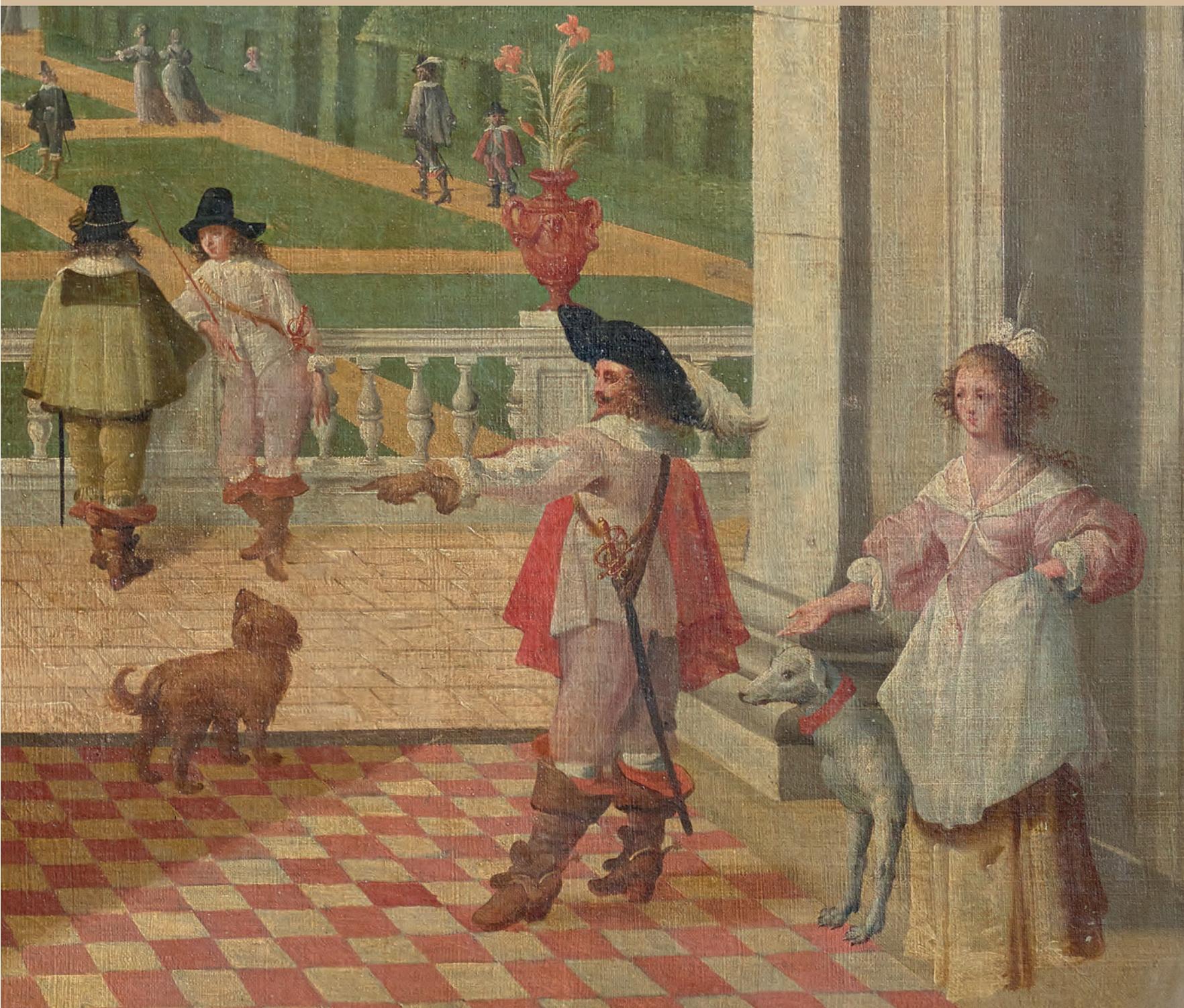


THE
BURLINGTON
MAGAZINE

Arcadia rediscovered: 'The Paston prospective'

A bronze 'Bathing woman' after Giambologna | Modern French art in Victorian Glasgow
Richard Thomson on Rodin and ancient Greece | Delacroix in Paris | Monet in London | Joan Jonas at Tate



2. Detail of a cope given by Boniface VIII to Anagni Cathedral. Thirteenth century. Gold embroidery (*opus cyprense*) on red samite. (Museo della Cattedrale di Anagni).

importance attached to such offerings. Elster explores the implications of papal gifts for their role in disseminating the authority of the papacy and for the obligations of reciprocity that they imposed.¹ Gifts of vestments carried more personal associations than, for example, ivory carvings. To receive something that had been worn by the pope was not only an honour, but, in an age that esteemed the transmissible power of relics, may have been perceived as conferring additional spiritual benefits on the new wearer. The gifts often retained their association with their donors through commemoration in written sources, such as inventories, and, in some cases, through heraldic embroideries. The papal insignia (a tiara and crossed keys) would have sufficed to mark items as a papal donation, but the inclusion of a particular family's armorials elicited not only gratitude but also prayers specifically for them.

Boniface VIII instigated a virtual personality cult through the prominent displays of his own armorials (of the Caetani family) juxtaposed with the papal insignia, not least in the numerous woven textiles from Lucca he commissioned for the Holy See, and in shields of his arms (now lost) included upon the embroidered vestments given to Anagni. In the fifteenth century, Pius II marked his gifts to Pienza in the same way, and the recipients carefully ensured that the armorial shields were preserved, reattaching them when alterations were made, as Elster shows in the case of the so-called 'chasuble of Pius II' (p.218, fig.149 and p.222, fig.157). Their preservation commemorates both the donor and the honour that he had conferred upon his birthplace of Corsignano, a distinction which, now as then, plays a central role in the identity of this city, rebuilt by Pius and renamed by him 'Pienza'.

The variety of workmanship exhibited in the embroideries preserved at Anagni comprises examples from Northern Europe, including England, and the so-called *opus cyprense* or 'work of Cyprus' (Fig.2), whose origin is discussed by Elster, as well as embroidery made in Rome. It offers a tantalising glimpse of the internationalism of the textiles recorded in the inventory of the treasures of the Holy See undertaken under Boniface in 1295, and in the smaller inventory of his gifts to Anagni.

In the catalogue section, Elster includes detailed entries for the papal vestments at Anagni and summary entries for the



vestments at Pienza and Ascoli Piceno, tracing the history of each of the surviving vestments, including any physical alterations. Each item is accompanied by a description of its iconography, technical analyses and diagrams reconstructing its original form. Over the centuries the vestments have been repaired and have lost precious adornments such as pearls, which is particularly noticeable on the Pienza cope. Some of the vestments were altered in line with reforms instigated by the Council of Trent (1545–63). At Anagni, a dalmatic embroidered in England or France with scenes from the life of St Nicholas was converted, probably in the late sixteenth century, into a chasuble of the new recommended slimline shape. Leftover fragments from the St Nicholas dalmatic were recombined with parts of an embroidered *opus anglicanum* cope to form two dalmatics. In a conservation campaign of the second half of the twentieth century, the dalmatics were unpicked, and the *opus anglicanum* cope has been reconstructed, but is missing its hood and orphreys. Useful appendices accompanying this volume offer transcriptions of inventories and documentation of the recent repairs to the Anagni vestments.

Elster's narrative traces the Bonifacian and other papal vestments from their origin as part of the working resources of the papal treasury to their role as gifts and instruments of patronage, noting modifications undertaken while they were in use as liturgical vestments, until they eventually came to be regarded – and conserved – in the twentieth century as museum objects. After so many centuries, these venerable textiles still retain their status as papal gifts, and through their display

continue to commemorate their donors as well as shedding the glow of papal munificence on the recipients. It is rare to find a study that is as thorough and engaging as this. This volume is not only an excellent addition to the study of historic textiles, ecclesiastical vestments and papal patronage, but it is also of wider interest for its exploration of questions of identity, reciprocity and self-fashioning in the late Middle Ages.

¹ See also C. Elster: 'Liturgical textile as papal donations in late medieval Italy', in K. Dimitrova and M. Goehring, eds.: *Dressing the Part: Textiles as Propaganda in the Middle Ages*, Turnhout 2014.

Ghirlandaria: Un manoscritto di ricordi della famiglia Ghirlandaio

Edited by Lisa Venturini, with contributions by Nicoletta Baldini. *Biblioteca Storica Toscana, series I, vol. 76.* 474 pp. with 16 col. ill. (Olschki, Florence, 2017), €55. ISBN 978-88-222-6498-5.

by JEAN CADOGAN

In the second edition of Giorgio Vasari's *The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1568), the author included a detailed account of Michelangelo's training. As Vasari related, on 1st April 1488 Michelangelo's father, Lodovico, agreed to apprentice his son for three years to the painters Domenico and Davide Ghirlandaio. Vasari quoted Lodovico, who on 16th April acknowledged the receipt of two gold florins by his son and 12 lire 12 soldi by himself. Vasari concluded with a spirited defense of the truth of his account and of the closeness of his relationship with Michelangelo: 'These entries I have copied from the book itself, in order to prove that

all that was written at that time, as well as all that is about to be written, is the truth; nor do I know that anyone has been more associated with him than I have been, or has been a more faithful friend and servant to him'.¹

Vasari's digression was provoked by Ascanio Condivi, who in his *Life of Michelangelo* (1553) had disputed the account of Michelangelo's apprenticeship that Vasari had given in the first edition of *The Lives* (1550).² Today the veracity of Vasari's account has been confirmed through documentary evidence, but up to now the record book Vasari cited has been presumed lost. The volume under review publishes a seventeenth-century manuscript (Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Vatican City, Arciconfraternita del Gonfalone, 1276, no.1) that is derived from an original manuscript entitled *Ghirlandaria* and which contains records of the Ghirlandaio family. The Vatican manuscript is a partial copy by Ridolfo di Alessandro (1571–1640) of a memoir compiled by his father, Alessandro Ghirlandaio (1531–95), son of Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio (1483–1561) and grandson of Domenico (1448–94). Although referenced in earlier literature, the manuscript was first studied by Lisa Venturini, who was prevented from publishing it by her untimely death in 2005. Nicoletta Baldini has completed the project in exemplary fashion as a moving tribute to her friend and colleague.

Middle- and upper-class Florentine families kept memoirs that recorded births, deaths, marriages, possessions and professional activities for posterity. These *ricordanze* have long been mined by historians for insight into the social, economic and political history of Renaissance Florence. The Vatican manuscript paints a detailed picture of an elite artisan family during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a time of profound social and economic change. It is a treasure trove of new information about the Ghirlandaio family. For example, Domenico's birth date is shown to have been 2nd June 1448; his training as a goldsmith is confirmed by the dates of his apprenticeship with Bartolomeo di Stefano and Bernardo di Guccio from 1463 to 1469; several lost works are recorded, such as a panel he painted for the Compagnia di S. Maria della Neve in Agliana near Pistoia in 1482. In 1484 Domenico and his brother Davide are shown to have formed a *compagnia* as part of their professional relationship. Purchases of houses and land in Florence and the surrounding countryside indicate increased material wealth up to the mid-sixteenth century. An inventory of Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio's possessions after his death in 1561 lists numerous family

portraits as a kind of material counterpart to the *ricordanze*. From the fourteenth century family members were inscribed in the guilds of the *seta* (silk), *medici e speciali* (doctors and apothecaries), *galigai* (leather workers) and *rigattieri* (second-hand dealers), confirming their broad artisan and merchant activity. Even more fascinating is the glimpse of social networks that the manuscript offers: witnesses for baptisms of Domenico's siblings and children include the artists Alesso Baldovinetti (1425–99) and Andrea del Verrocchio (1435–88) among others, as well as clerics, tradesmen and intellectuals such as Giorgio Antonio Vespucci (1434–1514). Mysteries remain; in particular, we still do not know who taught Domenico to paint.

The commentary and notes provided by Baldini exponentially multiply the revelations of the manuscript itself. She has uncovered rich veins of information, tracing, for example, the careers of Ghirlandaio's masters Di Stefano and Di Guccio through tax returns, and describing the patronage and provenance of the lost panel for Agliana. We learn the later history of Ghirlandaio family members, who turned to banking and relocated to Rome. She has in addition provided a provenance history of the manuscript from the Ghirlandaio family, with whom it remained until 1734, to the Arciconfraternita of the Gonfalone in Rome, and finally in 1911 to the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. While the revelations of the manuscript do not alter our general understanding of the general profile of Domenico and Ridolfo Ghirlandaio's careers that we have had up to now, they sharpen the contours immeasurably and will undoubtedly stimulate future research on artists and patrons in Renaissance Florence.

1 G. Vasari: *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori ed architettori*, ed. G. Milanesi, Florence 1906, VII, pp.138–39, transl. G. De Vere, New York 1996, II, pp.644–45.

2 A. Condivi: *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, Rome 1553, p.16.

Sebastiano del Piombo and the World of Spanish Rome

By Piers Baker-Bates. 246 pp. incl. 8 col. + 57 b. & w. ill. (Routledge, London, 2017), £115. ISBN 978-1-4724-6602-0.

by AIMEE NG

In 1511 Sebastiano del Piombo migrated to Rome from his native Venice under the patronage of Agostino Chigi. Twenty years later he was appointed *Piombatore* (keeper of the papal seal) by Clement VII, whom he

served as portraitist. He died in Rome in 1547, some fifteen years after his collaborative friendship with Michelangelo came to an end. Among dozens of studies on Sebastiano written since Michael Hirst's seminal monograph and Mauro Lucco's *Opera completa*,¹ this book focuses on patronage as a framework through which Sebastiano 'will emerge as an artistic personality in his own right, rather than being overshadowed by his contemporaries' (p.1). Published in the same year as the exhibition *Michelangelo & Sebastiano* at the National Gallery, London (to which Baker-Bates contributed),² it is a refreshing look at Sebastiano's career, with chapters devoted to his patrons both in Spain and Rome with whom the average reader may be less familiar, such as Filippo Sergardi, Don Jerónimo de Vich y Valterra, Francisco de los Cobos and Ferrante Gonzaga. Not all of the personalities at the centre of each chapter actually commissioned works of art; the Bishop of Vaison, for example, was a 'meta-patron' who, the author argues, helped to shape Sebastiano's professional relationships.

One of Sebastiano's most influential works, *Christ carrying the Cross* (Fig.3), was commissioned by Don Jerónimo de Vich, ambassador of the Spanish king to Rome from 1507 to 1521. It was almost certainly sent to Valencia in 1521. In the 1530s Sebastiano revived the original composition on canvas, producing at least three simplified versions on slate, one certainly for another Spanish patron, Fernando de Silva, Count of Cifuentes.³ Sebastiano's seminal paintings of this subject and their varied patronage deserve renewed attention as a group, also in light of the acquisition by the Art Institute of Chicago in 2016 (too late to be considered in this volume) of an almost exact copy on panel of the Prado picture.⁴

Despite the commendable efforts of Baker-Bates and others, in some cases the circumstances of patronage remain a mystery. Sebastiano's *Madonna and Child*, in the chapel founded by Don Gonzalo Díez de Lerma, Canon of Burgos, in Burgos Cathedral, was restored to great acclaim for the 1995 exhibition *Sebastiano del Piombo y España* at the Prado.⁵ For centuries it had been attributed to Michelangelo. Virtually nothing is known about the commission, including whether or not Lerma ever met the artist and if the large panel was exported to Spain before Lerma's death in 1527. The author reveals persuasive formal connections between Sebastiano's altarpiece and imagery in S. Maria della