

**Federico Zuccari. Le idee, gli scritti.** Atti del convegno di Sant'Angelo in Vado, Hrsg.: Bonita Cleri; Mailand: Electa 1997; 193 S., zahlr. Abb.; ISBN 88-435-6284-3; Lit. 80.000

**Der Maler Federico Zuccari. Ein römischer Virtuoso von europäischem Ruhm.** Akten des internationalen Kongresses der Bibliotheca Hertziana; Hrsg.: Matthias Winner und Detlef Heikamp (*Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana*, Bd. 32, 1997/98, Beih.); München: Hirmer 1999; 368 S., zahlr. Abb.; ISBN 3-7774-8140-8; DM 258,-

**Federico Zuccaro. Kunst zwischen Ideal und Reform;** Hrsg. Tristan Weddigen (*Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana*, 27); Basel: Schwabe 2000; 271 S., zahlr. Abb.; ISBN 3-7965-1438-3; Sfr 58,-

After having long been regarded as an artist with few qualities, the last decades have restored Federico Zuccari to at least part of his erstwhile international fame. But the obstacles of historiography have left their mark. Its core lies in Taddeo's biography written by Giorgio Vasari, creating mythology around the elder Zuccari, at the expense of Federico's fame. After his brother's premature death, Federico himself provided Vasari with a detailed biography, and designed a series of visual images with the same subject. In the written *vita*, the role of Federico was diminished in their cooperative works, to stress the artistic status of the younger brother<sup>1</sup>. From then on, the image of the Zuccari-brothers was influenced by his literary construction and biased judgement<sup>2</sup>.

Recent studies on Taddeo and Federico are, for this reason, often concerned with a critical evaluation of the correlation between extant works and contemporary sources. Within three years, three volumes with acts of congresses have appeared in print offering a broad overview over current trends in research, and following in the footsteps of a number of other publications<sup>3</sup>. Two of the congresses were firmly set within the academic tradition of studies on the Zuccari; the third, published in 2000, was a more informal attempt by young arthistorians to reappraise the artistic judgement on Federico Zuccari within a broader perspective on the late sixteenth century. Although there are several contributions by the same authors, these three publications are markedly different in character.

1 GIORGIO VASARI: *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori* (PAOLO DELLA PERGOLA, LUIGI GRASSI, GIOVANNI PREVITALI eds.); vol. VII, Milan 1965; pp. 37–95.

2 Giovanni Baglione wrote that Federico was stylistically so near to his brother „tal che finì tutte le opere principate, e per morte lasciate da Tadeo imperfette, del quale la vita scrisse il Vasari [...]”. GIOVANNI BAGLIONE: *Le vite de' pittori scultori et architetti* [...] (JACOB HESS, HERWARTH RÖTTGEN eds.); Città del Vaticano 1995; p. 121.

3 For example E. JAMES MUNDY: *Renaissance into Baroque – Italian Master Drawings by the Zuccari 1550–1600*, exh. cat. Milwaukee 1989; *Federico Zuccaro e Dante*, exh. cat. Torre de'Passeri 1993; and the recently appeared monography by CRISTINA ACIDINI LUCHINAT: *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari fratelli pittori del Cinquecento*, 2 vols.; Milan – Rome 1998.



The conference held in Sant'Angelo in Vado in 1994<sup>4</sup> was conceived around the image of Federico himself, as expressed in his writings and his work. Typical of this question is the essay by BONITA CLERI on Federico's marginal handwritten remarks in Vasari's biography of Taddeo. As Federico was 'heir' to his brother in various commissions (the Palazzi Farnese in Rome and Caprarola) he wanted to stress the artistic continuity between himself and his deceased brother. The information he furnished Vasari with for Taddeo's *vita* was thus not only meant to heighten the status of his brother, but to improve his own position as well. Vasari, however, was himself partial on the question of rivalry between his friend Francesco Salviati and Taddeo, and described the former as the better artist. In his personal copy of the *Vite de' Pittori, scultori ed architetti* Federico added many remarks in the margin, which betray his own position in this process of deification of his brother's artistic personality. In the same line was the contribution by SERGIO ROSSI, who interpreted the drawings made by Federico as an illustration of his own version of Taddeo's life as moralistic examples, used later in Federico's theory of painting.

ALESSANDRO ZUCCARI set out to question the interpretation of the reception of Federico's paintings produced in the years 1585–1587 for the Escorial. Philipp II of Spain seemed eager to hire Federico for the execution of decorations for this royal monastery, many of which were however altered or removed shortly after the painter left Spain. This 'failure' has often been ascribed to the artistic differences between the Italian artist and the Spanish court, but Zuccari here argues that Philipp II and his advisors were unresolved patrons. Not only were Federico's paintings critiqued, but most other commissions were afterwards changed or even removed, like El Greco's altarpiece. Whether it will have been an advisor of the king, who objected to iconographic details and suggested alterations remains a point of discussion – the facts seem slightly contradictory; but the close supervision that Philipp kept over the paintings during execution surely justifies Alessandro Zuccari's suggestion.

In the third volume of acts (published in 2000), a rather diverse interpretation is given by MICHAEL BRUNNER, namely that the king and his court knew what they wanted, but had difficulties finding the artist to translate these ideas into painting. The preference for a painter from the Venetian school proved unrealizable, and thus, on the recommendation of Spanish representatives in Italy, Zuccari was asked. The contractual stipulation that only Venetian pigments were to be used in the commissioned works supports this assumption. The accusation of dryness in style, and not only the iconographical objections mentioned later was the real motif behind the rejection of his works.

A third contribution on this discussion, seemingly in line with Brunner, was delivered by AXEL GAMPP in the same volume, in which the artistic freedom taken by Zuccari was regarded as the stumbling block for his Spanish patron. Symmetric

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4 Sequel to earlier exhibition on the brothers Zuccari, *Per Taddeo e Federico Zuccari per le Marche*, Sant'Angelo in Vado 1993



disposition and the visual coherence were regarded as features of *opus*, in contrast to the artistic credo of *ars* that put the ability of the painter in the first place. It was this essentially *maniera*-discussion that would have been alien to the Spanish situation and thus misunderstood by the king and his court. The result was, in the eyes of Philipp and his advisors, a lack of *decorum*, which led them to correct and replace some of Federico's works. The arguments put forward by Gampp and Brunner seem slightly contradictory, and both contrast with the last, and rather convincing, argument made by Alessandro Zuccari in his essay, that the continuing employment of Carducho in the Escorial indicated a positive judgement on style, but possibly a negative one on iconography. Brunner's suggestion that De Sigüenza, who critiqued Zuccari's works, only entered the convent of the Escorial in 1590, and thus after the departure of the painter, is an argument that could prove decisive in the historiography of the Escorial-paintings. It suggests strongly that the iconographical objections were formulated later, probably indicating a change in the religious or intellectual concept of the Escorial – that must contain the core of the later negative appraisal of Zuccari's works by the Spanish court.

In the Sant'Angelo in Vado-acts, DETLEF HEIKAMP expanded upon a similar, but then more conspicuous, 'failure' in Federico's oeuvre, the decoration of the cupola of the Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence. After tracing the origins of the critique of Zuccari's work in contemporary reactions, he then follows the discussion well into the twentieth century. This circled around three themes: the partial 'destruction' of Vasari's work, the lack of legibility of the frescoes, and the disturbance of the architectural experience of Brunelleschi's architecture. The first two arguments were particularly strong immediately after the unveiling of the fresco and continued until the eighteenth century; the latter was tied to nineteenth-century ideas about 'pure' architecture of the Renaissance. Heikamp's historiographic essay is very informative as none of the other essays discussed the later seventeenth century, and the continuously falling star of Federico's fame.

The fresco in Casa Zuccari representing a family-scene is coupled with archival material in the essay by PAOLA GALANTI, in which the traditional identification of the sitters in this homely scene is questioned. The inclusion of sons and daughters at a moment when Federico had just married Francesca Genga, in 1578, seems strange. It is thus argued that Federico only executed this painting much later, in 1593. Biographical data do not correspond with this thesis, however: for example, Federico's son Alessandro Taddeo was absent from the *status animae* of Zuccari's household of the early seventeenth century, and probably died at a young age – why would he have been included? More questions remain after Galanti's tentative identification of the depicted persons, and combined with the awkward decision of Federico to paint this fresco in his Florentine house when he was presumably trying to sell it, dating and identification remain problematic.

KRISTINA HERMANN FIORE relates the depiction of angels to Federico's theoretical treatise and extant works to the importance attached to the subject during the Counter-Reformation. One of the paintings discussed is the recently discovered ver-



sion of „Christ supported by Angels“, already published in an earlier essay<sup>5</sup>, and more thoroughly discussed in the acts of Rome/Florence (see below). The theme of Dante in Zuccari's oeuvre is taken up by MICHAEL BRUNNER, who recently published a study on the theme of Dantesque iconography in the late sixteenth century<sup>6</sup>. Federico's interest for the *Inferno* seems to have started in Florence, where at the Accademia Fiorentina lectures were organized on Dante. As an effect, possibly of outright cooperation with that institution, several artists produced illustrations for themes from the *Divina Commedia*. Zuccari was part of this intellectual circle, and remnants of this culture can be found throughout his work.

In the volume with the acts of the four-day-conference in Florence and Rome, held one year prior to that in Sant'Angelo in Vado, Federico's European fame was the overall theme, as the title „Der Maler Federico Zuccari – Ein römischer Virtuoso von europäischem Ruhm“ expresses. Long essays have been published for example by PHILIPP FEHL, who started with observing the iconography of the garden-porch of Palazzo Zuccari in Rome, and along a winding path with interesting vista's takes his reader along the symbolic conquering of the monster, the portrait-busts of Federico and his wife under the protection of the papal sign to the *impresa* of the family Zuccari. More focused is SEBASTIAN SCHÜTZE's detailed discussion of the decoration, patronage and iconography of the Cappella di San Giacinto in Santa Sabina. Cardinal Girolamo Bernerio as commissioner had himself prominently displayed in the scenes of Hyacinth's taking the Dominican habit and the saints' canonization in 1594. The role of Bernerio as patron of the visual arts forms the last part of Schütze's contribution, an issue that maybe deserved a separate discussion.

Likewise detailed is LOREN PARTRIDGE in his essay on the decoration of Palazzo Farnese in Caprarola, and the involvement of Federico Zuccari. His role had been diminished in the historiography in favor of Taddeo's achievement. Referring to Vasari's account, Partridge concludes that Federico did more than he has traditionally been accredited. Federico's drawings, of which ITALO FALDI<sup>7</sup> claimed that they were mostly copies of the finished frescoes or preparatory studies, in a number of cases show Federico's authorship of frescoes in Caprarola and his growing involvement in Taddeo's workshop. Apart from stylistic evidence of the drawings, little documentary proof has survived; the discussion will, without such material, definitely be prolonged<sup>8</sup>. Related to this essay is the discussion by KRISTINA HERRMANN FIORE of the various versions of the altarpiece of Christ supported by Angels, which was painted

5 KRISTINA HERMANN FIORE: ‚Pietà con Angeli‘, in: *Federico Zuccari e Dante* (see note 3), pp. 316–320.

6 MICHAEL BRUNNER: *Die Illustrierung von Dantes Divina Commedia in der Zeit der Dante-Debatte (1570–1600)*; München & Berlin 1999. An earlier contribution on the same theme by Brunner can be found in *Federico Zuccari e Dante* (see note 3), pp.71–74.

7 ITALO FALDI: L'opera di Federico Zuccari nel Palazzo Farnese di Caprarola, in: *Federico Zuccari e Dante*, Corrado Gizzi (ed.), Milan 1993 pp. 75–82.

8 KRISTINA ACIDINI LUCHINAT: Taddeo e Federico Zuccari (see note 3), pp.156–212 maintains that Taddeo was largely alone responsible for the execution of the frescoes, although some of Partridge's ideas on Federico's involvement are accepted, for example the execution of the allegories of *Fama* and *Valore* in the Sala dei Fasti Farnesiani.



by Taddeo for Caprarola, but never ceded to the patron; Federico produced one copy which was sent to cardinal Farnese, and kept the original for himself.

ZYGMUNT WAZBINSKI discussed a number of unpublished letters of Francesco Maria II della Rovere of 1579. The duke's protection was asked, as Wazbinski here argues, to escape from the commission of the Florentine cupola even before its completion; probably the contemporary discussion of Federico's execution of large parts ,al secco' prompted him to look for another patron. Minutes of letters to the Vatican suggest that Della Rovere used his influence to obtain a commission for the painter at the papal court. It is suggested that Zuccari opted for the Cappella Gregoriana, but was awarded the Cappella Paolina, only after having finished the Florentine cupola. Compared with TROMBARI in the earlier publication, this essay focuses more fruitfully on the position of Della Rovere himself, and his reasons to promote Zuccari in papal circles. It seems plausible, as Wazbinski here argues, that the painter served political motives of the Duke: Francesco Maria II della Rovere used his contacts with painters as ,diplomatic gifts' to other rulers, such as the Spanish king. On the other hand, ERASMUS WEDDIGEN (in the last publication) interprets the papal *scalco segreto* Ghiselli as the link that secured the commission for the painter. Ghiselli commissioned a painting for his private chapel in Santa Maria del Baraccano in Bologna, which was refuted only after delivery, on the basis of anonymous slander about the quality of Zuccari's work. Although the thesis put forward by Weddigen is tempting, the documentary evidence of Wazbinski's contribution points at a more complicated system of patronage that was needed to push Zuccari's fame, and to deliver him the commission of the Cappella Paolina in the Vatican Palace. The iconography of this Cappella Paolina is the theme of the essay by MARGARET KUNTZ.

JULIAN KLIEMANN explained the development of the decoration of the Galleria Grande in Turin from a gallery of ancestors into the location for several collections of primarily art. Through a number of preparatory drawings, Zuccari's original idea can be followed through three phases, until his active participation in the execution seemed no longer necessary. Parallel to the iconographic change, a new political orientation of the Piemontese house towards the cultural models of the Ferrarese and Mantuan courts can be discerned in the beginning of the seventeenth century, which places the commission to Zuccari into an interesting socio-political context. Painting was here not merely decoration of the architectural space that was admired by several seventeenth-century visitors, but turned it into the venerable container for art, natural collections and dynastic opulence<sup>9</sup>.

CRISTINA ACIDINI LUCHINAT concentrated on Zuccari's stylistic guides in the Florentine cupola, Michelangelo and Raphael; she notes a shift from Michelangesque figures to Raphaellesque composition in the preparatory drawings (the chronology of which is not fixed, however); gradually the influence of the „Last Judgement“ in the Sistine Chapel vanished in favor of aspects of the „Disputa“. While Cristina Aci-

9 MARTHA D. POLLAK: Turin 1564–1680. Urban Design, Military Culture, and the Creation of the Absolutist Capital; Chicago/London 1991, pp.41–42.



dini Luchinat isolates the stylistic and related iconographic changes from their larger context, Weddigen in the third volume argued that this change only became decisive for Zuccari in 1581, with the condemnation for the exhibition of the incriminating *Porta Virtutis*, and thus rooted in external circumstances. This diverges from the recently published thesis that the school of Raphael was diffused in Italy by his pupils after the Sacco di Roma, returning to Rome after the middle of the century, and thus constructing a socio-historical explanation for this reversal of fame<sup>10</sup>.

JAMES MUNDY traced the use of fictive architectural in Zuccari's paintings, which took a largely decorative form. An interest of Zuccari in real architecture is thus difficult to prove; influence of sixteenth-century *quadratura* seems more logical, however. Tommaso Laureti and the Alberti brothers with their style of architectural *invenzioni* certainly will have influenced the development of the genre in Rome. In many cases these architectural paintings were executed by specialists in the field<sup>11</sup>. In contrast to the essay by KEMAL DEMIRSOY in the last volume, the concentration on one detail of larger undertakings distorts the view on the larger context.

At the end of 2000 appeared the acts of a conference held at the Bibliotheca Hertziana and the Swiss Institute in Rome in 1998. Behind most essays in this publication lies the assumption, that the concepts in Zuccari's writings and works were linked to contemporary reforms in painting and religion. After Michael Brunner's and Axel Gamp's essays on the Escorial, TRISTAN WEDDIGEN linked the Bolognese commission for the „Miracle of Saint Gregory“ with a presumed turning-point in Zuccari's stylistic orientation. The long essay refers to the many prints and sources that have been connected with this episode, like the *Lamento*, the *Calunnia* and the acts of the legal proceedings. These suggest that Zuccari encountered numerous problems during this commission, of which the iconographical issues were resolved quite intelligently.

KEMAL DEMIRSOY discussed the Ganymede-motif in Zuccari's painting and theory. The vault of the Sala di Ganimede is seen in perspective of the discussions on the intended function of that room; Demirsoy concludes that it will have served for the meetings of the Accademia di San Luca. The figure of Ganymede represented ‚design‘, being born aloft by the contemplation; the surrounding *quadratura*-painting supposedly represented the earthly boundaries that had to be surpassed to receive divine illumination. It was this divine inspiration that enabled the artist to create his works. But where, and most importantly, why did Zuccari adopt these concepts, is left undiscussed here. A contextual allusion to that question is made by JOSEPH IMORDE. In his view, artistic and religious practice during the early *Seicento* were linked by the image of ‚veiled beauty‘, that was transposed from theological into an artistic ‚credo‘. Although parallel to Demirsoy's arguments, the connection between art and spirituality is here too random to be particularly informing on Zuccari. That analogous con-

10 MARCIA B. HALL: *After Raphael. Painting in Central Italy in the Sixteenth Century*; Cambridge 1995, *passim*.

11 MARIE CHRISTINE GLOTON: *Trompe-l'oeil et decor plafonnant dans les églises romaines de l'âge baroque*; Rome 1965, pp. 141–146.



cepts informed him while writing his *Idea* is unquestionable, but the link between theological beauty and Zuccari's intentions to heighten the status of the artist is not shown in any detail in his own texts.

Rooted in actual facts derived from recent restorations in the Palazzo Zuccari is the contribution by ECKHARD LEUSCHNER. Hercules as represented in the central hallway of the palazzo pointed at a life of acquiring virtues by means of works, introducing a concept of ennobling the artist by using familiar iconographic motifs in an innovative way. Zuccari's pictorial expression of intellectual, social and financial status through the moral concepts of *onore*, *ricchezza* and *virtù* in this hallway is convincing, and surely in accordance with the situation in Rome around 1600. This essay reunites different aspects – painting, architecture and social status – that have been isolated in most other contributions of the three publications.

The admirable aim of the Hertziana/Swiss Institute acts was trying to look beyond the single object, and daring to hint at more general trends in the oeuvre and life of Federico Zuccari. Some essays tend to loose cohesion in the face of too much material and too broad an angle. On the other hand, the mostly detailed view offered in the other two publications sketches a fragmented image of Zuccari, with contradictory conclusions. The old dilemma remains, that the painter's oeuvre should be studied in depth, but even more so, in chronological coherence. These three publications have provided many aspects that should be taken along, and it cannot be denied, especially after the Hertziana-acts, that the context of the various commissions executed by Federico Zuccari was of major importance for the final results. One general conclusion can be drawn from these three books: Vasari's image of Federico as the obnoxious brother of the more famous Taddeo should now be discarded. No clear new image of Federico arises from these rather diverse contributions, however, but his European fame certainly was not Zuccari's own invention, but the reality of the early Seicento.

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**Joachim Jacoby: Hans von Aachen 1552–1615** (*Monographien zur Deutschen Barockmalerei*); München – Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag 2000; 329 S., zahlr. Abb.; ISBN 3-422-06287-4; DM 98,-

Die Monographie ist in zwei Teile gegliedert: den ersten Teil bildet die umfassende Einleitung, in der die Biographie und künstlerische Entwicklung chronologisch dargestellt werden (S. 7–76), den zweiten Abschnitt stellt der Katalog der Werke dar (S. 77–265). Eine Bibliographie sowie ein Register schließen die Arbeit ab. Es handelt sich nach Auskunft des Klappentextes um die erste Monographie zu Hans von Aachen in Buchform, was zweifellos mit der Rezeptionsgeschichte der Epoche und des Künstlers zusammenhängt, der lange Zeit als zweitrangiger, „nur“ Stil-Einflüsse rezipierender Maler galt. Einen Wandel in der Forschungsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts zu Hans von Aachen initiierte die bis heute zentrale, an Quellen und Dokumen-