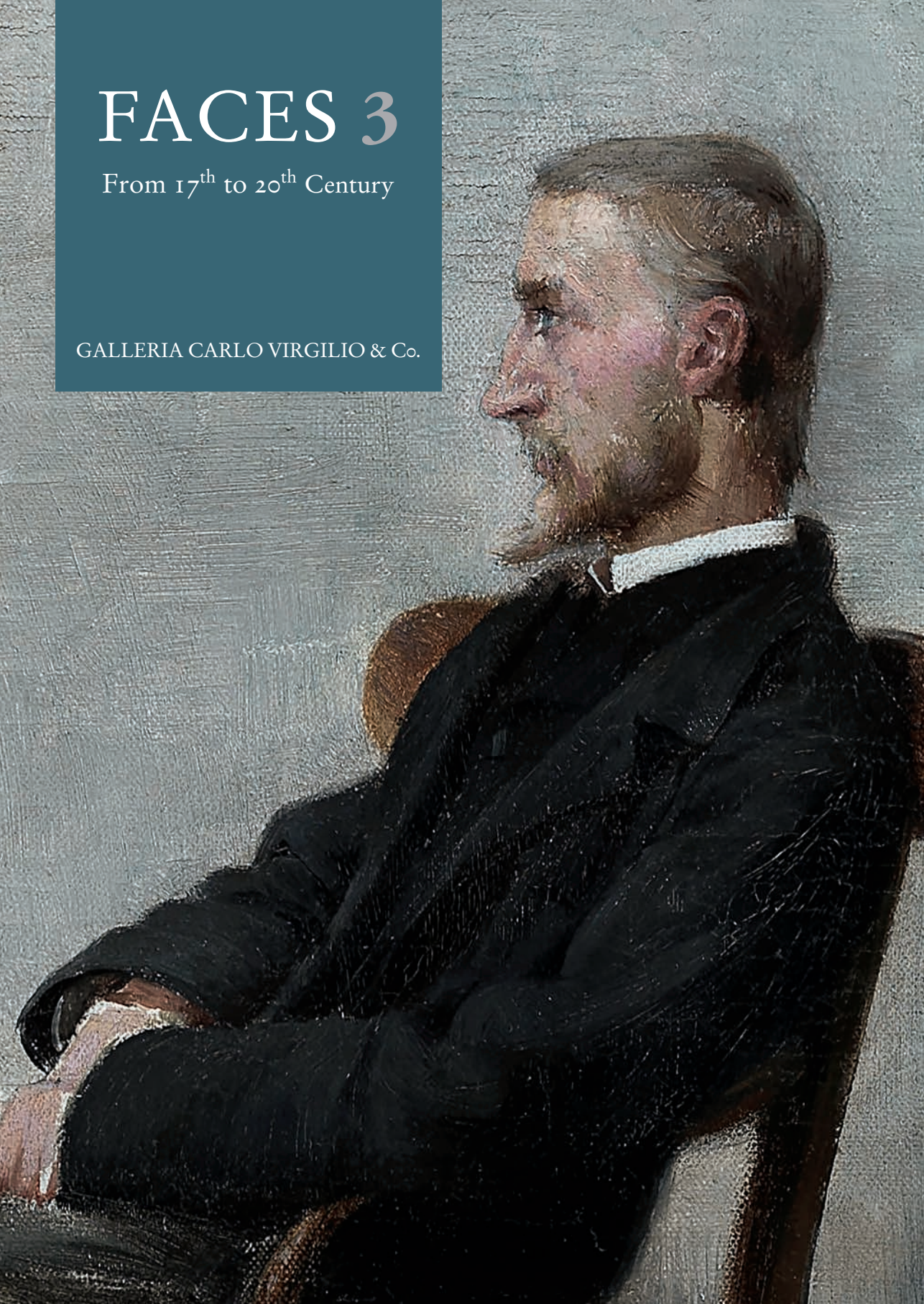


FACES 3

From 17th to 20th Century

GALLERIA CARLO VIRGILIO & Co.





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ARTE ANTICA MODERNA E CONTEMPORANEA

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CATALOGUE

I. SALVATOR ROSA

Naples 1615–Rome 1673

Screaming Skull

ca. 1640–1645

Oil on canvas, 24 x 19.3 cm

Provenance: Italy, private collection

This small canvas portrays a skull in the act of screaming (or sneering), with its mouth open wide and tufts of grey hair attached to the head. Rendered with rapid strokes of thick paint, the head emerging from a ruddy-brown background and lit by an oblique light, the work draws on the well known theme of *vanitas*, in the Nordic mould, but also evokes the sorcerous climate of the Sabbaths, a pictorial genre introduced into Italy with the diffusion of Dutch prints. The wispy waves of hair seemingly moved by the wind and the glimmers of red within the eye sockets give the cranium a disquieting sense of life and movement, making it into a near typical baroque image of metamorphosis, the nightmare of a corpse returning from the dead or a live person becoming a skeleton; a witch; or a gorgon on the point of petrifying the observer; a damned soul about to be sucked back down to hell.

The cultured and ironic character of this picture, or *divertissement*, the allusion to magic and witchery, alongside the layered rendering, the warm browns and reds, to the grey-blue hair applied with a technique approaching the Neapolitan method of Ribera (1591–1652) and Francesco Fracanzano (1612–1656), lead its attribution to the eccentric and grotesque production of Salvator Rosa, an artist whose prolific fantasy left us various examples of subjects treated in unusual ways in the most diverse formats and presented on varied supports.

At least from Rosa's Florentine years (1640–1650) skulls are recurrent in his paintings and drawings, and the presence of a death's head as the emblem of melancholy meditation on *vanitas* becomes a near distinctive trait of the artist and his poetic (Ebert-Schifferer 2008). Indeed we find it in the famous *Self-Portrait/Portrait of a Philosopher* at the Metropolitan Museum of New York (Volpi 2014, no. 140, p. 465), in the painting *Moral Philosophy* at Caldaro (Volpi 2014, no. 159, p. 477), and again in numerous works from the Roman period

(1650–1673) (*Democritus in Meditation* at the Statens Museum in Copenhagen and *Fragile Humanity* at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge to cite some more celebrated examples). Equally, among the sketches of the Florentine years, the image of a skull is found next to enigmatic philosophical figures and old witches (Mahoney 1977, nos. 13.3, 25.14).

The grotesque, imaginary and corrosive vein of the painter's fantasy was expressed with particular success in the Tuscan years above all relating to witchcraft, the eccentric genre of Nordic origins and on which Rosa focussed on several occasions for educated Tuscan clients (the Niccolini and Corsini families and Carlo De Rossi). It was a production, for the most part, aimed at small studies or rooms, often executed on precious supports (slate, copper and Ruin marble) and in small formats (H. Langdon, in *Salvator Rosa* 2010, n. 23, p. 178).

At the same time, absorbed by theatrical experiences with his companions of the Accademia dei Percossi, Salvator Rosa gave life to a new genre of pictorial portrait, the so-called "*testacce*" or heads, which is to say studies in painting and drawing of poses, expressions and characters drawn from theatrical observation and intended in most cases for intellectual friends, literary people, actors and musicians (*Portrait of a Poet*, priv. coll., Volpi 2014, no. 428, p. 428, *Portrait of a Philosopher*, whereabouts unknown, Volpi 2014, no. 84, p. 429, *Portrait*, Rome, priv. coll., Volpi 2014, no. 115, p. 449, *Portrait of a Poet*, Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux Arts, Volpi 2014, no. 151, p. 472), works that were carried out in a frenzy, satirical style, with fast, thick brushwork and an economy of colour. The small canvas with the *Skull* is half way between the genres just described, re-proposed and re-invented by Rosa from his very early years in Florence (1640–1645).

This eccentric and disturbing cranium, that seems to scream and laugh at the same time, and to come to life as a chilling



sorceress, zombie or mummy is the work of the brilliant and uninhibited imagination that was able to operate a formal and conceptual synthesis from different sources elaborated between Naples, Rome and Florence. The grotesque scream, of which *The Punishment of Prometheus* by Salvator, today at the Museo Nazionale di Arte Antica at Palazzo Corsini, is perhaps the highest point of arrival, was studied by the painter in Naples, from the models of his master Falcone (Aniello Falcone, *Head of a Screaming Warrior*, Bremen, Kunsthalle, cfr. Volpi 2014, p. 33) and of Ribera; and in Florence, at the Medici collections, home of the famous sketch by Michelangelo that portrays the *Damned Soul*, as well as Caravaggio's shield with the *Head of Medusa* (see Volpi 2014, p. 33, 195).

Rosa returns to the theme of the speaking skull (or better, singing skull) in the *Vanitas* painted on the casing of a harpsichord owned by the Maffei family, to whom the artist was tied by a deep friendship and of whom he was often a guest at their estate, Monterufoli (today at Haddo House, cfr. Volpi 2014, no. 227, p. 529). The work is most likely datable to Rosa's last sojourn in Tuscany, in 1649. Nonetheless the *Skull* in question shows a style that is still youthful, connected to his Neapolitan experiences, as yet not strongly influenced by Tuscan drawing, the same pictorial *ductus* and the same palette as works from the first half of the fifth decade. Despite the objective difficulty of establishing the exact chronological date for this grotesque piece

it is possible to demonstrate close stylistic affinities with works from the sixteen forties such as *Witch* from the Musei Capitolini and above all, given the similar palette and scream, with the *Witch*, previously Altomani (Volpi 2014, n. 158, fig. p. 167), for which this small canvas seems almost an initial thought, a preparatory note or first idea that took on the form of an impressive monumentality.

In the sixteen fifties Rosa continued to create images of witches and unsettling monstrosity, to a great extent inspired by the models elaborated in the Florentine years; such as the case of *Witchcraft* in the Corsini collection in Florence from 1655 (Volpi 2014, no. 137, p. 166) where the screaming witch carrying a light reappears to the left in the background. They are however more elaborate and complex – as the preparatory drawings show – and portrayed in a mature style, a long way from the spontaneous and enigmatic immediacy of our small *Skull*.

The playful character, abbreviated style and small dimensions seem to indicate that the canvas might have been intended for a Tuscan friend of the artist, perhaps the Maffei family for whom Salvator painted the harpsichord casing as well as numerous small paintings briefly described as portraying heads and masquerades (Volpi 2014, pp. 636-637) an inventory entry that may possibly include this ironic and terrorising *Skull* of a witch.

Caterina Volpi



2-7. CARLO AMALFI

Sorrento 1707–1787

Laura Serra, third Duchess of Cassano

Giuseppe Serra

Lady from the Serra di Cassano family

Gentleman from the Serra di Cassano family

Lady from the Serra di Cassano family

Gentleman from the Serra di Cassano family

Third quarter of 18th century

Oil on canvas, each 76 × 58.5 cm

Provenance: Naples, Serra di Cassano collection; Rome, private collection

Bibliography: Porzio 2015.

The identification of this suggestive group of portraits is supported by the presence, in three of the six paintings, of the heraldic coat of arms of the dukes of Serra di Cassano as well as their direct provenance from an heir to this important dynasty of Ligurian origin, whose fame is tied principally to the tragic events of the Neapolitan Republic from 1799 and the homonymous palazzo located on the Pizzofalcone hill in Naples from 1725 (for an historical overview of the family, see Augurio, Musella 1999, in particular pp. 378–442). Furthermore, the name “Serra di Cassano” is detectable in Wood’s light on the piece of paper held by the gentleman in the last portrait of the group.

The attributions alluding to conjugal fidelity, such as the dog and the rose shown by the lady portrayed in the third painting, firmly suggest that the six people constitute three couples, while it is harder to identify the sitters. However, an authoritative indication lies in two early twentieth century photos of the first two canvases, which belong to the Salvatore Di Giacomo Foundation preserved in the Lucchesi Palli section of the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli (N 141-N 142). The hand-written pen notes on the photos’ backing cards, probably written by the same person, identify the two portraits as the married couple Laura and Giuseppe Serra. Not knowing the sources used by Di Giacomo, whose fame as an accurate local historian merits great consideration, it might be assumed that he obtained the information from the proprietors, in turn handed down to them by their forbears.

If this is the case, knowledge of the facial features of the duchess Laura (1723–1790), of whom until now there was no

available iconographic record, it is no small thing for enthusiasts of the history of the Mezzogiorno, given the importance and renown of this figure, founder and enlightened governor of a state (today reduced to a fraction of the Comune of Cassano allo Ionio in Cosenza) that bears her name, Lauropoli, besides being mainly responsible for the magnificence of the ancestral residence of Pizzofalcone.

The series is substantially homogeneous in terms of quality and pictorial manner, beyond the obvious variations of nuance and intensity dictated by the different level of empathy shown by the subjects. The style, characterised by a robust plastic emphasis, prominent use of chiaroscuro and dense and compact rendering, indicates that it belongs to that Solimenesque line of Neapolitan painting, whose most subtle interpreters – in the genre of the portrait – were Giuseppe Bonito and Gaspare Traversi.

More precisely, the six canvases make up part of the exiguous but notable nucleus of portraits, of incisive communicative clarity, that constitutes the basis of the catalogue of the Sorrentine Carlo Amalfi, an imitator of Solimena whose successful specialisation in this field – much more conspicuous than his works of a sacred nature – is recalled in sources and confirmed by documentation (for bibliographic references see Porzio 2015, p. 7, note 5).

“Some portraits”, now lost, are documented in the archives (Aiello 1989, pp. 119–120, docs. 4–5; Porzio 2015, p. 7, note 6), carried out for Lord Hamilton between 1749 and 1750, a fact indicating that by these dates the artist was already integrated in the highest Neapolitan aristocratic circles. There



remain some unquestionable examples that are coherent with such a production, valid as comparisons with the series in question: the portraits of Princes Raimondo and Vincenzo Di Sangro in the chapel of Sansevero in Naples, attributed to him by old guide books (Sarnelli 1782, pp. 137, 142; Sigismondo 1788-1789, II, 1788, pp. 35, 38); the portrait of the lawyer Giannantonio Sergio in the Museo di San Martino, also in Naples (R. Causa, in *Seconda mostra di restauri* 1952, pp. 12-13, n. 13), previously in the Tesorone collection coupled with the portrait, now lost, of his wife and attributed to him by an inscription on the back of the canvas that is no longer legible (the *pendant* seems also to have shown the date of 1760: Porzio 2015, p. 8, note 9); the portrait of an unknown gentleman at the Museo Correale di Terranova in Sorrento (F. Bologna and G. Doria, in *Mostra del ritratto* 1954, p. 42, no. 53) and – from the same collection – those of the cardinals Antonio Sersale (Spinosa 1987, p. 112, no. 115) and Vincenzo De Petra (noted in Porzio 2015, pp. 8-9, 30, fig. 6), these last three all attributed to him for reasons of style and provenance; finally a presumed portrait of Marchese Bernardo Tanucci, current whereabouts unknown (reproduced in *Civiltà del '700* 1979, p. 24, fig. 1; cfr. Fototeca Zeri, inv. 123064,

as Bonito). To be added to this list is the drawing, later engraved by Antonio Baldi, of the portrait of the royal councillor Giuseppe Aurelio Di Gennaro for the frontispiece of his *Feriae autumnales*, published in Naples in 1752 (F. Masucci, in *I nostri omaggi* 2010, pp. 71-72, no. 15).

However, it is not only the male portraits of the series in question that obviously find confirmation in the above mentioned works (the pictorial treatment of the frock coat and wig is practically identical to the corresponding details in the presumed Tanucci); equally indicative for example are the comparisons to be made between the arrangement of the hands and the draperies of the ladies with those of Cardinal Sersale referred to above.

As regards chronology, the cut of dress suggests a date between the sixth and seventh decade of the XVIII century, which is to say between the end of the reign of Charles of Bourbon and the succession of his son Ferdinand IV; in other words the phase of the oldest surviving *corpus* of portraits by Amalfi, his later works, such as for example the Sorrentine canvases, being more inclined to the polished and brightened manner of Francesco De Mura.

Giuseppe Porzio











8. JOSEPH DEYM VON STRÍTEŽ KNOWN AS JOSEPH MÜLLER

Wognitz 1752–Prague 1804

LEONHARD POSCH

Fügen (Austria) 1750–Berlin 1831

Sir William Hamilton

ca. 1793

Polychrome wax, within a leaded glass case on a Portoro Bueno marble plinth, h 39 cm (with gilded pedestal)

Inscribed on back: "S.W. HAMILTON"

Provenance: Naples, private collection

Count Joseph Deym von Strítež (Wognitz 1752 - Prague 1804) started a military career but soon abandoned it for unknown reasons, possibly following a duel, and – having changed his name into the more anonymous Joseph Müller – reappeared in Vienna as a wax sculptor. There is a dearth of information on his apprenticeship, but a piece of news appeared in the «Wiener Zeitung» of 6 February 1793, citing a sojourn in France where he made wax figures. Towards 1791 he went into business with the sculptor Leonhard Posch (Finsing

1750 - Berlin 1831) who, having given up sculpture in marble for health reasons, devoted himself to making small wax portraits and medals. As Posch recalls in his autobiography, his job was to make the figures, which were then coloured, dressed and given real hair by Müller-Deym (cfr. Deutsch 1948; Kurz 1968; Forschler-Tarrasch 2002; Hatwagner 2008; Daninos 2011).

The Viennese exhibition that was held in 1789 at the Kohlmarkt and, a few months later, at the Stock-Im-Eisen-Platz, immediately received great success despite the unfortunate episode involving the arrival of the police to remove, by order of the emperor, figures of Marie Antoinette, Cardinal de Rohan and Marie Nicole Leguay d'Oliva, which is to say the protagonists of the famous «affair of the necklace» in which the queen was falsely accused of buying a costly piece of jewellery through Cardinal de Rohan; an event considered one of the harbingers of the French Revolution. Nonetheless, relations between Müller-Deym and the court remained good, to the extent that in February 1790 he was granted permission to make a cast of the face of Emperor Joseph II two hours after his death and to exhibit it. Besides the wax figures, the exhibition included Wunderkammer objects, plaster casts of classical sculptures, automatons and a mechanical organ that played *Trauermusik*, funeral music specifically composed by Mozart: *Fantasia in F minor*. In 1792 Maria Teresa di Bourbon, wife of Emperor Francis II, requested life-size wax figures of the royal family to send to Naples for her mother Maria Carolina. After making the figures, Müller-Deym oversaw





their transport to Naples, travelling there in company with Posch. In November 1793 he wrote from Naples of the satisfactory outcome of the delivery, specifying that the figures were highly appreciated and were located in the private apartments. That the realism of the wax figures was indeed admired at court is witnessed by a series of letters sent in the month of November and the succeeding month by Maria Carolina and her daughter Maria Cristina to Maria Teresa (cit. in Goudie 2013).

Posch and Müller-Deym remained some months in Naples, producing wax portraits of the royal family, who paid them a salary during their sojourn. The works that have survived are the bust of Ferdinand IV of Bourbon (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Porträtsammlung, Bildarchiv und Fideikommissbibliothek), partly distorted by a heavy nineteenth century restoration, and that of Maria Carolina, found in the deposits of the Palazzo Reale in Naples and correctly attributed by Alvar González-Palacios (*Civiltà del '700* 1980, p. 258; Daninos 2011, p. 231; *Avere una bella cera* 2012, p. 121).

While in Naples the two artists also entered into contact with Sir William Douglas Hamilton, the famous British diplomat, collector of antiquities and

naturalist, and obtained permission to take casts from his renowned collection of ancient vases. Hamilton's "Etruscan" vases, which conditioned the entire European figurative culture thanks to their publication in splendid illustrations from 1766-67, would become, as wax versions, one of the attractions at the Müller-Deym exhibition in Vienna, while in a pamphlet for visitors from 1797 it stated "eine Sammlung von etwa 150 theils großen etruschischen Originalvasen, von denen Ritter Hamilton nebst dem berühmten Director Tischbein ein weitläufiges Werk, mit den Abzeichnungen der Figuren, publizirte" (*Beschreibung* 1797, p. 60).

The bust presented here was very likely realised on the occasion of the two Austrian artists' Neapolitan sojourn, when Hamilton, who is portrayed wearing the British Order of the Bath on his chest, was 63 years old, an age compatible with the apparent age of the subject of the wax portrait. Supporting this chronology for example is the resemblance of facial features with the two drawings portraying Hamilton by Dominique Vivant Denon, also carried out in Naples around the same time (1782-1787).

Andrea Daninos has suggested the attribution of the bust to the two Austrian wax modellers, generously and helpfully indicating the details of their artistic affairs and their relations with Sir William Hamilton. In the list of works known today that can be linked to the pair, he recalled the existence of a profile portrait of Archduke Joseph Anton Johann, signed and dated 1793 (previously Vienna, Khöler collection, *Kollektion Dr. Köler* 1917, p. 27, no. 180), produced in small format, smaller than life size, as is the case for the portrait of Hamilton.



Joseph Müller-Deym, Leonhard Posch, *Maria Carolina of Austria*, ca. 1793, Naples, Palazzo Reale.



9. PIETRO BENVENUTI

Arezzo 1769–Florence 1844

Lady Dressed in Mourning

ca. 1797

Oil on canvas, 76 x 59.8 cm

Provenance: Florence, private collection

The portrait is attributable to Pietro Benvenuti, leading protagonist of the years that mark the passage from Neoclassicism to the affirmation of Romanticism as well as director of the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence from 1804 to the year of his death (Fornasari 2004; *Pittore imperiale* 2009).

The canvas dates from his youth and in particular the years spent in Rome, which Benvenuti reached in the spring of 1792, after a brief early training in Florence, at the then nascent Academy of Fine Arts. A series of stylistic considerations confirm both the attribution to Benvenuti, and the dating to around the second half of the 1790s and the very beginning of the next century. An important initial comparison is the *Portrait of Savina Gallina Fumagalli* (priv. coll.), signed and dated 1797. Although not mentioned in sources, it is the inscription on the back that provides the name of the artist, as well as the date and place of execution. The canvas was painted in Rome, where Benvenuti had occasion to frequent important salons, such as that of Angelika Kauffmann. Besides the quality of both paintings, the stylistic similarity shared by the two portraits is immediately obvious. In addition to the manner in which the face is rendered, Benvenuti's hand and talent are recognisable in certain details, among which the lace on the clothes of the woman who is pictured as youthful but dressed in mourning. Comparable examples stand in both the *Portrait of Diana Albergotti Della Penna*, painted in 1807, and the *Portrait of a Noblewoman of the House of Giorgini*, datable to between 1807 and 1810. The style of dress can be assigned to the late seventeen and early eighteen hundreds and from a detailed reading of sources it can be supposed that the portrait in question belongs to the prolific production of portraits mentioned therein. Taking into account the fact that many works dating to the Roman period have recently been tracked down,

including relevant documentary references, it is possible to identify in the sitter a noble woman of the Capitoline aristocracy, no doubt well-to-do, as shown by the necklace she wears. The painting under examination is to be added to a rich list of portraits, including the *Portrait of Maria Cesti*, today belonging to a private collection and identifiable as the daughter of Pellicciaro al Corso, of whom we know from sources that Benvenuti made a portrait in oil and a small copy in pastel as well as his self-portrait, also in pastel and found with the above. Carried out in pastel on paper, the writing on the back of the *Portrait of Maria Cesti* states: "This portrait of Maria Cesti, sister of Lorentino, was done by Pietro Benvenuti when first studying" and at lower right: "P. Benvenuti dis".

Liletta Fornasari



10. TEODORO MATTEINI

Pistoia 1754–Venice 1831

Young Lady with a Medallion

1797

Oil on canvas, 67 x 49.5 cm

Signed and dated bottom right: “Teodoro Matteini / f. in Bergamo / 1797”

Provenance: Bergamo, Davide Cugini collection; Bologna, Eugenio Busmanti collection

In the shade of a woody scene, that opens out in the distance on a mountainous horizon lit by the rosy light of evening, a young girl in a white dress with a high waist sits on a grassy knoll, in a melancholic attitude, with her head tenderly inclined and a sweet, thoughtful expression on her face. Leaning against the trunk wrapped around in strands of ivy, symbol of devotion and eternal passion, in her left hand she is holding a medallion with the profile in miniature of her distant loved one, identified with certainty, thanks to particulars of the uniform – the blue cloth and high red collar – as belonging to a French officer in Napoleon’s army at the time of his first dazzling campaign in Italy.

The painting’s inscription, clearly handwritten by the artist on the rock at the bottom right, relates that the work was executed by Teodoro Matteini from Pistoia, in the fateful year of 1797, in Bergamo, where on 13 March the local revolutionaries, with the backing of the French, brought to an end the centuries-long dominion by the Republic of Venice on their city and territory.

A charming canvas of extremely high pictorial quality and sophisticated tones, subtly playing with the range of browns, greens and greys, in perfect balance with the maiden’s skin colour and the whiteness of her full dress, as she sits in the foreground, central to the composition; it is one of the



Teodoro Matteini, *Portrait of a Young Officer in the French Army*, 1796-1797, Rome, Museo Napoleonico



Teodoro Matteini, *Young Lady with a Letter*, 1797 ca., Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia



best examples of portraiture by Matteini. Alongside more traditional half bust portraits, depicted life size with a cohesive background, skilfully rendering naturalism and the psychology of the sitter, he had great success with these attractive full figure portraits in small format, generally set in the open, portrayed with a strong sentimental tone and in an anglicizing taste, comparable with coeval productions in portraiture by Giovanni Battista Dell'Era, Jacques-Henri Sablet and Louis Gauffier, which he began to paint towards the end of his twenty-five-year stay in the Eternal City, begun in 1770.

Having left Rome in 1794 to go to Florence and then on to Milan (1795-1796) and Bergamo, where he stayed until June 1796 and January-February of 1798, by March of that year Matteini was settled in Venice, where he would remain – after a few months in Padua, between the summer of 1799 and January 1800 – taking on, in 1807, the prestigious chair of painting at the re-founded Academy of Fine Arts, where he would be the appreciated maestro of an entire generation of painters; just to mention a few, Odorico Politi, Giovanni Demin and Francesco Hayez – who remembers him in his memoirs with affection and admiration (Hayez 1995, p. 40) –, Ludovico Lipparini, Michelangelo Grigoletti, Placido Fabris and Cosroe Dusi (see Pavanello 2002, pp. 13-94, in particular pp. 13-21).

From among the fifteen portraits by Teodoro Matteini definitely carried out during the course of his stay at Bergamo that have come to light until the present today (Gori Bucci, 2006, pp. 146-147, 366, 378-379, 383, 389, 391; for Matteini portraiture see also; B. Falconi, *Ritratto della famiglia dell'avvocato Giovanni Battista Cromer*, in *Da Canova a Modigliani* 2010, pp. 215, 285-286, cat. 118; Mazzocca, Falconi 2010, pp. 157-163, ill. XVI, XVII, 210-216) only two other likenesses answer to the winsome typology of the updated international style of our painting: the *Portrait of a Young Lady with a Sheet of*

Music, signed and dated “Teodoro Matteini fece / in Bergamo 1797” (Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia, in storage at Ca' Pesaro since 1938; oil on canvas, 63 x 50 cm, Gori Bucci 2006, pp. 197, 383, cat. 32), and the *Portrait of a Young Republican*, signed and dated unclearly (1796 or 1797?), “[Teodoro] Matteini / F. in Bergamo / 179[?]” (Rome, Museo Napoleonico; fig. 1, oil on canvas, 66.5 x 51.5 cm, B. Falconi in *Napoleone e la Repubblica Italiana (1802-1805)* 2002, pp. 177-178, cat. 77, not reproduced; Gori Bucci 2006, pp. 184-185, 378, cat. 21), more correctly identifiable as a *Portrait of a Young Officer in the French Army*, thanks to the recognition of the jacket's blue colour (by Marco Pupillo of the Museo Napoleonico of Rome), seemingly black due to a change in the pictorial pigment, in which we are tempted to see the pendant of the work under examination. But it must be remembered that the *Portrait of a Young Lady with a Letter* (Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia, in storage at Ca' Pesaro since 1938; fig. 2, oil on canvas, 59 x 47 cm (Gori Bucci 2006, pp. 197-198, 383, cat. 33), which although traditionally dated to 1802, on the basis of the inscription in our opinion wrongly interpreted, today no longer legible, should also be dated to 1797, due to the obvious similarity with our small canvas, both in compositional structure and in the figure of the young sitter.

The painting, that reached us through heredity from lawyer Davide Cugini, famous twentieth century legal expert from Bergamo, noted patron of the arts, art historian, and collector of antique and contemporary art, was passed on during the nineteen nineties to the city's antique market (Galleria Michelangelo - Galleria d'Arte Due Bi), and thence to that of Milan (Carlo Orsi) (Gazzetta 1997, p. [7], colour ill.), where it was bought in 1997 by the Bolognese collector and art historian Eugenio Busmanti, who died prematurely in November 2018.

Bernardo Falconi



II. GASPARE LANDI

Piacenza 1756–1830

Bianca Milesi

ca. 1811–1814

Oil on canvas, 61 × 48.5 cm

On the back of the original canvas, apocryphal Appiani initials: “AA”

Provenance: Rome, artist’s collection; from 1830, Rome, Pietr’Antonio Landi; Milan, private collection

Bibliography: Mellini 2000, pp. 74, 116, fig. 22; Mellini 2004, pp. 45, 58.

Identified from an archive photograph (Bologna, Fototeca Zeri), the painting was published by Gian Lorenzo Mellini with the correct attribution to Gaspare Landi and the hypothesis that the sitter was the miniaturist daughter of Marianna Waldestein, marchesa de Haro di Santa Cruz, to whom the funerary monument commissioned to Canova was to be dedicated.

Today the opportunity for direct study of the work, issuing from a Lombard collection, fortunately coincides time wise with Federico Piscopo’s research into the figure of Bianca Milesi, due for imminent publication (Piscopo 2020). The art historian, whom I thank for sharing his research, suggests that the young artist portrayed by Landi is indeed the Milanese painter, writer and patriot, of whom it was known that Landi had carried out a painted portrait. The inventory of twenty-two of his paintings inherited in 1830 by his son Pietr’Antonio included the entry “Portrait of La Milesi” (Scarabelli 1845, p.116), as well as other likenesses of artist colleagues or patrons, such as the portraits of *Tommaso Minardi* (a copy is at the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Rome), *Giuseppe Bossi*, and the *Self-portrait with client Giambattista Landi* (Novara, priv. coll.), probably kept by the artist for sentimental reasons, along with demanding history paintings that he had carried out as demonstration pieces, without commission, such as a *Mary Stuart* of unknown whereabouts, and the famous monumental painting of *Oedipus at Colonus*, recently found (Grandesso 2018).

Piscopo underlines the similarity of Landi’s painter with known portraits of Bianca Milesi, the drawing carried out in 1808 by Andrea Appiani and presented by her to the Romanian poet Gheorghe Asachi (Muzeul de Artă, Drobeta-Turnu Severin,

previously C. Istrati collection, published in Bacaloglu 1912), when they were both artistic apprentices in Rome under Michael Köch, the drawing by Asachi himself, the oil painting by Sophie Reinhard (Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle) and the engraving by Camilla Guiscardi Gandolfi of 1829, whose close resemblance in her features seems decisive in confirming the identification.

Originating from a well-to-do entrepreneurial family from Bergamo, Milesi had received the traditional education for upper class young ladies, in a convent. Impatient of such conventional limits and desirous of greater learning, she enlarged her knowledge of figures of the enlightenment and of Italian poets under the learned instruction of a private tutor, cultivating by means of a passion for Alfieri a patriotic feeling and an aversion to foreign domination. She then embraced painting in Milan, benefiting from the guidance of Appiani and gathering around her writers and artists such as the engraver Giuseppe Longhi, the painter Giuseppe Diotti and the architects Luigi Bossi and Luigi Canonica (Souvestre 1854, pp. 25-26).

With the aim of improving her skills in order to be able to dedicate herself with seriousness to the profession of artist, Bianca Milesi moved to Rome at the end of 1810 with her mother and the abbot Tordeo, relying for painting lessons on Michael Köch, an artist in the circle of Felice Giani who was then employed in the Napoleonic decoration of the Campidoglio and Quirinale (cfr. A. Imbellone, in *L’officina neoclassica* 2009, pp. 183-185). She set up in an atelier, prolonging her stay beyond the her mother’s return to Milan, under the protection of Giovanni Gherardo de Rossi, famous playwright and writer of fine arts, frequenting Antonio Canova and the German painter Sophie



Reinhard, and through them, Giuseppe Tambroni, who was then setting up the Accademia d'Italia at Palazzo Venezia, the landscape artist Giambattista Bassi, and members of the Nordic community such as Joseph Rebell, Peter Cornelius and Christian Daniel Rauch (Souvestre 1854, pp. 28-34).

At her return home in 1815, Milesi gradually abandoned painting in favour of writing, publishing biographies of Sappho and Gaetana Agnesi, and political passion, cultivated in her literary salon and in the secret revolutionary society "giardinieri della carboneria." With Federico Confalonieri she attempted to introduce mutual welfare in Lombardy and in 1820 she visited Melchiorre Gioia in prison; briefly arrested herself the following year. Expatriate in Switzerland, France and England she then settled in Genoa, where she frequented liberal circles and was a follower of Mazzini; and married the doctor Charles Mojon. She then left Italy for Paris, where she nurtured an interest for children's educational literature and epistolary relationships with eminent intellectuals such as Silvio Pellico, Alessandro Manzoni, Nicolò Tommaseo and Jean Charles Léonard Sismonde de Sismondi (cfr. Souvestre 1854; Arisi Rota 2010).

Landi was very close to Canova and to de Rossi, who had witnessed his artistic debut

from the fundamental articles published in *Memorie per le Belle Arti*, and he therefore had the opportunity to frequent the young artist Milesi during her Roman sojourn.

The beautiful portrait remains one of his masterpieces, alongside those of *Caterina Anguissola da Travo* (Piacenza, Musei Civici di Palazzo Farnese), *Conte Giacomo Rota* or *Antonio Canova* (the two versions: Rome, Galleria Borghese and Bergamo, Accademia Carrara). As in these examples, the sitter is portrayed in the close foreground, against an abstract background, seemingly caught in the moment with great naturalness. Her pose of immense ease and familiarity constitutes an attribute as much as the pen holder and together with her expressive facial features really does put across the qualities that made Milesi famous; her beauty and the social amiability of her character as well as the vitality of her many intellectual talents that caused her to become a symbol of self-determination and female emancipation. The rendering in numerous progressive touches invigorates the chromatic passages of the skin as if it were a live surface and draws the studied carelessness of the details in the hairstyle of someone who has sacrificed every personal luxury in order to buy books.

Stefano Grandesso



12. GAETANO FORTE

Salerno 1790–Naples 1871

Flute Player

ca. 1813–1816

Oil on paper on canvas, 24 x 25.5 cm

Inscription on the frame, in pencil: “Cutolo”

Provenance: Naples, possibly Alessandro Cutolo (1899–1995) collection; Rome, private collection

The subject, portrayed three-quarters while playing the flute, is seen in an enclosed space with a grey background that is dark but easily made out - articulated by the table on which the score lies open, prominent in the foreground - with the figure's mass obliquely submerging into the wall behind, balanced by the opposite line of the flute. The man is dressed in a coat of black cloth with a slightly raised collar and a white necktie, knotted in the front.

We do not know who the flautist was, nor have we been able to identify him in the portraits of various maestri of the early nineteenth century. Equally, nor does the name “Cutolo”, written on the frame, shed light in this respect; however, since it dates back to the nineteenth century, it seems that it might refer to one of the painting's owners, perhaps the noted professor Alessandro Cutolo (1899–1995) who had a small art collection and lived in Naples, the city from which the painting originates and where the surname is common.

A first non-stylistic observation enables us to date the work to not beyond the first two decades of the nineteenth century, years indicated for the cut of the garment and the type of necktie, already in fashion in the late seventeenth century, as well as the model of flute, probably made in boxwood, with four pieces and only one key, on which the flautist is placing the little finger of his right hand. These typologies would soon be outdated: that of the instrument, already developed in the eighteenth century, would undergo substantial changes from the start of the nineteenth, such as the addition of other keys. Hence, the flute depicted appears to be an old model and the polished sockets where the various joints meet indicates that it is of Italian make. Indeed this characteristic is typical of Italian flutes from the seventeenth century onwards and is rarely found, and if so much

less accentuated, in French instruments (Gatti 1997, pp. 270–280).

The stylistic elements help us to date the work and reach a sustainable attribution. The painting is an expression of the culture that developed from David onwards, spread by his followers, often in the wake of the Napoleonic successes. I believe that it originated in a Neapolitan milieu where various French painters worked for the court, among others Jean-Baptiste Wicar who, summoned by Joseph Bonaparte in 1806, reformed the statutes and teaching of the pre-existent Accademia Borbonica, which re-opened in 1809. His pupil and, at least once his collaborator, was the Gaetano Forte who inherited his draftsman's rigour and the ability to analyse people introspectively and in physical reality (Saccone 1980, p. 197; L. Martorelli, in *Da Canova a Modigliani* 2010, p. 236, p. 236). These characteristics, proper to Forte's portraiture, appear in our flute player, from the intensely depicted face – for instance the thinning hair with locks falling forward, referred to as *à coup de vent* – and the concentrated expression he is adopting as he plays a musical piece that is not identifiable because the notes are illegible, that were indeed perhaps never made out with precision. A close parallel can be drawn with the *Portrait of Domenico Chelli* (Naples, Museo di San Martino), datable to 1813, where Forte catches a passing expression with intensity and forms the strong hands with touches and markings in whites and browns, with similar results to those seen in the flautist. The two paintings strike me as close in time too, dating to Forte's early activity, when he was still attentive to suggestions from Maestro Wicar. The small size of the work is unusual for the artist, and the medium, oil on paper, is more frequently used by landscape painters.

Renato Ruotolo



13. JOHN JACKSON

Lastingham 1778–London 1831

Antonio Canova

1819

Oil on canvas, 127 × 101 cm

Hand-written label on back of frame: “From [...] / John Chapman Walker Esq: / late of Whitby now of Hillfield, Cheddar / Canova portrait by John Jackson R.A. / [pain]ted at Rome for Chantry and bought [af]ter his / [...] Chapman”; further label, printed and in pen on back of canvas: “Venta de la Galeria de Cuadros de D. Lorenzo Pellerano / Cuadro No. 325 de nuestro catálogo / Cat. Gral. N. 442 J.C. Naón y Cí. S. en C. 757-Bmé. Mitre-757 / 241 del Inventario Judicial, Agosto de 1938.”

Provenance: London, Sir Francis Chantrey, 1819–1841 ca.; Whitby and Cheddar, John Chapman Walker Esquire, bought from Chantrey, from 1841 ca.; Argentina, Lorenzo Pellerano collection, up to 1936; USA, private collection; Sotheby’s London 2003; England, private collection

Exhibitions: London, Royal Academy, 1820

Bibliography: *The Exhibition* 1820, p. 13, cat. 186; *Memoir of Antonio Canova* 1822 (engraving by James Thomson); “John Jackson” 1831; *The Georgian Era* 1834; Bryan 1849, p. 355; Honour 1998, pp. 166–167.

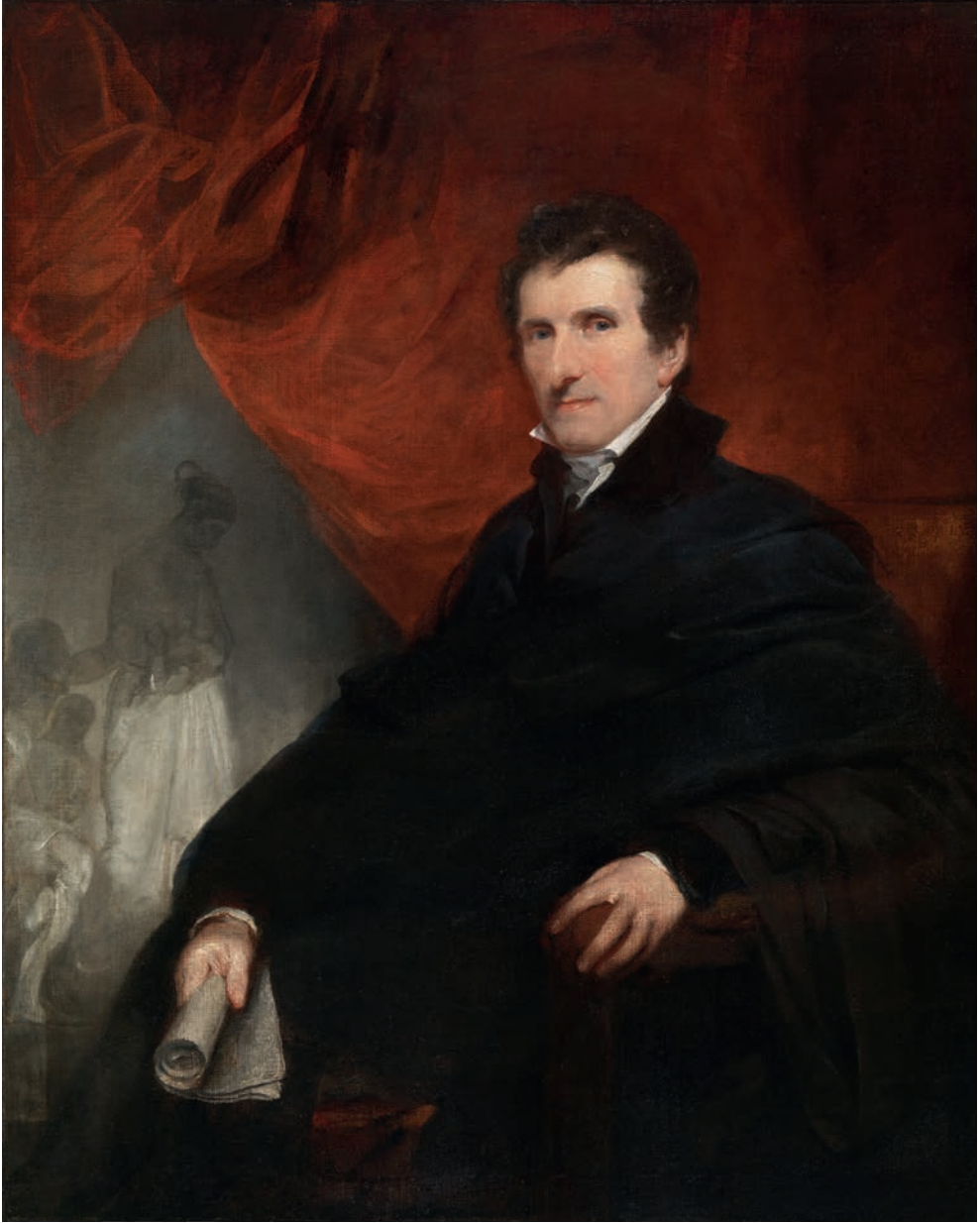
Prominent portraitist of the Georgian era and member of the Royal Academy from 1818, John Jackson “painted the portraits of many distinguished persons”, among whom the architect George Soane (Sir John Soane’s Museum), the sculptor John Flaxman (Wedgwood Museum), and Antonio Canova, which was the one that, as his biographer recalls, “obtained the greatest notice” (Bryan 1849, p. 355).

His contemporaries recognised in him a personal style of vigorous application, respectful of reality and not indulgent towards adulation. Compared to one of the other main portraitists of his time, Thomas Lawrence, he appeared resolved to avoid the flattery of fashion and ostentation, in favour of an expressive portrayal, thus showing himself successor to Reynolds. “It was not, like that of Lawrence, fitted only for the fashion and taste of the day; he attended to the character of the person, and was not very solicitous about the work of the tailor or milliner. He did not seem to understand, or would not represent, the affected graces and nauseous airs of what is called polished life; and he may be considered as one of the most honest of all the children of latter. He had an uncommon readiness of hand; his colouring was clear and splendid, and he resembled Sir Joshua Reynolds more than any other artist has done since his day.” (*Ibidem*)

In 1819 Jackson undertook a trip to Italy with the famous sculptor Francis Chantrey that took them to Rome, passing through Geneva, Florence, Venice, Parma and Milan. After staying at Carrara, where his friend ordered marbles and signed his name at the famous Fantiscritti marble quarry, significantly beneath that of Canova and next to that of Giambologna, they reached the Hotel de Londres in Rome on 13 October, to stay in the city for over a month.

The journey to Italy presented Chantrey with the opportunity to measure himself directly against the greatness of Canova and the poetic horizon of ideal sculpture practised in Rome by many other sculptors, among whom the Dane, Bertel Thorvaldsen. Split between admiration for Canova’s masterpieces and the need to define his own international dimension, Chantrey decided on his return to definitively abandon the poetic and allegorical subjects by which he had been tempted. He opted for the genres he favoured more, those of the portrait and monumental and funerary sculpture, where fidelity to reality and to feeling indicated a path of authentic “Englishness,” independent as much of the Roman school as of the heritage of the antique (cfr. Cunningham 1820, pp. 8–9; Dunkerley 1995, p. 49; Yarrington 2000, p. 133–136).

Over the course of the journey, Jackson also cultivated his style, confronting the pictorial



masterpieces of the past, for example Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love*, which he copied with admirable resolve in only four days, at Palazzo Borghese (*The Georgian Era* 1834).

An extraordinary account of the two artists' sojourn is to be found in the diary of the Irish poet Thomas 'Anacreon' Moore, later biographer of Byron, who recalled the intense days passed among the ancient and modern masterpieces of Rome and the frequent visits paid to Canova's studio (Moore 1983, pp. 240-257; Yarrington 2000, pp. 143-148). On 30 October Moore admired the model for the equestrian statue for Naples and the statue of *Pius VI*, the following day the almost-finished *Theseus and the Centaur*, when he was finally introduced to Canova, "who was sitting for his picture to Jackson for Chantry [sic]", who had commissioned the painting. On 6 November he was again present at Canova's sittings for Jackson, then noting among the masterpieces in the studio "the Female leading the Old Man, for the monument of the Archduchess Christine of Austria," which the painter chose to introduce into the background of his portrait as an attribute to the great sculptor.

After visiting the studios of Massimiliano Laboureur, Bertel Thorvaldsen, Ridolfo Schadow and Vincenzo Camuccini, the friends then had the privilege of seeing *Pauline Borghese as Venus Victrix* at Palazzo Borghese, not usually on display to the public, lit by candle-light, "Canova himself holding the light & pausing with a sort of fond lingering on all the exquisite beauties of this most perfect figure" (Moore 1983, p. 253). And finally, including another two illustrious Royal Academicians, Thomas Lawrence and William Turner, they visited the Venetian Academy of Painting, observing nude life study, in action in the poses of classical statues, and from there the Academy of San Luca, where they witnessed another hundred students busy on nude studies. Both Jackson and Chantrey were then elected honorary members of San Luca on the recommendation of Canova.

Once back in the homeland in 1820, the portrait of Canova painted by Jackson and belonging to Chantrey was immediately exhibited at the Royal Academy, resulting in enormous interest in the periodical press "as one of the finest specimens of true character and true colour in British portraiture" (*The*

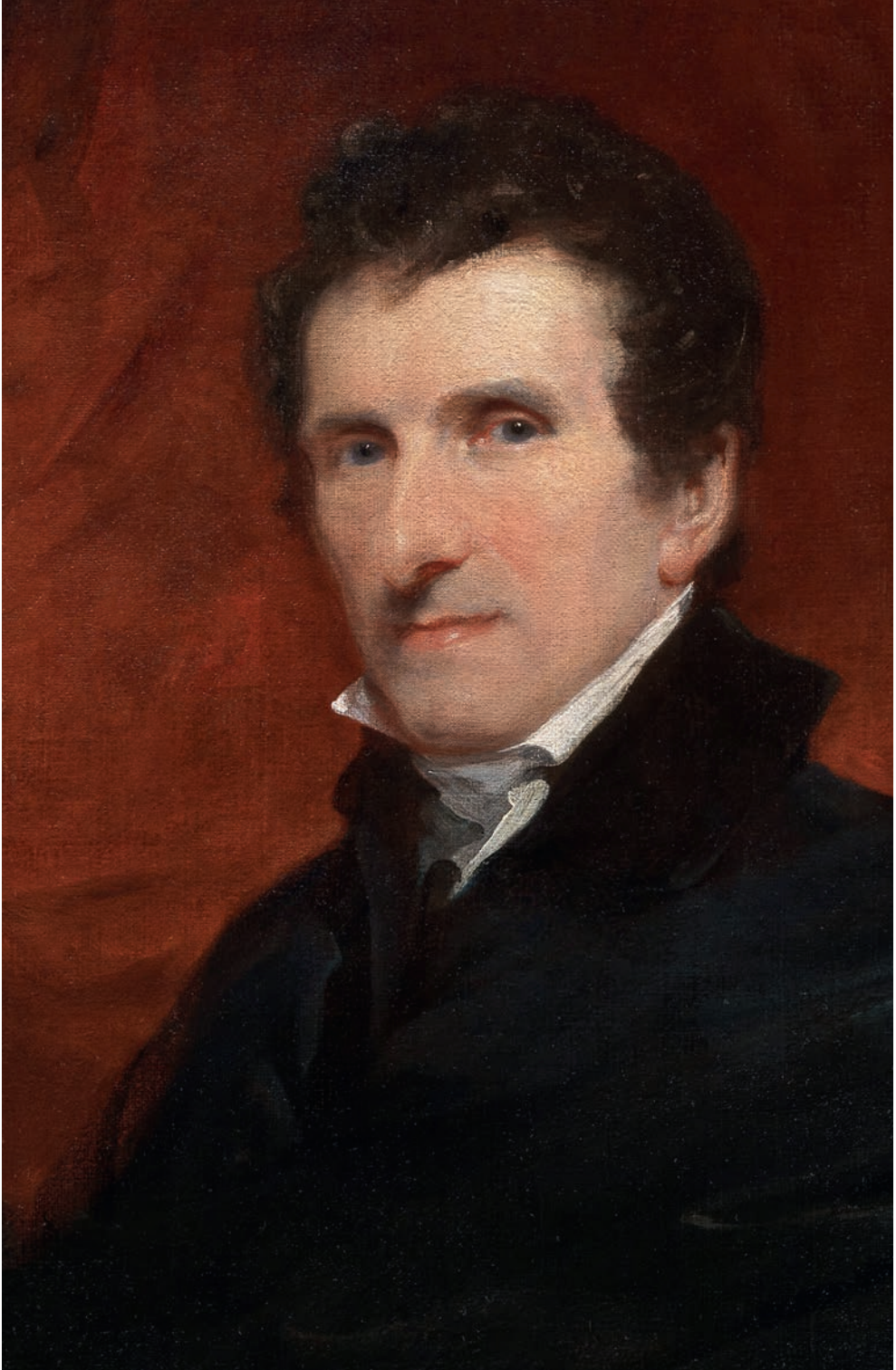
Georgian Era 1834), and transferred into an engraving by James Thomson for the *European Magazine* ("Memoir of Antonio Canova" 1822).

J.S. Memes, biographer of Canova, sanctioned the primacy of this portrait, among the many of Canova, for its proximity to the "intellectual character" of the sculptor's *Self-Portrait*, "and consequently to the true expression of the individual" (Memes 1825, p. 498). Without suffering in a comparison with the unrivalled portrait by Lawrence, begun in 1815 in London and completed in that same year in Rome in 1819 and then exhibited at the artist's studio (Possagno, Gypsotheca & Museo Antonio Canova), the painting by Jackson, in its cursive pictorial rendering, exalts the expressiveness of the sitter's face and hands, which seem rapidly drawn from life. Lit up by the play of light, these fundamental details are enhanced by contrast with the vast, dark area of clothing and the sumptuous red of the hangings, recalling the prototypes of van Dyck.

The curtain opens on the above-mentioned group of the young mourner supporting the old man, taken from the funerary *cortège* of the *Monument to Marie Christine of Austria*, which could constitute the poetic motif linking Canova's work and Chantrey's predilection. As shown by the RA exhibition of 1817, where Chantrey had programmatically aimed at a significant contrast between the sentimental character of his *Monument to Ellen Jane and Marianne Robinson*, with the moving figures of the two girls sleeping in each other's arms, and Canova's refined Olympian *Hebe* and *Terpsichore* presented on the same occasion (Yarrison, pp. 138-141).

The painting put forward here is the celebrated original painted from life in Rome, belonging to Chantrey and finally re-found, as seen by the label of provenance on the back. The painting's success must later have encouraged Jackson to make autograph replicas for collectors. Such as the famous version in New Haven (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection; cfr. M. Lafranconi, in *Canova Thorvaldsen* 2019, cat. III.9, pp. 156, 332), which appears slightly more finished, and the one reduced to the dimensions of the bust that was auctioned by Christie's (London, 27 April 2007).

Stefano Grandesso



14. BERTEL THORVALDSEN

Copenhagen 1770–1844

Rosa Taddei

1826

Marble, h. 50 cm, base 24.5 x 25 cm

Provenance: John Cam Hobhouse, first Lord Broughton; London, Hobhouse heirs

Bibliography: S. Grandesso in *Da Canova a Modigliani* 2010, pp. 222–223, cat. 6; Grandesso 2010, pp. 239–240, 281; Grandesso 2015, pp. 239–240, cat. 365, p. 282.

Rosa Taddei (Trento 1799 – Rome 1869) was heir in the nineteenth century to the great improvisational poetesses who prospered at the end of the previous century: the famous Corilla Olimpica, whose real name was Maria Maddalena Morelli, crowned poetess laureate at Campidoglio in 1778, and Teresa Bandettini, who was equally successful immediately after her, as Amarilli Etrusca.

Madame de Staël was inspired by the figure of Corilla Olimpica for the heroine of *Corinne ou l'Italie* (1807), celebrating her imagination and eloquence as Italian national talents. The novel contributed to the fame abroad of this genre of Arcadian extraction, which literary people and foreign travellers followed as one of the singular cultural attractions of Italy and that also drew the attention of noteworthy figures known to Thorvaldsen, such as the writer and art critic Carl Ludwig Fernow, who in 1808 wrote the essay *Gli improvvisatori*, and Hans Christian Andersen who took inspiration from them for his novel *The Improvisatore*, of 1835.

Rosa Taddei came from a family of actors. Her father Francesco was a famous comic actor at the head of a theatrical company and his brother Luigi, also a painter and poet, was one of the best-known character actors of the time. Rosa always considered her homeland to be Naples, where she was educated in classical studies by her uncle Emanuele, noted man of letters, and made her debut as a tragic actress at 17 years of age. She also performed as a singer, but soon discovered the talent for improvisational poetry that secured her fame throughout Italy and earned her a place among the shepherdesses of Arcadia with the name of Licori Partenopea. She retired quite early, afterwards making occasional appearances for charitable purposes, and in 1832 she married Vincenzo Mozzidolfi, man of letters (cfr. Stefanucci Ala 1892).

Numerous foreign writers have left us

descriptions of her performances, referred to as “*accademie*,” which were also the attraction at Roman celebrations given in honour of Royal personages passing through the capital – such as that in 1818 organised by the ambassador of Austria, Prince Kaunitz, for Ludwig of Bavaria or the event of 1829 given by Chateaubriand at Villa Medici for Grand Duchess Elena of Russia – invited to put forward subjects for Rosa’s poetic variations. The German poet Wilhelm Müller described one of her performances, held at the Teatro Valle in Rome in 1818. On entering, the spectators put ideas of themes for impromptu poetry into an urn. When the poetess appeared, pale and adorned in a white dress, six subjects were drawn out of the urn: the death of Count Ugolino, Sapho and Phao, the death of Iphigenia, the death of Aegaeus, the belt of Venus and Coriolanus. After an introductory aria, similar to a lament and therefore appropriate for the first subject, Rosa began to declaim in a tone that was half recitation and half song, accompanied by the orchestra to the rhythm of the verses. The audacious range of poetic inventions and the transformation of La Taddei from mild and delicate damsel to passionate actress, with heaving bosom and ardent expression, raised general amazement and commotion (Müller 1829, pp. 184–185).

The many comments made by contemporaries and cited by Sass in relation to Thorvaldsen’s portrait all underline the transformation of the young woman’s modest and moderately pretty face into intense and unexpected expressiveness when on stage. The scholar, reflecting on the image of contemplative serenity portrayed by the bust, might conclude that the sculptor had chosen to represent the usual aspect of the young woman rather than her artistic temperament with her face stamped with bold liveliness. Which is to say he favoured her objective and



nobler character, free of the transitory nature of the passions. By means of the descriptive details of the draped herm, in modern dress rather than nude, according to a model that does not lack examples from classical sculpture, and employing an extraordinary plastic development in her elaborate hair style, where the hair is parted in the centre and swept up over her head, the bust, in the habitual balance Thorvaldsen achieves between idealisation and nature, could interpret the Biedermeier taste of the 1830s (Sass 1963, pp. 149-157, with previous bibl.). Thorvaldsen admired Rosa Taddei's talent and the regard was mutual. On one occasion, the sculptor's biographer Thiele recounts, Thorvaldsen, attending one of her *accademie* on 21 March 1826, was the object of her poetic homage. The topic of the ad hoc performance was progress in sculpture and the poetess took the occasion to sing the praises of Thorvaldsen, who was however embarrassed to be find himself defined "a son of God", provoking noise in the audience, although the gaffe was swiftly remedied by Rosa as she brilliantly brought her improvisation to an end. From a letter written on 16 April 1827 by the engraver Andrea Acquistapace we also know that it was most likely the same evening on which he had made his appearance at the Accademia Tiberina in order to confer a gold medal on the poetess. Acquistapace urged his friend, for "the many qualities that distinguish this poetess, the many virtues that she possesses and that we have often witnessed together". The plaster model of the bust is conserved at the Thorvaldsens Museum of Copenhagen, where in 1850 it was catalogued as the portrait of Rosa Taddei by an anonymous sculptor. In 1947 Else Kai Sass corrected the attribution of the model to Thorvaldsen, and it is indeed depicted in the museum in the frieze painted by Jørgen Sonne among the works that the sculptor brought back to Denmark from Rome. Furthermore there is an entry in Thorvaldsen's accounts showing

that a marble bust of Rosa Taddei was in production between June and August 1826 (Sass 1947, pp. 86-93). Hence it is very likely that the portrait was made around the time of La Taddei's above mentioned performance in homage to Thorvaldsen, which took place in the spring of that year. The marble in question is the only known version and belonged to the descendants of John Cam Hobhouse, first Lord Broughton, who before taking up a political career accompanied Lord Byron on his travels to Greece (1809-10) and Italy (1816) and was in contact with Thorvaldsen in 1817 in order to commission a bust of his friend Byron, today at Windsor Castle (The Royal Collection). In 1829, after his death, Hobhouse revisited Thorvaldsen, in the name of a committee, to erect a monument with a full-length figure of the poet, completed in 1835 (Cambridge, Trinity College). The purchase of the bust of Rosa Taddei probably occurred at the same time as this second, important commission, although documentation has not so far been found, but it cannot be excluded that it was ordered on the Roman visit of Matilda Hobhouse in 1827.

Indeed the bust was originally considered to be her portrait and it was mounted on a nineteenth century wood base with a bronze nameplate with the inscription "Matilda Hobhouse Marchesa Brancalione Thorvaldsen sculpsit 1828". Matilda, sister of Hobhouse and friend of Foscolo, married Count Francesco Ranghiasi Brancalione di Gubbio whom she had met in Rome in 1827; hence the year following the execution of the bust of Rosa Taddei. However, the name Matilda does not appear in Thorvaldsen's archive and there is no documentation suggesting that he made a bust of her, so it seems that such family lore is not sufficient to doubt the identity of the proven sitter of the original plaster model conserved in Copenhagen.

Stefano Grandesso



15. JOSEF KÄSSMANN

Vienna 1784–1856

Francis I of Austria

1826

Marble, h 54 x 24 x 20 cm

Signed on the right: “IK (monogram) ROMÆ 1826”

Provenance: Rome, private collection

This portrait bust of Emperor Francis I was executed in 1826 in Rome and was made by the neo-classical sculptor Josef Kässmann (1784–1856). Born in Vienna, in 1784, the sculptor was apprenticed by his father Francis Kähsmann, before attending the Viennese Academy. There he won several prizes, such as the *Gundelpreis*, as well as the silver and gold medals. From 1823 to 1829 he was sent to Rome, where he frequented the studio of Bertel Thorvaldsen. After his return from Rome, Kässmann became professor at the Viennese Academy where he worked until 1851 (see Kolbeck 1999, Sycha 2008).

Kässmann executed several works in marble during his Roman sojourn as the academy records show: the colossal group of *Iason and Medea* today at the “Hofburg” in Vienna, a *Sitting Mercury*, *Psyche*, *Cupid*, and a bust of *Sappho* (Kolbeck 1999, cat. no. 9). Moreover, two portrait busts of emperor Francis I in neo-classical drapery and armour with a laurel – one of them today at the library of Vienna University, one at the Castle of Schönbrunn.

The bust here exhibited was carried out during the Roman sojourn as indicated by the signature with the monogram IK, the date 1826, and the Latin localization Romæ, that could be read identical in the inscription carved by the artist on the base of his *Psyche* (auctioned at Kinsky Kunst Auctionen, 18 April 2007). It differs slightly from the earlier mentioned bust at Vienna University – with its idealized physiognomy of Emperor Francis I and the neo-classical drapery and armour that goes back to examples such as Antonio Canova’s portrait from 1805 (KHM, Vienna). In contrast, our portrait shows the emperor’s bare neck, quoting not only works from classical

antiquity, but also the more severe neo-classicism established by Kässmann’s northern European contemporaries such as Christian Daniel Rauch and Bertel Thorvaldsen.

Anna Frasca Rath



16. ANTONIO GUALDI

Guastalla 1796–1865

Tommaso Minardi With Skull

1827

Oil on canvas, 83 x 62.5 cm

Signed and dated lower right: “Antonio Gualdi 1827”

Provenance: Novara, private collection

Exhibitions: Faenza, Palazzo Milzetti, 2009, *L’officina neoclassica. Dall’Accademia de’ Pensieri all’Accademia d’Italia*

Bibliography: *L’officina neoclassica* 2009, pp. 70, 77 (ill.); E. Lissoni, in *Romanticismo* 2018, p. 344.

“Around 1813, ten years after moving to Rome from his native Faenza, Tommaso Minardi, at the time experimenting new expressive boundaries of the Neoclassical language that seem to herald the new Romantic sensibility, made a self-portrait in the loft on the top floor of Palazzo Corea, leant him for use as a studio and living quarters by Felice Giani, the great, eccentric genius who fascinated younger generations. In this painting, famous for seeming to foretell the existential condition and melancholy of the Romantic artist, he has put forward an accurate and heartfelt image of himself in small dimensions that nonetheless include, in a true and affectionately analytical rendering of the bohemian milieu, an entire world. A world that reflects the anxieties of the twenty-five year old artist, ‘conscious of his own privileged diversity’, when he confessed becoming ‘ever more wishful and in solitude’” (F. Mazzocca, in *Romanticismo* 2018, p. 244).

The young man described as “sentimental and pained [...] adrift on his mattress” by Anna Ottani Cavina (A. Ottani Cavina, in *L’età neoclassica* 1979, pp. 113–114; see also S. Susinno, in *Disegni di Tommaso Minardi* 1982, pp. 174–175; C. Mazzarelli, in *Maestà di Roma* 2003, p. 324) in the *Self-Portrait* that ended up in the Uffizi collection, nearly fifteen years later, became a prominent artist who entrusts to his pupil and compatriot Antonio Gualdi the job - arduous but masterfully performed with necessary instructions from Minardi himself - of updating the portrayal of him as a “saturnine Romantic intellectual” (Leone 2009, p. 45), abandoning the tormented but reassuring rearguard represented by his makeshift bed to take on the eyes of the world with a

renewed awareness.

Minardi is no longer grasping a pencil holder, which he might have chosen to represent himself in a canonical way, but from among all the objects jumbled up in the loft he is holding a skull. It is no longer lying anonymously to his left but placed at the very centre of the composition, accentuating the portrait’s iconographic characterisation in a Romantic and literary sense. The painting certainly betrays the Nordic impact, which, mediated by Giani, influenced Minardi during the extraordinary season of the Accademia de’ Pensieri, not only due to the presence of the skull as in John Flaxman’s *Self-Portrait* (1779, London, University College), but also *ante litteram* for the striking pose of Rodin’s thinker, already experimented by Richard Cosway (Detroit, priv. coll.) and, more generally, for the intense, slightly wild-eyed expression encountered in Fuessli and James Barry.

The work’s specific iconography also fuels an hypothetical interpretation that weaves the personal experience of the painter and his almost maniacal worship of the figure of Raphael, aided by the two year period (1819–1821) he spent in Perugia as director of the Academy of Fine Arts there and his frequent visits to Raphael’s fresco in the Chapel of San Severo, of which he drafted a detailed report with a view to a possible restoration. In 1821 Minardi was called back to Rome to begin officially his job at the Academy of San Luca, an institution to which he dedicated more than thirty years of his life. But it was not easy for the painter to obtain the post at the school of design, left vacant after the death of Luigi Agricola, due to the steadfast opposition to his nomination on the part of older professors, above all Camuccini and



Wicar. It required the personal intervention of Antonio Canova to break the impasse and allow Minardi to take up the title that he had been chasing with obduracy. From the start the artist showed an authentic devotion to his job, which he always carried out with irreproachable professionalism, even organising a reform of the teaching programme. 1827, the year in which this portrait was executed, was one in which he received the hard blow of being accused, once again by Camuccini, who probably nurtured an aversion to Minardi since the time when, very young, he dropped his studies to embrace Giani's experimentation, of entering the rooms of the Academy by night to correct the work his pupils' were preparing for the nudes competition. Minardi effectively managed to demonstrate his innocence but his standing certainly suffered as doubts remained regarding his loyalty to the institution to which he had always dedicated himself entirely.

Such a regrettable episode might have led the painter to feel the need to boost his role and image within the Academy and, more generally, to celebrate his association with the institution, evoked in the portrait by the presence of the skull, which, jealously kept in a display case at the Academy, was thought to have belonged to Raphael, to whom, making use of the twofold symbolic value, Minardi could thus also pay his strongly felt personal homage.

In reality the remains of the artist from Urbino were rediscovered beneath the altar of the Madonna del Sasso in the Church of Santa Maria ad Martyres, formerly the Pantheon, in 1833, six years after the execution of the painting. Minardi was the first to offer himself for the task of sketching the bones but it fell to his rival Camuccini, who succeeded in carrying out

a pencil relief of Raphael's head and lower jaw during the making of the death mask. The skull that Minardi is holding in the portrait was the one that, according to the most accredited tradition, Carlo Maratti brought to the Academy around 1677 after finding it, again at the Pantheon, during an excavation near Raphael's tomb. The "false" relic was hallowed for over a century and a half. Even Goethe, in his "Italian Journey", tells of how moved he was when he saw it (Genovese 2015, pp. 103-105, 133-142).

This making of a work so dense with autobiographical detail and symbolism was entrusted by Minardi to Antonio Gualdi, who out of his pupils was evidently the one considered to have recognised his instructions and could convey them onto canvas according to the most updated Romantic ideas. Gualdi, who arrived in Rome in 1824 after a profitable pupillage under Pietro Benvenuti and some good opportunities offered him from Parma and Florence, did not prove a disappointment to Minardi, with whom he had worked closely for almost three years. Over this period of intense attendance "the Socratic theme of the master and pupil, the intimate dialogue between tutor and philosopher," so dear to the painter from Faenza, and portrayed several times over his career, for example in *Blind Homer at the Home of the Shepherd Glaucus*, was able to be realised fully. It is precisely "in the concept of knowledge, the transmission of understanding, the essence of the joint participation in deep thought, in the intimate sharing of psychological and emotional values between the teacher and the taught" (Leone 2009, p. 46) that we find the foundations on which Gualdi built his masterpiece.

Emiliano Orsini



17. GIUSEPPE TOMINZ

Gorizia 1790–Gradiscutta 1866

Aron Isak de Parente

after 1847

Oil on canvas, 225 x 112 cm

Provenance: Italy, private collection

Bibliography: De Grassi 2008, pp. 47-49; Quinzi 2011, p. 200, cat. 153 ; P. Rosazza Ferraris, in *A Picture Gallery* 2012, pp. 20-21, cat- 3.

Active in Trieste from as early as the mid-16th century, the Parente family – like the Morpurgos, the Luzzattos and the della Vidas – were part of a group of Jewish families that successfully controlled the city’s trading sector, consolidating their financial influence through frequent marriage alliances between their respective children. Aron Isak Parente was born in Trieste on May 21st 1775 and married Regina Morpurgo at the age of 21. He died in Trieste on May 12th 1853. Together with his considerable business successes, the various public offices he held eventually earned him the title of baron of the Austrian Empire on December 6th 1847, hence the addition of the “de” that preceded the name from then onwards.

The Cross of Leopold in red enamel bordered with white stands out on the severe background of the clothes worn by the newly elevated baron, dressed entirely in black from his square buckled shoes to the bicorn hat, worn firmly set over the head in the manner of the 1790s. A very similar portrait confirms the identity of the sitter, painted posthumously and half-length in 1854. Signed by Lipparini, this painting is currently at the Camera di Commercio of Trieste and shows de Parente in almost identical dress.

Both Massimo De Grassi and Alessandro Quinzi, who recently published a monograph on Tominz, agree on the paternity of this large-scale, formal and commemorative portrait, whose austere composition is nonetheless softened by a number of more ‘homely’ Biedermeier details. The surroundings in which Tominz has placed the black-clad figure recall the grand formality of the imperial portraits, almost as if the baron had wished to re-forge his image in the semblance of a tradition to which his title now gave him rightful access. In painting this portrait Tominz, who had

already had the opportunity to measure his talents against such commissions with his large portraits – from etchings – of Francis I (1822) and Ferdinand I (1837), appears to have drawn on the canvas by Leopold Kupelweiser (1796-1862) of Emperor Ferdinand I in the Schönbrunn Palace. The painting shows the emperor in 1847, with the same column partially covered by a drape, the balustrade dropping sharply towards the countryside beneath and the black and white, diagonally checkered marble floor that creates the visual effect of propelling the baron towards the viewer. Clearly in Tominz’s work the countryside is the port of Trieste. In the portrait of Francis I the emperor has his hand placed on an imposing, rococo-style console emblazoned with the symbols of his rank, while de Parente is flanked by a small, extremely simple rectangular table – traced by Grassi among Tominz’s drawings – whose polished light wood surface reflects a solitary gilded porcelain cup placed on a saucer, with an oval in which there is a portrait of a young lady.

It is unlikely, as some have speculated, that the young lady in question is Regina Morpurgo, whose youth would have coincided with the neoclassical Empire style whereas both the style of the dress and the design of the cup instead date from around 1840. In any case we do have some idea of what Isak’s wife really looked like from a miniature in the Civici Musei di Storia ed Arte in Trieste, which was acquired on the antique market as a *Portrait of Regina Morpurgo Parente*, (circa 1835, inv. 2527). The lady in the oval could conceivably be Stella, who married Isak’s son Salomon (1808-1873) in 1828 and who therefore embodied the hopes for a continuation in the de Parente baronial dynasty.

An important collector and erudite



bibliophile, by 1832 Salomon was already the proud possessor of the exceptional *Florilège de Rothschild* – a compendium of Hebrew texts illuminated in 1479 by the same artists who had been in the service of Borso d’Este. When the manuscript went up for sale in 1855 the Rothschilds in Paris bought it. After escaping the Holocaust unscathed, the piece was eventually donated to the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem, where it is to this day. It is by no means inconceivable that such a refined collector could have personally commissioned a cup of this kind, with his wife’s portrait on it. The most likely possibility, however, is that – given his choice of a Habsburg ‘setting’ for his portrait – Isaak had wished to discreetly include an image of his sovereign in the picture: she who had visited Trieste alongside the emperor in 1844, Maria Anna Carolina of Savoy, whose long neck, pointed chin and thin lips appear just discernible amidst the gilt of the porcelain. It was customary at the time

for Austrian emperors to circulate their informal effigies also on tasteful object of domestic use such as Viennese porcelain, as is amply documented by the many cups of this kind that still survive. Emperor Francis and Empress Maria Ludovika, for example, on two gilded cylindrical cups from 1806 (cfr. Folnesics Braun 1907, pp. 140-41), are not wearing full imperial dress but the fashion of the time. Again, Emperor Francis appears in civilian clothes on two other gilded, trumpet-shaped cups from 1830. It is worthwhile noting that the shape of the cup, with its thick base and vaulted handle, is more akin to the Biedermeier series produced by KPM (Königliche Porzellan Manufaktur) of Berlin. It was not until Franz’s successor, Franz Joseph and particularly his legendary consort Sissi – the media icon of the *finis austriae* par excellence –, that the practice became commonplace to the point of pedestrian.

Patrizia Rosazza Ferraris



18. FRANCESCO HAYEZ

Venice 1791–Milan 1882

Young nun. Life Study

1879

Oil on canvas, 50.7 x 40.5 cm

Inscribed, signed and dated on the back of the left hand chair:

“Studio dal vero / Franc.° Hayez / fece nell’ età di 89 anni / 1879”

Provenance: Milan, Giuseppina Negroni Prati Morosini; Milan, Negroni Prati Morosini collection; Milan, Orsi Gallery; Milan, private collection

Bibliography: Hayez 1890, pp. 282-283.

There are two known versions of this painting - an extraordinary testimony of the final phase of the long artistic career of Francesco Hayez - one signed lower right “Life study / Hayez” reproduced and entered in 1890 by Giulio Carotti in the list of works in the appendix of Hayez’ *Memoirs* as belonging to Count Aldo Annoni and then reconsidered and newly reproduced by Nicodemi who indicated that it was in the collection of the heirs to Senator Alessandro Casati (Hayez 1890, p. 282, fig. p. 230; Nicodemi 1962, p. 265, tav. 221; Mazzocca 1994, p. 373, no. 424); the other, also noted by Carotti, which appeared at the Milanese retrospective dedicated to the artist a year from his passing with the indication: “Head; life study in oils. Never exhibited. Considered one of his last life studies. Prop. Donna Giuseppina Negroni Prati Morosini” (Hayez 1890, pp. 282-283). It is this last that should be identified as our painting.

From a comparison of the two works there are minimal differences, although our version appears decidedly more complete in pictorial definition so it might be considered a first draft, later replicated in a more rapid and brief manner. The elegant inscription, in which the artist shows pride for a vitality that age had not dimmed, confers great importance on studying from life, which was always at the centre of his poetic. A life study that is nonetheless elevated to an expression of feeling, as occurs in this case where we intuit an intense capacity for psychological introspection in the consideration and rendering of the thoughts behind the delicate profile of the beautiful novice. We discern a slight glimmer of turmoil that inevitably brings to mind, if we weren’t aware that the sitter is a model, of the famous nun of Monza in Alessandro

Manzoni’s *Promessi Sposi*.

Another interesting aspect of the work, which is an exceptional testimony to the eternal youth of Hayez, is its provenance. In fact it belonged to a person who was very close to the artist in his final years; his faithful friend Countess Giuseppina Negroni Prati Morosini, whose portrait he made in 1853 (Milan, Pinacoteca Ambrosiana), who was a leading member of Milanese cultural circles thanks to the ties she had with the painter, the poet Andrea Maffei and Giuseppe Verdi, with whom she kept an extensive correspondence.

Her long relationship with Hayez was definitively established when, in 1869, the artist dictated his memoirs to her, later published in 1890 by Carotti in an edited and corrected version, with respect to the hand-written original conserved at the Brera Academy, perhaps by Morosini himself. There are numerous paintings executed for her by the artist, such as the large historical painting on a Venetian theme, whereabouts unknown, *Revenge of a Rival* (1853), the portrait of her husband Alessandro, and the magnificent portrayals of her two young daughters Luigia and Antonietta. Finally there was no lack of tributes, such as the sketch for the large altarpiece depicting *The Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew*, the pen drawing of *Joseph Explaining the Dream*, a watercolour with a version of the *Kiss* and lastly, probably, this very oil.

Fernando Mazzocca



19. GENEROSO FRATE

Vallo della Lucania (Salerno) 1857–Rio de Janeiro 1885

Bambocciata. The sculptor Tabacchi

ca. 1877

Oil on canvas, 79 x 32.5 cm

Inscription below: “G.so Frate Al mio Nobile Amico Tabacchi”; on the back of the frame: “Bambocciata di G.so Frate”

Provenance: Florence, private collection

Little is known of the life and work of Generoso Frate, the painter from Campania, mainly due to his brief existence. Originating from Vallo della Lucania (Salerno), he trained at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Naples under maestro Domenico Morelli (cfr. Fraire 1916), in the same years in which it was frequented by Antonio Mancini from Rome. He set up in a Neapolitan studio at 20 vico Loffredi, where he is recorded as resident at least until 1876 (*Catalogo delle opere 1876, ad vocem*). Following the example of other Italian artists who were his contemporaries, Frate tried his fortune by setting sail on a ship to Brazil, which he reached around 1883. There he became a fully integrated member of the local artistic scene, taking part in exhibitions announced in official circuits. At the exhibition held at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro in 1884, where he entered an oil painting and five drawings, he was awarded a silver medal. The resultant success encouraged him to immediately prepare a solo exhibition – a show that never took place due to his falling ill of yellow fever, which in 1885 caused his premature death at twenty-eight years of age. In one of the reproductions in Indian ink by the hand of the artist whose work was shown at the exhibition of 1884, entitled *Da terra ao Céu* which is to say “From Earth to the Sky” (with a pendant *Do Céu à Terra*, whose design took up the famous *Mater Purissima* by Domenico Morelli), an inscription can be made out that, just like the one in the portrait presented here, occupies a position of importance within the composition.

Behind the statue of a moor, masked with a hat and fabrics, peeps out the Lombard sculptor Odoardo Tabacchi (1831-1905), whose physiognomy appears comparable with the one portrayed years before in

the portrait by Angelo Pietrasanta (1837-1876) (private collection). The Lombard artist jokingly lays his hand on the statue simulating the horns, a superstitious gesture, possibly goliardic. Himself a former student of the Neapolitan Accademia and of Frate’s teacher Domenico Morelli, Tabacchi could have taken part in this *Bambocciata* between artists likely when he accompanied his sculptures triumphantly exhibited at the Esposizione Nazionale of Naples in 1877, the *Hipatia*, awarded with the gold medal, and the *Tuffolina*, gratified by the purchase of the king Vittorio Emanuele II.

In South America, Frate distinguished himself in the portrait genre. The Brazilian critic Luís Gonzaga Duque Estrada, recalling the artist’s posthumous exhibition held at Casa de Wilde in rua Sete de Setembro in Rio de Janeiro, cited as worthy of note the portraits of his friends, the painter Nicolò Facchinetti and the wife of the journalist and painter Émile Rouède, all three expatriate Europeans, and added: «Generoso Frate’s drawing is rapid and pleasing, slightly caricatural, and his colour is fine, clear and solid» (Estrada 1888, p. 209). Two portraits by Generoso Frate, portraying members of the Bindi family, are conserved at Giulianova (Teramo) at the Pinacoteca Civica “Vincenzo Bindi.”



20. FRANCESCO PAOLO MICHETTI

Tocco da Casauria 1851–Francavilla al Mare 1929

Study of a Female Head

1883

Pastel on paper, 450 x 400 mm

Signed and dated: “FP. Michetti '83”

Provenance: Rome, Amelia Almegià and Aldo Ambron, acquired from the artist; descendants of the Ambrons

Bibliography: Janni 1910, 11, p. 966; Ojetti 1910, p. 414; Ferraguti 1911, 6, p. 483; Benzi, Berardi, Lodispoto, Spinazzè 2018, cat. 472.

Listed in an unknown collection in the general catalogue of Francesco Paolo Michetti's work (Benzi, Berardi, Lodispoto, Spinazzè 2018), the pastel reappeared on the market recently; it has great appeal due to its simply composed subject matter, and is decidedly powerful for the expressive quality of the style. Probably never exhibited before and published by Ugo Ojetti in 1911, it has been found to be of the painter Amelia Almegià and the engineer Aldo Ambron, the couple of patrons of the arts who lived between Rome and the international city of Alexandria in Egypt. They liked to buy works directly from artists, as in the case of this portrait by Michetti. Of Jewish origins, Amelia Almegià trained with the non-conformist genius in the field of *Verismo* Antonio Mancini, who became a friend of the family and some of whose paintings entered their collection. Amelia frequented circles of the artistic avant-garde and held an intellectual salon in the couple's residence in Parioli, Rome, where among others Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Giacomo Balla and Trilussa gathered. A fraternal tie united the Ambrons to Balla, who made a portrait of Amelia; besides being their guests with his family between 1926 and 1929. To date, the few known photographs of Michetti's pastel are indecipherable ones published at the beginning of the twentieth century, one of the reasons its execution was mistakenly located in 1890. In fact, it is signed and dated by Michetti “1883” a date that places it in a crucial phase of the artist's extraordinary creative itinerary. In Italy *Verismo* triumphed in both art and literature. At this time the thirty-one-year-old Michetti is at full creative and intellectual maturity and enjoys an established fame on the international stage. Connected to Gabriele D'Annunzio by friendship and a spiritual affinity, he shared with him a manner of feeling and of exploring their common native land, on the one hand attracted by the archaic primitive, violent and sensual world,

on the other seduced by an uncontaminated, unfathomable and eternally young ‘nature’ open wide to their voracious senses. In Rome in January 1883 Michetti shows his masterpiece, *Il voto* (The Vow), at the Esposizione di Belle Arti, and the work is bought by the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna of Rome, where it still is today. Created over a few months, the painting was the fruit of a long gestation in which Michetti explored out of the way places in Abruzzo, where religious festivals took place. In Miglianico he was present at the feast of the patron saint when the silver bust of San Pantaleone with a halo like a large solar disc over his head, was moved from its underground shrine. Besides employing a seventeenth century realism that darkens his palette, as observed by Sabrina Spinazzè (Benzi, Berardi, Lodispoto, Spinazzè 2018, p.38), Michetti organises the single figures and the arrangement of the masses with a photographic eye, if not indeed a cinematographic one (photography is a medium he uses in a modern way), unfolding his powerful talent, with which he gives shape to: “a vast canvas, a lugubrious theme, hemmed in, with no sky, a way of thinking, already called social, of misery and superstition, stupidity and blood, a type of painting imbued with the soil of the small town held in a frame straight as a ramrod - as comments Ugo Ojetti (Ojetti 1910, p. 421) - (...) *The bust of the saint on a carpet on the ground among six candle holders, the country folk licking the ground, crawling and bleeding from the threshold of the church to reach the idol that they hug, sobbing and shuddering, the priest serene and smiling under a large cope, kneeling at the side holding the aspergillum, and behind him the crowd: men, women, old people, brides, children and the sick, each carrying a candle, their souls in their eyes, ecstatic and suffering.*” Ojetti recounts that after such a resounding ordeal resulting however in scarce innovation in style, Michetti



began a “*simplification*” and “*sought a more vigilant and severe style,*” that materialised in the giant canvas *Jorio’s Daughter* (1895). *Study of a Female Head* belongs to the work produced by Michetti in this new phase, but after a few years and having already exhibited at the Esposizione Nazionale di Milano in 1881. He portrays the young country girl’s face slightly at three-quarters, focussing on her thoughtful and innocent expression, somewhat darkened by a faint shadow. The light is in the colour of pastel, which gives life to the fresh pink of the face, to the vermilion lips with no hint of a smile, to her forehead in

grey-blue shadow. The fair hair is highlighted by a golden colour fragmented in subtle strokes and dashes, like the rebellious strands that fall over her face. A masterful portrayal between classical rigour and contemplation of the natural world, because Michetti, explains D’Annunzio: “had to live Nature as a religion (...). He lived everything like that, carrying everything inside him, as it were, the stamp of life, the meaning of life; not just the faces of men.” (G. D’Annunzio 1883, p.2).

Francesca Romana Morelli

21. HENRI LOUIS MARIUS PINTA

Marseille 1856–Paris 1944

André Pératé

1887

Oil on canvas, 22.5 x 31cm

Signed, dated and dedicated bottom right: “A MON AMI ANDRÉ PERATÉ H PINTA ROME 1887”

Provenance: private collection

This small painting, dated and signed, portrays the historian and linguist André Pératé (1862–1947). After studying at the École normale Supérieure de Paris (reading literature), he was a member of the École Française de Rome between 1884 and 1887, the year in which this likeness was made. A great specialist in Italian literature, Pératé distinguished himself as a translator from Italian into French, in particular *Little Flowers of St. Francis* by St. Francis of Assisi (1913) and the *Divine Comedy* by Dante (1922). Besides this activity he developed that of art historian. In 1892 he was nominated assistant curator at the Musée de Versailles, from where he slowly but progressively rose to the prestigious role of head curator, a position he held from 1920 to 1932. A great lover of the Nabis and above all of Maurice Denis, of whom he owned various works, he entered the historical-artistic debate thanks to his activity of art critic in the numerous Parisian salons in the first decade of the twentieth century.

The portrait presented is the work of Henri Pinta (1856–1944) from Marseille (Arzoumanian 2002). Son of the painter Jean-Chrysostome-Vincent Pinta, from whom he learnt the rudiments of the profession, he trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Marseille. In 1874, at the age of eighteen, he was admitted to the École supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he studied under the direction of two great teachers of history painting, Alexandre Cabanel and Jules Lefebvre. In 1882 he began to show at the Salon des Artistes Français. Two years later, for the work *The Oath of Brutus after the Death of Lucretia* (Paris, École des Beaux-Arts), he won the Grand Prix de Rome for painting, thanks to which he left for a four-year sojourn at Villa Medici, at the time directed by Ernest Hébert. Returning to Paris in 1888, Pinta exhibited

regularly at the Salon, where he won several prizes from the academic institution (*mention honorable* in 1890, 1892, 1893, gold medal at the Exposition Universelle of 1900). Due to this visibility the artist received numerous public and private commissions for canvases essentially of a religious nature, characterised by a strong academic stamp and accents of colour (*Saint Martha and the Tarasque*, 1887, Marseille, Musée Cantini; *Magnificat*, Marseille, Église de Notre-Dame du Mont, 1891; *Death of St. Joseph* and *Chapelle des Morts*, Paris, Église de Saint François-Xavier, 1914; *Coronation of the Virgin*, Neuilly, Église de Saint Pierre, 1924). To this production a series of landscapes should be added, as well as genre scenes (*The Meal for Guests at the Maritime Refuge at Berck*, 1910, Musée de France d’Opale-Sud, Berck-sur-Mer), official portraits (*Portrait of Eugène Rostand*, 1905, Marseille, Caisse d’Épargne Provence-Alpes-Corse) and scenes of orientalist taste (*The Dance of Salomé*; *Oriental Dancer*, priv. coll.). With the passing of time, Pinta’s work became increasingly conventional. Alongside his activity as a painter, he distinguished himself as a designer of decorative cartoons for mosaics (seven cartoons for the Sacré-Coeur in Paris, 1923) and glass windows (Église Saint-Vaast, Béthune, 1924–1927; cartoons for mosaics and windows of the Basilique du Sacré-Coeur de Marseille, 1934–1935). In 1903 he was awarded the *Légion d’honneur*. The portrait on display comes from the artist’s early production, corresponding to his training period in Rome. The reduced size and choice of subject – a friend and young colleague resident at Villa Medici at the same time as Pinta – reveal a more intimate and free painting practice, quite different from the academic and codified style of the historical and religious painting that he adopted later on. André



Pératé, twenty-five years old at the time, is pictured in profile, sitting on a chair, caught in a contemplative attitude; the natural position of the body, slightly lengthened at the back, decidedly anti-academic, indicates observation of the sitter from life, a likeness made in the daily intimacy of the life of the *pensionnaires*. The private destination of the work – a sort of exercise in style – finds confirmation in the naturalness of the pose and above all in the rapidity of execution in certain areas – for example the hands – between which the canvas can still be seen.

Despite being portrayed full body, the portrait of Pératé follows the tradition of *pensionnaires* portraits at Villa Medici. In effect, from the eighteenth century onwards it was the habit of residents at the French Academy to take turns to paint portraits of their colleagues. Although such a practice was not an obligatory exercise, and hence not mentioned in the Academy regulations, it constituted a sort of tradition

to which the pupils were attached, sealing the spirit of belonging to the institution. This tradition, although popular between 1810 and 1914, gradually abated after the end of the First World War, disappearing completely around 1935. This is the reason why not all the *pensionnaires* are represented in the Villa Medici collection (Brunel 1979, p. 155). Pinta certainly did not dodge the tradition (was painted by O. Gilbert in 1884, Brunel 1979, p.241), during his stay he carried out portraits of the young musician Claude Debussy in 1886 (Brunel 1979, p. 241), the engraver Joseph William Barbotin (Brunel 1979, p. 243) and the painter Emile Jean Sulpis in 1887 (Brunel 1979, p. 242), all studying in Rome at the same time. The portrait of Sulpis in particular reflects some elements that are similar to the likeness of Pératé, above all the chromatic softness of certain areas.

Barbara Musetti

22. DOMENICO BACCARINI

Faenza 1882–1907

Self-Portrait

1903

Pen on paper, 175 x 135 mm

Signed and dated: "D BACCARINI 1903"

Provenance: Rome, Emporio Floreale (1977); private collection

Exhibitions: Bologna, Galleria Comunale, 1977, *Il Liberty a Bologna* 1977 (not in the catalogue).

Bibliography: de Guttry, Maino, Quesada 1985, p. 66.

The uninterrupted series of self-portraits carried out by Domenico Baccarini constitutes a substantial visual diary of his brief life. A common thread firmly links private sphere with artistic research, the tension to know the spirit of the new human reality that was taking form at the beginning of the century, comprising the wish to extract the impulses and absolute feelings from within the self: "Baccarini is among the artists who, in the first decade of the XX century, manage to shift realism (human and social) towards a symbolist sensibility, without betraying it, achieving the miracle of an art that renders universal a human experience that is deeply rooted in a small corner of the world and of history, which is his place of origin (...) - writes Anna Maria Damigella (Damigella 2007, p.27) - *Faenza was always the fixed point and the strong point, the place of return from an unrestricted life, in its brevity, marked by travel and long sojourns in Florence and Rome, by loved ones and the events of life, where he could put to the test the knowledge and conquests acquired elsewhere, evaluating and including them in the world that he feels to be his.*" Drawing occupies the preeminent role in Baccarini's articulated production, a medium of autonomous and versatile expression, apt for seeing to the depths of reality, beyond appearances, as happens to many other artists of the time: from the Divisionists to Alberto Martini, to the debuting Gino Severini (who would remember Baccarini for the beauty of his graphic works) and Mario Sironi.

In 1903, the year in which he made this self-portrait, Baccarini worked intensely at Faenza, after a stay in Florence, operating on that fragile confine between direct

observation of reality and a symbolist language that obsessively rummages through the chaotic context of life. It is also the year in which he would fall in love with the strikingly beautiful country girl Elisabetta Santolini, who became his companion, inspirational muse, model and ideal model for the female figures that inhabit his sculptures and ceramics from this phase. In the plastic group *Sensations of the Soul*, soft and sinuous nude bodies abound, held in the virtual space of the sculpture, which, singularly or in groups, give shape to vases, cachepots and candleholders in Liberty style.

We find the same motif of the female nude in this *Self-Portrait* in pen, in which the twenty-one year-old Baccarini depicts himself in profile, immersed in a saturnine light. His moustache, short beard and hat with a large brim seem to be an attempt to disguise his youth, but with clumsy results. The hat is slightly tipped so as to leave his profile visible. The rapt and uneasy expression on his face betrays inner turmoil, even more obvious in other drawings from the same period, among which *Frontal Self-Portrait*, which focuses obsessively on the eyes. The garland of female nudes issuing from his semi-open mouth stands as a visible witness to the artist's tormented state of mind. Alongside the skilful draftsmanship, with a telling knowledge of graphic technique, the compositional scheme is obtained by means of a game of triangles converging on the image of the artist.

Francesca Romana Morelli



23. RENATO TOMASSI

Subiaco (Rome) 1884–Rome 1972

Prelate (or Monk)

1906

Mixed medium, watercolour, tempera, pastel on paper on card, 510 x 350 mm

Signed and dated: "RT 1906"

Provenance: Italy, descendants of the artist

Bibliography: Eleuteri 1986, p. 92, no. 5; *Renato Tomassi* 1999, p. 60, no. III.

Most probably made in Rome in 1906, this portrait is without doubt one of the paradigmatic works of Renato Tomassi's early production. Indeed, here we see a summary of the salient traits of a painter gifted with a sharpness of vision and a capacity for analysis that, combined with a predilection for the Secessionist culture of Central Europe, was a unique presence in the panorama of Roman portraiture in the first half of the twentieth century.

Indirect testimonies (Tomassi Von Heuduck Kiskis 2000, pp. 26-27) recount how Tomassi began to paint almost by chance, following a fortuitous meeting with the Hungarian painter Robert Wellmann (1866-1946) who had a studio-retreat near Tomassi's native town, Subiaco, in the province of Rome. The young man immediately showed a highly developed talent for observation as well as an innate gift for drawing. In a short time – helped by the suggestions of Wellmann and later of Sigmund Lipinsky (1873-1940) (Domestici 1999, p. 12) – the painter matured a language that was materially accurate and of analytical stamp, certainly placeable outside schools and advanced currents, while not insensible of the innovations that circulated in the capital in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

As Gino Severini mentions in his memoirs and as Umberto Boccioni recalls in 1916 (Boccioni 2011, p. 408), in the early years of the new century it was Central European art that generated the greatest enthusiasm among the ranks of bohemian Rome. In particular Severini remembers that Boccioni «was a great admirer of the German painter Otto Greiner and artists from Munich in general. At the time this painter had a certain influence among the artists of Rome; he drew minutely, with analytical precision, but not without elegance» (Severini 1983 [1946], p. 19). Like Boccioni (Carrera 2013), Roberto Basilici (Parisi 2016) and Severini himself, Tomassi was also a passionate follower of the German painter (Domestici 1999, pp. 10-13; Parisi 2016, pp. 248-249)

who lived in Rome from the end of the 1890s (Bardazzi 2010). In Greiner (1869-1916) the young Romans appreciated – apart from his symbolist visionariness – a draftsmanship that was real and abstract at the same time, thanks to the perfect equilibrium between a contour line that almost engraves the shapes and a soft chiaroscuro that raises it up (*ivi*, p. 72). In Tomassi these influences are clearly evident in a charcoal portrait from 1904, *Maria Latini* (priv. coll., cfr. Domestici 1999, p. 21, fig. 18) and in the *Self-Portrait* of the same year, bought by the Italian State in 1906 at the LXXVI Esposizione della Società degli Amatori e Cultori delle Belle Arti (the foremost Roman artistic show) and now in Florence, at the Uffizi.

Stimuli coming from over the Alps certainly encouraged Tomassi to re-evaluate episodes of past painting unknown in Italy, such as the art of the German Renaissance, whose clear influence is revealed when comparing the profile of *Portrait of a Prelate* with that of *Erasmus of Rotterdam* by Hans Holbein the Younger (1523, Paris, Musée du Louvre), in particular in the version on paper at the Kunstmuseum of Basel. As in this last, in the portrait under consideration the profile of the old man emerges in contrast thanks to the meeting of the descriptive minuteness of the face, the neutral background of the paper and the wide black areas, almost *à plat*, that make up his cassock and skullcap. With extreme precision, pencil delineates the edges of the face, folds of the cheek and the ear, the thin lips and tired eyes, every single wrinkle, every trace of hair and every blemish of the skin. Even the beard, not perfectly shaven, can be seen cropping up against the light around the subject's mouth.

From 1906 to 1910 (when he visited Berlin for a few months, guest of the German sculptor August Kraus) Tomassi took a studio in the courtyard of Palazzo Venezia and lived with a prelate uncle, Giuseppe Latini, tax lawyer at the Holy Office. Given the artists' habit, in the early years of activity, to make portraits of



family members, it is not to be excluded that this very exponent of the Roman Curia can be recognised in the old man portrayed in this work, although it should be underlined that at the Esposizione degli Amatori e Cultori of

1907, the painter put forward, alongside other works, portraits of two religious people, *Friar Giovanni* and *Friar Egidio*.

Matteo Piccioni

24. ADOLFO CALLEGARI

Padua 1882–Arquà Petrarca 1948

Gino Tasinato

1912

Oil on canvas, 76 x 60 cm

On the back “O.F.B.F / estate 1912”, “*esposto a Venezia a Cà Pesaro*”, “*dipinto di Adolfo Callegari ritratto del sig. Tasinato Gino all’epoca*”

Provenance: Veneto, Private collection

Exhibitions: Venice, Palazzo Pesaro, 1913

Bibliography: *Catalogo dell’Esposizione d’arte* 1913, no.183; *Adolfo Callegari* 2008, p.26.

This work is a rare painting by Adolfo Callegari from Padua, who presented it in 1913 at the exhibition of the young avant-garde of Ca’ Pesaro in Venice, and probably never since. The sitter is a member of the wealthy family of Este, Tasinato, which Callegari frequented at the beginning of 1910s, acquiring for the years 1914 and 1915 Villa Borini.

The picture is a sharp analysis of reality entrusted to few elements. In the foreground a young man dressed in dark clothing, his face turned towards the painter, with a mordant, impenetrable look, accentuated by his blue eyes, slender closed lips and the pronounced nose that reinforces the man’s psychological expression. Positioned to the right of the pictorial area and in profile, the mass of the body sits confined in a small space between the light-coloured wall and the fleeting diaphragm that separates the painted space from real space. On the wall, summarily drawn and almost monochrome, the painting within a painting seems to offer an illusion of depth. The *Portrait of Signor Tasinato* is the ‘existential’ representation, through the allegory of a rarefied intimacy, of a silent place where time seems to pass so slowly that it gives the impression of being immobile. In the summer of 1912, when he painted this likeness, the thirty-year-old Callegari had begun to revolutionise his life following the death of his father, who had always supported and guided him. He imposed the son to enrol in Jurisprudence, up to graduating in 1906 (the same year Felice Casorati graduated), but then he allowed him to take the longed-for artistic path, seeking for him artistic *milieu* with moderate positions, driven by solid moral principles. He studied between Padua

and Venice, then, like his friend Bortolo Sacchi, he completed his training at the Munich Academy, where he focussed on the practice of drawing and copies of the masterpieces in museums; all the while frequenting exhibitions put on by contemporary artists.

Callegari spent the winter of 1912 secluded in the Paduan countryside at San Pietro Viminario, with the only aunt left in the family. He began to show his work. His painting displays a pondered observation of the research of youthful art in the exhibitions at Ca’ Pesaro in Venice and the Roman Secession, in which he participated. The following year he exhibited the *Portrait of Signor Tasinato* at Ca’ Pesaro as well as two other oils and three watercolours, and was noted by the critics for the high poetry of his interiors. Callegari aimed to depict domestic compositions, in serene chromatic harmony, that could emotionally move the viewer. Many artists took part in the show with whom he had been in touch during his time at the Academy or at least whose artistic development he had followed: Felice Casorati, author of a large solo show, Gino Cadorin, Umberto Moggioli, Mario Cavaglieri, Gino Rossi, Tullio Garbari, Ubaldo Oppi, and the sculptor Arturo Martini, all using freer expressive languages. For various reasons, Callegari came to the decision to step down from the stage of exhibiting. Despite briefly participating in the Great War, he nonetheless continued to exhibit until 1922, from which moment he would mainly paint for pleasure. Around 1914 he bought a sixteenth century villa in the medieval *borgo* of Arquà, where Petrarch spent the last years of his life. Callegari kept up good relations with various friends from Ca’ Pesaro, frequented Conte Cini’s intellectual circle, cultivated



a close relationship with Ugo Ojetti and his review *Dedalo*. He became an inspector of the Soprintendenza, mayor of Arquà and custodian of the house of Petrarch, he would also be director of the archaeological museum of the small

town of Este until just before his death (1948), having become an archaeologist and authoritative expert on Este and the Euganean area.

Francesca Romana Morelli

25. SIGMUND LIPINSKY

Grudziądz 1873–Rome 1940

Young Girl

1914

Pencil and pastel on paper, 29 x 26 cm

Signed lower left: "S Lipinsky Roma 14"

Provenance: Germany, private collection

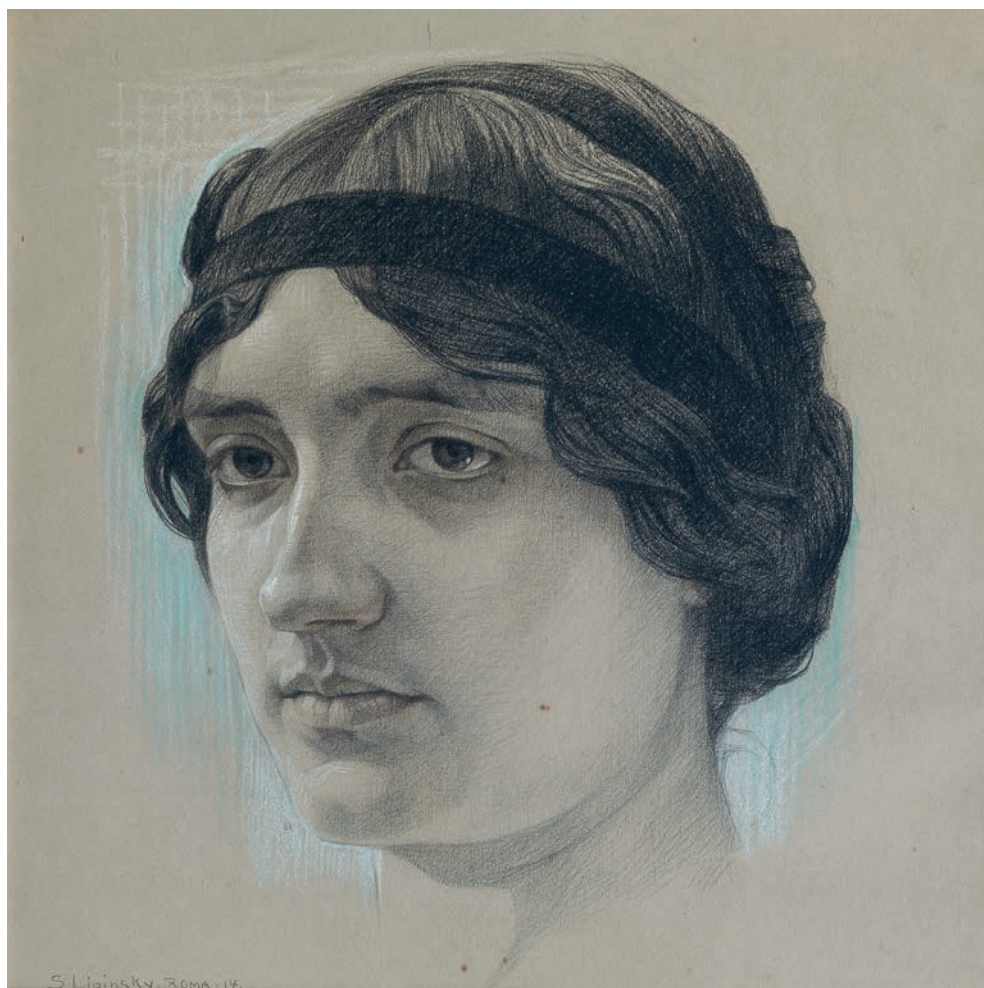
Exhibitions: Firenze, 1914, *I Esposizione Internazionale del Bianco e Nero*

Bibliography: *Catalogo* 1914, p. 51, n. 264.

Noted above all for his production in etching, Sigmund Lipinsky was one of the most influential foreign artists active in Rome in the early twentieth century (cfr. Bardazzi 2012). Born in 1873 in Prussia, today the Polish city of Grudziądz, he trained at the Academy of Arts in Berlin with Anton von Werner. He was awarded a scholarship that allowed him three years in Italy, and arriving in Rome in 1902, he settled there, taking one of the studios at Villa Strohl-Fern (De Feo, Raimondi 2012, pp. 88-90, 169). In the capital he found a large community of German artists – mainly the second generation of the so-called "Deutsch-Römer" – and established a deep artistic and personal friendship with Otto Greiner (Leipzig 1869–Munich 1916). Critics have often underlined the influence of the Leipziger engraver on Lipinsky's graphic production; evident in the analytical attention he pays to anatomical detail. And indeed Greiner's technical expertise changed the way in which many artists conceived drawing in the early twentieth century (cfr. Parisi 2017; Carrera 2017) among others Umberto Boccioni, above all regarding the theme of the nude and more in general the representation of the human figure: if on the one side this was certainly also the case with Lipinsky, who would later go so far as to publish a manual of anatomy aimed at the artistic depiction of the human body (Lipinsky 1931), on the other hand it must be said that he intentionally renounced a certain coarseness in Greiner's style to reach a more shapely and elegant figurative rendering, in line with the tendencies of a more bourgeois taste. «Greiner is uniquely an exquisite and powerful etcher, but Lipinsky is a colourist in black and white» (Howell 1924, p. 267) wrote Edna Howell

in 1924, underlining the sensuality of his figuration.

More than in his symbolist production, expressed in complex engravings and inventive burin ex libris (for greater detail, see Bragaglia, Gai 1992), Lipinsky's introspective vocation is fully revealed in portraiture. In the skilful combination of technical rigour and attention to the psychological state, the *Young Girl* under consideration stands as a particularly apt example of Lipinsky's manner of interpreting the portrait, a genre that he regularly took on throughout the course of his career, with paintings, drawings and engravings – among his most noted portraits are those of Caterina Lombardo, Claire Wenz, Raoul Heinrich Francé, Lucy von Waldthausen and Galeazzo von Thun und Hohenstein. Signed and dated 1914, the work is part of a series of portraits that the artist made around the middle of the century's second decade in which he focused exclusively on the sitter's head. A *Head of a Young Girl* was exhibited in Florence in 1914 at the "I Esposizione Internazionale di Bianco e Nero" (*Catalogo* 1914, p. 51, n. 264) and a further two heads are known of, with the same model posing, both dated 1914. Already in 1913, at the first exhibition of the Roman "Secession", among the four drawings put on show there was a *Head of a Girl* (*Prima esposizione* 1913, p. 53, n. 72), belonging to the series of heads drawn before Lipinsky was obliged to return to Germany at the start of the First World War. His presence among the exhibitors of the "Secession" should be laid at the door of Roman artists – who by associating had in mind the model of the Middle European Secessions – to represent the international modernist trends. However, from the following year Lipinsky no longer took part in the "Secession" exhibitions, preferring to



show his work at the old “Società Amatori e Cultori di Belle Arti,” respecting the choice of his friend Otto Greiner, who never took part in the *Secession* and was among the organizer of the exhibitions of the “Società Amatori e Cultori di Belle Arti” (for in depth analysis, see Kinzel 2017, pp. 23-34). Independently of the change of political-cultural alliance, by 1914 Lipinsky was fully part of the Roman panorama and had established himself as a point of reference, both for the German community (he was president of the *Deutscher Künstlerverein*), and for young Italian

artists. Consequently, he opened a school of drawing and painting in his studio in via Margutta. When he resumed his activity after the pause imposed by the world war, he set up again, first on his own and then at the British Academy of Art, becoming for his pupils a personality of high standing in the history of art of the Nineteen hundreds: to take one from among many, the painter Fausto Pirandello, who from the maestro changed the expressive force lent to drawing.

Manuel Carrera

26. MAURICE CONSTANT FAVRE

Saint Maurice 1875–Paris 1919

Heinrich Schliemann (Neubukow 1822–Naples 1890)

1918

Marble, 75 × 100 × 63 cm

Signed and dated lower right on the base: “MAURICE FAVRE 1918”

Provenance: Paris, private collection

Recently reappeared on the antiquarian market, this unpublished post-mortem bust depicts the eccentric German businessman Heinrich Schliemann (Neubukow 1822–Naples 1890). As a small merchant, he quickly managed to build an economic empire trading gold and indigo, which he sold to the Russian army during the Crimean War to dye uniforms. Economic ease would allow Schliemann to devote himself to his great passions: travel, languages and above all the classical culture he studied for a year at the Sorbonne in 1866. After a first trip to Greece in 1868, he decided to retire from business to devote his time fully to a search of the places described in the Homeric texts, of which he was a great connoisseur. Despite his status of self-taught archaeologist, often contested by the scientific world, Schliemann would be at the origin of a series of exceptional archaeological discoveries, in particular the ancient cities of Troy (1870), whose walls were identified on the hill of Hisarlik in Turkey, Mycenae (1876), Orcomene (1880) and Tiryns (1884).

The bust presented here, signed and dated on the base, is the work of the French sculptor and medallist Maurice Constant Favre. Active in Paris at the turn of the twentieth century, the artist trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Paris under Ernest Barrias, Pierre Jules Cavalier and Félix Coutan, whose teaching was accompanied by the less institutional sort found at the Académie Julien, one of the most famous “free” academies in Paris. In 1896, in his early twenties, Favre exhibited for the first time at the Salon des Artistes Français (SAF) where he presented the *Bust of Mademoiselle Louise Tresal*, a marble medallion that received an honorable mention. Taking advantage of the recognition, he exhibited again in 1898, presenting the *Portrait of Colonel Turnèse*,

and in 1899, presenting the *Bust of Madame de B.*, receiving a certain public success for both. These were the precursors to a long series of marble portraits - a genre in which he would specialize in part thanks to frequenting important Parisian salons and a certain worldly *milieu* - executed in the first decades of the 20th century. There was no lack of prestigious commissions such as that of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, for whom in 1907 he created the statue entitled *Regret* (plaster, signed work, h 1.55 m, Paris, Petit Palais), depicting the poet Alexandre Ducros. The work, which received the silver medal at the *Salon* of the same year, would have the honour of being presented at the Royal Academy in London the following year. It was on that occasion that it came to the attention of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, whom he portrayed in 1909 in a gilt bronze group.

Between 1909 and 1918 Favre carried out a series of official commissions for commemorative portraits of important French public figures: politicians (Camille Pelletan; Frédéric Passy, Nobel Peace Prize, 1913; and Gustave Mesureur, first president of the radical party, 1913); military heroes of the First World War (General Bailloud, 1912; generals Mallterre, 1917; Maunoury, 1917, Musée d’Orléans; and Niox, 1917); and intellectuals. It is probably in one of the most well known Parisian salons of the time, the one of Madame de Arman de Caillavet, that the meeting with the famous writer Anatole France took place, of whom he would create one of his most renowned portraits in 1918.

It is in this context that the portrait of Heinrich Schliemann must be seen. In fact, although documentary proof is unavailable as yet, it is legitimate to imagine the work resulting from an official commission (for example from the French Archaeological



Institute of Athens?). Executed twenty-eight years after Schliemann's death, the portrait could only be commemorative and probably based on photographic material. Following the example of previous works (*Bust of Frédéric Passy*, *Bust of Anatole France*), Favre abandons the traditional format of the hermed bust traditionally associated with Schliemannian iconography according to the model chosen by the German sculptor Richard Grüttner in the portrait executed in the years 1860-1870 ca.

In this work, the French artist opts for a more modern horizontal format, in which Schliemann, in contemporary clothes, contemplates a headless antique statuette with satisfaction, an evident reference to his archaeological successes. The choice of a more contemporary representation is also found in the monument made in 1895 in Schwerin, in Schliemann's region of origin,

by the German sculptor Hugo Berwald-Schwerin and in the bust preserved in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens. The portrait by Favre is of strong Rodinian inspiration, found above all in the use of the *non finito* which gives the impression of the bust emerging from the marble block. This composition, much imitated in the first two decades of the 20th century, had been codified by Rodin from the end of the 1890s, thanks to a series of famous worldly and commemorative busts (see the *Bust of Malher*, 1895). The fragmentary, almost archaeological, character assumed in this way ends up becoming the subject's own attribute, together with the statuette in his hands. Created in 1918, a year before Favre's death, the work is probably one of the artist's final creations.

Barbara Musetti



27. ANTONIO MARIA NARDI

Ostellato 1884–Bologna 1973

Self-portrait

ca. 1920

Oil on canvas, 92 x 70 cm

Signed lower left: "AM Nardi"

Provenance: Italy, heirs of the artist; Italy, private collection

Exhibitions: Rome, 1921, *Prima Biennale romana*; Milan, Galleria Ponte Rosso, 1986, *Antonio Maria Nardi*

Bibliography: *Prima Biennale Romana* 1921, no. 87, p. 132; Lancellotti 1921, p. 52.

Born in Ostellato, near Ferrara, in 1897, Anton Maria Nardi, a brilliant student, enrolled at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Bologna in 1912 and as early as 1915 started to work as book illustrator for some publishing houses, an activity that successfully spanned his life. He graduated in 1916, awarded best student by the Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione and was thus granted a bursary trip, but he could not attend due to being immediately drafted. Nonetheless, that year he exhibited his first works, a painting and eleven drawings, at the "Mostra di pittura e scultura anno 1916" in Bologna organized by the Associazione Francesco Francia - a preeminent Bolognese cultural association that still exists today; the *Cenacolo* of which, later on, he would become one of the most important members.

He served in the army until 1919 and once back in civilian life immersed himself in painting with the enthusiasm of youth, lamenting the years lost through military service. From this time and throughout the 1920s, he dedicated most of his energy to painting and exhibiting. Apart from the shows at the Associazione Francesco Francia - which in 1924 held a solo exhibition for Nardi - his presence was also notable at the important Biennale Romana in 1921 and 1925. And it was on the occasion of the first of these that he entered "two incisive portraits" (Lancellotti 1921, p.52) of which this *Self-Portrait* was one (*Prima Biennale Romana* 1921, no. 87, p. 132).

Probably completed in 1919 or 1920, soon after his return from the army, and thus one of the oldest known paintings by the artist, Nardi depicts himself in his studio still wearing his military uniform, looking at the viewer with an intense, self-confident, even bald expression, which nonetheless betrays a glimmer of uncertainty. Behind him is apparently a female artist at an easel finishing a portrait - probably a suggestion of the theme

of the "double" so widespread at the time -, also a lavishly coloured drape on a chair, and some small paintings on the walls - at least two of which, again, are portraits. All is rendered in a rich chromatic palette and synthetic, powerful brush strokes of thickly-layered colours, not unaware of the Divisionist technique. However, while echoing the strong and direct language of avant-garde expressionism, a calmer afflatus issues from this studio interior. There is a closeness that emerges, a consonance in the full sensibility that recalls the intense, mute and suspended atmosphere of Magical Realism. The fabrics and textures appear ample and crisp and the unhidden energy of the brush strokes is softened in the synthetic treatment of the face that conveys the introspective reflection of the artist; the brightness smoothed out and blurred by a vague sfumato effect.

Although Futurism never had much success in Bologna - considered the "most anti futuristic of Italy" - Nardi's painting confirms that in the 1910s and early 1920s, despite its conservative tendency, Bologna was more than receptive to the ongoing artistic debate in its wider artistic production. The Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna, where Nardi studied, had been frequented by Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964) and Osvaldo Licini (1894-1958), his seniors by a few years; added to which Metaphysical art came to life in nearby Ferrara, two episodes that could not but be of importance to Nardi's artistic training. Moreover, many Bolognese artists had been attending the Roman Secessions, held from 1913 to 1916, and the innovations of the Fauves, Nabis and Viennese Secession paintings are seen clearly in the colours, lights and sense of space of their works.

Nardi would use the intense and synthetic introspection of this portrait only in a few more works, after which his portraiture would shift towards a more sentimental and



anecdotal type and his interests, thanks to a profound faith, would move towards the fresco and the great cycles of religious art. He decorated several churches in Emilia and Romagna and in Brazil - where he lived with his family from 1949 to 1965 - over the years combining the fresco with other techniques, such as mosaic, stained glass and inlay. For

his oeuvre he was honoured with the title of *Commendatore* of the Order of St. Sylvester by Pope Paul VI. In his final years he returned to easel painting, producing landscapes and still life works imbued with melancholy.

Eugenio Maria Costantini

28. BORTOLO SACCHI

Venice 1892–Bassano 1978

Self-Portrait as a Saint

ca. 1920

Tempera on cardboard, 69 x 51 cm

On the back, in a scroll glued to the frame: “Nihil nisi divinum”

Provenance: Veneto, private collection

Exhibitions: Bassano del Grappa, Palazzo Bonaguro, 2000, *Bortolo Sacchi 1892-1978*

Bibliography: *Bortolo Sacchi* 2000, p. 87, no.17.

Self-Portrait as a Saint is the original fruit of rigorous research carried out by the Venetian artist Bortolo Sacchi. Characterized by a high and refined pictorial quality, the painting shows the already very personal style of the twenty-eight year-old artist, part of the new European current of magical Realism. His interest in creating an experimental work is clear; he appears to be looking inward, in search of his ‘other self’ (a *tòpos* of twentieth century culture) and hinting very slightly at irony.

His growth as a painter was influenced by his German studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich (1909-1913), where he learnt to look at “*vero*.” Stimulated by the international milieu of Munich, where Giorgio de Chirico also trained, once he returned to Venice, Sacchi hooked into the more advanced elements of young Italian art, represented by the Venetian Capesarini (Ca’ Pesaro group), led by figures such as Felice Casorati, and by the Roman Secessionists; and took part in their exhibitions. In this phase his painting was influenced by Gauguin’s synthetism, an interest mediated by his friend Gino Rossi, who spent time working in Paris, and by the presence of some engravings by the French master at the 3rd Roman Secession. He is also affected by the enigmatic and decadent style, with strong traits of surrealism, of the Venetian painter and engraver Alberto Martini, linked to German circles. However, his research must also have included aspects of certain paintings by Casorati, characterised by a cracked reality of deep ambiguity and psychological aims that are dense with anxiety. On this artistic path Sacchi already demonstrates a personal and meditated leaning towards the “return to order,” the new avant-garde still widespread in Europe before the end of the war. Guided by a “*tough discipline*,” he threw himself headlong

into the study of antique pictorial solutions, tied to a magical pictorial operation. After the war he began to show his work again at important exhibitions in Italy and in 1920 he had his debut at the Venice Biennale, where he would be a constant participant up to the forties. At the same time, besides his *Self-Portrait as a Saint*, he executed a *Self-Portrait at Night*, in which he portrays himself on a bridge over a Venetian canal wrapped in darkness, his pale face turned to the left, while his enigmatic and detached expression is directed at the onlooker; a self-portrait brought to the fore, imposing face to face intimacy with himself, his eyes veiled by the dim light. For many painters of this period, particularly artists from Italy and Germany, the self-portrait is a mirror through which to catch not so much the external face as the internal being, with that element of magic playing on the theme of being and seeming. “Here in Sacchi, we see taking form an ironic transposition of the artistic self carried to the extreme consequences of narcissism - observes Nico Stringa (in *Bortolo Sacchi* 2000, p.88) - *Bulging in a sort of vortex that raises it upwards, the head has the halo of a ‘saint’ screwed onto it with the neck exaggeratedly lengthened, in an ascesis that is also a physical lifting and literal ‘mockery’ of the genre of ‘self-portrait’.*” Sacchi’s artistic activity required a precise knowledge of the history of art and in particular of the Venetian masters, from Mantegna to Bellini, Carpaccio and Tintoretto, in which enigmatic scenes and miraculous visions are brought to a level of logic and harmony. Besides, on the reverse of the self-portrait, an inscription in Latin says: “Nihil nisi divinum” (“*Nothing but divine*”), whose meaning could be connected to the spiritual value of artistic activity. Equally, the inscription might have been extrapolated from the maxim *«nihil nisi divinum stabile*



est. Coetera fumus» (“Nothing is stable if not divine. The rest is smoke”), which can be seen on a scroll at the feet of a dramatic *Saint Sebastian* (1506) painted by Andrea Mantegna, already at the time in the Venetian

collection of Giorgio Franchetti but also known from photographs (Venice, Ca’ d’Oro, Galleria Franchetti).

Francesca Romana Morelli

29. XAVIER BUENO

Vera de Bidasoa, Spain 1915–Fiesole 1979

Self-Portrait

1947

Oil on paper on panel, 45 x 34 cm

Signed and dated upper center: “Xavier Bueno 1947”

Provenance: Milan, private collection

Painted in 1947, *Self-Portrait* coincides perfectly with the idea of ‘reality’ pursued by Xavier Bueno, who in the same year developed it to create, with his younger brother Antonio, Gregorio Sciltian and Pietro Annigoni, the group Pittori Moderni della Realtà (Modern Painters of Reality) at a moment in history that was dense with new cultural ferment and position-taking. In November, at Milan’s Galleria de L’Illustrazione Italiana, the pugnacious clutch of artists launched with a bellicose catalogue declaration: «(...) We are not interested in or moved by so-called ‘abstract’ and ‘pure’ painting, which, child

of a society in ruination, was emptied of all human content falling back on itself in the vain hope of finding its substance within. We disown all contemporary painting from Post-Impressionism to today (...). We want painting with a moral sense in its intimate essence, within its very style, a painting that in one of the darkest moments of human history is impregnated with that faith in man and his destiny that made art great in times past. We are re-creating the art of the illusion of reality, eternal and ancient seeds of the figurative arts” (*Pittori moderni* 1947). Bueno, like his companions (who were subsequently joined by three more artists), did not want to lend themselves to a ‘return’ to a figuration, even of the highest quality, that had lived in the shadow of Fascism, but intended to return to Painting its ancient value of *mimesis* and to connect it to categories of universal spirituality.

At the basis of Bueno’s research lies an articulated and coherent artistic itinerary. An important influence on his training was his father Javier, a journalist and war correspondent for the Madrid daily paper “ABC”, he was a man of socialist and philo-Soviet leanings, who in the mid twenties, when Miguel Primo de Rivera rose to power, definitively left Spain and settled with his family in Geneva to run the Spanish section of the Bureau International du Travail linked to the League of Nations. It was he who passed on a love of painting to his son; Xavier, for his part, entered a communist cell at a very young age. In 1936, at little more than twenty-one, he moved to Paris, following his artistic vocation. In the City of Lights, instead of pursuing the chimeras of the École de Paris, he ventured into the less frequented territory of the great Spanish realist tradition, from Zurbaran to Velázquez and on to Goya, his cultural roots giving his painting a personal style that was appreciated by Parisian critics. He studies painters like Edouard Manet and is



Xavier Bueno, *Self-portrait*, 1947, oil on canvas, 16 x 10 cm, Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Collezione degli Autoritratti e dei Ritratti di Artisti, Corridoio Vasariano



bowled over by *Guernica*, Picasso's anti war manifesto, when his homeland became the theatre for a bloody civil war. In 1940 he took refuge in Florence with his mother and brother Antonio, not knowing that he would spend the rest of his life there. In the Tuscan city he became inebriated by Renaissance art, but also reflected on the Flemish painters for their treatment of light and their skilful naturalism. In the early forties Bueno intensified his relationship with his brother, made up of intellectual correspondence and reciprocal influence, to the extent of composing four-handed pictures, among which *The Carriage* (1942) and *The Double Self-Portrait in the Studio* (1944), showing a symbolism that unites the two compositions. In 1947, having developed an autonomous artistic identity, he painted his *Self-Portrait*, one version is the object of this research and the other a work of very small format conserved in the Gallerie degli Uffizi in Florence. In the latter painting he depicted himself turning towards the spectator, his expression distant but curious at the same time. The head is flanked by two sources of light, one coming from the window behind him, the other issuing from the left and revealing the naturalism of the face and the enigma of the vision. A wooden frame at the bottom transforms

the painting into a sort of window out of which the man looks at reality; tacked to the frame he has put his signature and the date of execution. The other *Self-Portrait*, the one into consideration, has a complex compositional idea. Bueno is at the easel, his body, located on a diagonal, marks the spatial depth of the studio. He is looking out of the painting, in the manner used by Ghirlandaio in the *Adoration of the Magi* at the Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence, thereby declaring himself the author of the work. Instead Bueno is observing himself in a mirror, long-standing tool of the atelier for the illusion of reality, but it is a virtual surface that can be cut through to instil a silent but eloquent dialogue with the viewer. A limpid volume hit by the light, the figure of the painter stands out from the back wall, vertically defined by the strips of panelling to either side of him. A piece of paper with his signature and the date is nailed to the wall above, once more doubling the presence of the artist as in certain self-portraits by de Chirico, becoming a 'portrait' and classical measure of the space of his pictorial universe, a modern form of Antonello da Messina's *St Jerome in his Study*.

Francesca Romana Morelli





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