's claim that he was "a pupil in his art of the house and museum of the Cavaliere dal Pozzo" (Balduino [as in n. 89], 311), yet years could elapse between a request for a copy of an item and its receipt. According to Jaffé, "dal Pozzo does not seem regularly to have volunteered news of recent excavations or discoveries. Obtaining material from his paper museum was often a battle" (D. Jaffé, review of Lhote and Joyal, in *Journal of the History of Collections*, iii, 1991, 103).

⁹¹ Cassiano's collection, enlarged by his brother Carlo Antonio, was sold by his grand-nephew Cosimo Antonio to Pope Clement IX about 1703. In 1714 the collection passed to Cardinal Alessandro Albani, and in 1762 it was purchased by King George III: see Lumbroso (as in n. 87); C. C. Vermeule, "The Dal Pozzo Drawings of Classical Antiquities: Notes on Their Content and Arrangement," *Art Bulletin*, xxxviii, 1956, 31–46; J. Fleming, "Cardinal Albani's Drawings at Windsor: Their Purchase by James Adam for George III," *Connoisseur*, cxliii, Nov. 1958, 164–169; H. McBurney, "A Brief History of the Museo Cartaceo," *Quaderni Puteani*, i, 1989, 5–9; *idem*, "The Later History of Cassiano dal Pozzo's 'Museo Cartaceo,'" *Burlington Magazine*, cxxxi, 1989, 549–553; D. L. Sparti, "Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo (1606–1689): An Unknown Collector," *Journal of the History of Collections*, ii, 1990, 7–19.

The idea of creating a collection specifically devoted to ancient painting seems to have come from Cardinal Camillo Massimi. From 1654 to 1658 Massimi served as Papal Nuncio in Spain, and it was during this period that he had the opportunity to examine Francisco de Hollanda's album of drawings after Roman antiquities (then as now in the Escorial), which included copies of paintings in the Domus Aurea.⁹² These beautiful drawings impressed Massimi so greatly that he had them copied, and when he returned to Rome they were deposited in his library, where they formed the core of his famed collection of drawings after ancient paintings.⁹³ In many ways, as Haskell observes, Massimi seems to have been deliberately assuming the role left vacant by the death of Cassiano in 1657.⁹⁴ The artist responsible for most of Massimi's drawings was Pietro Sante Bartoli.⁹⁵ Born in Perugia in 1635, Bartoli came to Rome as a young man to continue his artistic education and is said to have been for a time a student of Poussin, a close friend of Massimi's. Bartoli soon found his true calling, however, in the recording of the remains of ancient Rome, and particularly of ancient paintings, a self-imposed mission that he pursued with unstinting devotion until his death in 1700.⁹⁶ The mission was an urgent one, for the paintings and mosaics that were so often discovered by chance were as quickly destroyed through greed or ignorance.

A characteristic episode is recounted in Bartoli's memoirs:

During the first *villeggiatura* of Alexander VII to Castelgandolfo, a countryman found a subterranean temple, completely covered with the most noble mosaics. But by bad luck it was a monk of S. Agostino who was the first to see it and persuaded the countryman that this was the work of demons, and that it would be a good thing if he destroyed it: wherefore without loss of time he destroyed it entirely. A piece in which was the figure of a little Venus having been seen by the antiquarian Leonardo Agostini, it was presented to the Pope who, being informed of the situation, quite rightly condemned the countryman to prison. It is not known what punishment was given to the friar.⁹⁷

Here, certainly, is an echo of Cardinal Paleotti's distrust of the monstrous shapes found in Rome's dark grottoes. More commonly, decorations were destroyed through carelessness or avarice, as when marble incrustations were stripped off and sold,⁹⁸ plaster chiseled off so that the underlying bricks might be harvested, or subterranean chambers simply reburied after their discovery. This doubtless had been happening for centuries, only now there was a small group of men—Massimi, Bartoli, and Giovanni Pietro Bellori, Bartoli's close friend, who wrote the learned commentaries for Bartoli's later publications of the paintings—who cared enough to see to it that a record was made.

La Teulière, *Directeur* of the Academy of France in Rome from 1684 to 1699, often refers in his correspondence with his superior, the Surintendant des Bâtiments Edouard Colbert (Marquis de Villacerf), to the activities of Pietro Sante Bartoli. Villacerf was an avid collector of Bartoli's drawings and prints after Roman antiquities, and La Teulière's primary concern was to justify the high prices that the drawings commanded and also the long delays that attended the production of the engravings. In a letter of December 30, 1692, he writes of Bartoli: "Comme cet homme est unique, il veut estre bien payé; ses ouvrages cependant ne paroistront jamais chers à des personnes qui ont du goust pour les choses rares."⁹⁹

La Teulière presents a grim picture of the difficulty of Bartoli's task. In a letter of May 12, 1693, he writes that these sorts of drawings,

... are unique, in that all these sorts of works are destroyed as soon as they are found, in order to make a profit from the bricks or other materials. Such is the barbarism of the Romans of this time. I have, with a good deal of sorrow, seen things pulverized which merited a better fate. The best studies of Raphael, they say, were made after works of this kind. Without the passion of Pietro Sante all but the memory of what has been found would be lost. But this good man pays laborers who advise him of new discoveries and, as soon as he can, he goes to draw what merits drawing, noting the colors and the proper measurements, in order to paint or engrave them at leisure.¹⁰⁰

⁹² E. Tormo, *Os desenhos das antigualhas que vio Francisco d'Ollanda, Pintor Portugues (1539–1540)*, Madrid, 1940; Dacos, 21–26, 41–42, pl. VIII, fig. 12.

⁹³ Bellori, 1680, intro. p. 6: "Delle Pitture di questa Casa [di Tito] e delle Therme di Tito rimangono bellissimi disegni coloriti d'acque nella famosa Biblioteca dell'Escorial, de' quali il Cardinale Camillo Massimi, tornando dalla sua Nuntiatura di Spagna, portò le copie a Roma, conservate nel suo gran libro dell'Antiche Pitture." For the career of Camillo Massimi, see Haskell (as in n. 87), 114–119; for the formation, reception, and dispersal of Massimi's collection of drawings after ancient paintings, see Pace, 118–131 (with earlier literature).

⁹⁴ Haskell (as in n. 87), 117.

⁹⁵ *Dizionario biografico*, vi, 586–588; L. Pascoli, *Vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti perugini*, Rome, 1732; M. C. Mazzi, "L'incisore perugiano Pietro Sante Bartoli," *Bollettino della deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria*, LVII, 1, 1973, 21–39; Pace, 117–127.

⁹⁶ Bartoli's own account of the inspiration and purpose of his mission is given in the introduction to his *Gli antichi sepolcri Romani*, Rome, 1697; see Pace, 121–122.

⁹⁷ Bartoli, CCLXVI, no. 146. Similarly, in the time of Clement XI, at Monte delle Gioie outside the Porta Salaria, some ancient "stanze bellis-

sime, tutte incollate di stucco," were found to be haunted by spirits which hurled a carriage "da mano invisibile" into the river (Bartoli, CCLXIV, no. 144).

⁹⁸ E. G., Bartoli, CCXXII–IV, nos. 6–7; CCXLIII–IV, no. 81.

⁹⁹ Montaiglon, I, 345. Bartoli's prices had been too steep even for the King. As La Teulière writes in the same letter, he had earlier sent the King a large number of drawings, but "l'on interrompit l'ouvrage sur ce que le Roy ne voulant faire que peu de despense icy, feu M. de Louvois [Surintendant des Bâtiments from 1683 to 1691] trouva bon d'attendre un meilleur temps pour le reprendre." It is probably these drawings that the Comte de Caylus later found "par hasard" in Paris, had engraved in a sumptuous limited edition (*Recueil de peintures antiques . . . trouvées à Rome . . .*, Paris, 1757), and then gave to the Cabinet des Estampes, where they are still to be found (*Abecedario de P. J. Mariette*, ed. P. de Chennevières and A. de Montaiglon, Paris, 1851–53, I, 74–75; *Le Cabinet d'un grand amateur P.-J. Mariette*, Musée du Louvre, 1967, no. 306; M.-N. Pinot de Villechenon, "Fortune des fresques antiques de Rome au XVIII^e siècle: Pietro Sante Bartoli et le Comte de Caylus," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 6^{ème} ser., CXVI, Oct. 1990, 105–115).

¹⁰⁰ Montaiglon, I, 389–390.



23 Giovanni Battista Falda, engraving after paintings in the Pyramid of Cestius (from Falconieri, "Discorso . . .," pl. 3a).

Again, on June 30, 1693, La Teulière writes:

The two sheets which I am sending cost twelve Roman crowns. They would not seem dear, Sir, if you took the trouble to consider the difficulty involved in going to the places to draw them. It is greater for Pietro Sante than for another, for he is very fat and is not young, and he is the only one who can do these sorts of things in the antique taste, because he has been making it a habit for forty years. I must add that it is absolutely necessary to go to these places to measure what has been newly discovered, because it is immediately demolished without pity, solely in order to profit from the bricks. Such is the barbarism of the modern Romans; besides, the outside air devours the colors, which are only in fresco.¹⁰¹

This considerable effort, however, was of a very different sort than the explorations of the grottoes of the Domus Aurea and the recording of other grotesque decorations in the sixteenth century. The Domus Aurea and other sites had been visited by many artists, who recorded what they saw in sketchbooks for later use. Artists also drew, more conveniently, in Raphael's Loggie, which were thought to be a faithful transcription of ancient painting and thus a legitimate source of motifs in the antique style. In the seventeenth

century, virtually all record of ancient painting derives from the efforts, first, of Cassiano's draftsmen and, later, of Bartoli.¹⁰² Besides Annibale Carracci's drawing of the "Coriolanus" and Fetti's and Van Dyck's works after the Aldobrandini Wedding, all produced in the first quarter of the century, I have found only two instances of an artist outside the dal Pozzo-Massimi circles drawing directly from ancient fresco.¹⁰³

In 1665 Ottavio Falconieri published a discourse on the Pyramid of Gaius Cestius, together with the paintings in the burial chamber (Fig. 23) as an appendix to Famiano Nardini's *Roma antica*, the first publication of ancient paintings since the engravings produced under Barberini patronage in the 1620s and 1630s.¹⁰⁴ Although the paintings had been known for many years (Giulio Mancini refers to them in his 1620 *Considerazioni sulla pittura*¹⁰⁵), they were evidently inaccessible until the restoration of the tomb in 1663, under Alexander VII, when a new entrance was made to the burial chamber. Falconieri's discourse is in the tradition of those of Pignoria, Holstein, and Suarès: his primary interest is the identity of Cestius and in the iconography of the paintings, which he concludes were intended to memorialize Cestius's membership in the *Septemviri epulones*, one of the four chief priestly colleges.

The engravings that accompany the work were by G. B.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 400–401. The necessity for speed in recording new discoveries is confirmed by Bartoli: "In the vineyard of Marchese Palombara . . . there was found a most beautiful room ornamented with grotesques, and landscapes, which having been seen by the most eminent Massimi, he gave orders that they should be excavated the following morning. This noble desire was frustrated by the barbarism of the excavators, who demolished everything during the night; except for one of 24 *palmi*, which was inadvertently left unharmed by the lime-burners, which if God pleases will be engraved immediately" (Bartoli, CCXXVII, no. 24).

¹⁰² There is an important difference in these two efforts. Cassiano's draftsmen drew only excavated paintings and mosaics already in private collections (the Aldobrandini Wedding, the Barberini landscape, the Palestrina mosaic, and the Vatican Terence and Virgil). Although Bartoli did some copying of earlier drawings, e.g., the vaults in the Domus Aurea (Dacos, 141, n. 2) and the Palestrina mosaic (Pace, 131), most of his drawings were made *in situ*.

¹⁰³ The numerous copies of the Aldobrandini Wedding, in oil and other media (see above nn. 44, 45), represent a very different phenomenon: they are not working sketches, like those made by Renaissance artists, but finished works intended for the *saloni* and libraries of erudite collectors, like the casts and copies of famous antique statues produced at the same time (F. Haskell and N. Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, New Haven and London, 1981, 31–42). Nor is it possible to determine if these copies were made from the fresco or from another copy.

¹⁰⁴ "Discorso d'Ottavio Falconieri intorno alla piramide di C. Cestio," in Famiano Nardini, *Roma antica*, 2nd ed., Rome, 1704, 559–583; E. Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, London, 1962, II, 321–323; Bellori, 1664, 123.

¹⁰⁵ Mancini, 41–42.

Falda, a draftsman and engraver chiefly known for his plans and views of the monuments and gardens of Rome.¹⁰⁶

In June-July 1694, La Teulière had the *pensionnaire*-sculptor Pierre Legros make a small drawing of an ancient painting that had been discovered a short while before in ruins presumed to belong to the Palace of Titus. The drawing was colored "suivant l'original par un bonhomme qui gagne sa vie à faire de miniatures," and then sent as a gift to the Marquis de Villacerf. Villacerf was delighted with the gift (he insisted on reimbursing La Teulière for his costs), and he enjoined the *Directeur* to send him copies of anything else that might be found, to which La Teulière readily assented, informing him that "j'ay pris des mesures, il y'a long temps, avec les ouvriers qui fouillent ordinairement dans les ruines antiques pour estre averti des premiers."¹⁰⁷

La Teulière, then, seems to have had some idea of eliminating the middleman (i.e., Bartoli) and setting up a rival operation, the better to feed his patron's insatiable appetite for ancient paintings. However, nothing further appears to have come of this plan.

This episode also provided the occasion for one of the rare documented visits of seventeenth-century artists to a place where ancient frescoes could be seen, for all the *pensionnaires* (except for one scapegrace) made a class trip to see the ancient painting that had been copied for Villacerf.¹⁰⁸

The interiors of the Pyramid of Cestius and the Tomb of the Nasonii on the via Flaminia (discovered in 1674) eventually joined the touristic itinerary,¹⁰⁹ their fame doubtless enhanced by Falconieri's and Bartoli's publications.¹¹⁰ However, these monuments seem never to have been recommended to or particularly visited by artists.

It is commonly said that we underestimate the importance of ancient painting for Renaissance artists, who must have known far more than is now preserved on walls or in their drawings.¹¹¹ This may well be true, though not, as I believe, in the case of illusionistic architectural painting. This is not the case in the seventeenth century, however, when interest

in ancient painting, although known in so many more examples, was confined to a small circle of antiquarians and collectors and an even smaller group of artists, like Poussin and Rubens, with strong antiquarian interests of their own. One cannot assume, therefore, as is so often done,¹¹² that a lost ancient painting or mosaic was the source for any motif or image during this period. All that could have been known to a seicento artist of ancient painting is still preserved in engravings and among the collections of drawings now in London, Windsor, Eton, Glasgow, Paris, and Rome.¹¹³

Scholars in the past have taken a very different view of the interest of seventeenth-century artists in ancient painting, suggesting that this renewal may be attributed to the discovery of the Aldobrandini Wedding, "which was immediately recognized as the most distinguished surviving representative of Roman style, and was therefore studied and copied not only by Poussin but by Annibale Carracci before him, and with whom the new interest in ancient painting can more accurately be said to originate."¹¹⁴

Poussin's admiration for the ancient fresco is reported by Félibien, although no copy by him has survived. The basis for the belief that Annibale copied it appears to be Mancini's statement that in the Wedding, "vi è un groppetto d'alcune feminine che, molti anni prima che fussero trovate, le dispinse Annibal Caracci."¹¹⁵ Mancini expands upon this remark later in the treatise, observing that a group of figures in a *Decollation of Saint John the Baptist* "dipinto da Annibale Caracci giovanetto" (now untraceable) closely resembles a group of young women standing near the bride in the Aldobrandini Wedding. Mancini's point, however, is that the ancient fresco had not then yet been discovered, "et da questo si può comprendere l'eccellenza del Caracci, che in adolescenza dirivò l'antichi, et appresso che non sempre dobbiam accusare di furto il pittore quando fa una cose simile ad un altro pittore, poichè i concetti sono comuni et così posson cascare nella fantasia di ogniuno."¹¹⁶ In fact, we do not know what Annibale's opinion of the fresco was, or even if he ever saw it.

It has also been suggested that Raphael's and Giovanni da Udine's interest in *grotteschi* should be distinguished from that of the painters of the seventeenth century, who "were

¹⁰⁶ P. Bellini, "Per una definizione dell'opera di G. Battista Falda," *Arte cristiana*, LXXI, fasc. 695, 1983, 81–92. Falda's views of the exterior of the Pyramid (Falconieri's pls. 1a and following; nos. 287 and 288 in Bellini's catalogue) are rare. The (unsigned) engravings after the paintings of the interior (Falconieri's pls. 2a, 3a, 4a) do not appear on any list of Falda's works.

¹⁰⁷ Montaiglon, II, 50, 57, 62.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 52–53. One suspects that the motivation for the trip was to pay a compliment to the *Directeur*, who had taken such an interest in the project. Earlier in the century, Annibale Carracci had visited the grottoes of the Domus Aurea, as did also, in all probability, Bernardino Capitelli (see above n. 47). La Teulière himself may have occasionally accompanied Bartoli on his drawing expeditions, for he says in the letter of May 1693 quoted above, "J'en ay veu mettre en poudre avec bien de la douleur qui meritoient certainement un meilleur sort" (Montaiglon, I, 389). Bartoli's memoirs record the visit of only one artist, to a group of richly decorated tombs outside the Porta Portese: "... cavalier Bernini, che fu a vederle, di volerle imitare nelle frontispizj del portico di s. Pietro" (Bartoli, CCXXXVIII–IX, no. 65).

¹⁰⁹ E.g., M. Misson, *Nouveau Voyage d'Italie*, 4th ed., The Hague, 1702, II, 152–155; J. B. Trapp, "Ovid's Tomb," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXXVI, 1973, 67.

¹¹⁰ Bellori, 1680; P. S. Bartoli (as in n. 96), pls. 60–70 (Pyramid of Cestius); a second edition of Nardini's *Roma antica*, with Falconieri's discourse, appeared in 1704.

¹¹¹ See nn. 12–13 above.

¹¹² E.g., Blunt, 148, fig. 137; R. W. Lee, "Van Dyck, Tasso, and the Antique," in *Acts of the XX International Congress of the History of Art*, Princeton, 1963, III, 24, 26; G. Lippold, "Ladas," *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, VI, 1948 (on the dependence of Rubens's *Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus*, *Mikon and Pero*, and other works on ancient paintings, now lost); E. Panofsky, *A Mythological Painting by Poussin in the Nationalmuseum Stockholm*, Stockholm, 1960, 15–16, fig. 9.

¹¹³ See above for drawings in London and Windsor; see Pace and Pinot de Villechenon (as in n. 99) for drawings in Glasgow, Paris, and Rome; for the Baddeley Codex, now at Eton College, see T. Ashby, "Drawings of Ancient Paintings in English Collections, II–IV," *Papers of the British School at Rome*, VIII, 1916, 48–51. While this statement is generally correct, it is not literally true, for the preserved collections of dal Pozzo and Massimi drawings are not complete (Fleming [as in n. 91], 168–169; Vermeule [as in n. 91], 39–40).

¹¹⁴ Dempsey, 221.

¹¹⁵ Mancini, I, 48.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 102–103. The passage is also quoted in Mahon (as in n. 1), 143, n. 103.

clearly seeking a more substantial image of antique style than can be found in grottesche ornament."¹¹⁷ This interpretation would appear to be misleading in two respects, first in suggesting that seventeenth-century artists were seeking an image of antique style in painting: on the contrary, aside from the rather limited antiquarian-artistic circles identified above, seventeenth-century artists seem to have been remarkably uninterested in the discoveries of ancient paintings going on all around them. Second, it is by no means clear that seventeenth-century artists and art theorists ever recognized a "Roman" or "antique style" in painting, or at least not before the very end of the century.

The Aldobrandini Wedding, the Barberini landscape, and the Palestrina mosaic are very different in their "style," being a figural frieze, an idyllic landscape (without figures), and a topographical mosaic. What these monuments have in common, and the features that are repeatedly remarked by seventeenth-century commentators, are their rarity, complexity, and excellent state of preservation. The treatises that these works inspired all dealt with matters not of style, but of iconography.

Not that critical issues were completely ignored, but what was at issue was the quality of the work. Mancini, for example, ascribes the paintings in the Pyramid of Cestius to the period of the Republic, "in età della pittura di fanciullezza," which is confirmed by the clumsiness of the painting ("le pitture sono goffe").¹¹⁸ "Dell'età perfetta dell'Imperio Romano" are the paintings in the "casa di Nero" and the "casa di Tito," the Aldobrandini Wedding, and the paintings in the Christian catacombs, "ma di pittori imperfetti e non molto eccellenti." Mancini concludes, "And thus this period of the perfection of Latin painting lasted until the end of the century of Gallienus, Constantine, Theodosius II and other similar emperors of those times, with the respective popes. . . ."¹¹⁹

Bellori greatly refines this crude outline, having the advantage of the numerous discoveries made in the intervening decades. He correctly dates the paintings in the Pyramid of Cestius to the reign of Augustus, but still finds the figures "picciole e di arte non ancora intieramente perfette." "Delle Pitture nel secolo migliore de' Romani" are the "Coriolanus"; the Volta Dorata in the Domus Aurea; the Aldobrandini Wedding, "la qual pittura è ben conforme all'eleganza di Raffaello"; "un ammirabile ornamento di un fogliame" from Hadrian's Villa, which is "una di quelle fantasie, che Vitruvio chiama: *Monstra, et dimidiata sigilla*, e noi Grottesche"; three paintings from the Esquiline (to be discussed further below); and the Barberini landscape, "singolarissimo per l'eruditione, e disegno."

"Inferiori alle prime" are the paintings of nymphs and putti in boats from the garden of S. Gregorio. In the Tomb of the Nasonii are "alcune figure eseguita debolmente." While

the stories are pleasing enough "per l'invenzione, e dispositione delle figure, per li moti, espressioni, e abbigliamenti di abiti, e modi . . . si concede che alcune di esse immagini sono condotte con poco perfettione, ma altre ne sono assai perfette di colore, e disegno. . . ."¹²⁰

As Pace observes, "Bellori makes it clear that he admires certain works more than others, and certain qualities in those works especially—the qualities, in fact, which are consonant with the art of Raphael, and with Bellori's own classical ideal."¹²¹ Yet even Bellori is able to admire a well-drawn grotesque, or to assign to a decadent period a group of paintings unexceptionable for their invention, composition, movements, expression, and verisimilitude, yet inferior in technique. Félibien refers to both the ornament from Hadrian's Villa and the Aldobrandini Wedding as having shown Poussin "quel poivent être le genie de ces grands hommes."¹²² It should be noted, however, that the characterization of the Wedding as "simple and noble" is Félibien's own.¹²³

It has been claimed nevertheless that the paintings to which seventeenth-century artists turned particularly for inspiration were not the grotesques, but a group of figural paintings said to have been found near the Sette Sale on the Esquiline and constituting the first six paintings illustrated in Bellori's and Bartoli's *Pitture antiche*.¹²⁴ The first of these, the

¹²⁰ Bellori, 1680, 5–6, 14.

¹²¹ Pace, 121.

¹²² The entire passage reads, "Mais après avoir . . . examiné les ouvrages des Anciens dans le peu de choses à fresque que l'on a tiré de la Vigne Adriane, et particulièrement ce mariage que est dans la Vigne Aldobrandine, dont la simplicité et la noblesse qu'on y remarque, ont fait concevoir au Poussin quel pouvoit être le genie de ces grands hommes . . ." (C. Pace, *Félibien's Life of Poussin*, London, 1981, 149 [pp. 161–162 of the 1725 edition of the *Entretiens*; Vol. v, containing the life of Poussin, was originally published in 1688]).

¹²³ Until the end of the 17th century, the principle of the excellence of the ancient painters and their value as models for modern artists was unquestioned, though this did not preclude criticism of particular works surviving from antiquity. With Charles Perrault and Roger de Piles, ancient paintings were enlisted in the "Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes," much to the disadvantage of the former (C. Perrault, *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes en ce que regarde les arts et les sciences*, Paris, 1688, I, 197ff; R. de Piles, *Cours de peinture par principes*, Paris, 1708, 420ff). The abbé du Bos takes a more generous view, though when he says that we cannot judge the remains of antiquity as we do not know in what esteem these works were held in their own time, he implies that they are not obvious masterpieces (*Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, Dresden, 1760, I, 340ff [1st ed. 1719]). But as Lee observes of de Piles's poor opinion of the Roman remains, "No Poussinist would have said so much, no matter how inconsequential the painting" (Lee [as in n. 1], 264). Lee goes on to say that Armenini "was no more inclined to worship the ancient remains of painting than de Piles," yet the only examples of ancient painting known to Armenini (writing in 1586) were the "feeble lights" of the grotesques, "found in horrible and uninhabitable places" (Armenini [as in n. 8], 94). His evident revulsion is the product of his adherence to the moral principles of the Counter-Reformation, rather than any aesthetic standard.

¹²⁴ Bellori and Bartoli (as in n. 68; published by F. Bartoli, with additional commentary by M. A. de la Chausse). The structure, of which no trace is now preserved, in which these paintings were found, was actually located a considerable distance from the Sette Sale (a Trajanic cistern). Identification and dating have proved elusive (see H. Jordan and C. Huelsen, *Topographie der Stadt Rom in Altertum*, I, 3, Berlin, 1907, 278, 322, n. la; C. C. van Essen, *La Topographie de la Domus Aurea Neronis, Mededelingen van het K. Ned. Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde* n.s. XVII, 12, 1954, 387–388, no. 9). L. Fabbrini has recently suggested (personal communication) that it was of a pre-Neronian—perhaps Augustan—date.

¹¹⁷ Dempsey, 222.

¹¹⁸ Mancini, I, 41. Falconieri, in his discourse on the Pyramid of Cestius (as in n. 104), 565, takes exception to this criticism, claiming for the figures "una certa grazia, e leggiadria, che oltre al buon disegno mostrano, che sono opera di non volgare artefice."

¹¹⁹ Mancini, I, 102–103.

"Coriolanus" copied by Annibale Carracci (Fig. 14), comes not from the Sette Sale, however, but from the Volta degli Stucchi in the Domus Aurea.¹²⁵ Another painting, representing Bacchus in the company of two maenads (Fig. 24), is thought to have inspired the principal figure in Poussin's *Bacchus and Midas* in Munich (Fig. 25).¹²⁶

The Esquiline painting (reversed in Bartoli's engraving) shows a youthful nude Bacchus balanced with his left foot crossed before his right, resting his right arm languidly on his head. Poussin's Bacchus appears to be a literal adaptation of this figure: the pose and even the outlines of the musculature seem to be identical. A reminiscence of the flute-playing maenad is found in the satyr behind Bacchus, who is also blowing a double flute. The treatment of the cape, too, appears to derive from Poussin's misreading of the armholes in the cape of the Esquiline Bacchus.¹²⁷

The Munich *Bacchus and Midas* is strongly reminiscent of another painting by Poussin, the *Bacchus-Apollo* in Stockholm (Fig. 26), the subject of a detailed and penetrating study by Erwin Panofsky.¹²⁸ Although long identified as Bacchus and the nymph Erigone, Panofsky, partly on the evidence of an X-ray showing an earlier state of the painting, and partly on the evidence of a drawing in Cambridge, identified the painting rather as a Bacchus-Apollo. Panofsky suggested several ancient sources for the composition.¹²⁹ A more compelling source, both for the composition and iconographic content, has been seen in the Esquiline Bacchus, and a clue to the significance of the composition for Poussin appears in the description of the Bacchus written by Michelangelo de la Chausse for Bartoli's collection of ancient paintings (plate iv). Here, the painting is identified as "Adonis sub imagine Bacchi." The figure is not, therefore, a mixture of twin spirits, but of three—Apollo, Bacchus, and Adonis—a conflation of the rulers of the heavens, the earth, and the underworld. It would appear, then, that Panofsky's intensely detailed analysis of the Stockholm painting is not complex enough: the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius and its doctrine of the *numen mixtum*, the syncretistic theories of Girolamo Aleandro the Younger, and the work of scholars associated with the Barberini circle, all were significant influences on the thought and art of Poussin.¹³⁰

The circumstances of the discovery of the Esquiline paintings argue, however, against this ingenious interpretation of the *Bacchus-Apollo* and *Bacchus and Midas* for, as de la Chausse says, the works represented in plates ii-vi were found "in some superb remains of ancient buildings . . . uncovered in July, 1668, in a kitchen garden . . . which is on one side of the street by the Flavian Amphitheater." Poussin could not, therefore, have depended on the Esquiline Bacchus for either composition or iconography, for it was discovered several decades after the creation of the Munich and Stockholm paintings, and three years after Poussin's death.¹³¹ There are, however, other possibilities.

Scholars have long recognized the dependence of the *Bacchus and Midas* on Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians* and have also observed correspondences between Roman sarcophagi and individual figures in the painting. The suave Castor and Pollux, discovered in Rome in the early 1620s, has also been suggested as a model for the figure of Bacchus.¹³² But closest of all is a votive stele dedicated to the *Genius Pacifer* recorded by Pirro Ligorio (Fig. 27).¹³³ Ligorio's drawings of Roman antiquities had been copied for the "Museo Cartaceo" and would have been readily available to Poussin. The pose is the reverse of the Bacchus in the painting—the left leg is crossed before the right and the head is turned to its right—and the outstretched right hand holds a caduceus, but otherwise the figures are nearly identical. As it happens, though, this stele is one of Ligorio's forgeries. He based the figure on a *Genius Pacifer* on two coins of Commodus, one showing Apollo nude with crossed legs leaning on a column, the other showing him in a long robe with his lyre on the column and his right hand extended and holding a plectrum.¹³⁴ Ligorio assimilated the solar image to Mercury by substituting a caduceus for the plectrum. His purpose was to express the harmony of the universe: Apollo's "bright and splendid virtue" is combined with Mercury's "wisdom, fame, peace, vigilance, and government." Poussin would not have known that Ligorio's image was not authentic, and its *numen mixtum* was entirely to the taste of Poussin's learned circle.

To return briefly to the ancient paintings from the Esquiline, upon their discovery in 1668 they were detached

¹²⁵ See pp. 228–229 above.

¹²⁶ Dempsey, 222. The authorship and date of this painting have been in dispute since Blunt rejected it: K. Oberhuber, *Poussin: The Early Years in Rome*, New York, 1988, no. 7, with earlier references, pl. p. 85 (ca. 1624); A. Mérot, *Nicolas Poussin*, New York, 1990, no. 153, pl. on p. 74 ("accepted by all the experts except Blunt; usually accepted date 1629–30"); see, however, A. S. Harris, review of Oberhuber, in *The Art Bulletin*, LXXII, 1990, 151 ("not in my opinion by Poussin at all").

¹²⁷ Dempsey, 223.

¹²⁸ Panofsky (as in n. 112). Mahon disagrees with Panofsky's analysis of the history of the painting on a number of points; he dates the first state to ca. 1626 and the final version (which did not, however, alter the original iconography) to "some follower or imitator in Poussin's circle quite long after 1630" (D. Mahon, "Poussiniana," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, LX, 1962, 9–17); Mérot (as in n. 126), no. 126 (original version 1626–27).

¹²⁹ Panofsky (as in n. 112), 13–16.

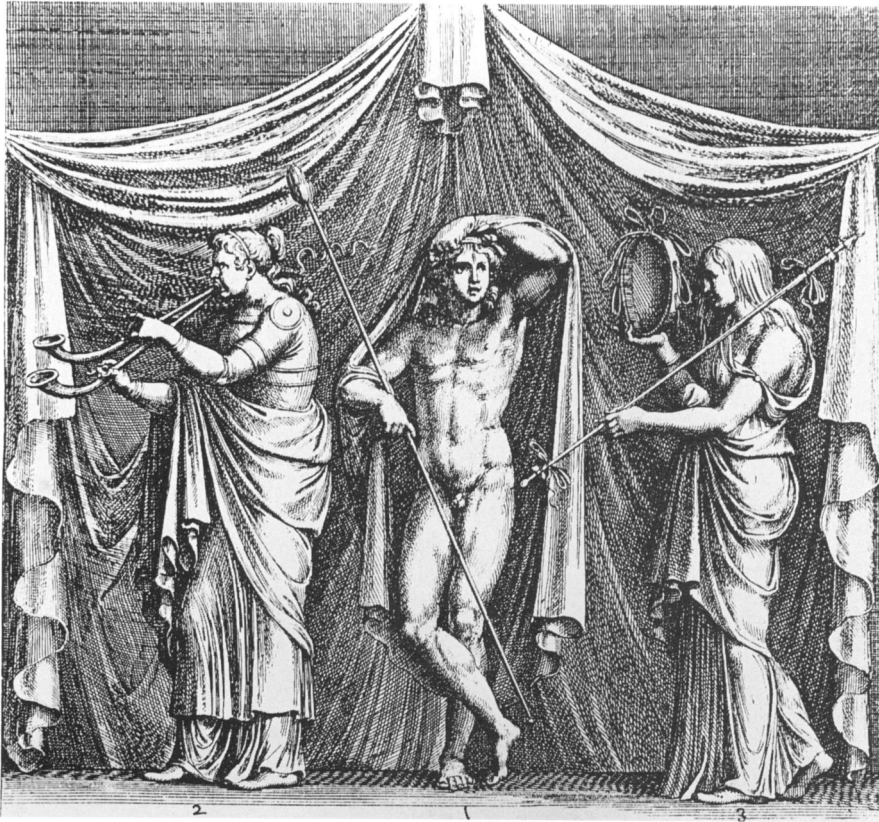
¹³⁰ Dempsey, 229ff.

¹³¹ The source of the error would appear to be Marucchi's note on Mancini's reference to paintings in the "casa di Tito" (Mancini, II, 102, n. 474, which refers to n. 90). Marucchi refers to the discovery of the Laocoon near the Sette Sale in 1506, then to "sui dipinti che poi passarono nel Palazzo Massimi, o meglio sulle copie eseguite dopo le indagini del 1668." There is, however, no evidence that these paintings were known before their excavation in the later 17th century (R. Lanciani, "Picturae antiquae cryptarum Romanarum," *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma*, XXIII, 1895, 174ff). The problem is the confusion about the find-spot of the Laocoon: Bellori thought that it was discovered in the Domus Aurea, in the same room as the "Coriolanus" (see nn. 59 and 62 above); this error has since been repeated in reverse, by locating the "Coriolanus" in the Sette Sale.

¹³² Panofsky (as in n. 112), 13–16; Dempsey, 223, 226; Oberhuber (as in n. 126), 84, cat. no. D55 (Poussin's drawing of the Castor and Pollux).

¹³³ Mandowsky and Mitchell, cat. no. 44, p. 76, pl. 57b.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 76, pl. 27d–e; on Ligorio's forgeries, see n. 30 above.



24 Pietro Sante Bartoli, *Bacchus-Adonis* (from Bellori, *Pitture antiche*, pl. IV)

25 Nicolas Poussin, *Bacchus and Midas*. Munich, Bayerisches Staatsgemäldesammlungen (photo: Museum)





26 Nicolas Poussin, *Bacchus-Apollo*. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum (photo: Statens Konstmuseer)

from the walls and conveyed to the library of Cardinal Massimi. At some point they were also drawn by Bartoli, probably initially *in situ*, and then again after they had entered the Cardinal's collection. Bellori refers to these paintings in his introduction to the volume on the Tomb of the Nasonii: "Among the pictures which are preserved in the Library of Card. Massimi, the Birth of Adonis, drawn forth from the trunk of Myrrha, being presented to Venus by a kneeling nymph [Fig. 28]; the same Adonis held back by the goddess from leaving to go hunting [Fig. 29], and a dance of three nymphs [Fig. 30]: these works were excavated on the Esquiline, near the Amphitheater."¹³⁵ He says nothing of the Bacchus-Adonis.

At the time that the English doctor Richard Mead acquired Massimi's volume of drawings after ancient paintings, he also purchased these frescoes, which were subsequently offered for sale in the auction of the huge Mead collection, in



27 Pirro Ligorio, votive stele to the *Genius Pacifer* (from Mandowski and Mitchell, pl. 27b)

1755.¹³⁶ Again, only three of the paintings are listed in the sale catalogue: as in Bellori's description, the Bacchus-Adonis is missing. The next item to these in the catalogue (and within the group said to come from the Terme di Tito) is a nymph playing the double flute. Michaelis long ago suggested that this nymph was all that remained of the Bacchus panel.¹³⁷ It may have been damaged in the removal, or it may have been discovered in a fragmentary state. In either case, the panel was imaginatively restored in Bartoli's copy.¹³⁸

This interpretation best accounts for the many anomalies in the Bacchus-Adonis. The figure belongs generally to the type of Bacchus in the tradition of the Apollo Lykeios (e.g., Fig. 31), but it conforms to none of the many categories defined by Schröder.¹³⁹ Although individual examples in Schröder's catalogue cross their legs, hold a thyrsus, stand unsupported, or grasp a cloak in the upraised hand, no

¹³⁵ Bellori, 1680, intro., p. 6.

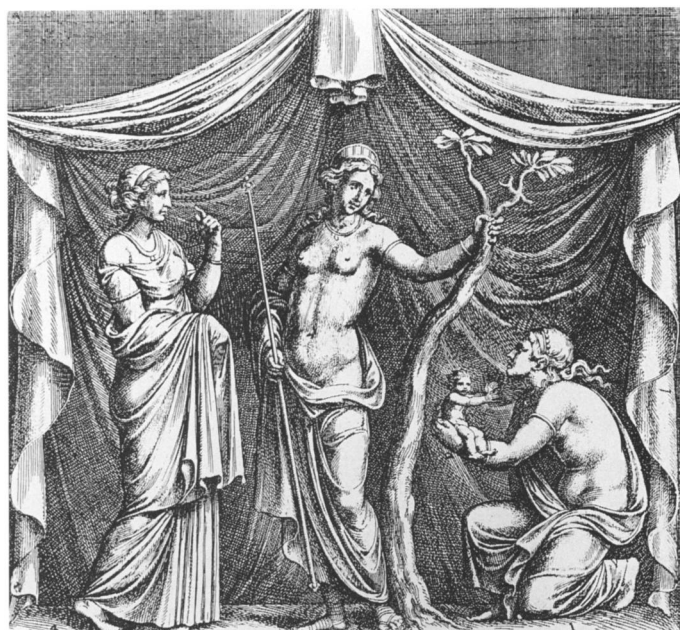
¹³⁶ *Museum Meadianum*, London, 1754–55, 241–242; A. Michaelis, *Ancient Marbles in Great Britain*, Cambridge, 1882, 49–50.

¹³⁷ A. Michaelis, "Das Grabmal der Nasonier," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, xxv, 1910, 115. This supposition is confirmed by the description of this painting in the 1677 inventory of Cardinal Massimi's possessions (BAV Cod. Capponi 260, fols. 45v–46r), where the listing makes clear that it was displayed apart from the other three panels, accounting for Bellori's failure to mention it among those

displayed in the Library. I am grateful to H. Whitehouse for sending me, prior to its publication, her paper on the paintings discovered in 1668, occasioned by the recent rediscovery of the original "Birth of Adonis" in the storerooms of the Ashmolean Museum.

¹³⁸ Bartoli is known to have taken many liberties in preparing his finished drawings and engravings (see Pace, 122–123).

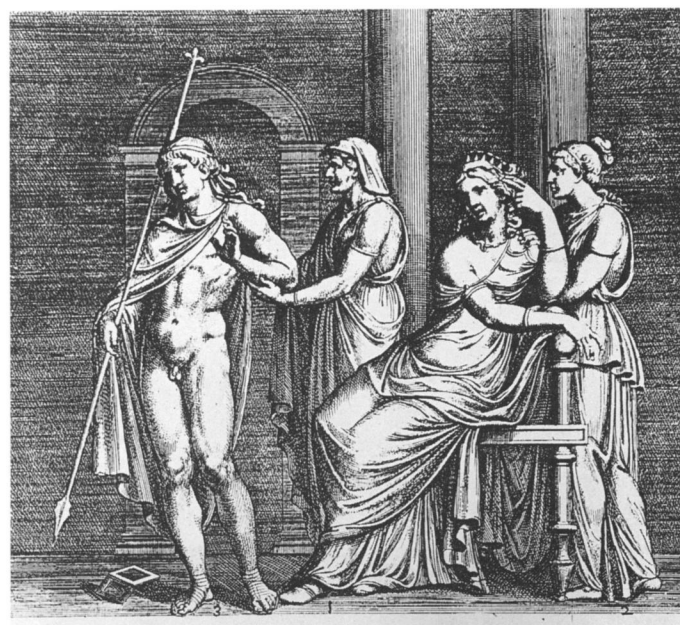
¹³⁹ S. F. Schröder, *Römische Bacchusbilder in der Tradition des Apollon Lykeios*, Rome, 1989. The sarcophagus illustrated in Fig. 31, formerly in the Palazzo dalle Valle, is cat. no. v 4 (Bober and Rubenstein, no. 80).



28 Pietro Santi Bartoli, *Birth of Adonis* (from Bellori, *Pitture antiche*, pl. III)



30 Pietro Santi Bartoli, *Dance of Three Nymphs* (from Bellori, *Pitture antiche*, pl. V)



29 Pietro Santi Bartoli, *Adonis Held Back by Venus* (from Bellori, *Pitture antiche*, pl. VI)

figure combines all these elements.¹⁴⁰ The composition, too, with the two maenads facing in the same direction, is unusual for a panel (one would expect them both to be facing Bacchus) but standard for a frieze. A Bacchic vase in the Museo Capitolino (Fig. 32) suggests the sort of model that

¹⁴⁰ Closest are the figures with crossed legs, nude or half-draped (Schroder [as in n. 139], groups G, I, K, M, and V), and the figures on two sarcophagi whose legs are uncrossed but who hold the cloak above the head (group R).

Bartoli might have used for restoring the group: here the maenads and satyrs are all moving to the right, except for a young nude satyr with his right arm bent over his head and his right leg crossed over his left, who faces outward while turning his head back to the left.¹⁴¹ The Bacchus-Adonis stands, however; he does not dance. Perhaps he is a conflation of an unsupported dancing satyr type and a supported Bacchus of the Apollo Lykeios type. If, then, it has been possible to discover such rich resonances between the Bacchus-Adonis and seventeenth-century scholarship, it is because the Bacchus was a product of that milieu, not an inspiration.

We can return, at last, to the question with which this paper began. Why did Renaissance artists respond with such enthusiasm to discoveries of ancient paintings in and around Rome, quickly applying their new knowledge to their work, while in the seventeenth century the recording of ancient paintings was the concern of only a few and applied in only a limited way?

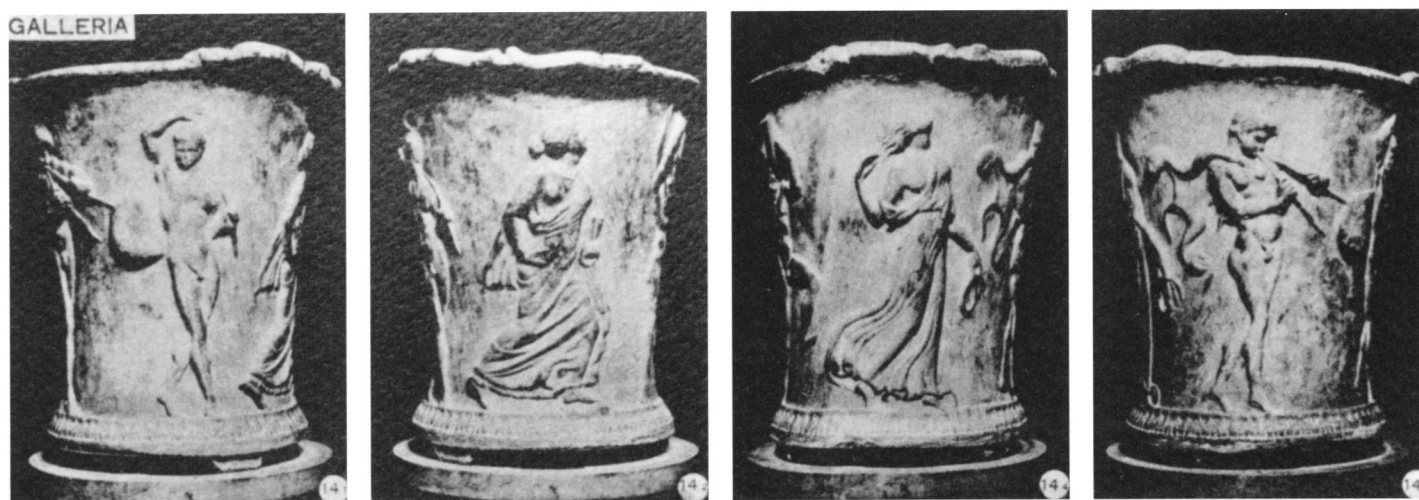
One answer lies in the tendency, observable already in the sixteenth century and continuing through the seventeenth, to codify masterpieces of ancient art, a process clearly demonstrated for ancient sculpture by Haskell and Penny.¹⁴² Similarly, certain ancient paintings—the Aldobrandini Wedding, the Barberini landscape, and the Palestrina mosaic—were excavated, displayed in noble collections, copied, pub-

¹⁴¹ H. S. Jones, *A Catalogue of the Ancient Sculptures . . . of the Museo Capitolino*, Rome, 1969 (repr. of 1912 ed.), 94–95, Galleria no. 14, pl. 27. This pose is a very common one for satyrs: probably the most famous example is the wineskin-bearing satyr in the Ikarios reliefs (Bober and Rubenstein, nos. 90a–d).

¹⁴² Haskell and Penny (as in n. 103).



31 Roman sarcophagus, *Discovery of Ariadne*. Oxfordshire, Blenheim Palace (photo: Otto Fein, Warburg Institute)



32 Roman vase, *Bacchic procession* (details). Rome, Museo Capitolino (from Jones, *Catalogue of the Ancient Sculptures* . . . , pl. 27)

lished, and universally recognized and admired. Just as artists by the late seventeenth century were content to copy ancient statues from casts, not troubling to seek out the originals,¹⁴³ so artists and collectors were content to admire what was known and approved of ancient painting. (This attitude accounts, as much as the fading of the vogue for grotesque decorations, for the scarcity of seventeenth-century visitors to the Domus Aurea: why risk one's neck in the *grotte*, when Raphael had already revealed all that was worth knowing?)

¹⁴³ The director of the French Academy in Rome wrote in 1707, "Since I have been in Rome I have seen neither Italians nor any other foreigners copying the actual marbles. They prefer to draw or model after the casts, which is more easily done" (Haskell and Penny [as in n. 103], 38).

That the canon for so long numbered so few "masterpieces"—eventually enlarged by the Barberini Roma (discovered in the mid-seventeenth century and restored by Carlo Maratta¹⁴⁴), and the paintings from the Pyramid of Cestius, the Tomb of the Nasonii, and the Esquiline—was largely a result of Bartoli's many other commitments, which delayed the publication of the paintings. Through the 1670s, 1680s, and 1690s, Bartoli was occupied with engravings of the Columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, Raphael's Vatican Loggia (this volume included ornaments from the "Domus

¹⁴⁴ F. Matz and F. von Duhn, *Antike Bildwerke in Rom*, III, Leipzig, 1882, 242–244, no. 4111; C. C. Vermeule, "The Dal Pozzo-Albani Drawings of Classical Antiquities in the British Museum," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, xx, 5, 1960, 29, no. 421; Solinas (as in n. 55), 114, n. 81, fig. 13.

Titi," Raphael's inspiration), sepulchral lamps and decorations, and relief sculptures from triumphal arches, as well as many individual engravings after contemporary paintings and tomb monuments.¹⁴⁵ Patronage for publication was also a problem: Cardinal Massimi commissioned engravings after the Vatican Virgil in 1677, the year of his death, but it was not until 1725 that the plates were published; Bartoli's engravings of paintings from the ancient *grotte*, on which he had been working since 1680, were published by his son Francesco in 1706.¹⁴⁶

One must still account, however, for the fact that these widely known and universally admired masterpieces of ancient painting had so little influence on the art of the age of their discovery. The explanation of this seeming paradox lies in the long tradition of theoretical and antiquarian study of ancient painting. By this time, ancient painting—the names and personalities of the ancient masters, the subjects and manner of their work—had been the object of intense study for over two hundred years. This knowledge had been thoroughly assimilated by those noble spirits, Raphael, Annibale Carracci, and Poussin, who, through study of the ancient literature on art and of the remains of ancient painting and, finally, through natural affinity, most nearly embodied the perfection of the ancients.¹⁴⁷ It was, therefore, because ancient painting had already been reborn that actual examples of this art could be complacently regarded as mere footnotes—however precious—to a history of ancient painting that had already been written.

This study has been concerned with several instances of shadow-grasping. There were the shadows of the Roman grottoes, which sixteenth-century artists and curiosity-seekers tried to dispel with their torches, in order to read the curious messages left by the ancients. There were the shadows of lost masterpieces, which seventeenth-century antiquarians and art lovers sought to draw forth from the ancient sources, with as little success as poor widowed Orpheus. Finally, there are the shadows of ancient paintings that modern art historians still seek behind the achievements of artists like Claude and Poussin. It seems clear, now, that

the debt of seventeenth-century artists to ancient painting is actually much less than has frequently been supposed, and that our knowledge of paintings discovered in those years is governed not only by the chance of survival, but also by the concerns of those who recorded, collected, and imitated them. Whereas others have attempted to define the influence of ancient painting on Baroque art, this chapter in the history of classicism ought rather to be titled, "The Influence of the Baroque on Ancient Painting."

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¹⁴⁵ Mazzi (as in n. 95). The chronology of Bartoli's engravings is difficult to establish precisely, as most of them are undated.

¹⁴⁶ So eager was Villacerf to acquire the engravings even before publication that La Teulière literally stood at Bartoli's elbow as he pulled the proofs and begged for copies to send to Paris. Bartoli agreed "par amitié," but only with reluctance, as he feared the engravings would be pirated (Montaignon, II, 247–248, 251). La Teulière expresses sympathy for the difficulties under which Bartoli labored: "... car ce bon homme n'est pas des plus accomodés, ayant une grosse famille, qui consume tout le fruit de son travail sans l'ayder en rien"; and again, "Il n'y a que le manque d'argent qui oblige le bon homme Pietro Sante de retarder son ouvrage, à son grand regret" (Montaignon, II, 259, 270).

¹⁴⁷ Mancini had remarked that Annibale painted like the ancients even as a boy (see n. 116 above), but he also studied their works. To La Teulière, Raphael's work was as much in need of preservation as the ancients': he says the Loggia paintings and stuccoes are "presque tous effacés et se ruinent tous les jours," and that "il n'y a personne qui dessine l'antique, ou les ouvrages de l'Escole de Raphaël, du goust de Pietro Sante ..." (Montaignon, I, 416). Félibien attributed Poussin's excellence to his study both of works of ancient wisdom and of the remains of ancient painting (see n. 122 above).

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