

A selection of
Italian and Flemish paintings
from the 16th to 18th centuries



GALERIE CANESSO

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We offer our warmest thanks to all those
who have helped us:
Pascal Aumasson, Daniele Benati, Anne Camuset,
Corentin Dury, Marina Gerra, Cecilia Magnani,
Gilles Matthieu, Marco Riccòmini, Yohan Rimaud,
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GIOVANNI BATTISTA DELLA CERVA

NOVARA, C. 1515 ~ MILAN, 1580

The Virgin and Child with the Young Baptist

OIL ON WOOD PANEL, 28 ½ × 21 ⅞ IN (72.5 × 55.5 CM)

PROVENANCE

London, Lady Lindsay collection; exhibited in the Leger Galleries around 1940-1950; Christie's, London, 11 December 1987, lot 113 (Bernardino Lanino); London, Helikon Gallery.

LITERATURE

Véronique Damian, *Deux caravagesques lombards à Rome et quelques récentes acquisitions*, Paris, Galerie Canesso, 2001, pp. 28-29 (Bernardino Lanino); Filippo Maria Ferro, in *Il Cinquecento Lombardo. Da Leonardo a Caravaggio*, exh. cat. Milano, Palazzo Reale, 4 October 2000 - 25 February 2001, pp. 422-423, no. VIII.15 (Bernardino Lanino).

EXHIBITED

Il Cinquecento Lombardo. Da Leonardo a Caravaggio, exh. cat., Milano, Palazzo Reale, 4 October 2000 - 25 February 2001, pp. 422-423, no. VIII.15.

THE EMPHATIC PRESENCE of Gaudenzio Ferrari's style clearly indicates that the author of this beautiful and well-preserved panel was a painter within his immediate circle, and that it can be dated to the richly fertile years of his last period in Milan. As regards style, the painting betrays a deference to the great master from Novara, but also reveals the inspiration of lively Milanese culture during the first half of the 1500s – first and foremost, understandably, through the powerful stimulus of Leonardo da Vinci – which was proper to Giovanni Battista Della Cerva.¹ As we may learn from the photo archive of the Zeri Foundation at the University of Bologna, the picture was once owned by Lady Lindsay in London and was exhibited in the Leger Galleries in the 1940s and 1950s.²

A native of Novara, Giovanni Battista Della Cerva was a prominent figure among Milanese painters starting in the later 1530s, when he is first documented (12 September 1537) in close association with the leader of that school of painting, distinguishing himself “at least from that moment onwards, [as] the principal assistant and collaborator of Gaudenzio” (Di Lorenzo) – especially for the prestigious ecclesiastical commissions which constituted the most important artistic undertakings in Milan after the deaths of Bramantino and Bernardino Luini. Indeed Giovanni Battista Della Cerva's hand has been correctly identified – on the basis of style and documentation, as has emerged from the latest, most significant contributions about the artist – in a series of works by Gaudenzio, including the *Last Supper* of 1544 in Santa Maria della Passione in Milan (to cite the most celebrated and striking example) and the *Assumption* polyptych in Santa Maria di Piazza in Busto Arsizio (1541), where Della Cerva also painted the frescoes in the main chapel; and probably also the *Baptism of Christ* and *Saint Jerome with a Donor* in the Milanese churches of Santa Maria presso San Celso and San Giorgio al Palazzo.³

After Gaudenzio's death in 1546, Della Cerva inherited his workshop, and the principal project of this period was the frescoed decoration of the altar in the oratory dedicated to Saint Catherine in San Nazaro in Brolo, Milan; here he collaborated with Bernardino Lanino in 1548-1549, painting *Scenes*



from the *Life of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*.⁴ The partnership between the two Piedmontese painters is very pertinent for establishing who painted the work presented here, which has in the past benefited from an attribution to Lanino himself, and was exhibited as such in the exhibition on sixteenth-century Lombard painting at the Palazzo Reale in Milan in 2000.⁵ Evolving scholarship on Bernardino Lanino, hand in hand with the progress made on Della Cerva, now allow us to refine what we know, and shift the painting comfortably – and in my opinion, securely – into the oeuvre of Giovanni Battista.

As Filippo Maria Ferro rightly said about our picture (though he retained the attribution to Lanino), “the subject as well as the model seem to presuppose the existence of an original work by Gaudenzio, which may in turn have had an iconographical link with a prototype by Cesare da Sesto, and offer clear evidence of how Gaudenzio’s workshop tended to reflect on Leonardo”. The scholar cited works deriving from this model, among them the *Virgin and Child with the Young Baptist* formerly in the Vittadini collection at Arcore, a panel that Giovanni Romano believed was the outcome of the collaboration between Gaudenzio Ferrari and Giovanni Battista Della Cerva.⁶ What remains to be understood is the inscription on the hem of the Virgin’s robe, with some interlaced lettering that is hard to decipher.

Apart from generic connections with most of Della Cerva’s known output (and we should recall that he was the teacher of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, who remembers him in his *Grotteschi* of 1587), this *Madonna* presents clear parallels with the frescoes in San Nazaro mentioned above, and with two of his panel paintings, the *Adoration of the Child with Saint Jerome* formerly in the collection of Cardinal Cesare Monti and now in the Brera Gallery, Milan, and the *Risen Christ Appearing to Saint Dorothy*, in a private collection.⁷ Our panel shares some of the features of the Brera picture, such as the figure type of the Virgin, with unmistakable physiognomic and Morellian similarities, and the description of drapery and the veil. As for the other painting – of great interest for a clear definition of how the artist’s language evolved in Milan, and bearing in mind its qualitative level and cogent composition – the affinities are even more significant.

With respect to chronology, too, I do not believe that this painting can be far in date from the two works we have just cited, which scholars have placed close to Gaudenzio’s last phase. Following this hypothesis, the year 1546 (in which the master died) could therefore provide a plausible point of reference for its dating. A limited number of these can be studied in the Bernardino Lanino folder in

1. See the fine entry on the painter by R. Sacchi in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 36, Rome 1988, pp. 730-733, and updated material in A. Di Lorenzo, “Gaudenzio Ferrari e la sua scuola a Milano”, in M. Gregori, ed., *Pittura a Milano. Rinascimento e Manierismo*, Cinisello Balsamo 1998, pp. 36-44, 254-258.
2. Fondazione Federico Zeri, Università di Bologna, Fototeca, no. 23801. For the presence of the picture in the Leger Galleries, see *The Connoisseur*, January 1952, p. 148.
3. Di Lorenzo 1998, pl. 80; the reader is referred to this text for a review of other works carried out by the painter in collaboration with Gaudenzio Ferrari. See also P. C. Marani, in M. Gregori, ed., *Pittura tra Ticino e Olona. Varese e la Lombardia nord-occidentale*, Cinisello Balsamo 1992, pp. 254-255, pl. 75.
4. On this pictorial project see the close study made by Di Lorenzo, *op. cit.*, 1998, pp. 256-258, pl. 81.
5. F. M. Ferro, in *Il Cinquecento lombardo. Da Leonardo a Caravaggio*, exhibition catalogue, directed and edited by F. Caroli, Milan 2000, p. 422, no. VIII.15.
6. *Ibidem*; see also G. Romano, “Gerolamo Giovenone, Gaudenzio Ferrari e gli inizi di Bernardino Lanino. Testimonianze d’archivio e documenti figurativi”, in G. Romano, ed., *Bernardino Lanino e il Cinquecento a Vercelli*, Turin 1986, p. 44, note 41. According to Romano the picture by Gaudenzio formerly at Arcore was inspired by a lost prototype by Cesare da Sesto, seemingly known in Vercelli.
7. Several recent scholarly entries have been written on the Brera panel: F. M. Ferro, in *Pinacoteca di Brera. Scuole lombarda, ligure e piemontese 1535-1796*, Milan 1989, pp. 44-45; P. C. Marani, in *Le stanze del Cardinale Monti 1635-1650. La collezione ricomposta*, exh. cat., Milan 1994, pp. 140-141; M. Carminati, in *Quadreria dell’Arcivescovado*, Milan 1999, pp. 155-156; all with earlier literature. For the second painting see A. Di Lorenzo, *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 255, fig. B.

the Zeri Photo Archive, Bologna (Berlin, Lepke sale, 5 March 1907; Stuttgart, Lucki collection, both ascribed to Bernardino De Conti; whereabouts unknown; Paris, d'Atri collection and later Sotheby's, London, 5 May 1958, lot 5). Another version, modifying the pose of the young Baptist so that he faces the viewer, was auctioned at Sotheby's Milan on 29 May 2007, lot 165.

In conclusion, we cannot fail to appreciate the beauty of this *Madonna* – the suave, animated description of the faces, the painstaking calligraphy that defines the veil and hair, and the skilled, controlled handling of tonal values – all in all an important contribution to Milanese artistic culture of the 1540s. ➤

GIOVANNI ANDREA DONDUCCI, called IL MASTELLETTA

BOLOGNA, 1575 ~ 1655

Fête by a Riverbank

OIL ON CANVAS, 39 × 47 ⁷/₁₆ IN (99 × 120.5 CM)

PROVENANCE

Cornette de Saint-Cyr sale, Paris, Drouot, 19 April 1991, lot 9; with Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, London; Bologna, private collection.

LITERATURE

Éric Moinet, in *Italies, Peintures des musées de la région Centre*, exh. cat., Tours, musée des Beaux-Arts; Orléans, musée des Beaux-Arts; Chartres, musée des Beaux-Arts; 23 November 1996 - 3 March 1997, p. 168, under no. 43, note 2, illus. (Reproducing our painting instead of the one formerly in the Zeri collection in Mentana; see note 5); Véronique Damian, *Deux tableaux de la collection Sannes, Tableaux des écoles émilienne et lombarde*, Paris, Galerie Canesso, 2006, pp. 40-45.

EXHIBITED

London, Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, Italian Paintings, January-February 1992, no. 2.

ALTHOUGH MASTELLETTA'S CAREER is that of a seventeenth-century artist, he is strongly related to the sixteenth century in inspiration. His style was influenced by the most atypical Mannerist painters, from Nicolò dell'Abate (1509 or 1512-1571) to Jacopo Zanguidi, called Bertoja (1544-1574), and his oeuvre was one of the last expressions of "European Mannerism". It is this style and his visionary quality that define him as a singular artist, especially within the genre of Bolognese landscape painting of the beginning of the seventeenth century.

His grand, open-air *fêtes champêtres*, combining landscape and slender, silhouette-like figures, often arranged around tables laden with food and depicted through a simplified, expressionistic design, lie at the root of his fame and originality. Yet his artistic novelty has always perplexed scholars when it comes to the mysterious side of his compositions. Should one read his subjects as drawn from the Old Testament, or, more simply, relate the images to a contemporary context? We would lean towards the latter interpretation, especially as regards our painting. It appears to be a reflection of aristocratic life during the second half of the sixteenth century, when nobles offered sumptuous entertainment in their country villas, as recorded by Bolognese chroniclers of this period.¹ At dusk, suggested here by the sombre sky and strong areas of shadow that cross the canvas, a group of nobles wearing hats, some of them on horseback, have gathered by a riverbank near an extensive fishing party. Clearly visible on the water's surface are a number of fishing-net floats, together with boats loaded with people crossing the river to reach the other bank. Music is being played, and in the foreground, a fisherman has taken a long fish out of a bucket placed among the rushes, and appears to be offering it to an elegant lady. In the background, slender figures are busy around a cauldron, brought to the party on muleback. Mastelletta has retained Nicolò dell'Abate's free, direct handling, thus moving away from the linear side of Mannerism. Our painter expresses an entirely different concept of form, which becomes evanescent and dreamlike, solely enriched by precious touches of red, yellow and pink.

The present composition appears to have had a pendant – a painting now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Orléans (fig. 1), as suggested by the fact that both paintings emerged in France in the Drouot





FIG.1 — Il Mastelletta, *Country Feast*, Orléans, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

one believes Malvasia, it was Annibale himself who encouraged Mastelletta to develop this approach to landscape, and justly so: according to the biographer, all the important families competed to obtain a painting by the artist.⁴ This would explain why the picture in Orléans is known in several versions.⁵

We should remember that Mastelletta was trained in the Carracci school, where he was a friend of Guido Reni (1575-1642), his exact contemporary, but also that he chose to express himself in a completely personal manner by creating a synthesis of landscape painting, combining the styles of Nicolò dell'Abate, Dosso Dossi (c. 1489-1542), Bertoja and the Bolognese classical landscape as developed by Annibale Carracci, Domenichino (1581-1641), and Albani (1578-1660). Malvasia notes his “bizarre” character, which drove him to end his life as a depressed recluse (and causing much ink to be spilt on the matter). Nonetheless, as Wittkower has emphasized, it is hard to establish cause and effect between the artist’s sanity and a composition as festive and innovative as ours.⁶ — V.D.

auction rooms, although at very different dates.² Moreover, the dimensions of the canvases only differ by two centimetres. Anna Coliva dates the work in Orléans very early, c. 1610-1611, which would be appropriate for our picture, during the painter’s Roman sojourn, when he met with genuine success “*a far questi suoi paesi con sì galanti e spiritose figurine*”, as Malvasia states.³ This precisely conveys the mystery and energy of his landscapes, which were so novel compared to the direct precedents established by the Carracci – one only has to recall pictures such as the *Fishing Party* and the *Hunting Party* in the Musée du Louvre by Annibale Carracci (1560-1609). If

1. Some of these Bolognese accounts appear in a recent collection of texts published by the Fondazione del Monte di Bologna e Ravenna: volume 7 contains the chronicle by Giovanni Battista Marescalchi, *Cronaca 1561-1573*, edited by Ilaria Francica and with an introduction by Armando Antonelli and Riccardo Pedrini, Bologna, 2002, pp. 33-34 (see especially the description of the party given on 24 August 1565).

2. Exactly when the painting in Orléans (98 × 118 cm) was offered at Drouot remains unclear, but it was certainly prior to 1962, when it appeared on the art market in The Hague. It was acquired in London in 1964 by the Orléans Museum.

3. Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice. Vite de’ pittori bolognesi [1678]*, 2 vols., ed. Giampietro Zanotti, Bologna, 1841 (2004 ed.), vol. 2, p. 69.

4. Malvasia, as in note 3, p. 69: “[...] cominciarono a fare

a gara quei Principi per ottenerne [i suoi paesaggi], facendosi sin copiare da lui talora gli stessi siti e le precise figure; il perché tanti se ne vedono in quelle Gallerie [...]”

5. Anna Coliva, *Il Mastelletta*. Giovanni Andrea Donducci 1575-1655, Rome, 1980, nos. 12, 13 (Orléans, Musée des Beaux-Arts; Rome, Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini). Another version, formerly in the Zeri collection in Mentana, appeared later (see G. Manni,

E. Negro, M. Pirondini, F. Zeri, eds., *Arte Emiliana dalle raccolte storiche al nuovo collezionismo*, Modena, 1989, pp. 70-71, no. 44). The replica of the Orléans painting had a pendant that replicates our composition (no. 44a); both paintings were auctioned at Finarte in Rome on 21 May 1996, lot 135.

6. R. and M. Wittkower, *Born under Saturn*, London, 1963.



GIOACCHINO ASSERETO

GENOA, 1600 - 1650

Joas saved from Athalia's persecution

OIL ON CANVAS, 58 × 77 IN (147.5 × 195.5 CM)
SIGNED "AXERET" AT LOWER CENTRE, NEXT TO THE CROWN

PROVENANCE

Turin, private collection, 1971; Genoa, Aldo Zerbone collection, during the 1980s.

LITERATURE

Hélène Mazur-Contamine, "A proposito di una cosiddetta scena biblica dell'Assereto", *Bollettino dei Musei Civici Genovesi*, IV, no. 10-12, January-December 1982, p. 28, note (as School of Assereto); Lilli Ghio Vallarino, in *Genova nell'Età Barocca*, exh. cat., Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola – Galleria di Palazzo Reale, 2 May - 26 July 1992, pp. 92-94, no. 6; Gian Vittorio Castelnovi, "La pittura nella prima metà del Seicento dall'Ansaldo a Orazio de Ferrari", in *La Pittura a Genova e in Liguria*, 2 vols., Genoa, 1998, 3rd ed., II, p. 134 [1971, 1st ed., p. 157; 2nd ed., 1987, revised and expanded by Franco Boggero and Farida Simonetti, p. 134], (attributed to Assereto); Gelsomina Spione, in *La Pinacoteca dei Cappuccini di Voltaggio*, ed. by Fulvio Cervini and Carlenrica Spantigati, Alessandria, 2001, p. 107 (Assereto); Gelsomina Spione, in *Le chiavi del Paradiso. I tesori dei Cappuccini della provincia di Genova*, exh. cat., Milan, Museo dei Beni Culturali Cappuccini, 28 March - 28 July 2003, p. 106 (Assereto); Camillo Manzitti, *Valerio Castello*, Turin, 2004, p. 103, fig. 481; 2008 ed., p. 103, fig. 481 (Assereto); Anna Orlando, in *Dipinti genovesi dal Cinquecento al Settecento, Collezione Koelliker*, ed. by Anna Orlando, Turin, 2006, p. 76, fig. 1; Tiziana Zennaro, *Gioacchino Assereto e i pittori della sua scuola*, 2 vols., Soncino, 2011, I, p. 178, illus. CIII, pp. 445-446, no. A141.

EXHIBITED

Genova nell'Età Barocca, Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola – Galleria di Palazzo Reale, 2 May - 26 July 1992, no. 6.

GIOACCHINO ASSERETO'S FEVERISH, expressive brush gives vibrant life to this Biblical scene, inspired by an episode from the reign of Queen Athalia (II Kings, 11, 1-3): "Athalia the mother of Ochozias seeing that her son was dead, arose, and slew all the royal seed. But Josaba the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ochozias, took Joas the son of Ochozias, and stole him from among the King's sons that were slain, out of the bedchamber with his nurse: and hid him from the face of Athalia, so that he was not slain. And he was with her six years hid in the house of the Lord. And Athalia reigned over the land". The figure with a drawn sword pointed at the child, who reaches out for the falling crown, which alludes to his destiny as future King of Judah, supports this iconography.

The play of hands, crossing one another in the middle of the picture, creates a true sense of opposing tensions – the intended murder of Joas, and his salvation – and the contrasting emotions are echoed in the expressive features of the figures. According to Tiziana Zennaro, the tight



FIG. 1 — Gioacchino Assereto, *Discovery of Joseph's Cup in Benjamin's Sack*, (Voltaggio, Pinacoteca dei Cappuccini).





FIG. 2 — Gioacchino Assereto, *Servius Tullius with his Hair on Fire*, Genoa, Collezioni d'Arte di Banca Carige.

arrangement and frieze-like depiction of the protagonists, all described in saturated brown tones, indicates a work created during the Genoese artist's maturity, that is, in about 1645. Scholars have noted resemblances – in the general balance of dark and light volumes, the heads nearly all on the same level, and the compositional structure propelling motion toward the centre – with the slightly earlier *Discovery of Joseph's Cup in Benjamin's Sack* (Voltaggio, Pinacoteca dei Cappuccini; fig. 1), and even closer ones, as regards Assereto's spirited style in this period, with *Servius Tullius with his Hair on Fire* (Genoa, Collezioni d'Arte di Banca Carige; fig. 2).¹

The picture appeared in the great Genoese exhibition of 1992, and Tiziana Zennaro has since established that it was the same work as a canvas recorded in a Turin collection; although the subject is rarely represented in art, Assereto treated it on two occasions. Another version, of the same dimensions but with a number of variants, especially in the background, is now in the Guido Angelo Terruzzi collection in Bordighera.² The novel iconography introduced by the artist had a real influence on the art of his contemporaries: for example, Valerio Castello (1624-1659) painted a version of the subject in a *bozzetto* (private collection) that was very close to Assereto's prototype.³ Tiziana Zennaro lists derivations carried out by followers, particularly that by the Master of Monticelli d'Ongina, faithful in every way to the frieze composition and punctuated by a central axis containing the heart of the action.⁴

The artist, celebrated in his own century by Soprani,⁵ who underlined that his renown extended far beyond Liguria, especially in the direction of Spain, has been reassessed in the modern age. A pioneering article of 1926-1927 by Roberto Longhi was entirely dedicated to glorifying "il Grande Assereto", and the Italian art historian had no hesitation in comparing him with Velázquez.⁶ Recent scholarship, above all the monograph of 2011 by Tiziana Zennaro, has returned the artist to his place among the most significant painters in seventeenth-century Europe, and indeed his naturalism is no less enviable than that of Matthias Stomer (c. 1600-after 1650) or Gerrit van Honthorst (1592-1656). ▀ v.D.

1. Tiziana Zennaro, *Gioacchino Assereto e i pittori della sua scuola*, 2 vols., Soncino, 2011, I, pp. 412-414, no. A118; pp. 443-445, no. A140.
2. *Ibid.*, 2011, I, p. 178, ill. CIII, pp. 446-447, no. A142.

3. Camillo Manzitti, *Valerio Castello*, Turin, 2004, p. 103, fig. 481; 2008 ed., p. 103, fig. 481 (as Assereto).
4. Tiziana Zennaro, *op. cit.*, 2011, II, pp. 650-651, no. G24.
5. Raffaele Soprani, *Le vite de'*

Pittori, Scoltori, e Architetti Genovesi, e de' forastieri, che in Genova operarono con alcuni Ritratti de gli stessi (1674), Genoa, 1768, I, p. 167.
6. Roberto Longhi, "L'Assereto", *Dedalo*, VII, 1926, pp. 355-

377; reprinted in Roberto Longhi, *Saggi e Ricerche 1925-1928 (Opere Complete, II)*, Florence, 1967, vol. 1, pp. 35-47.



WALLERANT VAILLANT

LILLE, 1623 ~ AMSTERDAM, 1677

Self-Portrait with a Turban

OIL ON CANVAS, 29 1/8 × 23 7/16 IN (74 × 59.5 CM)

PROVENANCE

Cambridge, Mrs Campbell; London, Christie's, 18 July 1910, lot 123 (as "Unknown", sold for 80 guineas to Clark); London, Christie's, 7 August 1942, lot 102 (as "J. E. Liotard – A Moroccan soldier", offered for sale by Knoedler, unsold); London, Christie's, 14 December 1990, lot 121 (as Wallerant Vaillant); London, with Colnaghi, The Grosvenor House Antiques Fair, 12-22 June 1991, purchased by its last owner.

LITERATURE

H.W. Grohn, "Ein neuerworbenes Bildnis der Niedersächsischer Landesgalerie Hannover und die Selbstporträts des Wallerant Vaillant", *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte*, 19, 1980, pp. 141-142, 144, plate 5; Nadine Rogeaux, *Wallerant Vaillant (1623-1677). Graveur à la manière noire, dessinateur à la pierre noire et peintre de portraits*, 4 vols., unpublished doctoral thesis in the History of Art, supervised by Alain Mérot, Paris IV-Sorbonne, 1999, I, p. 436, no. P13; IV, illus. P13.

COMPARATIVE WORK

Another painted version of this portrait is in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin (inv. 827; oil on canvas, 72 × 58 cm).

THIS DUTCH PAINTER AND PRINTMAKER Wallerant Vaillant (born in Lille, which only became part of France in 1668) is best known for his engravings, especially his numerous mezzotints, a technique he did much to develop.¹ His painted oeuvre is rarer, largely consisting of portraits, and including a number of self-portraits in which the artist presents himself clothed in a variety of picturesque costumes – for example, as a soldier (Hanover, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum), distinguished gentleman (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister), or in Orientalist mode, as seen here.²

It is significant that the painter never represents himself exercising his art – that is, with palette and paintbrushes. In this respect, he was clearly inspired by the numerous self-portraits of Rembrandt (1606-1669) in which the great Dutchman created sartorially-varied likenesses, accentuating expression and social status more than his own entirely true profession. These have the appearance of exercises, almost a series of repertory characters, within the greatly prized genre of portraiture. In Amsterdam, Vaillant would have had ample opportunity to witness Rembrandt's genius, since he was obliged for religious motives to seek exile early in his career in the capital of the Dutch kingdom, where he lived – with the exception of some extended trips abroad – until his death.

Creating this portrait through an oculus that offsets the bust enables the painter to play with optical space, an expedient he used on other occasions, for example in his portraits of *Pieter de Graeff* and *Jacoba Bicker* in the Amsterdam Museum. In this case, the highly refined, painstaking technique used in describing the face, treating transparency in an exceptionally realistic manner, heightens the photographic appearance of the work. Conversely, the reflections on the rich brocade of the turban, no doubt a product of the *Compagnie des Indes*, are depicted with a free, more generously loaded brush. It is striking how a master known for his *manière noire* was such a talented colourist.





FIG.1 — Wallerant Vaillant, *Self-Portrait*, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister.

Our picture entered the critical discourse in 1980 (it was still believed to be by Liotard in 1942), never being cited in early articles regarding the other version of the subject (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), dated to the beginning of the artist's career, in the years 1650-1655. His painted oeuvre consists not only of portraits but workshop scenes, still lifes and *trompe l'oeil* pictures.

In Antwerp, Wallerant Vaillant was taught by Erasmus Quellinus (1607-1678), a pupil of Rubens (1577-1640) and his successor as city painter. Vaillant's exile in Amsterdam was the first of a series of journeys that took him abroad, especially to Germany between 1655 and 1658: he is first recorded in Middelburg, then with his brother Bernard in Frankfurt, and in Heidelberg. When the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I was crowned in Frankfurt in 1658, Vaillant was commissioned to make black chalk portraits of the new sovereign, of the Electors of Bavaria, Cologne, Brandenburg and Mainz, among others, and of Philippe d'Orléans

and the Maréchal de Gramont, sent as delegates by Mazarin. In 1659, the artist came to France in the wake of Gramont, who introduced him to the Court of Louis XIV. During the preparation for the festivities for the marriage of the King and Maria Theresa, Vaillant received an important commission from the Queen Mother, Anne of Austria: five pastel portraits of Louis XIV, Maria Theresa of Austria, Anne of Austria, Marianna of Austria and Eleonora Gonzaga; these have recently enriched the collection of the Château de Versailles. In 1665, the artist was back in Amsterdam, which in this period was one of Europe's most important financial and cultural centres. Several of Vaillant's brothers were painters and portraitists: Jacques (c. 1625-1691), Jean (1627- after 1668), Bernard (1632-1698) and André (1655-1693). ▲ v.d.

1. Friedrich Wilhelm Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts – ca 1450-1700*, ed. by Ger Luijten, Amsterdam, 1987, vol. XXXI, pp. 59-213; Nadine Rogeaux, "Wallerant Vaillant (1623-1677): premier spécialiste de la gravure en manière noire", *Nouvelles de l'Estampe*, July-September 2001, pp. 19-31; Nadine Rogeaux, "Wallerant Vaillant (1623-1677): portraitiste à la pierre noire et au pastel", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, December 2001, pp. 251-265.
2. Maurice Vandalle, "Les Frères Vaillant, artistes lillois du XVII^e siècle", *Revue belge d'histoire et d'archéologie*, VII, 1937, pp. 341-360; Nadine Rogeaux, "Wallerant Vaillant (1623-1677), portraitiste hollandais", *Revue du Nord*, 2002/1, no. 344, pp. 25-49.



GIACOMO LIEGI (OR LEGI)

LIÈGE (?), 1605 ~ MILAN, 1640-1645

The Pantry

OIL ON CANVAS, 58⁵/₈ × 74 IN (149 × 188 CM)

PROVENANCE

Sale, Galleria Vitelli, Genoa, *Collezione di Arte Antica J.D.B.*, 20 April 1933, lot 132, pl. I (as “Benedetto da Castiglione”); Genoa, collection of Piero Pagano (1929-2007), by descent, to the present day.

LITERATURE

Ezia Gavazza, “Protagonisti e comprimari. Acquisizioni e interferenze culturali”, in *La pittura in Liguria. Il secondo Seicento*, Genoa, 1990, p. 44, fig. 42; Anna Orlando, “Giacomo Liegi”, in *Genova nell’Età barocca*, exh. cat. ed. by Ezia Gavazza and Giovanna Rotondi Terminiello, Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola – Galleria di Palazzo Reale, 2 May - 26 July 1992, pp. 208-209, no. 111; Anna Orlando, “Un fiammingo a Genova: documenti figurativi per Giacomo Liegi”, *Paragone*, no. 549, November 1995, pp. 69-70, 72-73, 76, fig. 56; Anna Orlando, in *Fasto e rigore. La natura morta nell’Italia settentrionale dal XVI al XVIII secolo*, exh. cat. by Giovanni Godi, Reggia di Colorno, 20 April - 25 June 2000, p. 108, no. 14; Anna Orlando, in *Genova & Anversa. Un sommet dans la peinture baroque*, exh. cat. ed. by Marzia Cataldi Gallo, Antwerp, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 4 October 2003 - 1 January 2004, pp. 106-107, no. 30; Anna Orlando, in *I fiori del Barocco. Dalla scena di genere al gusto rococo nella pittura a Genova dal ’500 al ’700*, exh. cat. ed. by Anna Orlando, Genoa, Musei di Strada Nuova, 24 March - 25 June 2006, pp. 52-53, no. 9; Anna Orlando, *Pittura fiammingo-genovese. Nature morte, ritratti e paesaggi del Seicento e primo Settecento. Ritrovamenti dal collezionismo privato*, Turin, 2012, p. 94.

EXHIBITED

Genova nell’Età barocca, Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola – Galleria di Palazzo Reale, 2 May - 26 July 1992, no. 111; *Fasto e rigore. La natura morta nell’Italia settentrionale dal XVI al XVIII secolo*, Reggia di Colorno, 20 April - 25 June 2000, p. 108, no. 14; *Genova & Anversa. Un sommet dans la peinture baroque*, Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, 4 October 2003 - 1 January 2004, no. 30; *I fiori del Barocco. Dalla scena di genere al gusto rococo nella pittura a Genova dal ’500 al ’700*, Genoa, Musei di Strada Nuova, 24 March - 25 June 2006, no. 9.

THIS ARTIST, MOST PROBABLY A NATIVE OF LIÈGE, as indicated by his name, Italianised as “Liegi” or “Legi”, was active in Genoa, according to the biographer Raffaello Soprani (1612-1672).¹ It is from Soprani that we learn that Giacomo was a Fleming and the pupil and brother-in-law of Jan Roos, known as Giovanni Rosa (1591-1638), and that he painted flowers, fruits and animals. We are also informed that he died in Milan after having moved there for health reasons. This meagre biographical information was enough to keep the artist’s name alive, as he might otherwise have fallen into oblivion. We owe the reconstruction of his oeuvre to Anna Orlando, whose article of 1995 in *Paragone* gave the painter a fairly complete group of pictures, assembled around two compositions in French public collections that had long been attributed to Liegi: the *Young Man in a Pantry* and the *Cook with Game* in the Musées des Beaux-Arts in Bordeaux and Orléans, respectively.² To this day, no signed painting by the artist has emerged, even if the older literature affirms as much.³ In any case, as with Jan Roos, it seems clear that Liegi collaborated with other painters for the depiction of figures in his paintings.

The artist’s contribution to the still life tradition is characteristically Baroque: the various elements in our picture are arranged both along the horizontal of the table and the vertical of the birds and the calf, hanging from one leg and almost filling the height of the canvas. This is a masterful exploration





of subjects, ranging from flowers and fruits to animals, both furred and feathered – *nature vive* juxtaposed with *nature morte*; and each dish, whether pewter, ceramic or copper, creates sparkling reflections described with generous brushwork. The wealth and complexity of the composition tends to make us forget the fragile crystal vase containing freshly-cut flowers, in the far left background. The kitchen servant has gathered fish and crustaceans, no doubt in preparation for a meal. In the foreground at right, the open drawer, with a knife balanced on the edge, reminds us of the painter's Flemish culture, as does the small cat in the middle, pawing playfully at the dead bird whose head hangs over the edge of the table.

The painting – which bore an attribution to Castiglione in 1933 – was ascribed to Liegi by Piero Pagano, its last owner, and was published as such by Ezia Gavazza in 1990, followed by Anna Orlando.

It is well known that Flemish artists were active in Genoa during the first half of the seventeenth century. Foremost among these were the De Wael brothers, Lucas (1591-1661) and Cornelis (1592-1667), originally from Antwerp, who took in Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) in 1621; but also Jan Roos, another Antwerp native, who had been trained in the workshop of Frans Snyders (1579-1657). ▲ v.D.

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|--|-----------------------|--|--|
| 1. Raffaello Soprani and Carlo Giuseppe Ratti, <i>Vite de' Pittori, scultori, ed architetti genovesi di Raffaello Soprani, patrizio genovese...</i> , Genoa, | 1768, I, pp. 462-463. | no. 549, November 1995, p. 82, note 56. | <i>Signatures et monogrammes des peintres de toutes les écoles</i> , Brussels, 1895, pp. 477, 837, 1089, 1126. |
| 2. Anna Orlando, "Un fiammingo a Genova: documenti figurativi per Giacomo Liegi", <i>Paragone</i> , | | 3. Anna Orlando believes that the first to point out these signatures was Louis Lampe, | |

GIUSEPPE MARIA CRESPI

BOLOGNA, 1665 - 1747

*Portrait of Domenico Casati, known as
the Hunchback, grocer in Via Clavature [Bologna]*

OIL ON PAPER LAID DOWN ON CANVAS, 19 ⁵/₈ × 15 IN (50 × 38 CM)

PROVENANCE

Bologna, private collection from 1935 to the present day.

LITERATURE

Mostra del Settecento bolognese, exhibition catalogue ed. by G. Zecchini and R. Longhi, Bologna 1935, p. 9, no. 14 (not illustrated; according to the catalogue the back of the painting bore the inscription: “Crespi G.M. Domenico Casati detto il Gobbo, lardarolo di via Clavature, 1713”).

THIS PAINTED SHEET IS A PORTRAIT OF A SINGULAR INDIVIDUAL: a man dressed in brown, wearing a red cap and a white apron, and holding a knife in his right hand. His mocking, grim expression, thick hands, hunched back and a setting devoid of anything – solely defined by the poorly-plastered wall in the background – underline the popular character of this figure, whose potent depiction places the image among the most striking examples of genre painting in the eighteenth century.

The work, from a private collection, contains all the elements that distinguish the oeuvre of Giuseppe Maria Crespi: red-brown and pearl-like tonalities, leaden flesh, faces given raw pallor by a sudden, vertical fall of light. Typical of Crespi, too, is the background wall, revealing a pattern of bricks under thin plaster, as in the *Self-Portrait* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, the *Postman* in the Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, and above all the *Courtyard Scene*, also in Bologna.

It is precisely these unmistakable elements of style, and the absence of this subject in the fundamental monograph by Mira Pajes Merriman¹ that have led us to investigate further, studying the works by Crespi cited in early inventories, eighteenth-century sources and related art-historical literature. This examination has enabled us to find a mention of it in the catalogue of the Bolognese Settecento exhibition held in 1935, edited by Guido Zecchini and Roberto Longhi. Number 14 is a *Lardarolo* by Crespi, catalogued without an illustration, of identical dimensions, and which according to the entry bore the following inscription on its back: “Crespi G.M. Domenico Casati detto il Gobbo, lardarolo di via Clavature, 1713” (Crespi, G.M., [portrait of] Domenico Casati, known as the Hunchback, grocer in Via Clavature [Bologna], 1713).² This inscription, already illegible at that time³, since the paper had been glued onto canvas to remedy the fragile state of its original support, could not have consisted of autograph wording by the painter, but was very likely added by another hand so as to record the name of the author and sitter. The extreme precision of this information, which also includes the year of execution and even the address of the grocery, implicitly confirms its truth, and therefore the authorship of Crespi, of which one already felt convinced, judging by style alone. Moreover, the sitter was no doubt a member of the *Arte dei Salaroli* (pork-salters) to which the *Lardaroli* also belonged, that is, those who sold “carnes sallatas, lardum sallatum, olleum, candellas et alias res similes” (salted meats,



salted lard, oil, candles and other such things), thus resembling today's *salumieri* (grocers, sellers of cured meats) more than butchers.⁴

This work thus fits into Crespi's rich output of genre painting, and more generally into that strand of Bolognese figurative culture dedicated to the depiction of the lower classes, often shown practicing their profession. One may take for granted the reference to the satirical paintings by Bartolomeo Passerotti, the *Butcher's Shop* and eighty drawings of the *Arti di Bologna* by Annibale Carracci, and Giuseppe Maria Mitelli's *Le Arti per via*, which form the essential introductions to subsequent works by Crespi.

Since his youth the artist was drawn to such subjects: according to Zanotti, while he shared a workshop with Burrini "spesse volte ancora dipignea cose vulgari, e pertinenti a bassi mestieri" ("he often painted common things, pertinent to lowly professions"), and, in the mid-to-late 1680s, two pictures of a *cantina* (cellar) "con alcuni rozzi, e nudati facchini, e cantinieri, sprementi con gran torchio alcune graspe d'uva" ("with some uncouth, barely-clothed types and canteen-workers, crushing bunches of grapes with a big press"), and a butcher's shop "con molti beccai, che macellano, e scorticano bovi, e vitelli, e tutto quello fanno, che a ciò è pertinente" ("with a number of butchers cutting meat and flaying oxen, and calves, and all that is pertinent to what they do").⁵ It is also vital to note his awareness of Flemish and Dutch genre paintings in the Medici collections, seen during his sojourns at the court of Grand Duke Ferdinand (1708-1709), from which Crespi drew a wealth of descriptive elements and a taste for specific details. It was this context that led to the *Fair at Poggio a Caiano*, now in the Uffizi Gallery, and the various versions of the *Woman Looking for Fleas*, in which a real event becomes anecdotal, with humorous or moralising implications; other paintings, such as the *Woman Washing Dishes* in the Uffizi and the series of the *Seven Sacraments* in the Dresden Gallery, come across as objective representations of a place. The kaleidoscopic range of Crespi's genre painting is also shown by the group of pictures with bucolic and pastoral subjects, in which the description of country people and their activities draws on the taste for Arcadian scenes that was in fashion at the time, giving us an idealised, refined image of that world. One of the artist's major undertakings in this field can still be seen in the illustration of the stories of Bertoldo, Bertoldino and Cacasenno, written at the beginning of the 1600s by Giulio Cesare Croce and Adriano Banchieri⁶, and translated by Crespi into drawings, etchings and paintings on copper. In taking inspiration from such literary texts, the artist gave even further emphasis to the narrative aspects of genre scenes, carefully avoiding the presence of the darker aspects, perceived as more contemptible, of the lower classes.

This human sympathy towards plebeians and a profound respect for their occupations marks the various aspects of Crespi's painting, and it is precisely for this reason that it seems a little surprising to see how this figure of Casati is conveyed, not so much for his physical deformity or his big grocer's hands, but for the frowning, almost menacing expression, which has no parallel among the pictures we have cited thus far. For an understanding of this biting realism, one should look closely at Crespi's attitude to truth. It is worth recalling the words of his son Luigi, according to whom "questo continuato valore però del suo pennello si deve sicuramente attribuire alla continua, e non mai interrotta

1. M. Pajes Merriman, *Giuseppe Maria Crespi*, Milan 1980.

2. *Mostra del Settecento bolognese*, exh. cat., Bologna 1935, p. 9; the text erroneously cites the medium as oil on canvas.

3. X-radiography of our painting reveals traces of the

inscription, although it is indistinct.

4. G. Roversi, «Le arti per l'arte. Le sedi e il patrimonio artistico delle antiche corporazioni di mestiere bolognesi», in *La Mercanzia di Bologna*, Milan 1995, pp. 83-167, especially p. 148.

5. G.P. Zanotti, *Storia dell'Accademia Clementina di Bologna...*, Bologna 1739, II, pp. 36-37.

6. G.C. Croce, *Le Sottilissime Astutie di Bertoldo...*, Milan 1606; idem, *Le piacevoli e ridicolose semplicità di Bertoldino figliuolo del già*

astuto, & accorto Bertoldo, Bologna 1608; Adriano Banchieri (under the pseudonym Camillo Scaligeri della Fratta), *Novella di Cacasenno figlio del semplice Bertoldino...*, Bologna 1620.

osservazione del naturale, che sempre, qualunque cosa egli facesse, teneva davanti mentre operava” (“the enduring value of his painting can surely be attributed to the constant, uninterrupted observation of nature, which – whatever he was doing – he always had before him while he worked”), “fino a fare un foro nella sua porta di casa, che ha in faccia dalla parte opposta della casa un muro bianco volto a mezzo di, dinanzi al quale fermavansi alcune donne a stendere al Sole sulle stuoje i fulicelli; e quando alcuni paesani con carni, e bestiami passavano, a cotal foro applicava una lente, ed in faccia una tela bianca, passando quivi le giornate intiere ad osservare nella tela tutti gli oggetti, per mezzo della lente riportativi lumeggiati, macchiati, e riflessati dal Sole, come si vede nelle camere ottiche” (“to the extent that he had a hole made in the door of his home, which was opposite a house with a white wall facing south, before which some women were laying silk cocoons on some matting in the sun; and when some country folk passed with meats and cattle, he applied a lens to that hole, and facing it, a white cloth, spending whole days there observing all the objects on the cloth, reproduced on it by that lens, lit, spotted and reflected by the sun, as one sees in a camera obscura”).⁷ Yet this direct transcription of real data, the first step in Crespi’s creative process, was subordinated by subsequent elaboration that ultimately led to those carefully-calibrated compositions of popular scenes in which the tone was rendered more genteel and cordial. In any case the painter must have been well aware of the fact that excessive realism or grotesque deformities could not have been accepted in the academically-minded Bologna of those years, its cultural coordinates dictated by Cesare Malvasia, Senator Ghisilieri and Count Fava. Suffice it to recall the well-known episode of the caricature of Malvasia, “in figura di un cappone morto, e spennato, ma in tal atto, e in tal maniera, che non vi fu chi il Malvasia subito non ravvisasse” (“as a dead capon, plucked, but in such a way that no one failed to promptly recognise Malvasia in it”)⁸, which provoked enduring resentment on the part of the biographer.

What is exceptional about our *Lardarolo* is its appearance as a true snapshot, with the protagonist surprised by the raw light of a flashbulb, and in a rather awkward pose. It is hard to believe that the painter intended to place this portrait of Casati on the art market, not only because of its very swift brushwork but also because of the use of a support – paper – which evidently presupposed its status as nothing more than a study. Besides, as we have just said, the subject was too true to life, and pungently so, to resonate among Bolognese collectors, or pass unscathed before the eagle eyes of local art critics. Although it is distinct from the painter’s known oeuvre, this *Portrait of Domenico Casati*, precisely for these unique characteristics, offers new and unpublished evidence with which to study the painting of genre scenes – or better, of reality – by Giuseppe Maria Crespi.

The attribution to our Bolognese master, first confirmed by the exhibition catalogue of 1935, edited by Roberto Longhi, has been supported during the present research by Angelo Mazza and Marco Riccomini. ▲ A.C.

7. L. Crespi, *Felsina Pittrice. Vite de’ Pittori bolognesi*, III, Bologna 1769, pp. 217-218.

8. Zanotti 1739, p. 42.

GIOVANNI BATTISTA BEINASCHI

FOSSANO, C. 1634 ~ NAPLES, 1688

Saint Paul

OIL ON CANVAS, 49 1/4 × 39 3/8 IN (125 × 100 CM)

PROVENANCE

It appears that this painting was given by Pope Clement XIII to the Archbishop of Besançon, Antoine Cleradins de Choiseul Beaupré (1707-1774), who bequeathed it to Saint Paul's Abbey in that city. When the Abbey was destroyed the painting was taken to the church of Saint Maurice, and thence sold with its probable pendant canvas, *Saint Peter*, as stated on the label glued onto the back of the picture at an early date. Monaco, Christie's sale, 15 June 1990, lot 32, illus. (attributed to Beinaschi); Paris, private collection.

LITERATURE

Vincenzo Pacelli and Francesco Petrucci, *Giovan Battista Beinaschi. Pittore barocco tra Roma e Napoli*, Rome, 2011, p. 348, Ad. 7 (as *God the Father*).

AS INDICATED BY A LABEL glued into the back of the picture at an early date,¹ our *Saint Paul* was accompanied by a *Saint Peter*,² its likely pendant, with which it shared the same history until they were both put up for public auction in 1990.

Francesco Petrucci has confirmed the authorship of Beinaschi, publishing the work in the addenda section of the monograph he co-wrote with Vincenzo Pacelli. According to the scholar, the canvas was painted when the artist was still in his early period, in about 1660. Indeed, the style is not yet influenced by Neapolitan painting, instead displaying an enduring link with Giovanni Lanfranco (1582-1647) and Gian Domenico Cerrini (1609-1681). The saint is depicted frontally, an open book on his lap and his right hand raised heavenward: one can imagine him in the midst of a sermon. The cold light, in dynamic contrast with areas of shadow, lends drama to the figure, and the absence of setting and the presence of ample draperies show close adherence to the Baroque style.

Beinaschi was trained in Turin, his native region, and then in Rome, where he made copies after Annibale Carracci and Giovanni Lanfranco. He settled in Naples in 1664 and remained there until his death. In 1677-1678 he returned to Rome to work with Giacinto Brandi on the decoration of the Basilica of Santi Ambrogio e Carlo al Corso. ▲ v.D.

1. The back of the canvas bears an eighteenth-century label with the following inscription: "ce tableau avec son pendant St Pierre ont été donné par le .../ au Cardinal de Choiseul Archevêque de Besançon lorsqu'il est allé chercher / la barrette à Rome. Cette tradition est certaine. Un vieillard

contemporain / du Cardinal et qui fut toujours employé dans les églises a certifié que ces deux / tableaux qui ont toujours fait l'admiration des connaisseurs avaient été donnés / en don à l'Abbaye de St Paul à Besançon. Mais lorsque cette abbaye fut / supprimée ont transporta tous les tableaux qui y

étaient à l'église St Maurice. / Le grand nombre de ces tableaux fit qu'on choisit les plus apparens et d'une / plus grande dimension en proportion avec l'étendue et la hauteur du Vaisseau / de l'église; les autres au nombre desquels se trouvaient St Pierre et St Paul / furent relégués dans un coin et

vendus pour faire un tableau de / patron. / Mathieu..."
2. *Saint Peter*, the probable pendant of our canvas, measures 124 × 98 cm. It was auctioned at Christie's in Monaco on 15 June 1990, lot 31 (attributed to Beinaschi).



POMPEO BATONI

LUCCA, 1708 ~ ROME, 1787

Bacchus *Ceres*

TWO OVALS, OIL ON CANVAS, 18 ³/₄ × 14 ³/₄ IN (47.5 × 37.5 CM)
THE BACCHUS BEARS A LATER INSCRIPTION AT UPPER LEFT: "BATTONI"
THE CERES BEARS THE INSCRIPTION "BATTONI" ON THE SICKLE

PROVENANCE

Philadelphia, private collection; Sotheby's, New York, 6 March 1975, lot 73; Rome, Galleria W. Apolloni, 1975; Milan, private collection.

LITERATURE

Anthony M. Clark, *Pompeo Batoni: A Complete Catalogue of His Works*, ed. by Edgar Peters Bowron, London, 1985, p. 291, nos. 264-265, figs. 243-244; Edgar Peters Bowron, *Pompeo Batoni. A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings* (2 vols.), New Haven and London, 2016, I, p. 329, nos. 271-272.

THESE PAINTINGS ARE MARKED BY BEAUTIFULLY refined handling, the tip of the brush creating a true description of texture, as in the hairs of the animal skin covering Bacchus' shoulders, or the ears of wheat and vine tendrils crowning the heads of Ceres and Bacchus, respectively. Our two allegorical images bring out a relatively unknown side of the art of Batoni, whose reputation lies principally on his portraits. It is no doubt for this reason that E. P. Bowron gives these two ovals a matrimonial interpretation, suggesting they could be marriage portraits, the groom personified as Bacchus, God of wine, and the bride as Ceres, Goddess of vegetation and harvests. Indeed, the youthful seductiveness of the two models lend themselves to such an idea. Bowron also connects this interpretation to the celebrated Latin phrase from a comedy by Terence (c. 195/185 – c. 159 BC), "Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus" (*The Eunuch*, 732), in other words, "Without wine and feasting, Love [Venus] gets cold". The attributes of the mythological gods, grapes and a cup, the sickle and ears of wheat, all very much in evidence, allow for their straightforward identification.

Moreover, Bowron emphasizes the unique quality, both in subject and format, of these oval paintings in Batoni's body of work; our two allegorical subjects are not recorded anywhere else in his oeuvre. Yet a fine drawing in the Besançon museum of a half-length, squared figure of *Ceres* (fig. 1) suggests the artist was planning at least one other picture of this subject.¹

Each oval has a slightly dark edge running along a quarter of the perimeter – more visible,



FIG. 1 — Pompeo Batoni, *Ceres*, Besançon, musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie





FIG. 2 — Pompeo Batoni, *Cleopatra and the Dying Mark Antony*,
© musée des Beaux-Arts de Brest Métropole

Antony executed by the artist for Nicolas de La Pinte de Livry (1715-1795), signed and dated 1763 and now housed in the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Brest (Fig. 2).³ Cleopatra's profile stands out against the dark background, and her pink, porcelain-like cheeks and the drapery twirling behind her have much in common with our *Ceres*, although the latter is in three-quarter profile. Further resemblance can be seen in the elegant pose, with the Goddess' hand holding not only the sickle but also a long braid of her light chestnut hair between her index and middle fingers. These works date from the artist's most mature period.

Batoni was trained in draughtsmanship in the art academies of Lucca before going to Rome in 1728 and studying the Classical tradition, copying Raphael and ancient sculpture, and training with Sebastiano Conca (1680-1764) and Agostino Masucci (1691-1758). He was gradually won over by the sensuality of the Baroque style, soon becoming one of the most outstanding artists, wooed by local aristocracy and prominent foreign visitors, as is clear from the portraits he made of them; his sitters included Count Nicholas Yusupov, Prince August von Sachsen-Gotha, and Grand-Duke Paul and Grand-Duchess Marie Feodorovna of Russia. He was so successful that he became the most sought-after portrait painter in Europe in the mid-eighteenth century, especially for the British gentlemen on the Grand Tour. Batoni's art stimulated the evolution of traditional Roman Classicism as it moved towards the Neo-Classical age. ▲ v.D.

as it is more marked, on the left side of the *Bacchus* – that seem to effect a simulated oculus. No doubt set within an element of vertical decoration, either painted or architectural, this optical device probably intended to accentuate the figures' relief. As for the format, fairly frequent in his oeuvre as portraitist, there exists an oval of almost identical dimensions in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Orléans with *Vulcan at His Forge* (or *Allegory of Winter*).²

Bowron suggests our two works date from about 1763, comparing their handling and expression with those of the particularly painstaking history painting of *Cleopatra and the Dying Mark*

1. Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts: a drawing of *Ceres* (black chalk, white highlights, squared, 20.9 × 26.2 cm; inv. D.1016). See E. P. Bowron, *Pompeo Batoni. A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings* (2 vols.), New Haven and London, 2016, II, p. 658, D28.

2. *Vulcan at His Forge* (or *Allegory of Winter*), Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Orléans (oil on canvas, 45.5 × 37 cm; inv. 1111), with dimensions that resemble those of our canvases – only varying by 2 centimetres in height, and identical in width. See Bowron, as in note 1, 2016,

I, p. 275, no. 225, (but with dimensions erroneously given as 10 cm higher); c. 1760. Near the flames of his forge, the God Vulcan can easily symbolize Winter, just as (in a working hypothesis), for our two pictures, *Ceres* can stand for Summer and *Bacchus* for Autumn.

3. Bowron, as in note 1, 2016, I, pp. 327-329, no. 270.



GIORGIO GIACOBONI

PIACENZA, 1716 ~ VENICE, 1777

Fisherman emptying a basket

OIL ON COPPER, 12 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ IN (31 × 26 CM) MONOGRAMMED AT LOWER LEFT
“GG” THE LETTERS INTERLACED, ONE UPSIDE DOWN, UNDER A “P”

PROVENANCE

France, private collection.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

Unpublished.

THE MONOGRAM VISIBLE IN THE LOWER LEFT CORNER, with a pair of interlaced Gs surmounted by a P, is the characteristic signature of Giorgio Giacoboni, an artist from Piacenza. He was a painter and printmaker who trained in the workshop of his older brother, Carlo (1700-1790). In 1752 he moved to Rome, where he focused on genre painting, describing picturesque subjects drawn from daily life, and evolving towards pastoral painting in his mature Venetian phase. No doubt introduced to important Roman families by Gian Paolo Panini (1691-1765), a fellow native of Piacenza who was active, like him, in the Eternal City, Giacoboni worked for the Rospigliosi princes and Cardinal Silvio Valenti Gonzaga. After Rome he settled in Venice, where he is recorded between 1754 and 1756 in the corporation of Venetian painters; in 1759 he became a member of the Accademia di Pittura e Scultura.

Our copper belongs to a series of pictures on professional crafts, and with that in mind it is here suggested that Giacoboni was also the author of two other compositions on copper resembling ours, with rounded corners, which bear the same monogram at lower left: *A Mason Pulling a Wheelbarrow* and *A Woodcutter Chopping Wood*, housed in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon (figs. 1 and 2).¹ Initially, Arnauld Brejon de Lavergnée had identified the monogram as that of the Bolognese artist Giuseppe Gambarini (1680-1725), followed by Marguerite Guillaume in her catalogue of the Italian paintings in the Dijon gallery. The reappearance of paintings by our artist with the same letters and a stylistic comparison with documented works by him now rule out such confusion, largely due to the similarity of the initials.



FIG. 1 — Giorgio Giacoboni, *A Mason Pulling a Wheelbarrow*, Dijon, musée des Beaux-Arts.





FIG. 2 — Giorgio Jacoboni, *A Woodcutter Chopping Wood*, Dijon, musée des Beaux-Arts.

Such a series relating to craftsmen no longer had the specific aim – as conceived by Annibale Carracci (1580-1609) in his *Arti di Bologna*, or in the later 1600s, in a series on the *Mestieri di Roma* by an anonymous master² – of depicting peddlers, but rather of representing actual professions vital to human society, such as fishing, building, woodcutting, and no doubt others, their depictions as yet unidentified.

Having returned from fishing, his little boat tied to a post like those used for gondolas, our young pipe-smoking fisherman empties his baskets of the water and seaweed that has mingled with his crustaceans or fish. His dog, on the edge of the boat with one paw ashore, looks at him expectantly. The uniform blue-green background recalls the colour and surface of the sea. As regards dating this copper within the painter's oeuvre, the fluid and fairly free handling of pigment would suggest a mature piece, no doubt from his Venetian period.

Jacoboni's body of work remains largely unknown, awaiting rediscovery. Apart from the picture in the Pallavicini collection with *A Brawl at an Inn*³ – much inspired by the so-called *Bambocciate* by Northern painters – there exist two genre scenes published by Dario Succi in 1992.⁴ Scholarship had addressed his drawings as early 1930⁵ but it is as printmaker that he is best known. A series of prints after his paintings made by the Venetian Pellegrino da Colle (1737-1812) for publication by Niccolò Cavalli (1730-1822) reproduces some *Genre Scenes* and *Pastoral Scenes* which also remain undiscovered.⁶ ▲ v.d.

1. Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, *Mason Pulling a Wheelbarrow and Woodcutter Chopping Wood*, Inv. 5011 and 5012 (both oil on copper, 31 × 25.4 cm., monogrammed). See Arnauld Brejon de Lavergnée, "Tableaux italiens des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles", *La Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France*, 1979, nos. 5-6, pp. 390-391, 398, fig. 11; Marguerite Guillaume, *Catalogue raisonné du Musée des Beaux-Arts: peintures*

italiennes, Dijon, 1980, p. 30, nos. 47-48.

2. Francesco Frangi, in *Da Caravaggio a Ceruti. La scena di genere e l'immagine dei pitocchi nella pittura italiana*, ed. by Francesco Porzio, exh. cat., Brescia, Museo di Santa Giulia, 28 November - 28 February 1999, pp. 464-465.

3. *A Brawl at an Inn*, Rome, Galleria Pallavicini (oil on canvas, 61 × 74.7 cm.). This formed part of a series of four pictures: "quattro quadri... – Bambocciate

– di Giorgio Jacoboni Piacentino" (1783). See Federico Zeri, *La Galleria Pallavicini in Roma*, 1959, p. 139, no. and fig. 233.

4. Dario Succi, in *Arte nelle antiche case lombarde*, exh. cat., Bergamo, 1992, pp. 72-75; Francesco Frangi, in *Da Caravaggio a Ceruti*, as in note 2 above, pp. 258-259, 449, nos. 126-127, 480.

5. Giovanni Copertini, "Disegni sconosciuti del pittore piacentino Giorgio Jacoboni", *Strenna*

piacentina, 1930, pp. 4-12.
6. Ferdinando Arisi, "Dipinti di Giorgio Jacoboni, bambocciante piacentino", *Strenna Piacentina*, 1983, pp. 5-14; Tatiana Bushmina, "Scena di genere. Dipinto di Giorgio Jacoboni nelle collezioni dell'Ermitage", *Strenna Piacentina*, 2004, pp. 89-99.

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Paris, February 2017
Édition hors commerce.

