

# Abstracts

Mirabilia Urbis. *A new group of terracotta artifacts and the renewal of art in Chieri in the first third of the 16th century*

GIOVANNI DONATO

The study of the Renaissance in Chieri continues with this second and final paper, based on new and surprising findings of fictile materials, i.e. terracotta items decorated with ancient-style motifs (c. 1510-1520). The starting point is the group of works found in the Palazzo Robbio di San Raffaele in Chieri. The hypotheses on their architectural location are still problematic (both with regard to their original provenance and their function). The study of the Robbio terracotta artifacts provided an opportunity for an in-depth study of other Chieri sites (such as palazzo Tana), where other partial terracotta items were found. All these findings can be dated back to the same cultural phase, which has so far been poorly documented. Other towns in the Chieri area (Andezeno, Arignano, Cambiano) have also revealed scattered evidence that confirms or enriches what is already known (the Costa commission in the Quattro Torri castle in Arignano appears to be of particular interest). At the end, the paper includes a graphic and photographic representation of the Robbio terracotta findings by architect Simone Bocchio Vega.

*The Castle of Rivoli between the 14th and 15th centuries. The reconstruction of the building thanks to the castellania accounts*

VIVIANA MORETTI

Through the analysis of the castellania accounts drawn up between the 14th and 15th centuries, the essay outlines the structure of the Castle of Rivoli in medieval times. The analysis shows that it had a rather articulated structure, originating from the progressive addition of building blocks to the original core, already documented in the mid-12th century.

Surrounded by a moat that could be crossed by a drawbridge, the complex was organised in two distinct poles: the area of the *palacium castris*, where the lord's spaces were located, and the *castrum planum*, where most of the functional, service and administrative structures were concentrated. The structure was characterised by several towers, used for different purposes over the years, including the entrance tower, where the bridge was located, and the tower known as the *magna* tower. The latter, however, in the years studied by this paper, had lost any specific function other than that of representation. Adjacent to the buildings, in the direction of the village, were the fortified *ricetto* and *viridarium*, both enclosed by walls.

*Towards the 'perfect fusion'. Sardinia from particularism to integration with the mainland*

ISIDORO SOFFIETTI

The essay outlines a synthetic picture of a complex and articulated theme such as

the 'fusion' between Sardinia and the continent from a legal perspective. It starts from the end of the War of the Spanish Succession and follows the process all the way into the 19th century, focusing on some crucial dates: from the Royal Decree of 1848 to the Rattazzi Law of 1855 and finally to the unification of 1865.

*A difficult coexistence. The Sardinian Consulate in Tangier (1818-1825)*

ANDREA VERLUCCA FRISAGLIA

Left on the margins of the Savoy's 'Mediterranean policy' at the beginning of the 19th century, in the 1920s Morocco reclaimed its place in the Kingdom of Sardinia's diplomatic network – a place that the court in Turin, however, did not seem too keen to acknowledge. Following the vicissitudes of the four consuls who worked in Tangier between 1818 and 1825, we will try to outline the Sardinian-Moroccan relations in a context of extreme uncertainty, where crises and rapprochements seem to be dictated more by the personal interest of the players involved than by the *raison d'état*. The paper identifies three phases: the initial attempt to sign a trade treaty – a personal endeavour of the ambitious consul Gräberg and a miserable failure; a time of apparent stagnation, which led to a deterioration of relations and their rupture; and finally, the reconnection, marked by the treaty of 27 June 1825, signed in the difficult context of a profound internal crisis within Tangier diplomacy.

*The screenplay of Guido Gozzano's San Francesco d'Assisi: poetry, images and representation*

ROBERTO RISSO

The essay presents an in-depth analysis of Guido Gozzano's screenplay on St. Francis of Assisi. The movie project was never realized, but Gozzano's text remains an interesting and rich document which reveals not only the author's mastery of cinematic language and mechanisms, but also his astounding passion for the rich culture of the Middle Ages. Parallels with his other works, especially poetry and narrations, are established and studied in the context of Italian and international early cinema; the screenplay contains many of the topics that are dear to the author, along with his trademark sophisticated melancholy and wit.

*An exedra for the garden of the princes of Carignano in Turin. Notes on a "misplaced" drawing*

PAOLO CORNAGLIA

An unpublished drawing, preserved in the Savoia Carignano collection in the Turin State Archives, although classified in the *Racconigi, Parco* section, actually concerns the garden of the Carignano Palace in Turin. The quick, dimensioned pen drawing, probably the result of construction site practices, depicts the exedra-shaped architectural backdrop placed as a screen for the stables. The garden, created together with the residence of the princes and then transformed into an urban square during

the 19th century, did not contain the exedra, which was first incorporated into the service buildings, then replaced by the large stables of Filippo Castelli, built in 1789. The drawing, which shows the structure with the same shapes and dimensions as other projects for the garden, is yet another graphic confirmation of the construction of the backdrop.

*Deputy Enrico di Montezemolo and the province of Nice in 1859-1860*

SIMONETTA TOMBACCINI

Already aide-de-camp to the governor of the province of Nice, the knight Enrico di Montezemolo returned to the County in February 1859, in order to take part in the elections scheduled to replace the deputy of the Sospello constituency. In order to obtain the candidature, he first had to agree to a number of conditions, one of which was to advocate the Nice-Cuneo railway via Tenda. A number of local candidates, close to the clerical opposition, contested the succession, but the influence of the outgoing deputy and the support of Cavour played in favour of Montezemolo, who ran again in the elections of March 1860, obtaining once again the majority of votes, although in a context of tension due to the planned cession of Nice to France. In view of the plebiscite, he travelled to the various villages in his constituency to convince people to vote against annexation. He acts as an emissary of Turin, which aims to retain the upper Roia valley. After the vote, he endeavoured to support the

people of Briga and Tenda, even though his political career was coming to an end.

*"Eternal Soul of My Country!" Costantino Nigra's reflections on the Risorgimento*

ANDREA PENNINI

Costantino Nigra was one of the main actors of the Risorgimento. An Italian nobleman, philologist, poet, diplomat, and politician, Nigra is above all remembered because he was a pupil of Camillo Benso Count of Cavour and a dean of the Italian diplomat at the beginning of the 20th century. But despite this, he left just a few traces of his life. However, Nigra's papers give us the opportunity to see the administrative and social process of the Italian unification through the eyes of a protagonist of the time. The paper looks at three key aspects: the relationship with the generation of his father and the Revolution of 1821; his reflections on the year 1848; history and memory.

*Filippo Burzio and Vilfredo Pareto between the crisis of liberalism and the advent of fascism: towards a new "western demiurge"?*

PAOLO BAGNOLI

Filippo Burzio always considered Vilfredo Pareto as one of his masters: Burzio called himself a sociologist and set out to develop Pareto's sociological theory. Although the two developed their thoughts in completely different ways, they both refer to human behaviour: pessimistic in Pareto, positively resolvable in a demiurgical context for Burzio.

The demiurgic system appears as the solution to the dichotomy of human behaviours, as illogical attitudes are governed by a harmonious rationality. However, following this line of thought sociology becomes philosophy and, as such, builds Pareto's realist canon on the abstract level of thought. Despite this contradiction, however, Burzio's conception and the intention behind it are not lost.

*New figurative issues in the work of Antonio Carena (1925-2010)*

MARIA VITTORIA MAIELLO

"How can they claim to paint the human figure when they are satisfied with details?"

This question was paramount for the Rivoli-born artist Antonio Carena (1925-2010) during the mid-1950s and the 1960s. The representation of the human form was one of the key aspects of the painter's career, but it remains poorly studied to this day. This issue is evident in some of Carena's works that show his engagement with the new figuration and, at the same time, reveal the personal nature of his artistic research. The series of *Nudi* painted between 1960 and 1962 marked the culmination of a discourse that stemmed from some sketches dating back to 1956-1957, which Carena would later disavow, even going so far as to destroy some of them. Through an analysis of unpublished works, drawings and the artist's diary, this paper focuses on Carena's complex relationship with the representation of the human figure throughout the 1950s

and 1960s. His approach intersected with contemporary developments in the artistic research in Italy and in Turin, especially within the debate on new figuration.

*Experiences of sericulture in the Collegno asylum (1941-1942)*

GIANCARLO ALBERTINI

In 1941 and 1942, a sericulture experiment was conducted on the farm of the psychiatric hospital in Collegno, involving the hospitalized patients, particularly women, as a form of occupational therapy. The breeding of silkworms had been a significant economic activity for rural families, and the silk industry was crucial to the economy of Piedmont. The documentation on silkworm breeding, specifically on cocoon production, provides detailed descriptions of the activity and shows the profitable outcomes for the company thanks to the sale of cocoons during periods of autarchy. The rigorous and exhausting work, supervised by an experienced sericulture worker, was undertaken with considerable satisfaction by the patients. However, the war halted the initiative, one of the last sericulture experiences in the western Turin area. The availability of synthetic fibres on the market and the recurrent problems with parasites attacking the larvae led to the decline of this activity, not only in Piedmont but across the entire region.

*Three minor Piedmontese fabulists of the 19th century: Giuseppe Ellena (Solitari dla Val d'Breuss), Ignazio Santi and Maurizio Tarditi*

ANSELMO ROVEDA

The renewed fortune of the Aesopian fable during the 18th and 19th centuries also found expression in the regional literatures of the mainland Savoy states; especially in the Piedmontese language, with over two hundred and fifty texts and a dozen fable writers. Alongside the most renowned and studied (including their biographies) Piedmontese authors, such as Edoardo Ignazio Calvo (1773-1804), Norberto Rosa (1803-1862) or Giovanni Casalis (1768-1846), many other lesser-known authors practiced the fable genre, often publishing their texts in periodical publications, such as the "Parnas Piemonteis" (1831-1849) almanac. This paper presents some biographical notes on three minor 19th century fable writers in Piedmontese: Giuseppe Ellena (pen name: Solitari dla Val d'Breuss), Ignazio Santi and Maurizio Tarditi.

*Marco Giovanni Ponta (1799-1849), a Somasco Father from Arquata Scrivia*

PAOLO COZZO

The Somasco Father Marco Giovanni Ponta (1799-1849) from Arquata Scrivia was an important representative of his religious congregation and of literary erudition in the first half of the 19th century. In addition to holding important positions in the order of the Somaschi Clerics Regular (of

which he also became provost and prosecutor general), he was – like many of his brethren – a refined scholar of Dante and the Divine Comedy, to which he dedicated several works. In retracing Ponta's biographical, ecclesiastical and cultural journey, the paper sheds light on the rootedness and spread of the Somaschi Fathers in the area of Novi Ligure (in whose house Ponta trained and resided for a long time), linked to the close and profound relationship established in the modern age between that religious congregation and the Spinola family, owners of the marquissate of Arquata.

*General Donato Etna, from Monregalese*

DONATO D'URSO

Donato Etna, born in 1858, was the illegitimate son of King Vittorio Emanuele II. Having started a military career, he was an Alpine officer and took part in expeditions to Eritrea and Libya. In the First World War he was highly decorated and, at the end of the conflict, commanded an army corps. Having been removed from the Nitti government and drawn closer to fascism, he was regent of the prefecture of Alessandria, commissioner of the municipality of Padua, then of Turin. An expert in agricultural sciences, amateur painter, senator of the kingdom, he died in 1938.

*Remembering Pier Massimo Proso, a fine intellectual from Turin*

GIOVANNI TESIO

The paper traces the life of Pier Massimo Proso (1940-2023) in the many fields of his assiduous and industrious activity: from essay, not only in relation to Piedmont, to travel writing – the area in which Proso gave his best – to fiction, in which he expressed his taste as a reader and writer. What emerges is the profile of a complex scholar who alternated between the richness of critical activity and his creativity.

*«Si hortum in bibliotheca habes, nihil deerit»:  
remembering Vittorio Defabiani's life between books and gardens*

CHIARA DEVOTTI

The short article celebrates the figure of late Professor Vittorio Defabiani, who taught at Polytechnic of Turin for over three decades, where he trained a long list of professionals and researchers on historical gardens. He passed last November and left an imposing library and collection of music and ballet CD, a testimony of his interests. This moving and personal memory outlines the profile of a scholar of great expertise and humanity.

*In partibus Flandriae. A Piedmontese banker in Friesland: Cesare Mazzetti tafelhouder in Bolsward (1586-1622)*

GRAZIELLA RIVIERA

Toward the end of the 16th century, Piedmontese nobleman Cesare Mazzetti emigrated to the Netherlands to work as a banker. Taking as its starting point a tombstone preserved in the Martinikerk in Bolsward (Friesland), the paper traces back Mazzetti's financial career, his relations with fellow countrymen and his gradual integration into Dutch society. Based on previous studies – and especially on documents recently found in the archives of Leeuwarden, Utrecht, and Alexandria – the paper also outlines the personal events and fierce family disputes that pitted Cesare against the Mazzetti cousins, who lived in Italy, over the ownership of feudal rights on the castle of Frinco in Monferrato. An adventurous story, with some mysterious twists, that adds to the rich story of the “Lombardi” in Asti and Chieri who worked as “casanieri” (bankers at the banking houses in Asti, the “casanesk”) and owners of Loan Banks in Northern Europe since the Middle Ages.

*Two unpublished letters on the civil war in Piedmont. Cardinal Maurizio di Savoia in Nizza and the marriage negotiations (1640-1641)*

MATTEO FRIGERIO

Within a historiographical framework that looks more closely at the figures of the brothers Maurizio and Tommaso

di Savoia, the author presents two unpublished documents dating back to the Civil War in Piedmont on the activities of the cardinal prince. The first document is a report written by Valeriano Sfondrati – count of the Riviera and commissary general of the armies of the State of Milan – sent by the governor of Milan to Nice to handle negotiations with Prince Maurizio. The report analyses in great detail the state of the lands occupied by the prince in the southern part of the duchy, dwelling on the political orientations of his entourage. The second document is a copy of a letter written by Filippo IV concerning the handling of the marriage negotiations which, in the late summer and early fall of 1641, were entrusted to Sfondrati. The documents lists the hypothetical marriage candidates and possible political consequences. It also outlines the plan – viewed favourably by the Spanish ruler – to divide the Savoy state into three small potentates at the end of the war, with the aim of extending the Spanish sphere of influence into northern Italy.

*Giuseppe Biancheri, Knight of Saint Annunziata (1895). Unpublished telegrams and congratulatory letters from the Biancheri Foundation of Ventimiglia*

ROSANNA ROCCIA

Giuseppe Biancheri, deputy of the Ventimiglia constituency from 1853 until his death, was repeatedly appointed president of the Subalpine, then Italian Chamber. His service, carried out with poise and discipline for twenty years, ear-

ned him the awarding of the Collar of the Annunciation in 1892, the highest Savoy honour that made him a “cousin of the King”. The Ventimiglia Foundation named after him preserves telegrams and congratulatory letters sent from the highest State authorities, mostly belonging to the same supreme order. These are now published for the first time. The invitation of the Royal Household to Biancheri, called to Racconigi in 1904 as a witness to the registration of Prince Umberto’s birth certificate, and the mournful tribute in 1908 by the widowed Queen Margaret in memory of that upright and faithful man from Liguria, who had long honoured the institutions, are also presented.

*Augusto Monti - Barbara Allason: a correspondence*

GIOVANNI TESIO

Barbara Allason-Augusto Monti. An exchange of letters between two intellectuals from what could still be ironically and affectionately called “Old Piedmont”. News of works and activities against the backdrop of Vigna Allason, in the heart of the Turin hills, accompanied by a sense of companionship. The old professor (and writer) converses with the writer and Germanist in a mutual exchange marked by old-world kindness, with moments of perfect communion. The collection of unpublished letters complements Augusto Monti’s epistolary, *Continuare per cominciare*, published by Araba Fenice.

# Notiziario bibliografico: recensioni e segnalazioni