

phien Erwähnung findet. Ähnliches gilt für den Brief vom 15. August 1514 aus Rom an Marco Fabio Calvo in Ravenna, in dem sich Raphael für den Erhalt der Vitruv-übersetzung bedankt und verspricht, sobald er Zeit findet, die begleitenden Illustrationen und das Titelblatt zu zeichnen (Dok. F35). Da einige der Spezialisten die Kernaussage des Textes für glaubwürdig halten, hätte man ihn nicht unter die Fälschungen einreihen sollen. Diese kleinen Einwände können nicht die Bedeutung dieser Quellenedition schmälern, die gewiß das Standardwerk für die kommenden Generationen sein wird. John Shearman ist kurz vor der Veröffentlichung dieser bedeutenden Arbeit verstorben.

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**Michael Thimann: Lügenhafte Bilder: Ovids favole und das Historienbild in der italienischen Renaissance** (*Rekonstruktion der Künste*, 6); Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2002; 288 S., 45 Ill.; ISBN 3-525-47905-0; € 64,-

Thimann's book aims to relate a general theoretical issue – Ovid's fables and their adaptation to Renaissance painting – to one particular cycle: Parmigianino's *Camerino* in the Rocca Sanvitale at Fontanellato. This room was decorated around 1523–1524 for Galeazzo Sanvitale with three scenes from the myth of Actaeon, who after beholding the naked Diana bathing in a pool turned into a stag, and was subsequently devoured by his own hunting dogs. Around these three episodes, painted in the lunettes below a vaulted ceiling, other subjects were depicted: a female figure on the lunette on the fourth wall, and playing *putti* on the ceiling itself, in the setting of a pergola. Thimann aims to show by means of the discussion of this one object, how fables were visualised by painters in the first half of the sixteenth century.

Clear as the theme of Parmigianino's ceiling-decoration might seem at first sight, art historical studies have gone quite far in trying to find an explanation of its iconography<sup>1</sup>. The present book by Thimann has new insights to add regarding this object, but at the same time shies away from the lure of over-interpretation. It is in the concentration upon the most obvious source for the Actaeon-episode, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, that the book's primary quality can be found. Furthermore, it offers some corrections in the interpretation of the scenes themselves. First, the discussion of the location of the room and related to that, its probable function. Contrary to the current opinion, Thimann upholds that the *Camerino* at Fontanellato was not a 'mysterious and eccentric space' or part of the apartment for Galeazzo's wife, Paola Gonzaga, but

1 See especially UTE DAVITT-ASMUS: Fontanellato II: la trasformazione dell'amante nell'amato. Parmigianinos Fresken in der Rocca Sanvitale, in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 31, 1987, p. 3–58; and most recently MARIA CRISTINA CHIUSA: Parmigianino; Milan 2001, pp. 42–53. On the recent restorations of the room, see CRISTINA DANTI: Parmigianino a Fontanellato: tecnica e vicende conservative delle Storie di Diana e Atteone, in: *Parmigianino e il manierismo europeo*, ed. Lucia Fornari Schianchi; Cinisello Balsamo 2002, pp. 124–129.

was used as *studiolo*, a place for mental repose by means of study and the arts<sup>2</sup>. It was thus conceived for Galeazzo himself. This does not mean, as was supposed by Freedberg, that the decoration had a high level of aesthetic significance alone, but on the contrary, painting vied with the literary arts in their own camp<sup>3</sup>. As Thimann tries to show, Parmigianino did not merely follow Ovid's description of the tale but developed, on the basis of the text, his own images for illustrating a sequence of events. A third important addition is the identification of the introductory scene not as a nymph pursued by hunters, but as Actaeon leaving his companions to wander alone in the forest – where eventually he would meet his fate<sup>4</sup>.

Thimann dedicated the first half of the book to a general theoretical discussion of the reception of the *Metamorphoses* in literature and painting. He starts off with an etymological discussion on the meaning of the word *favola* and the various definitions of the term in literary discourse from late antiquity until the late sixteenth century. Thimann stresses here the connotation of untruthfulness conjured up by the word in early modern discourse, while the generic form of the fable allowed the author a certain amount of digression from the 'verosimile' which normally applied to painted or written *istorie*. Second, Thimann discusses the reception of a subspecies of the *favola*, the mythological story, up until the Counter-reformation. After Augustine's rejection of Ovid in late Antiquity, the moralistic and Christian interpretations of Ovidian tales as popularized by Boccaccio and Giovanni dei Bonsignori, turned the scales. Humanistic re-interpretation of the original sources meant that an overt Christian meaning was no longer needed to study these tales. This effect was strengthened by the Counter-reformation, which, it is argued, likewise reduced the multiple layers of meaning to the antique flavour these tales imparted, and thus these sources were regarded from a predominantly negative angle. For reason of their general connotation of untruthfulness, also *favole* in general were condemned. Subsequently, the ecclesiastical authorities restrained or even forbade the use of secular subjects in painting, and the *Metamorphosis* temporarily lost their importance as inspiration for artists.

As a third step in his argumentation, Thimann relates the Renaissance discussion on *paragone* to the freedom of the painter in adapting literary sources, and dealing with the untruthfulness that the genre of myths implied to the contemporary beholder. His main source for this last part is the art-theoretical literature of the sixteenth century, in which on the one hand ecclesiastical authors strove to apply Catholic orthodoxy to either the general issue of decoration, or to the decoration of religious buildings in particular; and on the other hand, artists and humanists discussed the value of the visual arts in relation to artistic licence.

2 The first was stated by ROBERTO TASSI: *La Camera di Fontanellato: La giovinezza del Parmigianino*, in: *La corona di Primule. Arte a Parma dal XII al XX secolo*; Parma 1994, p. 137; the second option was proposed by KATHERINE McIVER: *Love, death and Mourning: Paola Gonzaga's Camerino at Fontanellato*, in: *Artibus et Historiae* 18, 1997, pp. 101–108.

3 SYDNEY J. FREEDBERG: *Parmigianino – His works in painting*; Westport (Conn.) 1971, pp. 51–54.

4 This identification was doubted by BETTINA UPPENKAMP in her review of 'Lügenhafte Bilder' in: *Sehepunkte* 4, 2004, Nr. 1 [15.01.2004], <http://www.sehepunkte.historicum.net/2004/01/2693.html>, but the present reviewer agrees with Thimann on this point.

The second part of the book then discusses in detail Parmigianino's cycle in its immediate and larger context, applying the theoretical insights of the first part to a particular object. Especially the patron, Galeazzo Sanvitale, and the spatial setting of the decoration are scrutinised and re-evaluated with the conclusions mentioned above. Also the discussion of the frescoes themselves, and the relation of the images to the inscription in the frieze running below the lunettes, yields interesting insights. The words of the inscription did not merely explain what was depicted, but provided a commentary upon the depicted myth, and in that sense, painting vied with poetry in its own field of *invenzione*. Being more than a mere illustration of a myth, the entire decoration functioned as a moral allegory on fate.

However, the Camerino at Fontanellato depicted not only these elements from the Actaeon-myth, and it is in this respect that Thimann's approach might be deemed somewhat too cautious, leaving some questions unanswered. For example, the figure on the fourth wall has in earlier studies been identified as either the figure of Ceres – on account of the fruit and grain she is holding –, a representation of the Eucharist, or as a depiction of Galeazzo's youthful bride Paola Gonzaga, in an allegorical portrait probably celebrating her youthfulness and fertility. Although his profound study upon the source of the cycle seems to call for it, Thimann does not tackle this problem anew; it is merely stated that neither of these options can be completely true. Given his preliminary remarks about the absence of marital significance of the room in itself, its use by Paola Gonzaga, or its function as the site for funeral rituals, this would require some sort of new explanation. Besides, the identification with Ceres proposed by other authors and implicitly accepted by Thimann on account of the fruit and cereals she shows the beholder, is not further investigated, or related to the rest of the cycle.

The same goes for the *putti* in the pergola; in the explanation offered here these do not seem to have any more meaning than expressing the playfulness of mythology. This surprises, as other studies on Fontanellato did try to allocate a significance to these compositional elements, and moreover, the *putto* in art is being more and more recognised as a meaningful element, whether a recreation of the antique, or as a reference to the game of love, for example<sup>5</sup>. However convincing his discussion of Parmigianino's Ovidian illustrations may seem to be, the book does not arrive at a coherent interpretation of the room as a whole.

The main reason for the partial conclusion arrived at by Thimann might be sought in his very focus on the Ovidian literary reception and its translation into paint from early Christian times until 1600, with a special emphasis on the Renaissance era.

5 Examples of studies on this subject are ANTHONY COLANTUONO: Titian's Tender Infants. On the imitation of Venetian Painting in Baroque Rome, in: *I Tatti Studies – Essays in the Renaissance* 3, 1989, pp. 207–234; IDEM: Scherzo. Hidden Meaning, Genre, and Generic Criticism in Bellori's Lives, in: *Art History in the Age of Bellori. Scholarship and Cultural Politics in Seventeenth-Century Rome*; Cambridge 2002, pp. 239–256; JULIA K. DABBS: Not a mere child's play: Jacques Stella's Jeux et plaisirs de l'enfance, in: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 125, 1995, pp. 151–157; ECKHARD LEUSCHNER: Persona, Larva, Maske. Ikonologische Studien zum 16. bis frühen 18. Jahrhundert; Frankfurt 1997; and CHARLES DEMPSEY: *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*; Chapel Hill/London 2002.

For Ovid was not the only author treating this particular subject or consulted by painters, as Thimann himself also rightly points out. Neither is there one single source for the tale of Actaeon; there are a number of different versions, ranging from an Actaeon as son of the Theban king Aristaios, Actaeon courting Artemis in the temple dedicated to her, and the most familiar one as told by Ovid, to the interesting tale in which the protagonist is told to have been raised by the centaur Chiron, who after the youth's death makes a statue in his likeness to soothe his dogs who are mourning over the loss of their master<sup>6</sup>. So, the Ovidian fable might have inspired Parmigianino, but other – earlier – sources might have provided ideas and details as well, which could explain the function of the Paola/Ceres figure, or the *putti*. In recompense, the first half of the book provides interesting insights into the reception of mythological tales in early modern painting, and the manifold discussions existing on the subject during the early sixteenth century. This provides a theoretical context in which to understand not only Parmigianino's frescoes, but also other cycles with mythological subjects. By conscientiously remaining with the Ovidian origin of the tale of Actaeon and the boundaries of the literary genre, Thimann has successfully shown that previous studies suffered from over-interpretation and did not pay enough attention to the literary sources themselves, and the practice of adapting these fables into paint.

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<sup>6</sup> *Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, vol. I; Stuttgart 1996, col. 414; see also ERIC M. MOORMANN/WILFRIED UITTERHOEVE: *Lexikon der antiken Gestalten mit ihrem Fortleben in Kunst, Dichtung und Musik*, Stuttgart 1995, pp. 29 ff.

**Margit Kern: Tugend versus Gnade.** Protestantische Bildprogramme in Nürnberg, Pirna, Regensburg und Ulm (*Berliner Schriften zur Kunst*, 16); Berlin: Gebr. Mann 2002; 492 S.; 88 SW-Abb.; ISBN 3-7861-2391-8; € 74,50

Ein Forschungsprojekt, das (auch) von der Tugend der Prudentia handelt, läßt viel erwarten. Und in der Tat handelt es sich bei der vorliegenden Studie, die aus einer 1998 an der FU Berlin eingereichten Dissertation der Autorin hervorgegangen ist, um eine kluge Untersuchung, die sich mit einem Problem des Reformationszeitalters befaßt, das bislang in der kunsthistorischen Forschung in dieser Form noch nicht behandelt worden ist: der Frage, welche Auswirkungen die reformatorische Ethik auf die Entwicklung von bildlichen Tugendprogrammen hatte. Martin Luther hatte nicht nur explizit die heidnische Tugendenlehre verworfen, sondern auch durch die von ihm vertretene Rechtfertigungslehre und die darin enthaltene Ablehnung der Werkgerechtigkeit der Bedeutung einer tugendhaften Lebensführung den Boden entzogen. Eigentlich sollte dies einen Rückgang von Bildprogrammen mit moralischem Impetus erwarten lassen; doch ist, wie die Autorin zeigt, genau das Gegenteil der Fall: Gerade das nachlutherische 16. Jahrhundert hat Tugendprogramme in großem Umfang her-