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Mario Cobuzzi

Sulle *Maestà* senesi di Coppo di Marcovaldo e Guido da Siena: riflessioni sul problema della “copia” medievale e la centralità dello stile

Abstract

The essay addresses the problem of the concept of “copy” in medieval art, starting from the case study of the “Maestà” painted in Siena by the Florentine painter Coppo di Marcovaldo and the Sienese painter Guido da Siena. A typological and stylistic comparison is proposed to demonstrate how there are no specific connections between the two paintings: they thus become a methodological case study on how to understand the model-copy relationship between works of art, with the consequent claim of the centrality of stylistic analysis. The essay also discusses the well-known and problematic “Maestà” from Orvieto, whose attribution to Coppo di Marcovaldo is once again proposed.

Alessandro Volpe

Il Maestro del dittico Sterbini. Aggiunte e collocazione geografica

Abstract

The Master of the Sterbini Diptych is an anonymous painter known through a small group of panel paintings unified by a highly distinctive iconographic typology, likely of Eastern origin. The artist is generally thought to have received his training in Byzantium before working in Italy, where his production shows an evident connection with Sienese artistic culture in the very early decades of the fourteenth century. This study adds a significant work to his catalogue and, through comparisons with paintings of secure Genoese attribution, examines the probable geographical location of his workshop, proposing Liguria rather than Venice – a new view in contrast with previous scholarship’s predominant opinion.

Enrico De Iulis

Tra immagine e testo (VII). I Filosofi della Libreria Marciana

Abstract

This research starts from an hypothesis: “The Cycle of the Philosophers of the Marciana Library represents the authors of the works that made up the first nucleus of the Nicene Library, personified by Byzantine philologists close to Bessarion”. This hypothesis born from the the similarity of the iconographic and iconological elements with the

Cycle of Astronomers by Paolo Veronese previously published in this magazine. From the iconographic analysis of the individual images and the comparison with the portraits of the scholars from the cardinal's circle, this article tries to give an organic reading key to paintings remaining from the original series which adorned the Marciana Library's hall.

Alessandra Zamperini

Veneziani al bivio: Paolo Veronese e la scelta della Virtù

Abstract

Inspired by the classical fable of "Hercules at the crossroads", Veronese addressed the choice of Virtue in three paintings. In these works, the subject takes on different shades of meaning: the work in the Prado Museum offers a moral *exemplum* to the young Benedetto Sanudo; the canvas in the Frick Collection is a meditation on the relationship between Virtue and Nobility; the painting in the National Gallery of Melbourne invites to harmonise action and study. In this work, we also propose to identify Leonardo di Giovanni Mocenigo as the protagonist. At the same time, despite their differences, the three paintings convey the idea that Virtue is always the result of a choice, a message in line with Venetian patrician ideology.

Valentina Certo

'Impatto e importo': il primo contatto tra Caravaggio e Messina

Abstract

This article presents a critical reconstruction of painting in Messina before and after Caravaggio's stay in the city, dating from December 1608 to the summer of 1609. The study examines the artistic context of Messina prior to the arrival of the Lombard artist and analyzes the transformations that occurred following his departure, with particular attention to their scope and nature. The study also identifies the principal artists active during this period, analyzing their relationship to the Caravaggesque experience and the origins of Caravaggism in the Sicilian context. Through a multidisciplinary research methodology and the analysis of literary and documentary sources, this contribution investigates a complex artistic moment, namely the first decades of the seventeenth century. During these years, a new figurative phase connected to Caravaggio's legacy and to naturalism emerged; however, especially in the early years of the century, a late-Mannerist language of academic character continued to spread throughout the island, largely supported by public and religious patronage. From the 1630s onward, stylistic orientation gradually shifted toward a Roman-derived Baroque classicism, distant from the introspective intensity and psychological drama characteristic of Caravaggio's work.

Francesco Saracino

***La Vergine nel sepolcro*: Carlo Maratti e un'invenzione per Alessandro VIII**

Abstract

In 1691, Carlo Maratti executed a painting for Pope Alexander VIII that fits well with the pontiff's scholarly circle but is unique in Marian iconography. The painting depicts the Virgin Mary in Christ's tomb, approached by an angel showing her the crown of thorns. The iconographic elements of the image suggest that the painting is not a depiction of the grieving Virgin (the *Addolorata*), a well-established theme of the Counter-Reformation, but rather an unprecedented portrayal of the Virgin, who never left Jesus' tomb, becoming a witness to her son's resurrection. This theme was discussed in the Eastern Christian tradition and was heatedly debated among Catholics in the 17th century.

Chiara Ponchia

An illuminated manuscript of the *Summa de casibus conscientiae* (Padua, University Library, MS 618)

Abstract

This article examines Padua, University Library, MS 618, an illuminated copy of Bartolomeo da San Concordio's *Summa de casibus conscientiae*, focusing on its composite decorative campaign and its sophisticated text-image relationship. Stylistic analysis indicates that the manuscript was illuminated in two closely successive phases in the 1340s:

the opening initials were executed in Florence, plausibly by Pacino di Bonaguida or his workshop, while the remaining historiated initials were completed in Venice by an artist influenced by the Master of the Marciana Epistolary. In the analysis of the decorative programme, particular attention is devoted to illuminations in which gold leaf and powdered gold are used to depict objects made of precious metal, such as the chalice (Calix) and the wedding ring alluding to the *debitum coniugale*. In these cases, gold operates not only decoratively but materially and semantically, reinforcing the textual content while enhancing the mimetic and symbolic force of the image.

Antonio Pepe **L'incipit del Padovanino**

Abstract

This article examines the early phase of Alessandro Varotari, known as Padovanino, traditionally elusive from both documentary and critical perspectives, proposing a chronological reassessment that places it prior to the works of 1610. Through a stylistic analysis of selected paintings, both known and previously unpublished, it identifies the formal elements underlying the formation of the artist's pictorial language. The study also highlights the structuring role of copying in the painter's training and reassesses its function within the context of his mature oeuvre.

Tommaso Gristina **L'Angelo Custode del Domenichino: uno studio sul modello antico dell'altare funerario**

Abstract

Among the topics that art historical scholarship has progressively explored over recent decades regarding Domenichino, there remains a gap concerning a systematic analysis of the antiquarian models that influenced his production, particularly during his Roman period. The works created in these years reveal precise references to ancient monuments and objects, though reworked through a visual language that never amounts to mere archaeological quotation. Rather, such references reflect a selective and interpretative approach to antiquity, consistent with the theoretical currents of the early seventeenth century and functional to the narrative construction of the painted image. Within this framework, the present study proposes to investigate Zampieri's *Guardian Angel* (1614) and the ways in which the artist's antiquarian imagination is structured, through a comparative analysis of specific funerary typologies found in Roman collections and their reinterpretation in the altar represented within the painting, with particular attention to iconographic solutions adopted in devotional contexts.

Davide Trevisan **On the "Valadier Mirror": Giuseppe Spagna and the Altar of the Tomb of Saint Francis**

Abstract

Following the discovery of Saint Francis' body in 1818, the city of Assisi commissioned the construction of the new altar at his tomb, in the crypt that was specially excavated. This work included a commission by the Roman silversmith Giuseppe Spagna, who created a rich decorative scheme in gilded bronze. This also included two candlesticks, which were found in the Chapel of Saint Martin in the Lower Basilica, and the precious grille presented in 2018 at the Galleria Borghese exhibition dedicated to Luigi Valadier. Exactly a century ago, however, in the name of spiritual simplicity, it was decided to remodel the burial complex into its current appearance thus 'stripping' it of its original nineteenth-century arrangement.