

Sabine Eiche: FEDERICO ZUCCARI AND FEDERICO BAROCCI AT LORETO AND URBINO

By the 1580s, the decoration of the Duomo in Urbino and of the ducal chapel at Loreto, had become pressing concerns for Francesco Maria II della Rovere, 6th and last Duke of Urbino. Both undertakings are well documented, and the material has been published by scholars of Federico Zuccari and Federico Barocci, the two most important artists engaged on these commissions.¹

Nonetheless, in all these accounts, one brief passage in a contemporary letter seems to have been overlooked. While the new document does not alter the existing history of the projects, it does fill a blank space in the chronology of work at the Urbino Cathedral, and serves to intensify a little the light on the artistic situation at the court where, in the words of the Archbishop Antonio Giannotti, though there had always been first-rate painters, *tanti altri luoghi si ornino delle opre loro, et qua, per modo di dire, non si veda pur una linea.*²

Federico Zuccari, a native of S. Angelo in Vado in the Duchy of Urbino, was working on the decorations of the Cappella Paolina in the Vatican when, late in 1581, he was excommunicated. Zuccari fled to Venice where he was commissioned to paint in the Doge's Palace, which occupied him for most of 1582. In the summer of that year the Duke of Urbino's minister at Rome, Baldo Falcucci, succeeded in winning a pardon for Zuccari from the Pope, which would allow him to return to the Papal States, or more to the point, to begin work in the ducal chapel at Loreto. Zuccari came to Pesaro from Venice at the beginning of November, and decided to stay for a while since he was still apprehensive of going on to Loreto.

Just at that time the *Consiglieri della Cappella del SS.mo Sacramento* of the Cathedral of Urbino called a meeting to decide on the issue of decorating their church. The Archbishop suggested, as he repeated in a letter to the Duke, that they should take advantage of Zuccari's presence at the court, and en-



1 Federico Zuccari, Vault of the chapel of Francesco Maria della Rovere. Loreto, Basilica della Santa Casa.



2 Federico Barocci, *The Last Supper*. Urbino, Cathedral.

gage his services. The artist was agreeable, and indicated that he would be interested in painting the choir area. The Archbishop intimated that the *consiglieri* were hopeful of commissioning Barocci to do something as well.³

The following month Federico Zuccari, his fears overcome, had turned his attention towards the chapel at Loreto (Fig. 1). He worked there steadily, it seems, until April 1583, when he briefly went down to Rome to thank the Pope for his pardon. By May he was back in Loreto, departing finally in December to re-enter the employment of the Pope.⁴

No more is heard of Zuccari's earlier interest in painting at the Cathedral of Urbino. Gronau concluded that, in fact, nothing had been resolved by the meeting of the *consiglieri* in November 1582, since it was not until four years later that work was in progress. The document I have found touches upon this matter. In a letter of 1 May 1583 to the Duke of Urbino, the Archbishop reveals that Francesco Maria himself may have caused a delay, and ultimately cancelled Zuccari's intervention, because he had been dissatisfied with the proposed project: *Di mes. Fedevico Zuccaro non ho poi inteso altro, et dubito, che non si possa far molto fondamento nelle sue parole, et V.A. considera benissimo che il dipingere quella parte sola del Choro non havrebbe del buono.*⁵

The letter continues to discuss the Duke's other favourite artist: *Mes. Federico Barocci andò a Ravenna à metter su quella bella tavola, a reference to the *Martyrdom of S. Vitalis*, painted for the Cassinese of S. Vitale in Ravenna.*⁶ It is interesting to note that Barocci came along to personally supervise its collocation on the altar.

The Archbishop's next pronouncement will have struck the Duke of Urbino much as it must have affected Giannotti himself: *Et quei Padri lo voglion poi condurre a Venetia*. If Barocci were to accept a commission in Venice, it would be yet another instance of foreigners monopolizing local talent, a situation repeatedly lamented by the Archbishop, and underlined in his concluding sentence: *Se potesimo applicarlo all'opra della Capella del Corpus Domini, quella sarebbe l'impresa degna, non potendosi più tollerare quel luogo tanto principale così negletto*.

We do not know where, in Venice, the Cassinese monks had wanted Barocci to paint, but it may have been in S. Giorgio Maggiore, the most illustrious of their churches in the lagoon city.⁷ In any event, it appears that their plans were not realized. The Duke and the Archbishop, on the other hand, were finally appeased: Barocci applied himself, and in the following decade painted *The Last Supper*, which still glorifies the Cappella del SS. Sacramento of the Duomo in Urbino (Fig. 2).⁸

NOTES

¹ For Federico Zuccari and Loreto the most sound studies still are two by *A. Rustici*, Federico Zuccari, in: *Rassegna Marchigiana* I, 1922-23, pp. 405-429; *idem*, Gli affreschi di Federico Zuccari a Loreto, in: *Rassegna Marchigiana* II, 1923-24, pp. 133-144. Many of the documents were published by *G. Gaye*, *Carteggio* III, pp. 453 ff.; see also *G. Gronau*, *Documenti artistici urbinati*, Florence 1936, pp. 34, 214 doc. CCCXIX. Useful, too, is *W. Körte*, *Der Palazzo Zuccari in Rom*, Leipzig 1935, pp. 75-76. On Barocci's work at Loreto see *R. H. Krommes*, *Studien zu Federigo Barocci*, Leipzig 1912, p. 79; *Gronau*, op. cit., p. 154; *H. Olsen*, *Federico Barocci*, Copenhagen 1962, pp. 177-179; *A. Emiliani*, *Mostra di Federico Barocci*, Bologna 1975, pp. 140-142. For the Cathedral of Urbino see *Gronau*, op. cit., pp. 30, 165-172, in particular doc. CCXIX for Federico Zuccari; *Olsen*, op. cit., pp. 199-203; *Emiliani*, op. cit., pp. 196-199.

² *Gronau* (n. 1), p. 166.

³ The letter is published by *Gronau* (n. 1), pp. 165-166.

⁴ In the ASF, Urbino Cl. III, Filza 23, is an account book of Francesco Maria II, with various entries relevant to Zuccari's work at Loreto. Gronau had passed the information on to *Krommes* ([n. 1], p. 79), who extracted the references to Barocci and summarized the rest.

The entries are on c. 696, under the year 1583:

Al Zuccaro à buonconto dei 500 [February/March]	50
Al med.o per colori [February/March]	40
Al Zuccaro [between April and July]	200
Per il mattonato della Cappella di Loreto [between April and July]	25
A maestro Lattanzio [Ventura] per finir la Capella di Loreto [between April and July]	122
Al Baroccio, di Luglio per l'Annuntiata	50
Al Zuccaro per saldo di 549 scudi per la capella di Loreto	229

⁵ ASF, Urbino Cl. I, Div. G, Filza 256, c. 234-34 v.

⁶ *S. Muratori*, *Il Martirio di San Vitale del Barocci*: notizie, documenti, aneddoti, in: *Felix Ravenna* V, 1912, pp. 244-259; *Olsen* (n. 1), pp. 27, 172-175; *Emiliani* (n. 1), pp. 129-132.

⁷ S. Giorgio Maggiore has belonged to the Cassinese since 1429; see *P. Schmitz*, *Geschichte des Benediktinerordens*, vol. 4, Einsiedeln 1960, p. 139. Another Cassinese foundation in Venice is S. Niccolò di Lido.

⁸ *Gronau* (n. 1), pp. 165-172; *Olsen* (n. 1), pp. 199-203; *Emiliani* (n. 1), pp. 196-199.

I take this occasion to publish another letter regarding the Cappella del SS. Sacramento. Although it does not concern Barocci, it reports on the progress of work in decorating the chapel, and reveals that there was an attempt to engage the services of the sculptor, Marcello Sparzo. The letter is in the ASF, Urbino, Cl. I, Div. G, Filza 278, c. 575; it is dated 18 February 1594, and directed by the *Preposito* of Urbino to Camillo Peruzzi: *È finita la porta, quanto alle pietre, alla Capella del S.mo Sacramento nell'Arcivescovado, e per un poco più d'ornamento, e per accompagnatura del resto dell'opra si disegna da questi Consiglieri di farvi fare alcune figure di stucco nel frontispitio di essa, con l'occasione massimamente d'un maestro Marcello Spartio c'hora fa l'ornamento al Nome di Dio in S. Domenico, il qual n'ha già dato un disegno, com'ha fatto un'altro ancora, e promette di sbrigarne presto. Ma non si è voluto dar principio prima che si senta la mente di S.A. Ser.ma. Però hanno voluto ch'io preghi V.S. M.to Rever. com'hora faccio, che si degni con quell'occasione che le parerà di favlane motto, e d'avisarne poi quella che si debba fare. E parendo a V.S. che si debbano mandar' i detti disegni, me l'avisì che si mandaranno subito.*

N.B. in both Urbino and Pesaro the Cathedral was also referred to as the *Vescovado* or *Arcivescovado*. See, for instance, the description of the wedding in 1475 of Costanzo Sforza and Camilla d'Aragona, in *Biblioteca Vaticana*, ms. Urb. lat. 899 and Florence, Riccardiana, ms. 2256, the latter version published by M. Tabarrini, Florence 1870, p. 13. See also an account of Julius II's entry into Pesaro, in *Biblioteca Vaticana*, ms. Urb. lat. 904, on c. 18: *S. S.ta passò nella piazza et andò al Vescovato dove all'altar' grande diede la beneditione al populo.*