

ITALIAN LECTURE

VERONESE AND THE VENETIAN  
TRADITION OF ALLEGORY

BY CHARLES HOPE

Read 3 December 1985

IN recent years there has been an increasing interest in the iconographic programmes for schemes of decoration in Florence and central Italy in the later sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Several of these programmes survive, as well as a substantial body of related documents, such as the correspondence of Annibale Caro and the notebooks of Vincenzo Borghini. From evidence of this kind it has now become clear that the compilers of programmes worked in a relatively straightforward and systematic way. Far from drawing on esoteric texts and endowing the paintings themselves with several distinct levels of meaning, they generally seem to have used the most readily available manuals to produce schemes which were supposed to be comprehensible to educated people and for the most part unambiguous in their content.<sup>2</sup> Even the one text that might seem to contradict this view, Vasari's *Ragionamenti*, has proved on close analysis to substantiate it. For while Vasari certainly said that the mythological paintings in Palazzo Vecchio were not just stories, but also allegories of the Medici family, it is clear that his allegorical readings were entirely *ex post facto*, and in no way determined the original choice of subjects.<sup>3</sup> In fact, with a

<sup>1</sup> I am particularly grateful to Elizabeth McGrath for her help in the preparation of this study.

<sup>2</sup> See in particular Jean Seznec, *La survivance des dieux antiques* (London, 1940), pp. 246-71; Anna Maria Testaverde Matteini, 'Una fonte iconografica francese di Don Vincenzo Borghini per gli apparati effimeri del 1565', *Il teatro dei Medici (Quaderni di teatro, ii, no. 7, 1980)*, pp. 135-44; R. A. Scorza, 'Vincenzo Borghini and *Invenzione*: the Florentine *Apparato* of 1565', *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xlv (1981), 57-75; Clare Robertson, 'Annibale Caro as Iconographer: Sources and Method', *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xlv (1982), 160-81.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth McGrath, "'Il senso nostro": the Medici Allegory applied to Vasari's Mythological Frescoes in the Palazzo Vecchio', *Giorgio Vasari: tra decorazione ambientale e storiografia artistica* (Florence, 1985), pp. 117-34; Paola Tinagli Baxter, 'Rileggendo i "Ragionamenti"', *ibid.*, pp. 83-93.

basic ability to read Latin inscriptions, an elementary knowledge of classical mythology and modern history, and an awareness of the notion of decorum, such decorations present us today with few major iconographic problems.

Venice and the Veneto, by contrast, abound with decorative schemes whose meaning has still to be explained. This is not surprising, given that the surviving documentation is much less extensive. But I believe that there is enough evidence to establish something about the basic principles and habits of mind underlying such programmes. I do not pretend to have succeeded in deciphering all this imagery, or even a substantial part of it, but I hope at least to provide some idea of the kind of meaning that we might expect to find in fresco cycles like those at the Villa Barbaro at Maser or in some of the ceilings of the Doge's Palace.

The obvious place to start is with the few programmes that still exist. The earliest is not for Venice itself, but it seems relevant because the artist involved was Titian, and because the patrons, the town council of Brescia, must have been familiar with the kind of imagery favoured by their political masters in Venice. In October 1564 they commissioned three ceiling paintings for their town hall, and at that time, in the words of the contract, Titian undertook to paint 'those figures and stories designated to him' by the patrons.<sup>1</sup> But the artist's instructions were evidently not very precise, and in the following August he was sent a detailed programme, after a Brescian envoy had visited the studio and had found what had been done not to his taste.<sup>2</sup> According to this programme, the central picture was to show a personification of Brescia flanked by a peaceful Minerva on her right and Mars on her left, with three nymphs, symbolizing rivers, below; the picture at the left was to show Vulcan at the forge with at least three Cyclops, and, if Titian thought fit, a lion; in the one at the right were to be Ceres and Bacchus, with two river gods below. The paintings themselves were burnt in 1575, but there exists an engraving by Cornelis Cort of *The Forge of Vulcan*, and a drawing, probably by Rubens, of the central panel (Pls. VII and VIII). A

<sup>1</sup> '... pro pingendis tribus quadris reponendis in cuba soffitae pallatii illis figuris et historiis per dictos magnificos Dominos Deputatos sibi designandis...' For the full text of the contract see Giangiorgio Zorzi, *Le opere pubbliche e i palazzi privati di Andrea Palladio* (Venice, 1965), p. 103, doc. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The programme, first published by Baldessare Zamboni, *Memorie intorno alle pubbliche fabbriche più insigni della città di Brescia* (Brescia, 1778), pp. 139-42, is reprinted by H. E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, iii (London, 1975), pp. 251-3. For the report of the envoy see Carlo Pasero, 'Nuove notizie d'archivio intorno alla Loggia di Brescia', *Commentari dell'Ateneo di Brescia*, cli (1952), 56.

description of the paintings was also published in 1585 by a local writer, Patrizio Spini.<sup>1</sup> This is by no means accurate, but it gives the names of the rivers, all of which were in the vicinity of Brescia.

The meaning of the scheme was simple enough. In the centre was a personification of the city, whose fidelity to Venice was indicated by a small figure of Fides which she held, and she was accompanied by wisdom and peace, symbolized by Minerva, and by military strength, symbolized by Mars, while the river nymphs below presumably represented the three smallest streams listed by Spini, the Cherso, Salato, and Garza. The river gods in the panel at the right would therefore have been the Oglio and the Mella, and Ceres and Bacchus more explicitly recalled the blessings of Brescian agriculture. The river deities held urns of gold, silver, iron, lead, and crystal, all local products. Finally, Vulcan at the forge in the panel at the left alluded to the most important local industry, armaments.

The patrons were evidently proud of their invention, and took pains to lay it out in detail, specifying all the attributes of the figures and their placing in each composition. In choosing these attributes they relied principally on Cartari's *Imagini degli Dei*, published in 1556, the obvious mythological reference book, and on Du Choul's study of Roman religion, published in Italian in 1559.<sup>2</sup> They also seem to have consulted Vico's collection of Roman coins, probably in the 1554 edition.<sup>3</sup> These books had excellent indexes, and Du Choul, like Vico, included many illustrations of the reverses of ancient coins. Having decided on the actual figures to be included, the compilers evidently read the relevant sections of Cartari and Du Choul, and then chose a visually effective image, preferably one that appeared on a Greek or Roman coin.<sup>4</sup> Classical authenticity, indeed, was a high priority,

<sup>1</sup> Patrizio Spini, *Il Suplimento delle Historie Bresciane* (by Elia Capriolo), (Brescia, 1585), pp. 331-4.

<sup>2</sup> Vincenzo Cartari, *Le imagini con la spositione de i dei de gli antichi* (Venice, 1556); Guillaume du Choul, *Discours de la religion des anciens romains* (Lyons, 1556). The 1559 Italian translation of du Choul by Gabriel Simeoni, entitled *Discorso della religione antica de' Romani*, was also published in Lyons, with the same illustrations.

<sup>3</sup> Enea Vico, *Omnium Caesarum uerissimae imagines ex antiquis numismatis desumptae* (Venice, 1554). Other editions were published in Venice in 1548 and 1553, but without indexes.

<sup>4</sup> The main evidence that the compilers consulted Vico is provided by the description of Minerva, 'in habito di nimpha, cinta al traverso e recinta più basso, con braccia ignudi, e scalza, come nelle medaglie di Vespasiano in rame ed in argento'. No reference to these coins appears in Cartari or Du Choul, but comparable images are reproduced in Vico, 1554 (Vespasian, *ex aere*, 12; *ex*

for when Titian said that he wanted to borrow a suit of armour to use for the figure of Mars, the Brescians immediately turned down his request, saying they did not want Mars 'in conformity with present times, but precisely according to the antique'.<sup>1</sup> In short, there is nothing very unusual here; the programme is clear, self-explanatory, and pedantically correct in the choice of attributes, which are drawn from the most accessible sources. This does not mean, however, that the compilers were unfamiliar with classical texts. Thus they said that Titian could show Bacchus entirely nude, or with *coturni*, small boots, on the authority of Virgil.<sup>2</sup> There is nothing about the god's footwear in either Cartari or Du Choul, so the reference here must be to a passage in the *Georgics*, in which Bacchus's *coturni* are mentioned.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the compilers went to the handbooks because these were scholarly and up-to-date, not because they were too ignorant to look elsewhere. There is a parallel here with Annibale Caro's approach to devising programmes: before the publication of Cartari's *Imagini* he had to use classical texts, but once he acquired a copy it became his principal source.<sup>4</sup>

The decoration of the Obizzi villa outside Padua, Il Cathaio, is much more elaborate. But because the villa is not generally accessible and does not seem to have been completely photographed, the frescoes, mostly by Veronese's collaborator Zelotti, have not received much attention from scholars. The programme was largely the work of Giuseppe Betussi, the translator of Boccaccio's *Genealogy of the Gods*, who described the scheme in exhaustive detail in a book published in 1573, the *Ragionamento sopra il Cathaio*.<sup>5</sup>

The greater part of this decoration, and likewise the greater part of the *Ragionamento*, is devoted to a series of paintings of

*argento*, 42). Conversely, other numismatic images mentioned in the programme are reproduced by Du Choul, but not by Vico. For example, the helmet of Minerva 'senza orecchie nel modo quasi che si vede in alcune monete Ateniesi d'argento' appears in Du Choul, 1556, p. 48; Minerva's costume 'd'habito virginale a tre falde, o vero con trei veste' and her shield and olive branch correspond to Du Choul, 1556, p. 94; and the image of Mars 'come si vede tra i riversi di Antonin Pio in rame' is taken from Du Choul, 1556, p. 205. The dependence of the programme on Cartari, 1556, is ubiquitous.

<sup>1</sup> '... noi non volemo tal figura di Marte che si conformi alli presenti tempi, ma preciso secondo l'antico...' (Pasero, 1952, p. 57).

<sup>2</sup> Zamboni, 1778, p. 141: 'Del resto ignudo, o vero con li coturni, che sono stivaletti a mezza gamba per l'autorità di Virgilio.'

<sup>3</sup> Virgil, *Georgics*, ii, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Robertson, 1982, p. 167.

<sup>5</sup> Giuseppe Betussi, *Ragionamento . . . sopra il Cathaio* (Padua, 1573).



notable events in the history of the Obizzi family, which cover the walls of the principal rooms. Associated with these frescoes are painted personifications above the doors, but the relationship is not very specific or subtle. So in the main room are Victory, Honour, Fame, and a figure of Lucca, the city from which the family originated.<sup>1</sup> The room dealing with the family's service to the church has Faith, Religion, and Virtue.<sup>2</sup> But even here the scheme is not altogether consistent, since we do not just find qualities exemplified by members of the Obizzi, but in one room an image of Envy, which is of course rendered powerless by their merits.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the ceilings of these rooms are adorned with allegories which, as Betussi tell us, 'have nothing to do' with the wall paintings, but none the less are not without meaning.<sup>4</sup> In the main room there are three large rectangular panels on the central axis, each flanked by a pair of smaller ovals.<sup>5</sup> The main panels show three types of government: Democracy, illustrated by the Roman republic and its ruin; Aristocracy, by the Venetian republic; and Monarchy. In the first is a personification of Rome, with people bringing tribute and a consul providing an account of how he has discharged his duties, and at the sides Avarice and Discord, which led to the fall of the Republic; in the ovals are figures symbolizing the qualities which made Rome great, Bellona and Eloquence. In the central picture is a kneeling doge, crowned by Prudence and Occasio, and surrounded by his councillors, while in the flanking ovals are Concord and Peace, showing how the Venetian Republic has been maintained. Finally, Monarchy is an enthroned prince, crowned with olive and laurel by Felicity and Good Fortune, with a globe on his knees, surrounded by rulers and emperors, with infidels at his feet, and in the ovals Ardour and Clemency. Here Betussi remarks that he might have shown Merit instead of Felicity or Good Fortune, but this figure appears elsewhere in the building, and in addition 'regard has been taken of the fact that almost all the virtues who accompany these degrees and honours are female.'<sup>6</sup> Personification generally follows gender, and *Merito* would have had to be male.

<sup>1</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. xxx<sup>v</sup>-xxxiii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. lvi<sup>r</sup>-v.

<sup>3</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. cii<sup>r</sup>-v.

<sup>4</sup> Betussi, 1573, fol. xiiii<sup>v</sup>: 'i tre quadri del soffittato, che qui vedete, & ci stà sopra, non hanno che far niente con l'istoria particolare, ma non sono già vanamente, nè a caso posti, o fatti senza misterio; si come nè anco cosa veruna non è locata senza disegno'.

<sup>5</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. xv<sup>r</sup>-xxviii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Betussi, 1573, fol. xxiiii<sup>v</sup>: 'non vi si sarebbe disconvenuto il Merito . . . ma

There are two other ceilings on the ground floor, both with rather commonplace imagery. One shows the familiar *Veritas Filia Temporis*, the other illustrates Virtue, accompanied by Punishment, trampling Vice, and Merit ready to hand out rewards.<sup>1</sup>

The first-floor ceilings follow a similar arrangement, with three large panels and six smaller ovals in the central room, and smaller allegories in the pair of rooms at the ends of building. Here the basic programme was devised not by Betussi, but by the owner, Pio Obizzi. His idea was to show in the central room three types of tyranny, as a counterpart to the three types of government in the room below.<sup>2</sup> So one picture shows a tyrant who acquires power by arms, accompanied by Rapine and Exile, with Severity and Poverty in the adjacent ovals. In the next is a tyrant who came to power through feigned benevolence to the common people, with Fraud and Cunning, and in the ovals Modesty (*Pudicizia*) 'maltrattata e tutta lacerata' and False Liberality. The last picture shows Damocles, an example of a tyrant who came to power through external support, with a wounded Faith and Suspicion, and in the ovals Despair and Cruelty. One of the smaller ceilings illustrated how people continually plot against tyrants; and this was shown by a pair of armed young men attacking a statue of the tyrant, with more plotters and senators lying strangled on the ground. The other showed a tyrant killed by conspirators.<sup>3</sup>

This is by no means all the decoration of the villa. In a loggia, for example, there was a fairly elaborate version of the familiar theme of Time rescuing Truth, taken from Junius's emblem book published in Antwerp in 1565, and elsewhere a figure of Astraea or Justice, with an unrelated *favola* of Jupiter, Juno, and Io, on the ceiling.<sup>4</sup> In another room, part of the apartment of Leonora Obizzi, the ceiling was decorated with Chloris being taken to heaven by Mercury, the wall with Apollo and the Muses, and elsewhere there were figures of Angerona, with a tortoise, Aesculapius, and Nemesis, this last standing for continence and reason.<sup>5</sup> Betussi's explanations do not precisely correspond,

perchè s'è posto altrove, s'è lasciato fuori, oltre che s'è havuto riguardo che quasi tutte le virtù che accompagnano questi gradi & honori siano femine'.

<sup>1</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. lxxv<sup>r</sup>, cxxiii<sup>v</sup>-cxxv<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. cxlviii<sup>v</sup>-cli<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. clii<sup>r</sup>-v.

<sup>4</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. clv<sup>v</sup>-clvii<sup>v</sup>; Hadrianus Junius, *Emblemata* (Antwerp, 1565), p. 59. I am grateful to Jean Michel Massing for giving me this reference.

<sup>5</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. clviii<sup>v</sup>-clx<sup>v</sup>. For Angerona, the tortoise, Esculapius and Nemesis see Cartari, 1556, fols. lxxv<sup>r</sup>, cxiii<sup>v</sup>, xx<sup>r</sup>-v, lxxxxii<sup>r</sup>-v.

however, with Cartari's, suggesting here a rather casual use of the *Imagini*. There was also a loggia with a Choice of Hercules, another theme mentioned by Cartari, and two rooms decorated with fables in landscapes 'a capriccio del pittore'—Venus and Adonis, and Diana and Actaeon.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the exterior façade was also frescoed; and in reply to the question whether these paintings were done according to the painter's fancy, or with some meaning, Betussi explained:

The master made them as he wanted, mixing together eternal deeds and stories and those of the Romans; and here on the top level, wars and victories of our own time against infidels and between Christians; so that looking at everything combined in this way, the eye is charmed and the beholder is delighted. . . . But inside I hope to show you something that is not only meant to please you, but of which you will retain some memory; because, if this view of the wall outside, visible to all, can give sustenance to everyone, that within will do so only to people of understanding and spirit. And it is not such an ordinary type of painting, meant for everyone.<sup>2</sup>

Betussi also tells us that when the façade frescoes were painted, there was no plan of decorating the interior at all.<sup>3</sup>

There are several features of this programme which are of interest. It is notable, for example, that no interpretation is provided for the mythological stories, some of which were explicitly said to have been done 'according to the caprice of the painter'. They were just attractive paintings and nothing more. Many modern scholars would probably find this surprising, given that it is now often assumed that mythological compositions for private patrons, such as those painted by Titian for Philip II, normally had some topical or allegorical meaning. But there is no significant contemporary evidence which could support this view,

<sup>1</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. clxxiii<sup>r-v</sup>, clxxvii<sup>r-v</sup>; Cartari, 1556, fols. lxxii<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. x<sup>v</sup>-xi<sup>r</sup>: 'Foristiere: Ma questo ornamento di pitture, ch'io veggio qui di fuori, come sono di mano di buon' maestro. Sono fatte a fantasia, o pure con significato? Che mi paiono vaghe, & di bella vista, & di lontano pascono molto l'occhio. Bassanese: Il maestro le fece a voglia sua, mescolando insieme fatti, & historie eterne, & di Romani, & qui all'ultimo grado, guerre & vittorie de' nostri tempi con infideli, & fra Christiani; a tale che, mirando ogni cosa insieme cosi composita, l'occhio ne piglia vaghezza, & a' riguardanti rende diletto. . . . Ma di dentro spero bene mostrarvi cosa, che non solo habbia da piacervi, ma che ne farete anco qualche conserva; perchè, se questa vista della mura di fuori, commune a tutti, può dare pastura ad ogn'uno, quella di dentro la darà a persone solo intendenti & di spirto; & è pittura non così ordinaria per tutto.'

<sup>3</sup> Betussi, 1573, fol. xi<sup>v</sup>.

apart from Vasari's *Ragionamenti*, which, as I have mentioned, is in this respect misleading.

While it is clear that Betussi himself did not consider the selection of subjects from mythology as part of his role as iconographic adviser, it is equally evident that he attached great importance to the task of choosing and documenting historical subjects. Indeed, the exegesis of such paintings occupies the greater part of his book; and here there are obvious parallels with the priorities of Florentine iconographers like Cosimo Bartoli and Vincenzo Borghini. And like his counterparts in Florence, Betussi's other major responsibility was to select personifications and devise allegories.

For the personifications Betussi certainly used Cartari, but there is no evidence that he consulted the illustrated and expanded version of 1571 rather than the original edition. In the ceiling of the main room downstairs, for example, seven of twelve such figures come from the *Imagini*.<sup>1</sup> The sources of the other five are slightly more problematic. Ardour, according to Betussi, is dressed like Mars, holding a winged victory in the right hand and a sceptre in the left, as in medals; and this description corresponds exactly to an image of Mars reproduced by Choul.<sup>2</sup> The idea of showing the attributes of Mars to represent this figure is straightforward enough. In the case of the remaining four figures, Avarice, Prudence, Clemency, and Eloquence, the manuals evidently did not provide images to Betussi's taste, so here he had to invent his own.<sup>3</sup> This was easy enough with Prudence, which is traditional: she has three faces, a serpent and a mirror, and on her cuirass a face with many eyes.<sup>4</sup> Only this last feature seems to be novel, but it is based on a simple enough association of ideas. Likewise, it is not too difficult to see why Clemency should have been shown with a broken yoke, and with an extinguished

<sup>1</sup> The figures apparently derived from Cartari, 1556, are as follows: Bellona (fols. lxix<sup>r-v</sup>); Buona Fortuna, 'figurata simile ad una Giunone' (fols. xxxv<sup>v</sup>-xxxix<sup>r</sup>); Concordia (fols. lxii<sup>r</sup>-lxiii<sup>r</sup>); Discordia (fols. lxxix<sup>v</sup>-lxxx<sup>r</sup>); Felicità (fols. lxxxxvii<sup>r-v</sup>); Occasio (fols. lxxxxvi<sup>v</sup>-lxxxxvii<sup>r</sup>; but the vase is an addition by Betussi); Pace (fols. lxi<sup>v</sup>-lxii<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> Du Choul, 1556, p. 204; Betussi, 1573, fol. xxvii<sup>v</sup>, with the statement that the figure was inscribed MART VICTORI. The coin reproduced by Du Choul is inscribed MARS VICTOR.

<sup>3</sup> The only one of these personifications described by Cartari or Du Choul was Clemency, for which Du Choul, 1556, p. 126, provided a single image, a seated woman holding a staff and olive(?) branch. This would hardly have made an effective painting.

<sup>4</sup> Betussi, 1573, fol. xix<sup>v</sup>.

thunderbolt at her feet.<sup>1</sup> Here perhaps we need not seek a textual source, unless the thunderbolt is derived from Du Choul's image of Indulgence, who throws one away.<sup>2</sup> Avarice again is composed from a series of attributes of an unfamiliar kind, all of which Betussi explains. She has a long neck, a hungry look, and holds a glass vase full of coins and jewels, in the middle of which is a heart, 'like one who is buried in the greed for treasure'; she stands on a toad, 'to denote the insatiable greed of the miser, who is never sated'; and she holds an axe, 'to show that avarice is associated with every type of evil'.<sup>3</sup> Only the harpy beside her, a creature famous for its avarice, can be related in an obvious way to a textual tradition.<sup>4</sup> The same kind of approach seems to have been adopted for Eloquence, even though Betussi says that this figure is taken from the antique.<sup>5</sup> In its appearance this figure does recall numismatic images, notably in the fact that she is crowned with olive and that in one hand she holds a crown to denote merit, and in the other a statue of Victory or Peace. But only the chimera beside her, symbolizing the three parts of rhetoric, seems to be based on a specific text, Valeriano's *Hieroglyphica*.<sup>6</sup>

In short, it appears that Betussi used Cartari as his principal source for the personifications here, but where this text did not provide the necessary images he must have looked elsewhere, apparently in a quite unsystematic way. Valeriano, for example, can be invoked for one detail; but other interpretations provided by Betussi, such as that of the toad, have nothing in common with those in the *Hieroglyphica*. On occasion he was evidently forced to

<sup>1</sup> Betussi, 1573, fol. xxvii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Du Choul, 1556, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Betussi, 1573, fols. xvi<sup>v</sup>-xvii<sup>r</sup>: 'ha il collo lungo, & sta quasi tutta famelica & ingorda. Ha in una mano un vaso di vetro trasparente, con un core in mezo a molte medaglie d'oro, & altre gioie, si come quella che sta sepolta nell'ingordigia de' tesori. Pose un' piede sopra un botto, per dinotar l'insatiabile appetito dell'auaro, che mai non si satolla; come la rana, che di continuo stando ne' paludi, teme non sempre il terreno le manchi. Ha dall'un lato una Arpia . . . per dinotare la continua & monstruosa fama dell'oro. Nell'altra mano tiene la scurre, per dimostrare che l'auaritia si accosta ad ogni male.'

<sup>4</sup> Vincenzo Cartari, *Il Flauio intorno ai Fasti volgari* (Venice, 1553), p. 402, calls them 'rapaci oltre modo'; and Cartari, 1556, fol. lvi<sup>v</sup>, quotes Ariosto's description of harpies, with the phrase 'le man rapaci'.

<sup>5</sup> Betussi, 1573, fol. xviii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Giovanni Pierio Valeriano Bolzani (hereafter Valeriano), *Hieroglyphica sive de sacris Aegyptiorum literis commentarii* (Basle, 1556), fol 16<sup>r</sup>. The Basle editions of 1567 and 1575 have the same pagination, but include an additional section by C. A. Curio.

invent images, because they were not to be found in the manuals. Exactly the same pattern applies in the rest of the villa. Some figures come from Cartari, some seem to depend on very simple associations of ideas, such as Poverty dressed in rags, Cruelty dismembering a child, or False Liberality as two-faced, seeming to give with one hand and taking with the other; while others again appear to be conflations of different sources, for example Virtue, who is nude, winged, surrounded by flowers, crowned with flowers, with a flowering dry rod in her hand, seated on a rock, and with swans at her feet.<sup>1</sup> Cartari accounts for the wings and the rock, Valeriano for the swans, and Du Choul, perhaps, for the rod.<sup>2</sup> That Betussi should have been compelled to devise personifications of his own is not surprising, given the number that he used; and the approach that he seems to have used is no different from that of Florentine iconographic advisers like Cosimo Bartoli.<sup>3</sup>

It is significant that all the personifications were labelled. Without such labels, indeed, many would be unrecognizable. And it is important to realize that until the publication of Ripa's *Iconologia* in 1593, there was no kind of standardization in such images, in that many of them did not have regular and unique attributes by which they could, in theory, be identified by an educated person. Readers of Cartari and Du Choul would soon have realized, in fact, that the ancients had shown such figures in a bewildering variety of guises. The attributes, to be sure, were meant to be appropriate, and could no doubt have been explained (even though these texts do not always provide complete explanations); but they were not self-explanatory.

It is difficult to believe, too, that anyone would have understood the allegorical panels in the central sections of the ceilings without the inscriptions which Betussi records with such pride. The principal of decorum, after all, was of little help, since Betussi explicitly states that they have nothing to do with the wall decoration. Moreover, these decorations have little internal coherence. Take the three main scenes in the first room. Democracy is represented

<sup>1</sup> Betussi, 1573, fol. lvi<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Cartari, 1556, fol. lxii<sup>r</sup>; Du Choul, 1556, p. 35; Valeriano, fol. 165<sup>r</sup> ('la candidezza e purità dell'animo').

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bartoli's programmes of 1555-6 for the Palazzo Vecchio in Karl Frey, *Der literarische Nachlass Giorgio Vasaris*, i (Munich, 1923), 410-12, 437 f., 439-42, 447-51. In his programme for the Sala di Giovanni delle Bande Nere (pp. 441 f.), for example, Bartoli suggests personifications such as Fortune and Virtue, for which he does not trouble to provide attributes, but also Impeto, for which 'farei una furia di vento che piegassi quercie et pini; o un giovane robustissimo che le facessi cadere'.

by a personified state, Rome, in its decline: Aristocracy is shown not by a personification of Venice, but by the Doge and Senators; while Monarchy is not identified with a particular state at all, nor by a personification of Monarchia, but by a seated male ruler. There are precedents for this kind of imagery in Venice,



FIG. 1. Francesco Marcolini, *Le Sorti: Fama*.

notably in the woodcuts to a book used for a fortune-telling game, Marcolini's *Sorti*, of 1540. These include what we would now consider conventional personifications, such as Fame, a winged figure with a trumpet and a dress covered with eyes (Fig. 1), as well as anecdotal scenes—a woman falling out of a window for *Disgrazia* (Fig. 2)—and more generalized images such as an



FIG. 2. Francesco Marcolini, *Le Sorti: Disgrazia*.

enthroned ruler with a kneeling suppliant and bystanders for Beneficio (Fig. 3).<sup>1</sup>

The imagery of the ceilings upstairs is a rare documented example of a programme devised by a patron, though doubtless assisted here by Betussi; and very odd it is too, above all in its apparent inappropriateness to a villa. As in the main ceiling below, there is a strange mixture of genres, so that a historical exemplum is combined with more generalized allegories, while in

<sup>1</sup> Francesco Marcolini, *Le sorti intitolate giardino di pens[ieri]* (Venice, 1540) pp, 11, 15, 95. The illustrations seem to have had a relatively wide circulation. They were praised by Vasari, some were republished by Marcolini in other books, and the entire series was engraved by Enea Vico (Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori* (ed. G. Milanesi, Florence, 1878-85), v, 434 f.; Adam Bartsch, *Le peintre graveur* (Leipzig, 1854-70) xv, 307-16). A second edition of *Le sorti* appeared in 1550.





## B E N E F I C I O

FIG. 3. Francesco Marcolini, *Le Sorti: Beneficio*.

the side rooms there are representations of imaginary events without any allegorical figures at all. In comparison with the interpretations of Renaissance imagery often proposed today, this is a singularly unimpressive programme, incoherent, not particularly learned and altogether unsystematic. But Betussi himself did little better; and this should alert us to the fact that other schemes of the period may be equally clumsy.

The other two programmes that I want to examine are both for works of art in Venice. The first was for the scheme of redecoration of the main rooms of the Doge's Palace after the fire of 1577.<sup>1</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Wolters, 'Der Programmwurf zu Dekoration des Dogenpalastes nach dem Brand vom 20. Dezember 1577', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, xii (1965-6), 303-18: two other versions of the

[footnote cont. on p. 402

was composed by two Venetian noblemen, with assistance from a learned monk, Girolamo Bardi. The programme itself is simple enough, consisting for the most part of a series of subjects from Venetian history, the victories of the Republic and the virtuous acts of its citizens, arranged in chronological sequence. These subjects were taken from well-known historical works, and in each case the source was indicated. It is worth noting, though, that the programme contains a brief account of the events to be depicted, rather than precise instructions as to how the pictures should look. By contrast, the specifications about allegorical compositions and personifications are more detailed. This was inevitable, since the meaning of such paintings depended on the arrangement and attributes of the figures. But even here the artists were evidently free to use their own judgement: as Wolfgang Wolters has pointed out, in painting the three huge allegories on the ceiling of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio they did not follow the programme slavishly, but modified it for compositional reasons.<sup>1</sup> In other words, while the meaning of the pictures was an important consideration, there seems to have been a measure of consensus that they should also look good.

There are three groups of personifications mentioned in this programme. The first is a series of twelve figures for the ceiling of the Sala dello Scrutinio representing qualities of the republic such as Religion, Clemency, and Magnificence. Here the attributes were specified in detail. Some of them are taken fairly directly from Cartari, for example those for Concord, Faith, and Justice.<sup>2</sup> Some, such as Clemency, come from coins reproduced in Du Choul and other compendia;<sup>3</sup> others are traditional, such as Religion with a cross and chalice, and others again seem to be new inventions, for example *Disciplina Militare da Terra*, an armed woman surrounded by instruments of war and fortification, or *Liberality*, a woman who scatters money from a vase. The general pattern, though, is clear: where an authentic image was readily available it was used, if occasionally modified; in other cases the

text are preserved, one of which is published in Wolfgang Wolters, *Der Bilderschmuck des Dogenpalastes* (Wiesbaden, 1983), pp. 308–13.

<sup>1</sup> Wolters, 1983, pp. 275–87.

<sup>2</sup> Cartari, 1571, pp. 317–21 (*Concordia*), 319–21 (*Fede*; but the crow which Cartari says should accompany her is replaced by a turtle-dove), 464–7 (*Giustizia*; some of the attributes are those of *Nemesis*, which, according to Cartari, some believed to be 'la medesima con la Giustitia'). All these figures were illustrated in Cartari, 1571.

<sup>3</sup> The source seems to be two coins inscribed *INDULGENTIA AUGG IN CARTH.*, reproduced in Du Choul, 1556, p. 91.

attributes chosen were self-explanatory, traditional and unremarkable.

The second group of personifications appears in the allegorical compositions on the central axis of the ceiling of the *Maggior Consiglio*. Here the artists were supposed to base their images on ancient coins, but no more precise specifications were provided.<sup>1</sup>

The third group of personifications comprised twelve figures to decorate the doors of the *Sala delle Quattro Porte*, whose imagery reflected the rooms beyond.<sup>2</sup> At the entrance to the *Sala del Collegio*, for example, were Vigilance, Eloquence, and Facility of Audience. In one respect, this section of the programme is rather curious: the personifications themselves were represented as statues (Pl. IX), and the names of the sculptors are given in the text; but it is clear that the specifications are about paintings, because there are frequent references to colours. Thus we are told that 'Peace was shown as a large and beautiful woman crowned with laurel, with golden hair, with a mantle of gold and a green star . . .' Again, it is said that 'War will be placed on the left and she is painted . . .' It is possible that there had been a plan to install pictures above the doors, which was changed while the programme was being compiled, but this seems rather unlikely. A more plausible explanation is that the compilers simply copied an earlier scheme devised by the *Accademia Veneziana* around 1560, which was certainly meant to be translated into paintings 'to be placed in the space in front of the doors of the Most Illustrious Collegio and Senate, Council of Ten and Chancellery'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wolters, 1965-6, p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> Wolters, 1965-6, pp. 314-18.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to this earlier scheme is contained in a *supplica* of Federico Badoer to the Procurators of San Marco, written shortly before 12 July 1560, published by Paul Lawrence Rose, 'The Accademia Venetiana, Science and Culture in Renaissance Venice', *Studi Veneziani*, xi (1969), 228-34. The relevant passage, on p. 230, is as follows: 'Potranno similmente sapere che havendo ad essa academia con la volontà del Seren.mo Prencipe li Clariss.mi Sig.ri Proveditori supra le fabriche del palazzo fatto una terminatione in scrittura, che da essa sia fatto una aparato di quelle inventioni di pitture da esser poste nel luogo inanzi le porte del' Ill.mo Collegio e Senato, Cons.o di X, e la Cancellaria, et datole il carico parimente ch'ella dovesse parimente far ellettione del pittore, ha risoluto in scrittura la più bella inventione et di maggior ornamento a questo Seren.mo stato ch'altra fosse mai fatta, non pur in questa città, ma in ogni altra del mondo, considerata la materia appartenente a significar la prova del reggere Christianamente, virtuosamente con sicurtà e splendor un stato.' Wolters, 1983, p. 33, associates this document with a programme for the ceiling of the room in question painted by Giuseppe Salviati in 1567. But the reference to the 'luogo inanzi le porte' seems too specific to support such a reading. For a description of Salviati's contribution see Staale Sinding-Larsen, *Christ in the Council*

[footnote cont. on p. 404

This conclusion is corroborated by a detailed examination of the text, which is entirely different in character from the rest of the programme. Thus whereas the descriptions of the first group of personifications simply consist of lists of attributes, in this section everything is explained and justified in great detail. The wealth of information that is provided would be of no particular use to an artist; but it is precisely what one would expect in a programme devised by Academicians anxious to display their erudition to the *Provveditori sopra le fabbriche del palazzo*. Moreover, the actual sources used here are not the same as elsewhere. Instead of simply paraphrasing Cartari and Du Choul in a quite straightforward way, the compilers of this section relied principally on Valeriano, as the frequent references to 'hieroglyphic letters' make abundantly clear, although they also seem to have made use of Cartari for various details.<sup>1</sup> The result was a programme more overtly learned than anything else that we have encountered; and it is notable that the approach adopted here was not followed by the compilers of the rest of the scheme for the redecoration after the fire.

The final programme that I want to examine is for the statues on the parapet of Sansovino's library (Pl. *Xa*). This is preserved in a sketch (Pl. *Xb*), and it is certainly the work of Girolamo Bardi, who on 30 March 1591 was paid five ducats by the Procurators for 'the explanation of the histories or fables carved in the arches of the building, so that the figures above can be placed so as to correspond with the said carvings and figures in half relief carved

*Hall. Studies in the Religious Iconography of the Venetian Republic, with a Contribution by A. Kuhn (Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia, v, Rome, 1974), pp. 241 f., 269-75. For the Accademia Veneziana see Manfredo Tafuri, Venezia e il Rinascimento (Turin, 1985), pp. 172-85 (with full bibliography).*

<sup>1</sup> The approach of the compilers is well illustrated by the figure of Eloquence (Wolters, 1965-6, pp. 314 f.). Her dress of varied colours comes from Valeriano, 1567, fol. 440<sup>r</sup>; the wings on her head, to give her rapidity of intellect, from Cartari, 1556, fol. lxxiii<sup>v</sup>; the caduceus from Valeriano, 1567, fol. 116<sup>r</sup>, with the reference to caduceatori from Cartari, 1556, fol. lxi<sup>v</sup>; and the gratuitous reference to Hercules Gallicus from Valeriano, 1567, fol. 427<sup>r</sup>, or Cartari, 1556, fol. lxxvii<sup>r</sup>. But the file (lima), standing for 'la limatura dei concetti', seems to be an original invention, while the serpent wrapped around it, symbolizing prudence, can be paralleled in Valeriano, 1567, fol. 118<sup>r</sup>. Further evidence of the dependence of the compilers on Valeriano is provided by one of the attributes of Diligence (Pl. IX), a winged horse, which is here described as a symbol of speed (Wolters, 1965-6, p. 318: 'La Diligentia . . . col cavallo alato . . . per essere detto animale stimato simbolo della prestezza'). Valeriano, 1556, fol. 32<sup>v</sup>, seems to be the only authority who provides this interpretation of Pegasus in addition to the traditional association with Fame.

in the said arches'.<sup>1</sup> The idea of putting statues of gods on the parapet had already been promoted by the architect Sansovino, but in his lifetime only the figure of Neptune by Ammanati had been installed, at the north end of the main façade.<sup>2</sup> The building itself was finished only in 1587, and by the end of 1588 the procurators had begun to commission further statues.<sup>3</sup> The top section of the drawing shows the situation when Bardi intervened. The four figures at the left were on the south side, towards the Bacino di San Marco, the rest on the main façade. In other words, in 1588 a simple scheme had already been devised, with alternate male and female figures. No particular thought seems to have gone into the programme, for in addition to deities there was also Adonis, who was not even adjacent to Venus. It is notable too, that this scheme took no account of the earlier decoration on the ground floor, which Bardi indicated in the lower section of the sheet. The keystones of the arches have alternate heads of lions and gods, while the arches with lions are decorated with grotesques and those with gods with small stories related to each deity. Taking this scheme as his starting-point, Bardi then suggested that the statues above should correspond where possible to the carvings below. He also tried to rearrange the other statues in a more logical way, so that Adonis, for example, was next to Venus, and he suggested six other figures for the remaining spaces. Bardi's plan is shown in the middle of the sheet. It is logical enough, but it does not make much visual sense, since it involved abandoning the former male/female alternation. In the event, although the Procurators then commissioned some new figures according to Bardi's recommendations, perhaps for reasons of expense they did not carry out the programme as he had suggested.<sup>4</sup> The statues already installed were not

<sup>1</sup> Nicola Ivanoff, 'Il Coronamento statuario della Marciana', *Ateneo Veneto*, NS II (1964), 101: '... la dichiarazione delle istorie ovvero fabule delle figure intagliate alli volti della fabrica nova incontro l' Palazzo a ciò si potesse metter a suoi luochi le figure de sopra al cordon della balaustra le quali corrispondessero con li intagli de' figure de' mezzo rilievo intagliate nelle sopraditte volte...'. The same payment is dated 30 May 1590 by Giulio Lorenzetti, 'La Libreria Sansoviniana di Venezia', *Accademie e Biblioteche d'Italia*, III (1929-30), 28. The sketch was first published by Nicola Ivanoff, 'La Libreria Marciana', *Saggi e Memorie di storia dell'arte*, VI (1968), fig. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare, descritta in XIII libri* (Venice, 1581), fols. 113<sup>v</sup>-114<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> For the payments see Ivanoff, 1964, pp. 107-12.

<sup>4</sup> Of the six figures proposed by Bardi, four are recorded in the surviving payments, namely Pan, Latona, Endymion, and Hymen. As the first payment

[footnote cont. on p. 406]

moved, and the new ones were just fitted in, apparently quite unsystematically.<sup>1</sup> It looks as if the Procurators tried to preserve the male/female pattern at the north end of the façade, and then filled the remaining spaces with whatever was left over. The result is a muddle. Even Stringa and Martinioni did not understand it; the names they give for the statues correspond neither to Bardi's scheme nor to the arrangement that is there today.<sup>2</sup>

Certain aspects of these programmes are worth emphasizing. It is notable, for example, that careful forethought by the patron did not always go into the planning of decorative schemes, even quite elaborate ones. This is true of the exterior frescoes at Il Cathaio; more surprisingly, it also seems to be true of the 1588 project for the outside of the library, which Bardi tried to modify. Equally notable is a certain lack of coherence and consistency in the treatment of related subjects. This is most evident at Il Cathaio, but even Bardi's scheme for the library is hardly elegant in this respect. Nor is there any suggestion that any of this imagery was meant to be read on different levels. In short, not only is the meaning more straightforward than some modern scholars would lead us to suppose, it sometimes seems to have mattered rather little to the people at the time. Thus Francesco Sansovino, who described the Library built by his father at length and with obvious pride, was apparently unaware that the heads on the keystones were those of gods, and he did not bother to mention the storiated reliefs under the arches at all.<sup>3</sup>

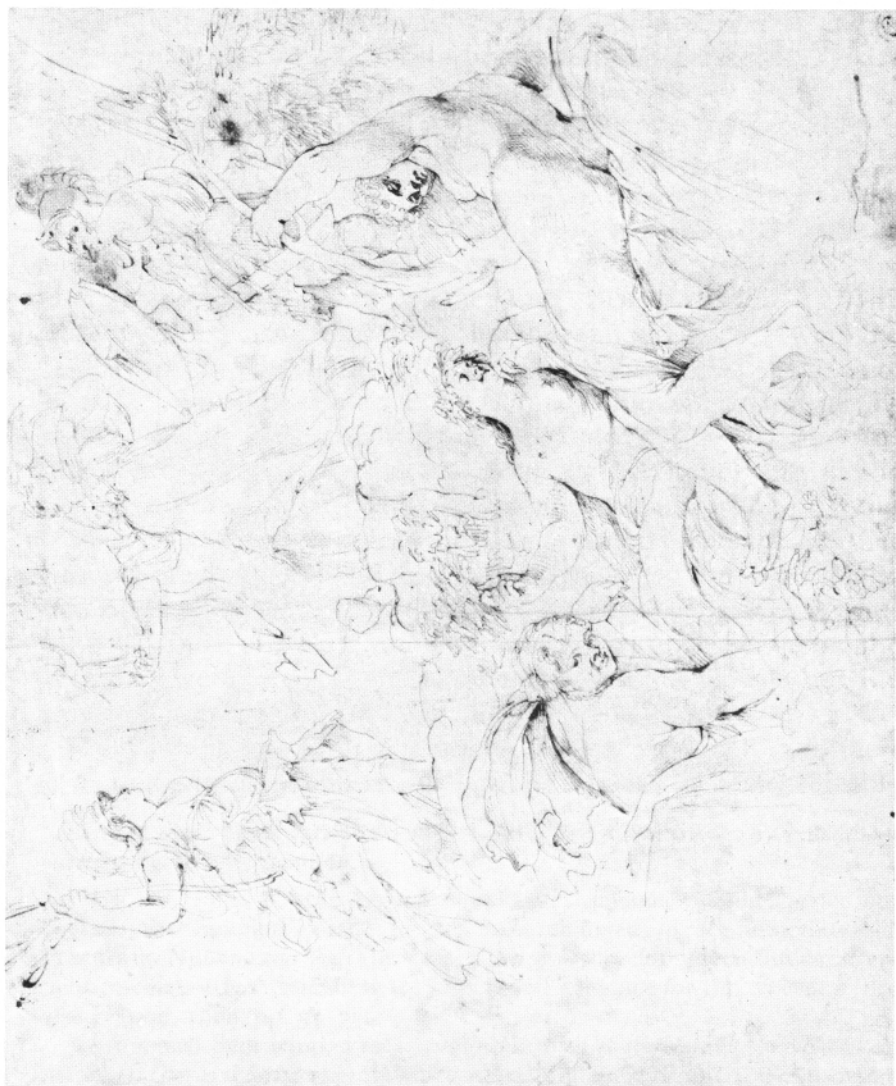
The compilers of programmes evidently thought that their principal job was to choose appropriate stories and devise suitable figures. The fact that the programme for the library was on 1 December 1590, this provides a *terminus ante quem* for Bardi's programme.

<sup>1</sup> Ivanoff, 1964, p. 102, argued that Bardi's scheme was not carried out because the function of the Library was changed to accommodate the Procuratia Nuova, and that the decoration was therefore given 'un carattere politico-celebrativo'; but there seems no good evidence for this assertion. See also Ivanoff, 1968, pp. 54-7.

<sup>2</sup> Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare . . . ampliata dal M. R. D. Giovanni Stringa . . .* (Venice, 1604), fol. 206<sup>v</sup>; Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare . . . con aggiunta di tutte le cose notabili della stessa città . . . da D. Giustiniano Martinioni primo prete titolato in SS. Apostoli* (Venice, 1663), p. 312. Both writers correctly record the figures at the south end of the main façade and on the south façade, but Stringa omits two figures on the north end of the main façade, and Martinioni one. In detail, their scheme does not account for the figures actually there, nor do the names which they provide correspond in every case to the names of the statues recorded in the payments to the sculptors.

<sup>3</sup> Sansovino, 1581, fol. 113<sup>v</sup>: 'Et nelle chiavi che serrano i volti nel mezzo, sono teste di huomini, di donne, & di lioni interzate . . .'



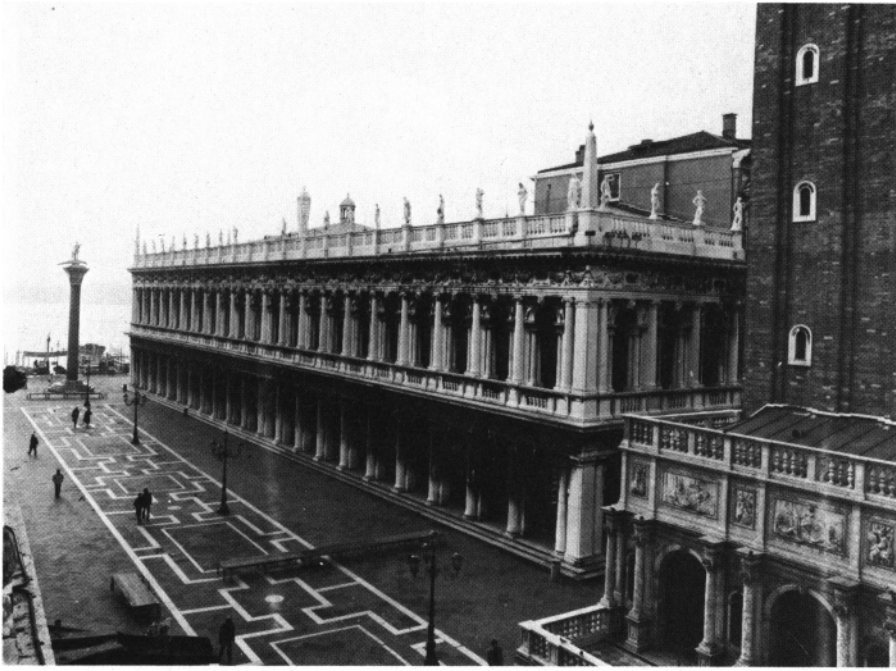


Rubens(?), after Titian, *Brescia between Minerva and Mars*. British Museum, London.

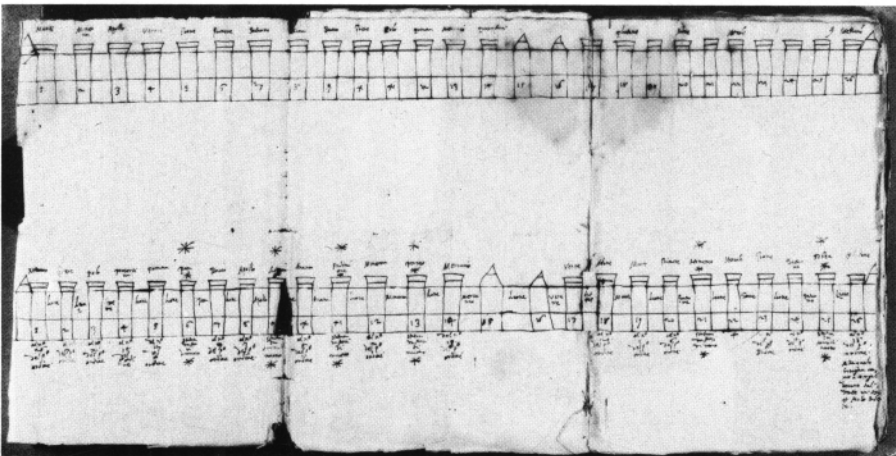




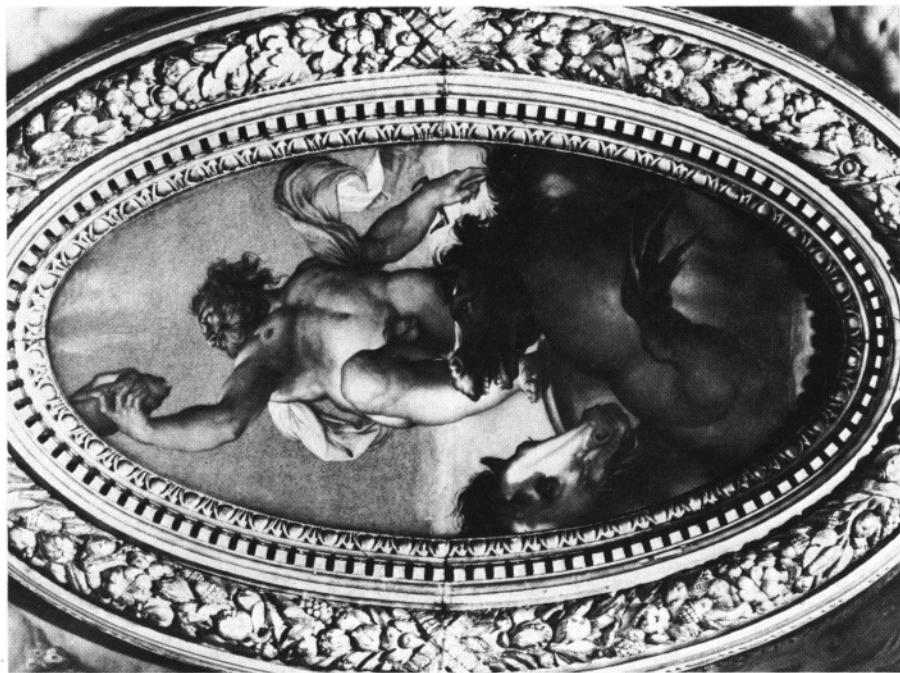
Giulio del Moro, *Diligence*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(a) Libreria Marciana, Venice.



(b) Girolamo Bardi, scheme for the sculptural decoration of the Libreria Marciana. Archivio di Stato, Venice.



(b) Giambattista Ponchino, *Neptune*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(a) Giambattista Zelotti, *Venice on a globe*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(b) Paolo Veronese, *Youth and Old Age*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(a) Giambattista Zelotti, *Janus and Juno*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(a) Paolo Veronese, *Liberty*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(b) Giambattista Zelotti, *Venice between Mars and Neptune*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



Paolo Veronese, *Jupiter expelling crimes and vices*. Louvre, Paris.

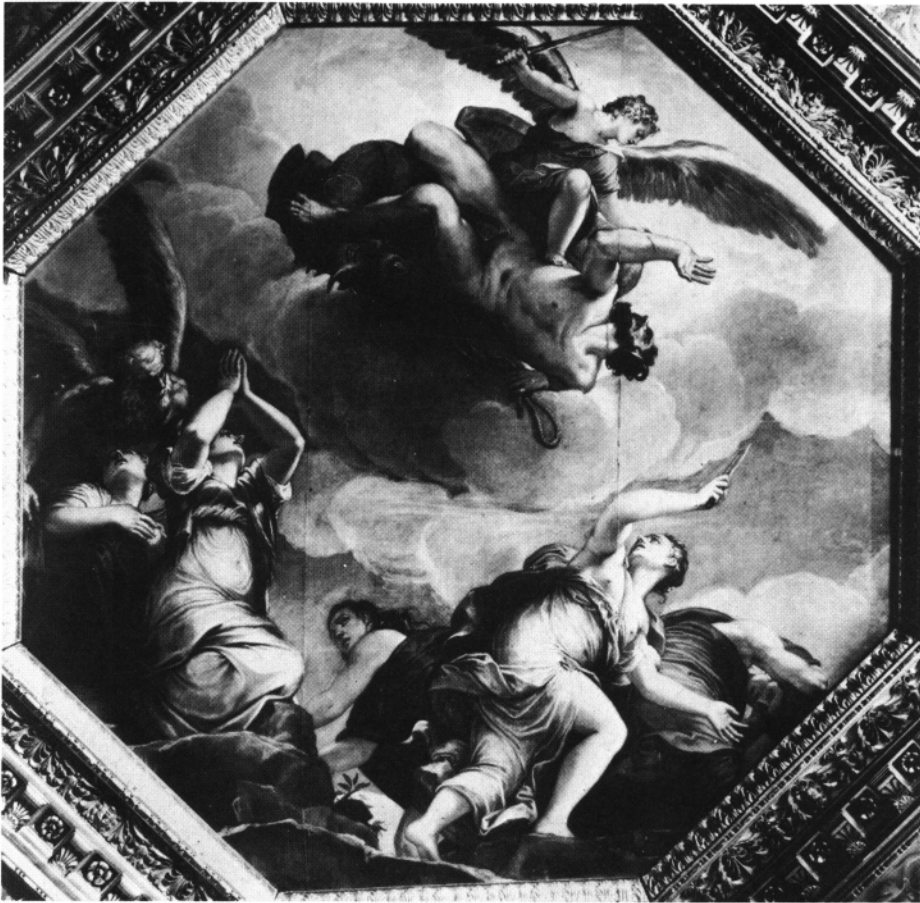




(a) Paolo Veronese, *Venice and Juno*.  
Doge's Palace, Venice.



(b) Giambattista Ponchino, *Mercury and Minerva*.  
Doge's Palace, Venice.



Giambattista Zelotti, *The defeat of Vice*. Doge's Palace, Venice.

Ceiling of the Sala del Collegio, towards the door.  
Doge's Palace, Venice.







Paolo Veronese, *Faith and Religion*. Doge's Palace, Venice.

Ceiling of the Sala del Collegio, towards the tribunal.  
Doge's Palace, Venice.





(a) Paolo Veronese, *Moderation*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(b) Paolo Veronese, *Concord*. Doge's Palace, Venice.





(a) Paolo Veronese, *Industry*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(b) Paolo Veronese, *Vigilance*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(a) Paolo Veronese, *Liberty*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(b) Paolo Veronese, *Obedience*. Doge's Palace, Venice.



(a) Paolo Veronese, *Continnence*. Doge's Palace, Venice.

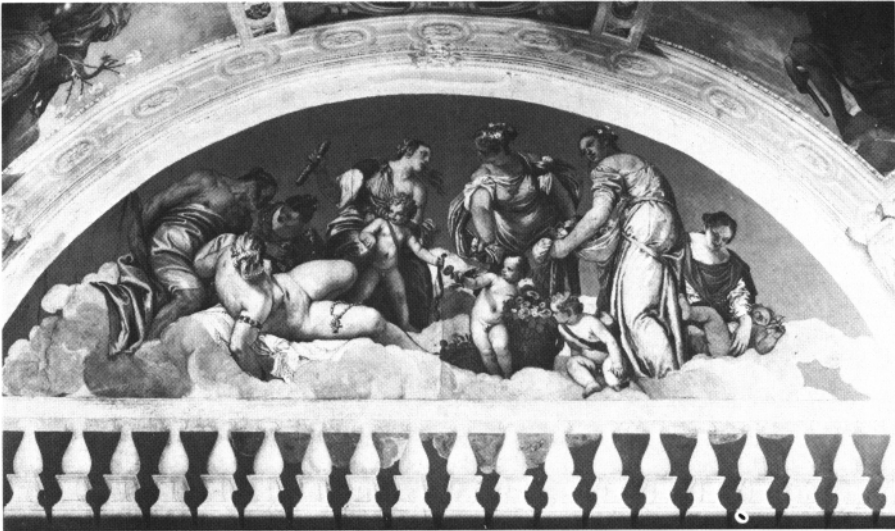


(b) Paolo Veronese, *Gentleness*. Doge's Palace, Venice.

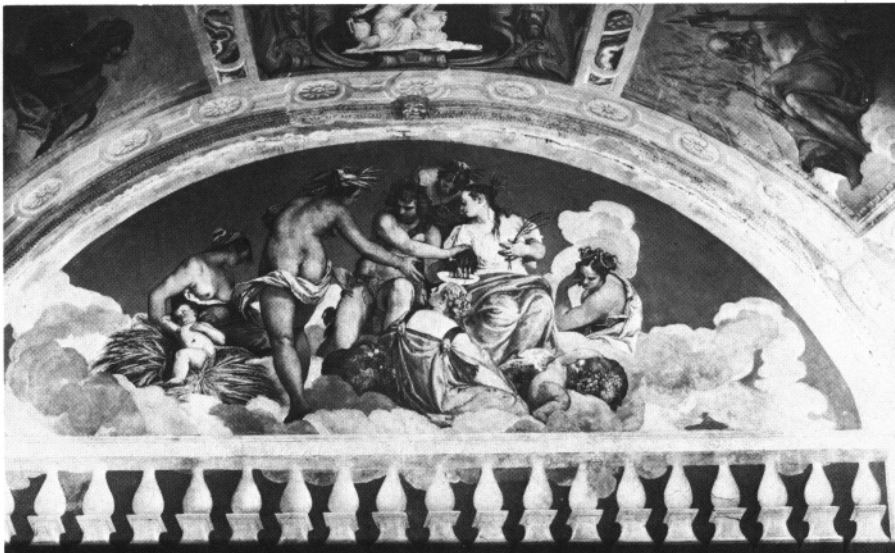


Paolo Veronese, vault of the Salone, Villa Barbaro, Maser.





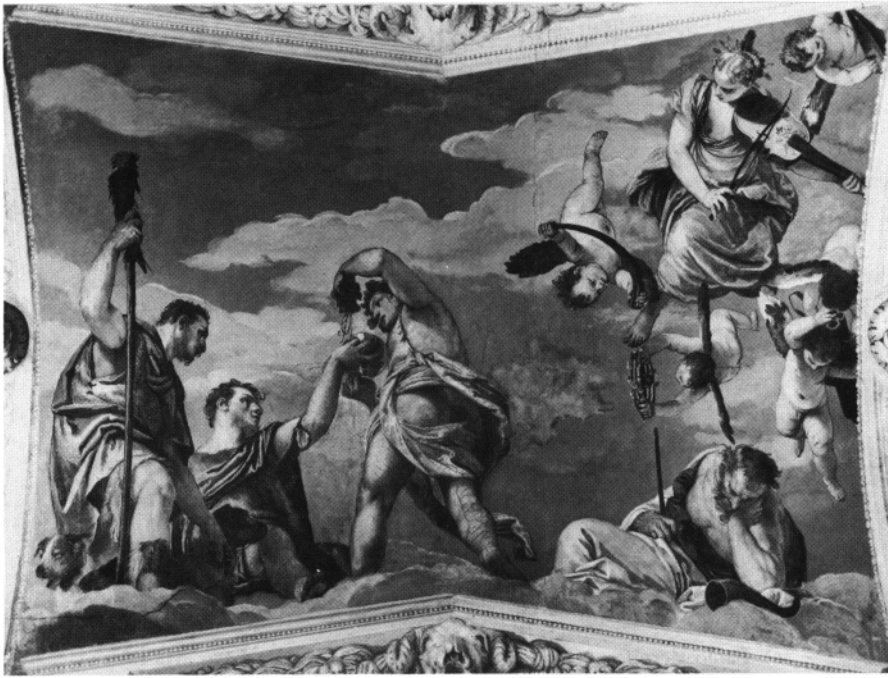
(a) Paolo Veronese, *Winter and Spring*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.



(b) Paolo Veronese, *Summer and Autumn*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.



Paolo Veronese, frescoes in the *Crociera*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.



(a) Paolo Veronese, *The Lares, Bacchus, a Muse, and Sleep*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.



(b) Paolo Veronese, *Juno, Hymen, Venus, and Talassio*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.



(a) Paolo Veronese, *Chance and a sleeping man*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.



(b) Paolo Veronese, *History and Saturn*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.



(a) Paolo Veronese, *Prudence and Virtue*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.



(b) Paolo Veronese, *Allegory of Nemesis*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.





(a) Paolo Veronese, *Allegory of Fortune*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.



(b) Paolo Veronese, *Allegory of Faith and Charity*. Villa Barbaro, Maser.



Parrasio Micheli, *Allegory of the birth of the Infante Ferdinand*. Museo del Prado, Madrid.

allegories, some of which used groups of figures to 'personify' a single concept, in a manner reminiscent of Marcolini's *Sorti*. Their other main task was to choose personifications and indicate the relevant attributes. In such cases there were two alternative approaches. The most common was to select or adapt classical images taken from Cartari and coins, but the Accademia Veneziana, and on occasion Betussi, invented new images which were either derived from Valeriano or were based on rather straightforward associations of ideas.<sup>1</sup> This was usually done when personifications were required which were not described in Cartari or Du Choul, but the members of the Accademia clearly regarded originality as desirable in itself, so that even when they were devising images for which traditional formulae existed, such as Peace, they still chose to modify these, often quite extensively, no doubt because they thought this to be a suitable way of displaying their learning. But other compilers of programmes did not follow their example. Instead, they seem to have considered it a sufficient contribution to choose the most appropriate attributes among the many alternatives provided by the manuals. For it is important to realize that attributes were not regarded primarily as labels, but as devices which amplified or modified the meaning of a particular figure. Thus Peace can hold a torch to burn the weapons of war; equally properly she can hold a cornucopia to allude to the prosperity she brings.<sup>2</sup>

In the rest of this lecture I want to examine some schemes of decoration from the same period for which no written programmes survive. Scholars have made various attempts to explain their meaning, but these interpretations are either incomplete, or else are partly dependent on texts, notable Ripa's *Iconologia*, which were not published when the paintings were made. I shall begin with the ceilings of the rooms of the Council of Ten in the Doge's Palace, painted from 1553 by Veronese, Zelotti and Ponchino on the basis of a lost programme by Daniele Barbaro. The most elaborate ceiling is in the room of the Council itself (Fig. 4).<sup>3</sup> Although there is general agreement about the subjects of most of

<sup>1</sup> This kind of approach is a notable anticipation of the procedure later adopted by Cesare Ripa in his *Iconologia*, for which see especially Elizabeth McGrath, 'Personifying Ideals' (review of Gerlind Werner, *Ripa's Iconologia, Quellen-Methode-Ziele*, Utrecht, 1977), *Art History*, vi (1983), 363-8.

<sup>2</sup> The point was clearly made by Betussi, 1573, fol. xxii<sup>r</sup>, who says of an image of Peace, 'altrove ancora è stata dipinta, ma in altra maniera, & con altro significato'.

<sup>3</sup> For a general discussion see Juergen Schulz, *Venetian Painted Ceilings of the Renaissance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968), pp. 97-9.



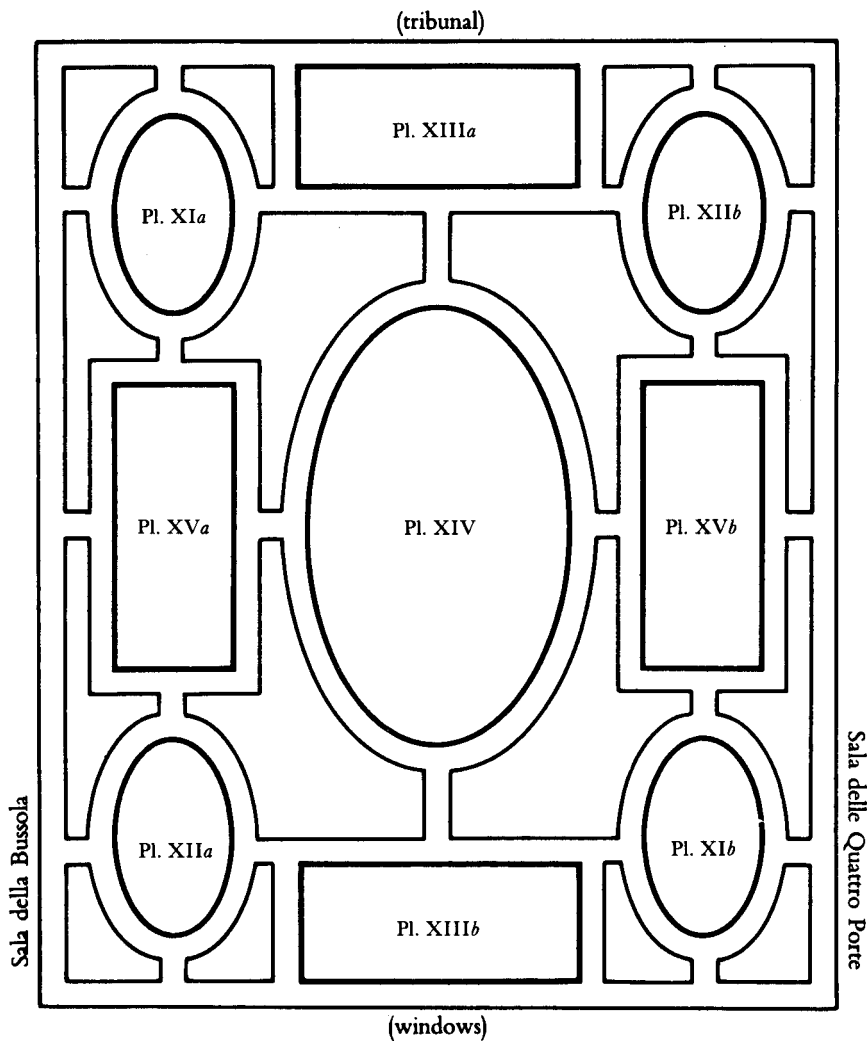


FIG. 4. Sala del Consiglio dei Dieci, ceiling, present arrangement of paintings.

the individual panels, the overall theme has never been explained. The source of the problem, I believe, is that two of the four ovals in the corners have at some time been switched. At the moment *Venice on a globe* is paired with *Youth and Old Age* (to use the traditional titles), and *Janus and Juno* with *Neptune* (Pls. XIa, b, and XIIa, b). These combinations make neither visual nor iconographic sense, but the problem disappears if *Neptune* is switched with *Youth and Old Age*. The alternative possibility, that *Venice on a globe* and *Janus and Juno* should be changed round, is less plausible

because that would mean that next to the window both Neptune and Venice appeared twice in adjacent paintings.

In the centre above the tribunal is an image of Liberty, with a broken yoke and chains, looking up towards the sky and under the benign protection of the Olympian gods (Pl. XIIIa). It would have been flanked by *Venice and Neptune*, an obvious enough pairing, given the famous idea that Venice was married to the sea; and the three paintings together would have proclaimed that liberty is safe in the maritime city of Venice. The central section of the ceiling is equally unproblematic. The large oval in the middle shows, as Vasari and Sansovino recognized, Jupiter, helped by an angel, expelling crimes and vices over which the Council of Ten had responsibility (Pl. XIV).<sup>1</sup> To the left is Venice receiving honours and riches from Juno, and to the right Minerva Pacifera with Mercury, here presumably to be associated with Juno as tutelary deities of the city (Pl. XVa, b). Finally there are three paintings above the window. In the centre is Venice born from the sea, flanked by Neptune and Mars (Pl. XIIIb). The parallel here of Venus and Venice is a commonplace, and likewise the association of the city with Mars and Neptune, which was used for example in the Sala del Collegio and on the Scala dei Giganti. At the left would have been Janus, identified by his key, with a young woman holding a sceptre and crown; at the right, an old man with a turban, deep in thought, and a beautiful young woman beside him in a respectful pose. The traditional title of this picture, *Youth*

<sup>1</sup> Vasari-Milanesi, vi. 371: '... un Giove che scaccia i vizi, per significare che quel supremo magistrato ed assoluto scaccia i vizi, e castiga i cattivi e viziosi huomini.' Cf. Sansovino, 1581, fol. 123<sup>v</sup>: 'Perciochè nella Sala del tribunale sono rappresentati nel suo cielo i casi proprii, che s'aspettano al detto Consiglio, conciosia che vi si vede ritratta con nuova inventione la Heresia nell'ovato di mezzo: & più oltre la Ribellione, accompagnata dalla Sodomia, & dalla Falsità amica de' monetari. & furono dipinte da Paolo Veronese, da Battista Farinato, & dal Bazacco: i quali compartirono fra loro i quadri a olio: & l'inventione fu di Daniel Barbaro eletto d'Aquilea dottiss. gentilhuomo di questa età.' It is unclear from this passage whether Sansovino is describing one picture or several; but the former interpretation is presumably correct. Veronese did not, however, show personifications of the Vices, since these would have been female. Instead, his composition was a straightforward adaptation of the familiar theme of Jupiter overthrowing the giants, who were here given the attributes of vices. Whether Sansovino is correct in his list of specific vices is by no means clear. The figure at the right with a book could represent Heresy, the one at the bottom left, who holds some coins, 'la Falsità amica de' monetari', and the one at lower right, breaking his bonds, Rebellion; but this leaves the two figures at left, one male and one female, who hardly provide a compelling representation of Sodomy.

*and Old Age*, is unsatisfactory, since Old Age should have been female. In fact, like most of the other figures on the ceiling the old man is surely a god, not a personification; and since he was opposite Janus, the obvious candidate is the melancholy Saturn. The association of the two was familiar to every educated person, because the arrival of Saturn in Italy and his meeting with Janus initiated civilization and the golden age; and Veronese was to pair these figures again at Palazzo Trevisan in 1557. These paintings would therefore have alluded to the golden age. If so, one of the young women would presumably be Venice, instructed by Saturn in the arts of civilization, and the other Astraea, who returns in the new golden age to bring justice, and who holds the crown and sceptre with which she will endow Venice. In conjunction with the panel they flank, they would have indicated that the creation of Venice brought about a new golden age.

As a whole the scheme is not totally coherent, but it is easy enough to understand, as well as being appropriate to the context. And it may be no accident that in his guidebook Sansovino mentions only the central oval. Two pages earlier he had described the ceiling of the Sale delle Quattro Porte, which was decorated with paintings by Tintoretto devised by Sansovino himself.<sup>1</sup> These simply repeat most of the ideas illustrated in the room of the Council of Ten. The three main paintings show 'Venice sent by Jupiter into these waters', a woman breaking a yoke to signify the liberty maintained by Venice, and Juno presenting Venice with signs of nobility; in two smaller pictures were Venice married to Neptune, and Venice on a globe.

As one might expect from a scheme by Daniele Barbaro, the Council of Ten ceiling is not unsophisticated, with its allusion to the golden age. But it is not entirely satisfactory. Neptune is shown twice, and Venice apparently no less than four times, in two pairs of adjacent pictures. Notable too is the uncanonical nature of the attributes. Saturn is merely Saturnine, while Minerva lacks the gorgoneion, doubtless because at this date Barbaro was not able to consult Cartari's *Imagini*. Even less helpful were the attributes of the personifications in the Stanza dei Tre Capi del Consiglio (Pl. XVI).<sup>2</sup> The central panel shows an angel overthrowing a male figure, presumably Vice, with long ears and seated on a

<sup>1</sup> Sansovino, 1581, fols. 122<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Schulz, 1968, pp. 100 f. Barbaro's third ceiling scheme, for the Sala della Bussola, consisting of Verone's painting of *St Mark crowning the theological virtues* and various small grisaille panels, is too conventional to require analysis. See Schulz, 1968, pp. 99 f.

dragon, while three personified vices flee below, and Time at the left protects two virtues. Only one vice has a clear attribute, a dagger, which is not very informative; as for the virtues, one could be Truth, since Time has a hand on her clothes, and the other Hope, to judge from her gesture. The male figures in the four smaller panels at the sides are also without obvious attributes, and the disposition of allegories is curiously asymmetrical, since three show the punishment of crime, and one the reward of virtue.

In its general character and in its shortcomings this programme fits well with the others that I have discussed, not least in the fact that it seems to have been devised with relatively little regard for visual considerations. Nothing shows its limitations better than Veronese's ceiling in the Sala del Collegio, which was painted after 1574.<sup>1</sup> The author of the programme, which is a model of its kind, is unknown (Pls. XVII–XIX). On the central axis are three panels showing Mars and Neptune, Faith and Religion, and Justice and Peace before Venice. The significance of these panels is made clear by inscriptions, and each is flanked by a pair of small scenes in grisaille, with historical subjects exemplifying respectively fortitude, piety and justice.<sup>2</sup> Each of the major panels make a clear point in a straightforward way, and the compositions are varied and effective. It is significant, for example, that only one contains a personification of Venice, the Campanile of San Marco being used to symbolize the city in another. The same kind of flexibility in the use of allegory is also evident in the central picture, where the combination of a personification for Faith and a scene of sacrifice for Religion makes wonderful visual sense without compromising the meaning.

It was evidently considered less important to indicate so clearly the precise significance of the eight personifications at the sides; but their beauty and their context make it plain that they are virtues representing notable qualities of the Venetian government. For those who troubled to consider them more carefully,

<sup>1</sup> Schulz, 1968, pp. 104–7.

<sup>2</sup> Sansovino, 1581, fol. 123<sup>r</sup>. Most of the subjects are listed by Valerius Maximus, though it is by no means certain that the compiler consulted this text, because they are all well-known. The only slightly unexpected one is 'l'offerta di Decio di morir per la patria', signifying piety; but this could have been seen as an example of a religious act, because Decius Mus made a vow before rushing into the fray to die for his country. Some of the titles provided by Sansovino were doubted by Francesco Zanotto, *Il Palazzo Ducale di Venezia* (Venice, 1841–61), tav. LXXXV, commentary, pp. 3–5, but without adequate justification.

however, the specific meaning was indicated not only by attributes but also by historical exempla in the frieze immediately below each figure. These, admittedly, are not easy to see, but the logic of the system is unusually clear. Fortunately, most of the figures can be identified from comments by Sansovino, who provides an incomplete account of the frieze.<sup>1</sup> He mentioned two exempla of Moderation, so this must be in the corner; indeed, it is the figure at the right of the door, with the eagle, as he indicates (Pl. XXa). Sansovino implies that the adjacent figure on this side, the woman with the spider's web, is Industry (Pl. XXIa). However, the next figure, with the goad and crane, cannot be Gentleness, but Vigilance (Pl. XXIb). Gentleness must instead be the woman opposite Vigilance, with the lamb (Pl. XXIIIb). The remaining figures on the left wall fit well enough with Sansovino's account. Above the door is Liberality, with a dice, crowns, and sceptres (Pl. XXIIa). Next to her is Continnence, with the ermine (Pl. XXIIIa); but Obedience, which Sansovino lists third on this wall, must actually be the last figure, with the dog beside her (Pl. XXIIb), because Gentleness is also on this side.<sup>2</sup> This leaves only the other figure above the tribunal, which I take to be Concord, to which Sansovino also refers (Pl. XXb).

No single source accounts for all the attributes. Liberality is related to images on ancient coins, while Valeriano may be the source for Continnence, Vigilance, Concord, Gentleness, and Faith.<sup>3</sup> Industry, with her sewing basket, is taken from Marcolini,

<sup>1</sup> Sansovino, 1581, fol. 123<sup>r</sup>. Sansovino's description of the ceiling as a whole is not entirely accurate, since in transcribing his notes he confused the positions of the door and the tribunal. In describing the frieze he says that 'dalla destra della porta lungo il muro è dipinta la moderanza di Davit & di Solone, l'industria di Archimede, & la mansuetudine di Claudio, et dalla sinistra, la liberalità d'Alessandro, la continenza di Marco Curio, & l'obediencia di Leonida'. In fact, there are twelve scenes in the frieze, two for each of the personifications at the corners, one for each of the others. But at least Sansovino here allows us to name six of the personifications. He has much less to say about the female figures themselves, limiting himself to the comment: 'Vi è parimente la Fede & la Concordia con altri ornamenti.'

<sup>2</sup> When Sansovino says that there is a personification of *La Fede* on the ceiling, it is presumably to the image in the corner that he is referring. Whether we call her Faith or Obedience makes little difference, since the example of the Obedience of Leonidas would be relevant to either quality.

<sup>3</sup> The dice held by Liberality is a standard attribute on ancient coins (Du Choul, 1556, pp. 139–41), while her crowns and sceptres require no explanation. Valeriano, 1567, fols. 100<sup>r</sup>–v, cites the ermine as a hieroglyph of *Intaminata munditia*, which would be appropriate for Continnence. In any case, it was famous for this quality, as is made clear in bestiaries and imprese. Cranes are

whose industrious ants are here replaced by a spider, presumably because ants would have been invisible from the ground (Fig. 5).<sup>1</sup> This feature actually contradicts Valeriano, who had interpreted the spider as, among other things, a symbol of useless labour.<sup>2</sup> Scholarly consistency, in other words, mattered less than the beauty and legibility of the images. For Moderation, a lady removing feathers from an eagle's wing so that he cannot fly too high, no obvious textual source can be adduced.<sup>3</sup>

In the attributes of the personifications the Collegio ceiling is quite as learned as any other scheme that we have examined, in the use of historical exempla significantly more so; and in the successful balance between the often conflicting demands of content and visual effect it is quite unparalleled. By contrast, one could say that in the statues on the palace doors the former consideration takes precedence, in those on the library parapet the latter. In the decoration of private buildings the balance could also go either way. Thus in the main rooms at Il Cathaio content was paramount, in the façade frescoes it hardly mattered. The same contrast, though in much less marked form, is illustrated by two major schemes of domestic decoration by Veronese, the Palazzo Trevisan at Murano, painted about 1557, and the Villa Barbaro at Maser, which dates from about 1560.

Almost all the figures by Veronese at Palazzo Trevisan were traditionally associated with vigilance, and Valeriano, 1567, fol. 128<sup>v</sup>, more specifically identifies them as symbols of *Custodia*, while the goad held by the woman would seem self-explanatory for such a personification. The caduceus is associated with Concord (ibid., fol. 429<sup>v</sup>), and the combination of pomegranates and myrtle, as Veronese showed in the basket beside this figure, with friendship (ibid., fol. 398<sup>v</sup>): Cartari, 1571, p. 321, also associates pomegranates with Concord. Valeriano, 1567, fols. 75<sup>r-v</sup>, calls the lamb a hieroglyph of *Mansuetudo*. Finally, the dog is a hieroglyph of *Fides* (ibid., fol. 40<sup>v</sup>); and the fact that this figure is dressed in white, with a veil, like the religious Faith in the central oval, conforms to the prescription of Cartari, 1571, p. 318.

<sup>1</sup> Zanotto, 1841-61, tav. XC, commentary, pp. 2 f., identified this figure as Dialectic, on the basis of Valeriano, 1567, fol. 193<sup>v</sup>, and indeed used Valeriano extensively to interpret the personifications on the ceiling. At the time he was writing this was remarkably enterprising; but in this instance his identification cannot be correct, although it is often still accepted (e.g. Schulz, 1968, p. 106). Not only would Dialectic, which rarely appears without the other Liberal Arts, be inappropriate—and certainly very old-fashioned—in such a political context, but it is clear from Sansovino that Industry must have appeared somewhere on the ceiling; and this figure is the only reasonable candidate.

<sup>2</sup> Valeriano, 1567, fol. 193<sup>r</sup> (*Inane opus*).

<sup>3</sup> The index to Valeriano includes only one entry for moderation, a belt (Valeriano, 1567, fol. 299<sup>r</sup>); but this feature could hardly provide a satisfactory or sufficient attribute in a ceiling painting like Veronese's.



FIG. 5. Francesco Marcolini, *Le Sorti: Industria*.

taken from Cartari, so their attributes are 'correct', but the meaning of the decoration, which must once have been outstandingly beautiful, does not seem to have been of particular allegorical significance. One of the two principal rooms downstairs once had a painted ceiling with the seven planetary gods, and in the frieze below were four figures identified by Ridolfi as Music, Study, Astrology, and Fortune, who was shown giving jewels to a sleeping man.<sup>1</sup> Opposite this was another room, painted by Zelotti. In the vault was Apollo with the Muses and Cupids, and around the walls a frieze with representations of the

<sup>1</sup> Carlo Ridolfi, *Le meraviglie dell' arte* (ed. D. von Hadeln, Berlin, 1914-24), i. 322 f.; see also Anna Caiani, 'Un palazzo veronese a Murano: note e aggiunte', *Arte Veneta*, xxii (1968), 47-59; and Terisio Pignatti, *Veronese* (Venice, 1976), i. 113 f., and ii, figs. 130-7.

Seasons, apparently not taken from Cartari.<sup>1</sup> Veronese's ceiling on the first floor still survives *in situ*, although it is very damaged. At the centre is Venus, and, in the four spaces around her, Jupiter, Juno, Cybele, and Neptune, presumably symbolizing the Four Elements.<sup>2</sup> Below are two pairs of seated figures: Janus and Saturn for the golden age, and Bacchus and Apollo for the pleasant diversions that took place in the room. At the ends of the vault are two smaller scenes with Eros and Anteros. In the first the two compete in their mutual love by struggling for a palm branch, an idea straight out of Cartari, at the other both extinguish their torches, a modification of another image from Cartari in which only Cupid does this, to symbolize the extinction of unwise passions.<sup>3</sup> Here it would seem that the structure of the vault, rather than the desire to proclaim a particular message, has dictated the content. Finally, on the walls below are painted landscapes.<sup>4</sup>

The author of the programme at Maser, who is always assumed to have been Daniele Barbaro, one of the owners of the villa, was perhaps more concerned with edifying meaning; but, as in the ceilings devised by Barbaro in the Doge's Palace, the meaning is not always entirely clear.<sup>5</sup> There are six principal decorated rooms

<sup>1</sup> Ridolfi, 1914-24, i. 367: 'In Murano, in Casa del Signor Camillo Trevisano, nella volta d'un mezzato terreno [Zelotti] fece Apolline tra le Muse & Amoretti, che volano per lo Cielo con ghirlande in mano, e nel fregio intorno a' muri le Stagioni; per la Primavera fece un giovine vicino ad una siepe di rose; per l'Estate una donna ignuda posta à dormire tra fasci di biade; un villano con grappolo d'uve per lo Autunno; e per il Verno una vecchia, che si riscalda al fuoco, con donne, che sostengono festoni, & alcuni ignudi.' Although there is perhaps some reminiscence here of Cartari's description of the Seasons (1556, fol. xiiii<sup>r</sup>: 'Coronata di fior la Primavera, / la nuda Està cinta di spiche il crine, / l'Autunno tinto i pie d'uve spremute, / e l'Inverno agghiacciato, horrido, e tristo,'), Zelotti did not attempt to show proper personifications, since his images were not always of the same gender as the Seasons they represented.

<sup>2</sup> Cartari, 1556, fol. 11<sup>r</sup>, says that the Four Elements are symbolized by Jupiter, Juno, Pluto, and Neptune; but on fol. xxx<sup>r</sup> he says that Cybele also symbolizes the earth. For Veronese this deity would obviously have been preferable to Pluto, since he was thus able to show alternate male and female figures.

<sup>3</sup> Cartari, 1556, fols. ci<sup>v</sup>, cii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Serena Romano, 'I paesaggi di Paolo Veronese in Palazzo Trevisan', *Arte Veneta*, xxxv (1981), 150-2.

<sup>5</sup> Among recent studies of the imagery of Maser the most important are: Nicola Ivanoff, 'Il Sacro ed il Profano negli affreschi di Maser', *Ateneo Veneto*, cxlv (1961), 99-104; idem, 'La tematica degli affreschi di Maser', *Arte Veneta*, xxiv (1970), 210-13; Richard Cocke, 'Veronese and Daniele Barbaro: the decoration of Villa Maser', *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxxv

[footnote cont. on p. 416]



in the villa: the Salone with an elaborately painted vault, the crossing with figures of female musicians in niches, a pair of rooms with moral allegories and a pair with mythological figures. The vault of the Salone presents few problems (Pl. XXIV). In the central panel are the seven planetary gods around a woman seated on a dragon, to whom I shall return in a moment. In the four corners are Juno, Vulcan, Cybele, and Neptune for the Four Elements, and in the two lunettes Venus and Vulcan, and Ceres and Bacchus, with various attendant figures, who symbolize, as Cartari tells us, the Four Seasons (Pl. XXVa, b).<sup>1</sup> Cartari, indeed, is the source for all these images, which obviously recall the earlier decoration of Palazzo Trevisan, and in large part are simply a conflation of the principal subjects depicted there. But who is the woman on the dragon? I believe that Ivanoff was right in seeing her as Wisdom, even though it is not obvious to me why he thought the source to be an illustration in Bocchi's *Quaestiones*

(1972), 226–46; Douglas Lewis, 'Il significato della decorazione plastica e pittorica a Maser', *Bollettino del centro internazionale di storia d'architettura Andrea Palladio*, xxii, pt. 1 (1980), 203–13; Thomas Puttfarcken, 'Bacchus und Hymenaeus: Bemerkungen zu zwei Fresken von Veronese in der Villa Barbaro in Maser', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, xxiv (1980), 1–14; Luciana Larcher Crosato, 'Considerazioni sul programma iconografico di Maser', *ibid.* xxvi (1982), 211–56; Inge Jackson Reist, 'Divine Love and Veronese's Frescoes at the Villa Barbaro', *Art Bulletin*, lxvii (1985), 614–35. Although Ivanoff, Puttfarcken, and Larcher Crosato all recognize the importance of Cartari for the programme, only Puttfarcken bases his interpretation exclusively on texts which had already been published when the frescoes were painted. I believe that this is the only satisfactory approach, and this is why I cannot accept many of the arguments in Cocke, 1972, even though we often come to similar conclusions. Jackson Reist brings to the discussion of the imagery a large number of very learned texts, whose relevance is open to question. The suggestion of Lewis that the imagery is related to various passages scattered through the text of Pausanias seems to me intrinsically implausible. Moreover, one of the images which in his opinion establishes the dependance of the programme on Pausanias, the relief in the nymphaeum of a girl with a goose, who is supposedly Proserpina, could equally well be derived from Cartari, who used Pausanias extensively (see Cartari, 1556, fol. xxxxiiv<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> Veronese's decision to use Vulcan rather than Jupiter for fire, as he had done at Palazzo Trevisan, is easily explicable by the presence of Jupiter among the planetary gods. For Vulcan as fire see Cartari, 1556, fol. lxxvii<sup>r</sup>; and for the Seasons, *ibid.*, fol. xliii<sup>r</sup>. Larcher Crosato, 1982, p. 248, on the basis of Cartari, 1571, argues that the figures with Venus and Vulcan are Proserpina and the Horae, and those with Bacchus and Ceres are nymphs and the infant Hercules. The relevant texts, unfortunately, do not appear in Cartari, 1556; but it seems reasonable to suppose that the companions of the gods here are nymphs.



FIG. 6. Albrecht Dürer, *The constellations of the northern hemisphere.*

(1555), which shows a naked woman with a mirror.<sup>1</sup> I would suggest that the key to the identity of this figure is provided by the dragon. Since the figures round the sides are planets, each with its associated zodiacal signs, the ceiling as a whole must represent the sky, and the dragon above the planets is presumably therefore the constellation Draco, which Dürer had placed at the very centre of his star map, a map which Barbaro mentioned with approbation in his edition of Vitruvius (Fig. 6).<sup>2</sup> The woman is therefore beyond the planets, beyond the constellations, above everything,

<sup>1</sup> Ivanoff, 1961, p. 99; see also Ivanoff, 1970, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Daniele Barbaro, *I dieci libri dell' architettura di M. Vitruvio* (Venice 1567), p. 391. The first edition appeared in 1556.

in the centre of a burst of divine light. Who else but Wisdom? As she tells us in Proverbs, 8:

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the depth . . . Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gate, waiting at the posts of my doors.

Who better to watch over the house of a gentleman-scholar like Daniele Barbaro?<sup>1</sup>

Equally appropriate in a villa are Muses, and Ridolfi tells us that these are the girls in the crossing (Pl. XXVI).<sup>2</sup> This is a reasonable suggestion, but it cannot be proved. They hold musical instruments and they are dressed as nymphs, as Cartari prescribes, but there are only eight of them.<sup>3</sup> However, as we shall see shortly, elsewhere there is another figure who is certainly a Muse, since she has a feather in her hair, another attribute mentioned by Cartari.<sup>4</sup> But whether or not Ridolfi is right, the point is scarcely important. As nymphs, Muses, or just music-making girls, they are appropriate and decorative.

The imagery of the two smaller rooms with mythological figures can be almost entirely explained by Cartari, as both Ivanoff and Puttfarken have noticed. One room has an inscription, ET GENIO ET LARIBVS, and on the ceiling are the two Lares, the tutelary deities of the house, receiving the gifts of the grape from Bacchus, while at the right is Sleep, with his horn of dreams and his rod, and above him a Muse, because, as Cartari explains, sleep is the greatest friend of the Muses (Pl. XXVIIa).<sup>5</sup> All these figures therefore allude to the kind of life that should be led in the villa. At the sides are Apollo with Venus, and Ceres with Pluto. These deities are obviously appropriate to a villa, but it is difficult to

<sup>1</sup> Recently Jackson Reist, 1985, pp. 622 f., has argued that this figure is Divine Love, and derived from Empedocles and Pico della Mirandola, while she regards the dragon as symbolic of Hate or Strife, an idea for which no precise textual source is adduced apart from Hesiod. It will be evident that I consider her approach and her conclusions unconvincing.

<sup>2</sup> Ridolfi, 1914-24, i. 303.

<sup>3</sup> Cartari, 1556, fol. xv<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., fol. xvi<sup>r</sup>; see also below.

<sup>5</sup> For the Lares see Ivanoff, 1970, p. 211; and for the Muse and Sleep, Puttfarken, 1980, pp. 8-10.

see any more specific rationale behind the choice, let alone the way in which they are paired. In this respect the figures above the doors at Il Cathaio provide an obvious parallel. The figures flanking the fireplace are also appropriate to the general context: one of them is presumably Vesta, holding the tambourine mentioned by Cartari; the other, holding the Penates, is probably the Genius of the house.<sup>1</sup> This room, in fact, is devoted to the tutelary deities of the villa.

The inscription in the room opposite is unfortunately missing. But its principal theme is obviously marriage. On the ceiling we find Juno, Hymen, and Venus, deities of marriage taken straight from Cartari (Pl. XXVIIb).<sup>2</sup> The identity of the three figures at the right is more problematical. In recent studies the woman has been called a bride, the man in the centre either the bridegroom or the bride's father, and the man at the right either the 'maestro di casa' holding the reins with which the bride will control the domestic economy, or the groom, holding the bridal girdle.<sup>3</sup> These suggestions are hardly satisfactory. Neither man looks old enough to be the woman's father, and the object held by the one at the right is not a bridal girdle, which should be of wool, nor reins, but a baldric, a leather shoulder-belt used for carrying weapons. And even granted that the position women held in the Renaissance was a subordinate one, it hardly involved the idea that they should be on their knees while the husband stands. I would suggest instead that the man with the torch is Talassio. He does not appear in the *Imagini*; but in an earlier book, *Il Flavio*, an Italian commentary on Ovid's *Fasti* which seems to have inspired the *Imagini*, Cartari wrote that just as the Greeks invoked Hymen at marriages, so the Romans invoked Talassio; and exactly the same was said by

<sup>1</sup> For Vesta see Cartari, 1556, fol. xxxiii<sup>r</sup> ('donna di virginale aspetto, perch'ella è la terra, onde siede, . . . e tiene un timpano con mano'). Larcher Crosato, 1982, p. 226, also proposes that she is Vesta, but misreads the tambourine as a millstone. For the Penates, see *ibid.*, p. 226, and Cartari, 1556, fol. lxxxviii<sup>v</sup>. Larcher Crosato, 1982, pp. 223 f., identifies one of the reclining grisaille figures above the door as the Genius. While this is possible, it is difficult to explain why this deity, having been invoked in the inscription, should have been given so little prominence, or why he should have been paired with a female (*pace* Larcher Crosato) faun. But the various descriptions of Cartari, 1556, fols. lxxxviii<sup>v</sup>–lxxx<sup>r</sup>, regarding images of Genius do not fit the figure by the fire especially well ('altri lo fanno in forma di fanciullo, altri di giovane, altri di vecchio . . .').

<sup>2</sup> Puttfarken, 1980, pp. 1–4.

<sup>3</sup> Puttfarken, 1980, pp. 4–7, with the suggestion that the man in the centre is the 'tremulus parens' of Catullus's epithalamium for Julia and Manlius; Larcher Crosato, 1982, pp. 216–18.

Daniele Barbaro's grandfather Francesco in his *De Re Uxoriam*, a well-known text which was even published in Italian in 1548.<sup>1</sup> Both writers also recounted the same anecdote about Talassio, which must have been widely known from several ancient texts, such as Plutarch and Livy. On the occasion of the Rape of the Sabines a rough soldier captured a beautiful girl, and fearing that she would be stolen from him he shouted out that he was taking her to Talassio, a young nobleman whom everyone admired. At this all the other Romans applauded, and the man had no choice but to bring her to Talassio, who then married her and thus saved her virtue. In Veronese's painting the kneeling girl would of course be the Sabine, and the man with untidy hair at the right her captor. He holds out the baldric because he has just released her, and Talassio holds a torch because, as Cartari explains, these were carried at Roman weddings.<sup>2</sup> Adjacent to this fresco are a group of figures playing musical instruments, which have generally been recognized as symbolizing harmony, and a woman with a collection of rich vases and several cupids, one of whom squeezes her breast, surely indicating that she is Fecundity or Abundance. Although no convincing textual source has been proposed, these images are based on such obvious ideas that they could easily have been invented by Veronese himself.<sup>3</sup> As in the previous room, the details are occasionally obscure, and may, as so often in the imagery that we have looked at, depend on a loose association of ideas rather than a specific text; and in both cases the central painting is a slightly untidy blend of allegory and narrative. But the general meaning, a celebration of matrimony, is clear enough.

<sup>1</sup> Cartari, 1553, p. 341; Francesco Barbaro, *Prudentissimi et gravi documenti circa la election della moglie* (tr. Alberto Lollo, Venice, 1548), fol. 32<sup>r</sup>. Larcher Crosato, 1982, pp. 211–20, argues that Francesco Barbaro's text is fundamental to the entire imagery of the room, but nothing in the paintings indicates a clear dependence on the passages which she cites. It is indicative both of the success of the *Imagini* and of its similarity in content to *Il Flavio* that in 1567 a reprint of the latter was published in Venice by Giordano Ziletti, with the title *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi raccolte da M. Vincentio Cartari con l'espositione loro*. This edition seems to be rare, but a copy exists in the library of the Department of History of Art, in Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> Cartari, 1553, p. 341.

<sup>3</sup> Larcher Crosato, 1982, p. 219 and note 53, associates the image of 'Fecundity' with a coin inscribed TEMPOR. FELIC., showing a woman surrounded by children, reproduced by Du Choul, 1556, p. 111; but on p. 158 Du Choul illustrates an almost identical image of Fecundity. Neither corresponds closely enough to Veronese's painting to prove that Du Choul was his source. Again, Larcher Crosato, p. 218, cites a passage in Francesco Barbaro's *De Re Uxoriam* as the source for the picture of Harmony; but the notion of harmony as a combination of diverse instruments hardly requires a textual justification.



FIG. 7. Francesco Marcolini, *Le Sorti: Sorte*.

This leaves the other pair of rooms, each containing moral allegories. In one Fortune, on a globe, prevents a crowned woman accompanied by a lion from taking her cornucopia, while at the left another woman sits clasping a knife (Pl. XXXa). Since there is a figure of Chance derived from Marcolini immediately below (Fig. 7 and Pl. XXVIIIa), it seems legitimate to suppose that the crowned woman with a lion is Nobiltà, on the basis of the Marcolini image of Nobility as a crowned woman on a chariot seated on a lion, even though there she also distributes crowns (Fig. 8). The woman with a knife looks distinctly negative, and is presumably a vice, like the woman with a knife in ceiling of the Sala della Bussola, a Barbaro programme. Discord is a possibility, given that Betussi was later to use a knife concealed at her breast as an attribute of this personification. If so, the whole composition

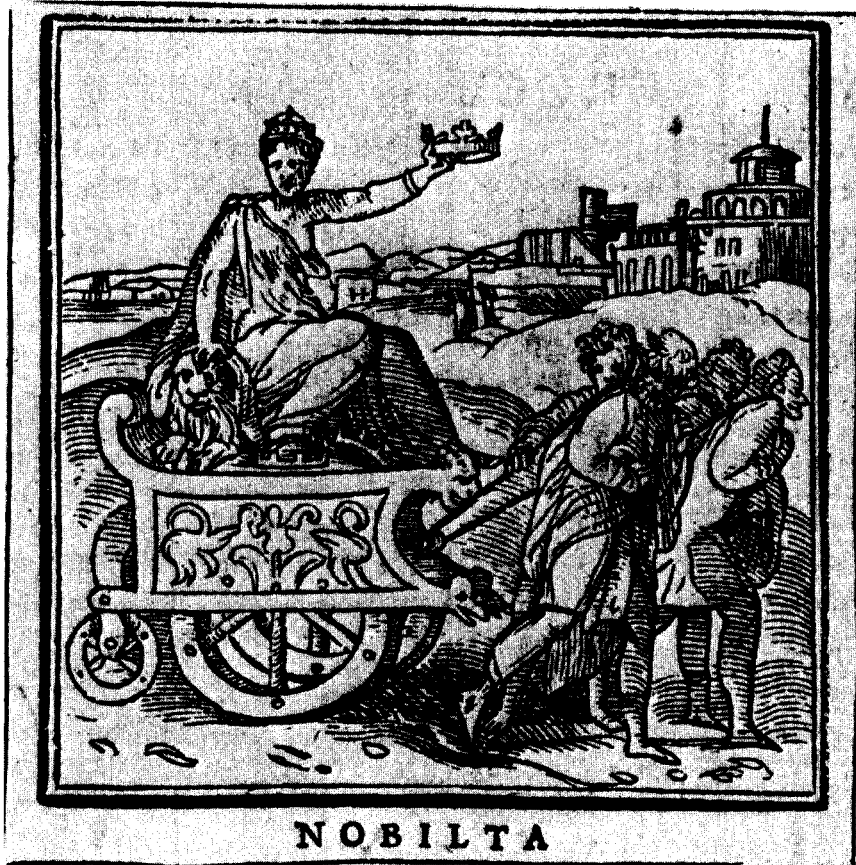


FIG. 8. Francesco Marcolini, *Le Sorti: Nobiltà*.

would mean that Fortune refuses her rewards to Nobility when accompanied by Discord, a fitting allegory, one might think, for a villa owned by two brothers. One of the pairs of allegories below also seems quite easy to understand: the figure of Chance crowning a sleeping man surely means that the rewards of chance come to those who do not seek them (Pl. XXVIII*a*). This theme, which Veronese had already shown at Murano, accords well with the main fresco above.<sup>1</sup> The other pair is almost certainly derived from Cartari, as Larcher Crosato has pointed out (Pl. XXVIII*b*). The woman with books is presumably History, and she is accompanied by Saturn, because, as Cartari explains, it was in the time of Saturn that history began. She seems to point to an image

<sup>1</sup> For the fresco at Murano see Ridolfi, 1914-24, i. 323: '... la Fortuna, che arricchisce di gemme un dormiglione'.



of the Madonna at the end of the room, surely to indicate the central importance of the birth of Christ in human history.<sup>1</sup> These figures, of course, do not relate very closely to the other imagery on the ceiling; but this type of relative inconsistency in the iconography is one of the features not only of Maser, but of several of the other Venetian programmes that we have already examined.

One detail of this group has never been satisfactorily explained, namely the green reeds which Saturn is holding, and which seem to have no textual justification.<sup>2</sup> There is however a visual precedent, an engraving of Saturn by Giulio Campagnola, and I believe that Veronese took the reeds from this print, assuming that they were one of Saturn's attributes (Fig. 9). But why did Campagnola show them? As it happens, there is a simple explanation. His figure of Saturn, a reclining old man holding a reed, is obviously based on an ancient river-god type, slightly modified by having him lean his head on his hand in a characteristically melancholic way. And of course until the beginning of the sixteenth century two of the most famous ancient statues, the river-gods now on the Capitol, were misidentified as images of Saturn and Bacchus. Campagnola, in other words, accepted this identification.<sup>3</sup>

The imagery of the last room is obviously edifying too. One of the pairs of allegories at each side of the ceiling shows Prudence, with a mirror, instructing Masculine Virtue, a figure taken from Cartari (Pl. XXIXa).<sup>4</sup> On the other side is a man with the

<sup>1</sup> Larcher Crosato, 1982, p. 232, states that Cartari says that 'La Storia cominciò con i tempi di Saturno e per questo è ad esso che si appoggia . . .'. This seems, however, to be a misquotation. On the page which she cites as the source, Cartari, 1571, p. 38, he actually wrote: 'E sollevano gli antichi porre in la cima del tempio di Saturno un Tritone con la buccina alla bocca volendo in quel modo mostrare, come dice Macrobio, che da Saturno cominciò la historia di havere voce, e di essere conosciuta, perche senza dubio innanzi che fossero distinti i tempi ella non poteva essere se non muta, & incognita.' In Cartari, 1556, a virtually identical passage appears on fol. xxxvii<sup>r</sup>, with the marginal note (also listed in the index): 'Quando cominciò la historia.'

<sup>2</sup> I am not convinced by the suggestion of Larcher Crosato, 1982, p. 231, that Saturn holds a bundle of papyrus, which is a hieroglyph for *stirps antiqua*, on the authority of Horapollo. The same interpretation can be found in Valeriano, 1556, fol. 412<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> The pose of his figure was almost certainly derived from a relief of a river-god at Benevento. See Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy* (London, 1964), pp. 210-12; and Ruth Rubinstein, 'The Renaissance discovery of antique river-god personifications', *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Roberto Salvini* (Florence, 1984), pp. 257-63.

<sup>4</sup> Cartari, 1556, fol. lxxii<sup>r</sup>: 'Fu poi la Virtù maschile, come è in una medaglia di Gordiano Imperadore, formata come huomo vecchio, barbuto, tutto nudo,

[footnote cont. on p. 424



FIG. 9. Giulio Campagnola, *Saturn*.

attributes of Nemesis, the bit and measuring rod, which indicate, according to Cartari, that men should bridle their tongue and act with due measure (Pl. XXIX*b*).<sup>1</sup> But here it is a woman who is bridled, while the man seems to look at the two figures across the room. I suggest that these images are related: just as the virtuous man should act with prudence, so the woman should hold her tongue and moderate her actions, if you like under the guidance of her husband. Iconographically this is not as neat as one might wish, in that it would be best if all the figures were personifications with, so to speak, equal weight; but elsewhere in the villa, and

appoggiato ad una mazza, e che ha la pelle del Leone involta ad uno delle braccia, cui sono lettere intorno, che dicono: Alla virtù di Augusto.' The mirror of Prudence is sometimes wrongly described by scholars as a shield, probably on the basis of black and white photographs; but in the fresco itself there is no doubt about the identity of this object, with its elaborate gold frame and carefully depicted reflections in its central section.

<sup>1</sup> Cartari, 1556, fols. lxxxii<sup>r</sup>-v: 'Fu fatta Nemesi alle volte anchora che nell'una mano tiene un freno, e nell'altra un legno con che si misura, volendo perciò mostrare che debbono gli huomini porre freno alla lingua, e fare ciò che fanno con misura . . .'

notably in the pairing of Chance and the sleeping man, this principal was not always maintained.

In the centre of the ceiling Faith directs Charity, dressed in red, and a poor man to an image of Eternity; Charity stands on a cornucopia full of jewels with a caduceus beside it (Pl. XXXb). These are the attributes of Felicity, and were used as such by Veronese in the nymphaeum at Maser.<sup>1</sup> The general meaning, obviously, is that we should reject earthly happiness for the true happiness of heaven. Rather unexpectedly, this whole image comes from Cartari. The passage in question appears at the end of his chapter on Fortune, where he is talking about Happiness, and refers to the *Tabula Cebetis*, and the opinion of Cebes that only virtue can make man happy. To this Cartari adds:

which we likewise should explain in Christian terms, not understanding by his words however the happiness which everyone seeks blindly here in this world, because this is not happiness, even if it seems so, but rather the true, immutable and eternal happiness which the blessed souls enjoy in heaven. Everyone must have the firm hope of achieving this, who, guided by the bright rays of divine goodness, travels the whole journey of this life in the company of faith, treading on the dry and sterile ground with the feet of charity.<sup>2</sup>

The only detail which cannot be precisely explained is the lamb, although its familiar associations with Christ, benignity, gentleness and whatever make its general significance clear enough.

The source of this ceiling painting in Cartari was discovered by Larcher Crosato, but the implications of this discovery, I believe, have not been fully appreciated.<sup>3</sup> Almost everyone who has so far studied the decoration of Villa Maser has suggested, more or less explicitly, that the programme was devised by Daniele Barbaro, who must first have drawn up some general scheme, inspired perhaps by a variety of humanistic texts, and then turned to Cartari for detailed information about individual figures.<sup>4</sup> It is the

<sup>1</sup> Pignatti, 1976, ii, fig. 338, wrongly identified as Peace.

<sup>2</sup> Cartari, 1556, fol. lxxxxvii<sup>v</sup>: 'il che dobbiamo noi dire parimente christianamente parlando, nè intendendo però della felicità che qui brama alla cieca ognuno in questo mondo, che questa non è, se ben pare, felicità, ma di quella che nelle celesti sedi godono l'anime beate, vera, immutabile, & eterna, alla quale ha da sperare di giungere fermamente ognuno che scorto da lucidissimi raggi della divina bontà camini tutto il viaggio di questo mondo in compagnia della fede, calcando l'arido, e sterile terreno con i piedi della carità.'

<sup>3</sup> Larcher Crosato, 1982, p. 240.

<sup>4</sup> The point is made explicitly by Larcher Crosato, 1982, p. 212: '... le "Immagini dei dei degl'Antichi" del Cartari furono solo uno strumento utile ai fini decorativi, il mezzo per esprimere in concetti succinti quella cultura

[footnote cont. on p. 426]

idea that the programme is in some sense dependent on a wide spectrum of Renaissance culture that explains why no one up till now has appreciated the full extent of its reliance on Cartari, even though this text alone accounts for almost all the imagery. In fact, as we have seen, Cartari provided not just information about individual figures, but the central image of one of the ceilings; and this was not something that anyone could easily have found in the book without reading through it rather carefully, because it is not cited in the index. In other words, the compiler did not so much devise a programme and then turn to the *Imagini*; he devised the programme partly on the basis of the *Imagini*. And the obvious and notable derivations from Veronese's decorations at the Palazzo Trevisan, which have often been noticed and which extend even to the famous landscapes on the walls, suggest that this earlier scheme was also a formative influence on the Maser programme.<sup>1</sup> In short, the scheme is neither especially original nor so learned as is often supposed. Indeed, most of it could quite easily have been devised by Veronese. Cartari, after all, had said that the *Imagini* would be 'of no small value to painters and sculptors, giving them subjects for a thousand beautiful inventions with which they can adorn their statues and painted panels'.<sup>2</sup>

At Palazzo Trevisan, where Veronese's frescoes were based on Cartari, while those by Zelotti apparently were not, there does not seem to have been a single overall programme in which the attributes of all the figures were specified. The fact that Cartari's *Imagini* were used in almost every part of the decoration at Maser would certainly seem to indicate that here, by contrast, there was such a programme. And although it was not particularly recondite, I believe that Daniele Barbaro must have made some contribution, not least because it seems unlikely that on his own initiative a painter would have introduced moral allegories into

umanistica fusa a regole morali, a principi cristiani, a teorie neoplatoniche e ad insegnamenti aristotelici che si sente pulsare dietro l'organico disegno iconografico di Maser.'

<sup>1</sup> Ridolfi, 1914-24, i. 322, says of Palazzo Trevisan that 'dicono fosse eretto co' modelli di Monsignor Daniele Barbaro'. The attribution is controversial (for a summary of opinions, see Elena Bassi, *Palazzi di Venezia*, (Venice, 1976), pp. 528-38); and the idea that Barbaro may have had some responsibility for the decorative programme, as recently suggested by Jackson Reist, 1985, p. 633, cannot be substantiated.

<sup>2</sup> Cartari, 1556, fol. 3r: '... è per giovare non poco alli dipintori et a gli scultori, dando loro argomento di mille belle inventioni da potere adornare le loro statue e le dipinte tavole'.

the decoration of a building owned by a prominent and learned churchman. Moreover, the iconography has something of the inelegance that we find in the ceilings of the rooms of the Council of Ten, and the general character of the decorations at Maser is rather different from that of most other villas of the Veneto, both in the absence of any painted stories, whether from history or mythology, and in the often edifying tone. There are no fables done 'a capriccio del pittore', the attributes of the individual figures are based where possible on the most authoritative text, Cartari's *Imagini*, and these figures are combined to form meaningful allegories much more appropriate to a villa than those of, say, Il Cathaio. Barbaro, in short, was slightly unusual among his contemporaries in his aspirations, but entirely conventional in his methods, even though the absence of any images derived from ancient coins and the paucity of inscriptions may come as a surprise.

This last feature need not necessarily indicate, of course, that the decorations would have been readily understood by educated visitors in the sixteenth century, any more than they are today. Barbaro, doubtless, would have had to explain them; and in doing so he could have had the pleasure of receiving compliments on the scholarly correctness of the individual figures, and on the novelty and appropriateness of such features as the Lares. But he certainly cannot be given credit for the whole of the programme. The figurative elements, after all, are only part of the decoration. They are fitted into an elaborate architectural structure, which must have been primarily the responsibility of Veronese. Barbaro, to be sure, had an unusual knowledge of architecture, but Veronese's own expertise in this field is demonstrated by any number of his paintings, and in this case the design, as well as much of the iconography, is closely related to his earlier decoration at Palazzo Trevisan. In short, I believe that Maser provides an example of an unusually happy and close collaboration between artist and patron. Such a collaboration would have been surprising if Barbaro's intention had simply been to devise a conspicuously learned scheme; but there is no reason to suppose that he wanted to do anything of the kind, or indeed that he or most of his contemporaries regarded painting—and least of all the painted decoration of a villa—as an appropriate medium for the expression of scholarly ideas. What Barbaro required, surely, were beautiful frescoes whose meaning, expressed in a visual language supposedly used in antiquity, was suited to the context. If so, he could hardly have done better than to make the fullest

possible use both of Cartari's *Imagini* and of Veronese's experience as a decorative painter.

It may be thought that in my interpretations I have relied too much on the few programmes that happen to have survived. My response would be that these constitute the best evidence that exists about Venetian attitudes regarding such decorative schemes. In other words, the onus of proof is on those who would dismiss this evidence as misleading. Until proof to the contrary is provided, I would maintain that if we do not understand a particular image of this period, it is usually not because we are not clever enough, but because we expect a quite inappropriate kind of cleverness on the part of the artist and his adviser. I would like to end by mentioning one example of a painting whose meaning would surely elude us were it not documented, simply because it seems too unlearned. This is an allegory of the birth of the Infante Ferdinand, which the painter Parrasio Micheli sent to Philip II of Spain in 1575 with a covering letter explaining the subject (Pl. XXXI).<sup>1</sup> The basic theme is clear enough: the queen, characterized by an inscription as a modern Venus, gives birth, and a crowd of Provinces brings gifts, while Fame trumpets the event above. But what of Diana and Mars in the sky? We might be able to guess that the eagles on which they lean are the twin Habsburg eagles. But surely we would never suppose that these two deities are there because the young Ferdinand was born between Monday and Tuesday, *lunedì e martedì*, and that here we therefore have a happy conjunction of these planets watching over his birth. To us this may seem an absurdly naïve use of astrological imagery; but to Micheli it was an invention fit for a king.

<sup>1</sup> For Micheli's letter, dated 20 August 1575, see Constance Ffoulkes, 'Ein unbekannter Brief des Malers Parrasio Michele', *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, v (1912), 429 f.