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SILVIO ANTONIANO AND THE PAINTED DECORATION
OF THE VILLA BELVEDERE AT FRASCATI

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In the autumn of 1601 Cardinal Silvio Antoniano was asked by Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, nephew of Clement VIII, to provide ideas for the decoration of the *piano nobile* of his newly built Villa Belvedere at Frascati. Antoniano responded with a lengthy proposal dated 6 October, which has long been known.¹ This document deserves further consideration, however, since it not only provides insights into attitudes to decorum in the decoration of ecclesiastical villas after the Council of Trent, but is also highly informative about the ways in which iconographic programmes were constructed in the sixteenth century.

The Villa Belvedere was built on the site of an earlier villa, the new work starting in 1601 on a design by Giacomo della Porta.² The building proceeded remarkably rapidly, and by the following year several rooms were ready for decoration (fig. 1). The commission was given to one of the Aldobrandini family's favourite artists, Giuseppe Cesari, the Cavaliere d'Arpino. At this time he was one of the most fashionable and successful artists working in Rome. He enjoyed the effective status of official papal painter, and had been and would continue to be employed by Clement for his major ecclesiastical schemes such as the decoration of the Lateran transept and the dome of St Peter's. His close relationship with the pope is vividly exemplified in an anecdote related by Carel van Mander, in which he describes an occasion when Giuseppe rejected a glass of Dutch beer, which Clement had offered him, without causing offence.³ Cardi-

nal Pietro evidently shared his uncle's artistic taste, and had already employed the Cavaliere on commissions for chapel decorations in Santa Maria in Via and in Santa Maria in Traspontina.⁴

Cardinal Antoniano (1540–1603) was well qualified to advise Pietro on his scheme.⁵ A child prodigy, he was known as “il poetino” because of his skills in improvising song and verse. He was adopted into elite Roman literary circles, and was a protégé of, amongst others, Annibale Caro, the poet and celebrated creator of iconographic programmes.⁶ On one occasion Caro wrote to his pupil, suggesting ways of organising collections of ancient coins for iconographic purposes.⁷ Subsequently he studied at the cultivated Este court in Ferrara. On his return to Rome, he began his ecclesiastical career, as a protégé of Pius IV, whose pontificate he had famously predicted, and became secretary to Carlo Borromeo. From the mid-1560s, he became ever more spiritual, and became a noted associate of Filippo Neri, and his Oratory. This association was so significant that Giovanni Francesco Bordini, who was Clement VIII's confessor, noted shortly after his elevation to the papacy that “Signor Silvio will always be our agent with his holiness”.⁸ Antoniano was as a result in direct contact with the great ecclesiastical historian Cesare Baronio, whose monumental *Annales ecclesiastici* he edited. He was thus very close to some of the most significant figures who influenced Counter-Reformation debates on the visual arts.

Silvio was phenomenally learned about poetry (he was a harsh critic of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, and seems in his later years to have rejected the humanist values of the Ferrarese court in favour of a strictly post-Tridentine morality), and also about rhetoric, ecclesiastical history and theo-

¹ For the text of the proposal, see Appendix. It was discussed in the entry by P. Guerrini and published in ed. A. Tantillo Mignosi, *Villa e paese. Dimore nobili del Tuscolo e di Marino*, Rome 1980, pp. 168f., and 175f. The document was also partially quoted in K. Schwager, “Kardinal Pietro Aldobrandinis Villa di Belvedere in Frascati”, *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 9/10 (1961–2), pp. 315f.; C. D'Onofrio, *La Villa Aldobrandini di Frascati*, Rome 1963, p. 53; J. Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600. Christian Concord in Counter-Reformation Rome*, Cambridge 1995, p. 162. The proposal itself is not dated, but in the archive it is accompanied by a letter of 6 October, which surely refers to it.

² For the history of the building, see Schwager, *op. cit.*; D'Onofrio, *op. cit.*; H. Hibbard, *Carlo Maderno*, ed. A. Scotti Tosini, Milan 2001 (originally published as *Carlo Maderno and Roman Architecture 1580–1630*, London 1971), pp. 60–63 and 164–71; T. Ehrlich, *Landscape and Identity in Early Modern Rome. Villa Culture at Frascati in the Borghese Era*, Cambridge 2002, pp. 78–106.

³ C. Van Mander, *Het Schilder Boeck*, Amsterdam 1618, p. 114, cit. H. Röttgen, *Il Cavalier d'Arpino. Un grande pittore nello splendore della fama e nell'incostanza della fortuna*, Rome 2002, p. 42.

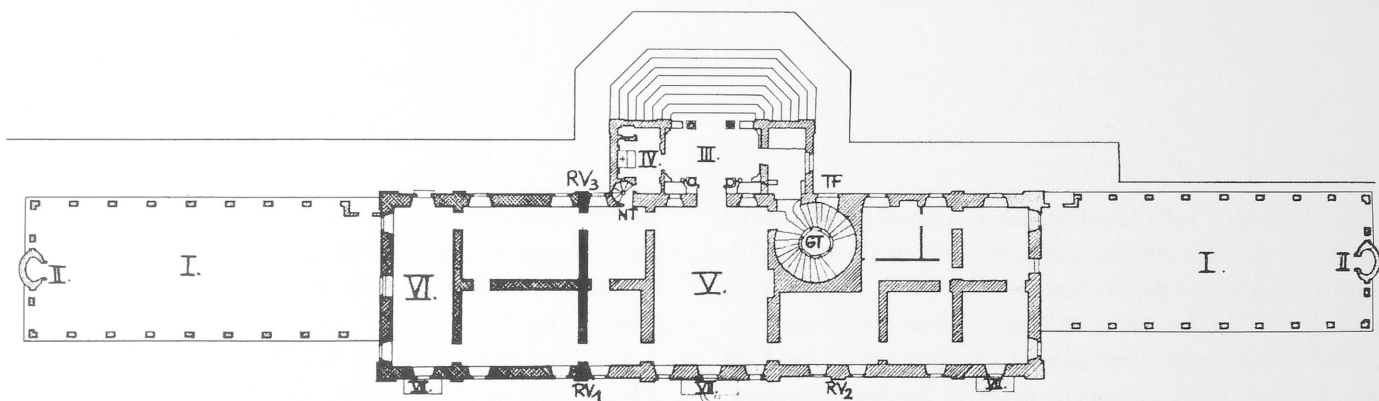
⁴ Röttgen, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–42 and 87.

⁵ For Antoniano, see G. Castiglione, *Silvii Antoniani S. R. E. cardinalis vita . . .*, Rome 1610; P. Prodi in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, s.v.; V. Frajese, *Il popolo fanciullo. Silvio Antoniano e il sistema disciplinare della controriforma*, Milan 1987.

⁶ For Caro, see C. Robertson, “Annibal Caro as Iconographer: Sources and Method”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 45 (1982), pp. 160–81.

⁷ Letter of 25 October 1551. A. Caro, *Lettere familiari*, ed. A. Greco, Florence 1957–61, II, no. 374.

⁸ L. Ponnelle and L. Bourdet, *San Filippo Neri e la società romana del suo tempo (1515–1595)*, tr. T. Casini, Florence 1986, p. 453 (originally published as *Saint Philippe Neri et la société romaine de son temps (1515–1595)*, Paris 1928).



1. Ground plan of the piano nobile of the Villa Belvedere (from Schwager, 1961–2, 318 B)

logy. As a result, he was frequently consulted on the iconography for a number of important schemes for Sixtus V, such as those for the Vatican Library and the Cappella Sistina at Santa Maria Maggiore.⁹ Thanks to his association with Filippo Neri, he regularly preached at the Oratory, and founded a burial chapel in the Chiesa Nuova, with an altarpiece of the Nativity by Durante Alberti.¹⁰ His associations with the Order, and his devotion to the Nativity, would have endeared him to Clement VIII, who made him his *maestro di camera* in 1592, and his Secretary of Briefs the following year, eventually raising him to the cardinalate in 1599.¹¹ It has been plausibly suggested that Silvio was employed as iconographic adviser on one of Clement's most important projects, the decoration of the transept of the Lateran.¹² Finally, Antoniano was asked by Cardinal Pietro to work on another aspect of the Villa Belvedere at the same time as he was considering the decoration of the interior. He made var-

ious written suggestions for the inscription to adorn the façade.¹³ In making them he was characteristically self-deprecating. He wrote, "The will to serve is good, the workshop poor. May the patron's kindness accept the one, and excuse the other".¹⁴

Antoniano was thoroughly familiar with contemporary debates on the uses of images. As mentioned, he had been a familiar of Carlo Borromeo, during the reign of Pius IV, and was surely aware of his important treatise on ecclesiastical art and architecture, the *Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesiasticae* of 1577.¹⁵ He was certainly acquainted with the influential writings of the reforming bishop of Bologna and fellow Oratorian, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti.¹⁶ Paleotti's ambitious treatise, the *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane*, of which only the first two volumes were completed, was intended to address all kinds of artistic subject matter, both religious and secular.¹⁷ Building on

⁹ S. Ostrow, *Art and Spirituality in Counter-Reformation Rome. The Sistine and Pauline Chapels in Santa Maria Maggiore*, Cambridge 1996, pp. 113–17.

¹⁰ Ponnelle and Bourdet, op. cit., p. 352 f.; E. Strong, *La Chiesa Nuova*, Rome 1923, pp. 96–97; J. Hess, "Contributi alla storia della Chiesa Nuova (Santa Maria in Vallicella)" in *Kunstgeschichtliche Studien zu Renaissance und Barock*, vol. 1, Rome 1967, p. 363.

¹¹ L. von Pastor, *History of the Popes*, tr. R. F. Kerr, vol. 23, London 1933, pp. 36–38.

¹² Freiberg, op. cit., n. 1 above, p. 162. Other scholars have proposed that Baronio was responsible for the Lateran scheme: C. W. Kirwin, *Christofano Roncalli (1551/2–1626). An exponent of the Proto-Baroque: His Activity through 1605*, Ph. Diss., Stanford University 1972, p. 156; S. Maciocco, *Undique splendent. Aspetti della pittura sacra nella Roma di Clemente VIII Aldobrandini (1592–1605)*, Rome 1990, p. 104.

¹³ Frascati, *Archivio Aldobrandini, Villa Belvedere*, vol. 12, fasc. 5, partly published in D'Onofrio, op. cit., n. 1 above, p. 54, n. 2. The document is not dated, but is grouped with two other documents, proposing sugges-

tions for the inscription, one of which is dated 1601. The others, according to D'Onofrio, op. cit. n. 1 above, p. 121, n. 2, are in Agucchi's hand.

¹⁴ "La volontà di servire è buona, la bottega è povera, la benignità del Padrone accetti l'una e scusi l'altra". D'Onofrio, loc. cit.

¹⁵ C. Borromeo, *Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesiasticae*, Milan 1577, in ed. P. Barocchi, *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento*, vol. 3, Bari 1960–62, pp. 3–113.

¹⁶ P. Prodi, *Ricerche sulla teorica delle arti figurative nella Riforma Cattolica*, Bologna 1984, pp. 63–65 and 91–93 (originally published in *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà*, 4 (1965), pp. 123–212); Ostrow, op. cit. n. 9 above, p. 117.

¹⁷ G. Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane*, Bologna 1982, in ed. P. Barocchi, op. cit. n. 15 above, vol. 2, pp. 117–509. For a recent discussion of Paleotti's artistic theory, see P. M. Jones, "Art History as Ideology: Gabriele Paleotti's Hierarchical Notion of Painting's Universality and Reception", in ed. C. Farago, *Reframing the Renaissance*, New Haven and London 1995, pp. 127–39.

the rather vague instructions of the Council of Trent on art, the treatise offered a robust defence of the use of images, and was particularly concerned with decorum. Antoniano did not always see eye to eye with Paleotti on artistic matters. He successfully led the rejection by many of the Cardinals, and probably by Clement VIII himself, of Paleotti's proposal of 1596 to set up an Index of images, comparable to that for books.¹⁸ However, he clearly respected Paleotti's authority on art. On one occasion, some years earlier in 1583, he had been asked to consult Paleotti on the correct iconography for an altarpiece of the Annunciation by Scipione Pulzone, intended for San Silvestro al Quirinale, a church with which Clement VIII was closely associated.¹⁹

Silvio stresses in his letter about the Villa Belvedere that this was very much a first draft, a sequence of ideas for the patron and artist to discuss. In this respect, it differs from the celebrated programmes for frescoes by figures such as Caro or Vincenzo Borghini, which are highly polished and elaborate prescriptions for the artist, based on full consideration of the available spaces in a room, their formats and dimensions. Antoniano's letter offers a rare chance to observe the preliminary stages which led up to the full programme. At this point it had not even been decided how many rooms would be decorated. Silvio mentions "seven or eight". The number of rooms proposed suggests that at this stage Pietro was contemplating the decoration of only one apartment in the villa.²⁰ However, Antoniano hints that there had been some discussion of further decoration, involving "the glorious actions of His Holiness", presumably a cycle celebrating Clement VIII.²¹ An obvious parallel, of which we can be sure Pietro was aware, was the Villa Farnese at Caprarola, with its Anticamera del Concilio dedicated to Paul III, and the Sala dei Fasti Farnesiani dedicated to the rest of the family. Pietro's desire to compete with the finest villas of Italy, including Caprarola, which he had visited in 1597, is well known.²²

Antoniano offers patron and artist a variety of types of subject, with examples, and stresses the need for discussion, claiming ironically that his suggestions represented a modest proposal: "This text, which is like a hodge-podge and a

Spanish stew, was written in obedience to whom it is owed, and to serve as entertainment to the patron and to the ingenious painter, who – one with greater inclination and the other better able to explain the excellence of his art – consult together, considering the area, the location of the villa, its lord, the nobility of the structure and other circumstances. And when these two, that is the patron and the painter, agree on some details of the many that have been proposed, then with study, books and discussions with learned people, they seek to give some form and polish to those things roughly blocked out. Meanwhile it will do no harm to preserve this text, such as it is, because he who has sketched it out has little intelligence and does not know how to unravel this muddle any further."²³

In fact, Antoniano's *invenzioni* are remarkably wide-ranging. He begins by classifying four different types of subject matter. These are "divine", "natural", "moral" and "fabulous". Of these, the first three are regarded as "true", while the "fabulous", "although they are false, have some connection and relation to the true".²⁴ This suggests that Antoniano was aware of another Counter-Reformation treatise on art, that of Giovanni Andrea Gilio, who drew a distinction between true, i.e. religious, painting and the fabulous, in which the painter created "poetic fictions".²⁵ Antoniano goes on to give a series of examples of each category, usually about seven, appropriately for the number of rooms planned, though it is clear that there is scope for extending the list in every case. After listing possible subjects, he then discusses which particular episodes from a person's life should be represented, sometimes giving alternatives. For example, he lists the characters who represent the seven ages of the Biblical world – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Judas Maccabaeus, and Christ. He goes on to suggest specific scenes. "These people should be represented with some of their well known attributes, such as Adam in Paradise, Noah with the Ark, Abraham's sacrifice, Moses on the mountain, when he received the law, or when he saw the burning bush, David's fight with the Philistine, etc."²⁶

¹⁸ Prodi, op. cit. n. 16 above, 78–84

¹⁹ Prodi, loc. cit. n. 16 above. The altarpiece is illustrated in F. Zeri, *Pittura e Controriforma. L' "arte senza tempo" di Scipione da Gaeta*, Turin 1957, fig. 17. For a useful discussion of this episode, see S.F. Ostrow, in ed. M. B. Hall, *Artistic Centres of the Italian Renaissance. Rome*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 277 f.

²⁰ For a ground plan of the piano nobile, see fig. 1.

²¹ Appendix § 11.

²² D'Onofrio, op. cit. n. 1 above, p. 67. For Pietro's visit to Caprarola, see J.A.F. Orbaan, *Documenti sul barocco romano*, Rome 1920, pp. 455–86.

²³ Appendix § 25. This passage is quoted in Schwager, op. cit. n. 1 above, 315 f., and Freiberg, op. cit. n. 1 above, 162. I have slightly modified Freiberg's translation. Antoniano's metaphor of unravelling a skein recalls that used by Vincenzo Borghini of his programme for the Medici wedding of 1565: R. Scorza, "Vincenzo Borghini and Invenzione: The Florentine Apparato of 1565", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 44 (1981), p. 59.

²⁴ Appendix § 1.

²⁵ G.A. Gilio, *Due dialoghi di M. Giovanni Andrea Gilio*, Camerino 1564, in ed. Barocchi, op. cit. n. 14 above, vol. 2, pp. 1–115. Gilio has a third category of "mixed" painting which combines the two approaches.

²⁶ Appendix § 5–6.

Religious subjects (“cose divine”) inevitably receive more attention than the other categories on the grounds of decorum. Antoniano expresses a Counter-Reformation sense of what is appropriate decoration, when he writes, “And certainly in my opinion, in the house of Christian princes and ecclesiastics I believe that Christian and ecclesiastical subjects are very good”.²⁷ He was not short of ideas. Apart from the figures representing the Biblical ages, he proposes a series of scenes showing the creation of the world including the animals and birds and, of course, man.²⁸ Another possibility was subjects from Genesis beginning with Adam and Eve in Paradise. Several of the Genesis episodes that he proposes are very rarely depicted in Renaissance cycles. Thus he specifies the sacrifice of Abel (*Gen.* 4, 3–4),²⁹ the translation of Enoch (*Gen.*, 5, 22–4), and the “not fabulous giants” (*Gen.* 6, 4).³⁰ He also mentions other Old Testament figures, such as Samson, Solomon and some famous women such as Judith and Esther. A further alternative that Antoniano suggests is hermit saints. He concludes his discussion of religious iconography by commenting on the richness of the Old and New Testaments as a source of “beautiful *historie*, which cannot fail to provide material to the skilful painter”.³¹ In this statement his attitude is in marked contrast with that of Paleotti in the mid-1590s, who considered that painters could not be trusted with responsibility for religious *invenzione*, and should have to defer to learned ecclesiastics.³²

Nature too was regarded as a source of “copious invention”, including subjects such as the planets, the seasons, times of day.³³ Another type of image, which would have been particularly felicitous in a villa, is various forms of hunting and other countryside pursuits. As Antoniano writes, “There are things which are part natural and part artificial, which might make a beautiful sight, and will give appropriate names to the rooms, such as hunting, repre-

senting various animal hunts, fishing, bird-catching agriculture, divided into the culture of crops, vines and olives, pastoral crafts, divided into flocks, herds, bee-keeping, horse breeding, vegetable and fruit gardens.”³⁴

This recalls the series of tapestries designed by Giovanni Stradano for the Villa Medici at Poggio a Caiano, which were based on a treatise on hunting.³⁵ It also brings to mind the four sets of Flemish tapestries showing figures in a wooded landscape, which are recorded in the vast inventory of the Cardinal’s possessions, drawn up in 1603 by Pietro’s majordomo, and celebrated expert on art, Giovanni Battista Agucchi and the *Guardarobba*, D. Bernardino Lupi.³⁶ These would have provided a very appropriate wall covering in a villa.³⁷

Economic and political affairs also fall under the category of nature, with suggestions for the representation of villages or cities, with various professions, such as priests, judges, soldiers and so on depicted, though this does not seem a particularly apt type of subject for a villa. Antoniano’s last series of natural subjects is the seven ages of man. This section appears in part to reflect his views in his most celebrated work, *Dell’educazione cristiana e politica dei figliuoli* (Verona, 1584).³⁸

²⁷ Appendix § 11.

²⁸ In the 1603 inventory of Pietro’s possessions, drawn up by Agucchi (below, n. 36), amongst the musical instruments listed, there is a cembalo decorated with the ‘Creation of the world’: published in F. Hammond, “Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, Patron of Music”, *Studi musicali*, 12 (1983), p. 65, doc. 2.

²⁹ This had been depicted in one of the lunettes of the volta dorata at the Cancelleria: C.L. Frommel, *Baldassare Peruzzi als Maler und Zeichner*, Wien u. München 1967–8, p. 94; J. Kliemann and M. Rohlmann, *Italian Frescoes. High Renaissance and Mannerism 1510–1600*, New York 2004, p. 10. Another example is in the portico of the Casino of Pius IV: G. Smith, *The Casino of Pius IV*, Princeton 1977, p. 80. It was also represented in one of the monochrome scenes of sacrifice in Gregory XIII’s Galleria delle Carte Geografiche: L. Gambi and A. Pinelli (eds.), *La Galleria delle Carte Geografiche*, Modena 1994, *Atlante*, p. 469.

³⁰ Appendix § 4.

³¹ Appendix § 11.

³² O. Mansour, *Offensive Images: Censure and Censorship in Rome under Clement VIII, 1592–1605*, Ph. D. diss., University of London, Courtauld Institute of Art 2004, p. 276f.

³³ Appendix § 12.

³⁴ Appendix § 12.

³⁵ For these, see L. Meoni, *Gli arazzi nei musei fiorentini. La collezione medicea. Catalogo completo, I. La manifattura da Cosimo I a Cosimo II (1545–1621)*, Livorno 1998, pp. 210–23. Two paintings by Vasari of Fishermen (G. Briganti in *Walpole Gallery, London, Treasures of Italian Art*, 1988, pp. 20–23, no. 6) and its pendant of Bird-catchers (Great Britain, private collection) may also have been associated with this project: L. Corti, *Vasari. Catalogo completo dei dipinti*, Florence 1989, p. 113, no. 91.

³⁶ Archivio Aldobrandini, Frascati, *Inventario generale della casa dell’Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Signore Pietro Cardinale Aldobrandino, Camerlengo di Santa Chiesa, et de’ beni et cose appartenenti a Sua Signoria Illustrissima revisto, accomodato et ridotti in questo libro nel principio dell’anno MDCIII. Monsignore Agocchij Maggiordomo et D. Bernardino Lupi Guardarobba* (hereafter *Inventario*). For the inventory, see D’Onofrio, op. cit. n. 1 above, fig. 9. The part relating to the paintings in Pietro’s collection, which retains Agucchi’s numbering was published by D’Onofrio: “Inventario dei dipinti del cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini compilato da G.B. Agucchi nel 1603”, *Palatino*, 8 (1964), pp. 15–20, 158–62 and 202–11. For the part relating to the musical instruments, see above, n. 28. The short section on Pietro’s medal collection was published in X. Salomon, “‘Hoc virtutis opus’. Antonio Felice Casoni’s medal of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini”, *The Medal*, 43 (2003), pp. 15–17.

Three sets of tapestries “à boscaglia con figure” or “à figure et boscaglia” are recorded in *Inventario*, fol. 245, and another similar set at fol. 247.

³⁷ Cf. below, p. 000.

³⁸ Appendix § 13–17.

Next Silvio turns to “moral” subjects, that is allegorical ones. He is unenthusiastic about the Cardinal and Theological Virtues, on the grounds that these are “very ordinary and all represented as women, which seems too unified”. If one must depict such common subjects, he argues, one should help the painter “. . . with some new invention, not just in the figure itself, but in other things around. For example Prudence is represented with a serpent, but one could show her with three eyes, if it did not appear monstrous, because Prudence considers the present, the past and the future. Fortitude is depicted with a column, but a lion would be good at her feet, and one could make her armed in the manner of Pallas.”³⁹

Such an inventive attitude to allegory, stressing the need for variety and novelty, is revealing in the context of Aldobrandini patronage. Cesare Ripa, the celebrated author of the *Iconologia*, which would become the standard manual for depictions of allegorical figures during the Seicento, was an associate of Cardinal Pietro’s cousin, Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini. Significantly, Ripa had been involved in devising the numerous allegorical figures for Clement VIII’s most important secular commission, the decoration by the Alberti brothers of the Sala Clementina in the Vatican palace.⁴⁰ Antoniano’s monstrous Prudence was not adopted by Ripa in his expanded edition of the *Iconologia* published in 1603.⁴¹ But he does entertain the possibility that Minerva as *Sapienza* could be represented with three heads.⁴² Moreover, Silvio’s version of Fortezza bears some similarities to one described by Ripa there, suggesting the possibility that the two men might have discussed allegorical imagery in Clement’s court.⁴³ Unfortunately, biographical information on Ripa is so scarce that this idea remains hypothetical.

Other moral subjects suggested by Antoniano are the sciences and liberal arts, which include Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, or the Muses. Here Silvio draws attention to Raphael’s representations of the Muses, presumably in the Parnassus in the Stanza della Segnatura, suggesting that one should look at the way that he and other *valenthuomini* had represented them, and “benefit them with some device of modern invention”.⁴⁴

Antoniano’s last category is the “fabulous”, which includes not just mythology but, surprisingly, Roman history. Of mythology he remarks that Ovid is the *maestro*. It may be significant that Ovid was used as a source for subsequent decoration in the Villa Belvedere. The subjects for Domenichino’s fresco cycle in the Sala d’Apollo, executed in 1616–18, were almost entirely based on Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.⁴⁵ It may not be a coincidence that two of the subjects listed as examples by Antoniano were represented there, the ‘Judgement of Midas’, and the ‘Flaying of Marsyas’, neither of which are particularly commonly illustrated subjects. Moreover, Antoniano mentions ‘Atlas bearing the globe’, the subject of the central part of the *teatro delle acque* behind the villa.⁴⁶ In listing subjects from the early history of Rome, Antoniano appears to be suggesting episodes, which again might have seemed more appropriate for a palace than a villa.⁴⁷ It is perhaps not entirely surprising, given Antoniano’s reservations, that subjects from Tasso were not included in this category, despite the fact that the poet was a close associate of the Aldobrandini, especially Cardinal Cinzio, and the increasing popularity of subjects from Tasso at this time, notably with the Carracci.⁴⁸

Throughout the letter Antoniano emphasises the need to provide the painter with material to fuel his creative invention. The surviving programmes of Caro and Borghini can appear very prescriptive towards the artist, but we should perhaps bear in mind that they are likely to have been the outcome of just the sort of debate which Antoniano recom-

³⁹ Appendix § 18–19.

⁴⁰ C. L. C. E. Witcombe, “Cesare Ripa and the Sala Clementina”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 55 (1992), pp. 277–82. For Ripa’s methods, see E. Mandowsky, *Ricerche intorno all’Iconologia di Cesare Ripa*, Florence 1939; G. Werner, *Ripa’s Iconologia: Quellen, Methode, Ziele*, Utrecht 1977. See also the review by E. McGrath, *Art History*, 6 (1983), pp. 363–38.

⁴¹ C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, Rome 1603, pp. 416–18.

⁴² “E comune opinione gli antichi nell’immagine di Minerva . . . volessero rappresentare la Sapienza, secondo il modo, che era conosciuta da essi, & però finsero, che fosse nata dalla testa di Giove, come cosa conosciuta per molto piu perfetta, non sapendo errare in cosa alcuna, di quel che comporta la potenza dell’uomo, & fingano che avesse tre teste, per consigliare altrui, intender per sè, & operare virtuosamente . . .” C. Ripa, op. cit., pp. 442 f.

⁴³ “Donna armata, & vestita di color lionato, il qual color significa fortezza, per esser somigliante à quello del leone, s’appoggia questa donna, ad una colonna, perche della parti dell’edifitio, questa è la più forte, che l’altre sostiene; à i piedi di essa figura, vi giacerà un leone, animale da gli Egitti adoperato in questo proposto, come si legge in molte scritti”, Ripa, op. cit., p. 165.

⁴⁴ Appendix § 21.

⁴⁵ For the Sala d’Apollo, see D’Onofrio, op. cit. n. 1 above, pp. 126–35; M. Levey, *National Gallery Catalogues. The Seventeenth-Century Italian Schools*, London 1971, pp. 96–106; R. Spear, *Domenichino*, New Haven and London 1982, pp. 195–201, cat. no. 55.

⁴⁶ Appendix § 22–23.

⁴⁷ Appendix § 24. This subject had, of course, recently been painted by Annibale Carracci in the Camerino Farnese, and would surely have been known to Agucchi who seems to have been responsible for the iconography of the teatro. However, the Villa Mattei seems to have been the direct source: D’Onofrio, op. cit. n. 1 above, pp. 121 f.

⁴⁸ M. Ferretti in *Torquato Tasso tra letteratura, musica, teatro e arti figurative*, Bologna 1985, pp. 249–55; C. Robertson, “I Carracci e l’invenzione: osservazioni sull’origine dei cicli affrescati di Palazzo Fava”, *Accademia Clementina. Atti e memorie*, 32 (1993), p. 274.



2. Cavaliere d'Arpino, *Creation of Adam*, Frascati, Villa Belvedere

mends in this letter. He is concerned that certain subjects might be difficult to depict. Thus in discussing the early stages of the Creation of the world, in a manner which suggests that he may have had Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling in mind, he observes, "...and I can see that to express these things with colour and good design will not be without much difficulty". But, he observes, to compensate, other aspects of the Creation would offer copiousness and variety: "However, some things will turn out very beautiful, such as the germination of the earth, the green grass and the trees and the plants, the abundance of fish and marine beasts in the sea, the abundance and variety of the birds, and on the earth itself the quadrupeds, the creation of man and then of woman etc."⁴⁹

Similarly he suggests that the Elements might present difficulties, but he offers several possible solutions: "...the Four Elements, which, although they might appear difficult to represent, can be assisted with certain accompaniments, as in the case of Fire. Not only can Fire be expressed with colours in its highest sphere, but one could make an Elijah snatched up in the chariot of fire, or some of the lower arts

that one makes with fire, such as the Cyclopes at the forge, or guns discharged with fire etc."⁵⁰

Here the principle of decorum is being used in ingenious ways to provide different types of subject appropriate to the chosen topic.⁵¹

Antoniano uses decorum in another way. At one point he suggests hermit saints on the grounds that they would offer suitable opportunities to depict landscapes, which were suitable for a villa setting: "Elijah, Elisha, St John the Baptist, St Paul the Hermit, St Anthony, St Benedict, St Romuald, because they lived in solitary, wooded places, would make beautiful landscapes, woodlands and mountains, which are particularly pleasing in a villa."⁵²

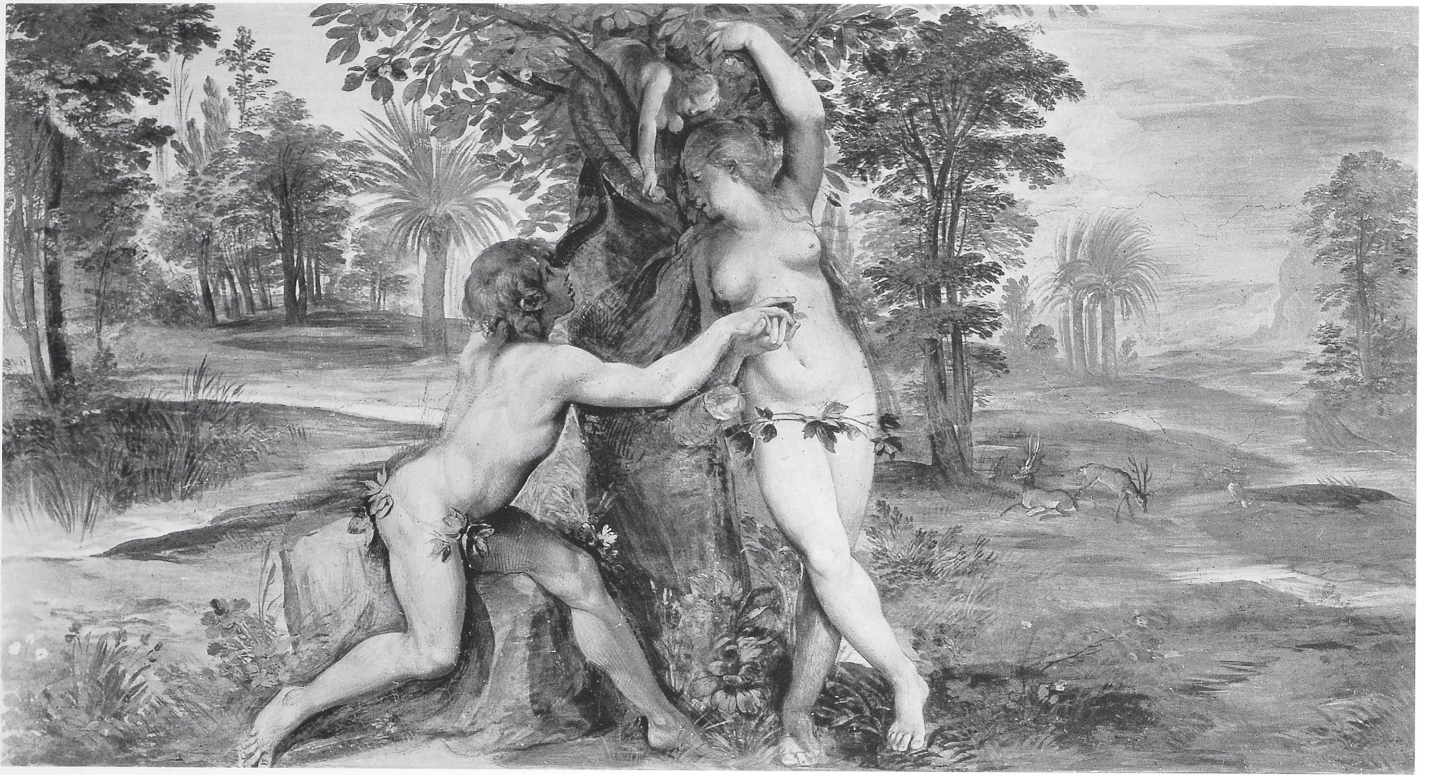
This clearly reflects a growing contemporary interest in landscape in general, although landscape scenes had frequently been used in Cinquecento villa decoration, for example at the Villa d'Este at Tivoli, and at the Villa Lante at Bagnaia. It is possible, however, that Antoniano would have recalled Caro's programme for the Stanza della Solitudine at Caprarola, in which various hermits are depicted in woodland settings appropriately to the theme of the

⁴⁹ Appendix § 3.

⁵⁰ Appendix § 12.

⁵¹ For the principle of decorum, see E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, London 1972, ch. 1.

⁵² Appendix § 9.



3. Cavalieri d'Arpino, *Temptation*, Frascati, Villa Belvedere



4. Cavalieri d'Arpino, *Expulsion*, Frascati, Villa Belvedere



5. Cavaliere d'Arpino, Judith and Holofernes, Frascati, Villa Belvedere



6. Cavaliere d'Arpino, *Jael and Sisera*, Frascati, Villa Belvedere



7. *Cavaliere d'Arpino, Abigail before David, Frascati, Villa Belvedere*

room.⁵³ He may also have recalled other rooms at Caprarola which were decorated with hermit saints in landscapes, among them some of those suggested by Antoniano. Thus Elijah was depicted in Bertoja's *Stanza dei Sogni*, while the Baptist, St Paul the Hermit and St Anthony were represented in the *Stanza della Penitenza*. The advisor for the decorative scheme for the latter room, and probably for the former, was the highly learned Cardinal Sirloto, who worked as an assistant to Baronius.⁵⁴ Landscapes with hermits were at this time becoming increasingly popular in palace and villa settings, as well as ecclesiastical ones, notably in the work of Paul Bril, with which Cardinal Pietro would undoubtedly

have been familiar.⁵⁵ More generally, Pietro seems to have been one of the leading patrons of classical landscape at this time. The Aldobrandini lunettes are, of course, the most celebrated examples. But by 1603, he already owned two landscapes by Domenichino, who had only arrived in Rome the previous year. One of these was the 'Landscape with the Sacrifice of Isaac', now in Fort Worth.⁵⁶ He also owned a pair of landscapes with scenes of hunting and a river by Gio-

⁵³ For this programme, see Caro, *op. cit.* n. 7 above, III, no. 764. This programme is discussed in Gombrich, *loc. cit.*

⁵⁴ See the programme published by Loren Partridge, "Discourses of Asceticism in Bertoja's Room of Penitence in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola" in ed. Joseph Connors, *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 11 (1995), pp. 162–64. Antoniano avoids some of the more obscure hermits proposed by Sirloto. It should be noted that Sirloto's scheme is clearly the outcome of previous discussion of the subject matter. See also, Clare Robertson, *'Il gran cardinale'. Alessandro Farnese, Patron of the Arts*, New Haven and London 1992, pp. 230 f., and doc. 67.

⁵⁵ F. Cappelletti, "Ancora su Paul Bril intorno al 1600. Qualche osservazione sul paesaggio con storie sacre, la tradizione degli eremiti e un nuovo committente", in ed. F. Cappelletti, *Decorazione e collezionismo a Roma nel Seicento. Vicende di artisti, committenti e mercanti*, Rome 2003, pp. 9–20, esp. 11 ff. On the fashion for landscapes with hermits, see A. Witte, *The Artful Hermit. Cardinal Odoardo's Religious Patronage and the Spiritual Meaning of Landscape around 1600*, Ph. D. diss., University of Amsterdam 2004. I am most grateful to Arnold Witte for enabling me to read this.

⁵⁶ R. Spear, *op. cit.* n. 45 above, p. 126, no. 3 (*Inventario*, no. 331). The other work a "paese con diverse figure" is too vaguely described to be identified (*Inventario*, no. 325). Although it is tempting to identify this work with 'Il guado', now in the Galleria Doria Pamphili, a work which Spear has dated to 1604, the dimensions do not correspond with those given in the inventory. See also, ed. R. Spear, *Domenichino, 1581–1641*, Milan 1996, p. 390, no. 10.

vanni Battista Viola,⁵⁷ and a 'Landscape with Tobias' by Albani.⁵⁸ It is likely that Giovanni Battista Agucchi, Pietro's secretary, who was of course a noted expert on art, and who seems to have been responsible for the later iconography of the *teatro delle acque*, played a part in encouraging this precocious interest in landscape.⁵⁹

As Antoniano stressed, much further research and discussion with "persone intendenti", as well as debate between patron and painter, was required to turn his suggestions into a proper iconographic programme. It seems highly probable that one of those consulted was Agucchi. Certainly, if he was indeed the author of the lengthy description of the villa which Pietro sent to his friend Duke Carlo Emmanuele I of Savoy in 1611, he shows a highly detailed understanding of the subjects that were eventually painted there, stressing their sensuality and the use of *affetti*.⁶⁰ A number of Antoniano's suggestions were taken up in the decoration that was actually painted by Cesari.⁶¹ In the room known as the *galleria* there are three scenes from the Creation story, the 'Creation of Adam', the 'Temptation', and the 'Expulsion' (figs. 2–4). All three scenes are remarkable for their verdant landscape settings, which Antoniano had recommended for villas. Moreover, in the 'Creation of Adam', there seems to be a reflection of his suggestion about the copiousness and variety that the creation of the birds and animals could offer, since there is a conspicuous menagerie in the middle ground. These include domestic animals, such as an ox, a donkey, a horse, sheep, ducks and geese, as well as more exotic beasts, including a bear, a lion, a giraffe and a miniature elephant.

The other four rooms that were decorated each received one ceiling fresco, showing an Old Testament subject, with a distinct emphasis on famous women, another of Antoniano's suggestions, although the specific subjects do not entirely correspond with his proposals. The stories eventu-

ally chosen were 'Judith and Holofernes' (fig. 5), 'Jael and Sisera', 'Abigail before David' (figs. 6–7), and 'David and Goliath'.⁶² We can perhaps get some idea of Pietro's (or another adviser's) response to Antoniano's proposals. In the margin of the letter, on three occasions, another hand has written "piace". This occurs alongside the suggestion for Adam in Paradise, and for famous women, both of which were adopted, as well as by the discussion of fiery subjects.⁶³ The theme of famous women seems to have appealed to Pietro. Yet in the 1611 description, his reasons for choosing these subjects seems curiously ambivalent. Abigail is seen as an example of virtuous womanhood, compensating for the defects of her husband, yet Jael is interpreted as proof of the dangers of entrusting oneself to women.⁶⁴ The Aldobrandini family is notable for its strong women, and Pietro had a close relationship with his mother and with his sister Olimpia. For example, in 1607 he wrote a touching letter to Olimpia, comforting and seeking to encourage her despite the various tragedies of her life – her early widowhood, and the loss of so many of her children.⁶⁵ The emphasis on exemplary females in the villa's decoration may thus reflect the presence of the Aldobrandini women there.

The iconography that was ultimately selected was biblical, in accordance with Antoniano's suggestions that this was proper for a prelate's dwelling. Today, the frescoes look rather isolated in the rooms with their bare walls, and it has not proved possible to determine how the walls were decorated. The fact that one room was called a *galleria* might suggest that paintings were hung there, but the 1603 inventory gives no indications of location. Pietro owned a large collection of tooled leather wall hangings, some of which still survive.⁶⁶ However, Pietro also had a substantial collection of tapestries, some of whose subjects might have complemented the painted decoration. Most obviously a set

⁵⁷ *Inventario*, nos. 329–30. This was a pairing of which Viola was particularly fond. Pietro's paintings must have looked something like the pair published in ed. R. Spear, *op. cit.*, p. 526, nos. IIa–IIb. See also, R. Spear, "A Forgotten Landscape Painter: Giovanni Battista Viola", *Burlington Magazine*, 122 (1980), p. 301.

⁵⁸ *Inventario*, no. 328.

⁵⁹ It has been suggested that the young Bolognese artists were invited to leave their pictures as "calling cards" in Pietro's collection: A. Tantillo Mignosi in ed. R. Spear, *op. cit.* n. 56 above, p. 26.

⁶⁰ The description was published in full in D'Onofrio, *op. cit.* n. 1. above, pp. 82–115. For his account of the frescoes, see pp. 97–99. S. Ginzburg Carignani has raised some doubts about Agucchi's authorship, but he remains the most likely candidate for devising the detailed programme: "Domenichino e Giovanni Battista Agucchi" in ed. R. Spear, *op. cit.* n. 56 above, p. 137, n. 125.

⁶¹ For these, see Röttgen, *op. cit.* n. 3 above, pp. 103–08 and 338–41, cat. no. 105.

⁶² Abigail before David had recently been painted by Avanzino Nucci in the first Sala della Lavanda in Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini, an institution with which Pietro Aldobrandini had close connections: M. Pupillo, *La Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini di Roma. Artisti e committenti al tempo di Caravaggio*, Rome 2001, pp. 97–100 and 105–09. Pietro would subsequently employ Nucci in 1604 to paint the walls of the chapel in his palace: H. Hibbard, "The Date of the Aldobrandini Lunettes", *Burlington Magazine*, 106 (1964), p. 183, n. 2.

⁶³ D'Onofrio, *op. cit.* n. 1 above, p. 98, n. 1, mentions the first two of these annotations.

⁶⁴ D'Onofrio, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁶⁵ Published in L. Testa, "... In ogni modo domatina uscimo": Caravaggio e gli Aldobrandini", in ed. C. Volpi, *Caravaggio nel IV centenario della Cappella Contarelli*, Città di Castello 2002, p. 130.

⁶⁶ D'Onofrio, *op. cit.* n. 1 above, figs. 64–65. *Inventario*, fols. 260–66.

of tapestries with the life of David would have looked appropriate in the room with 'David and Goliath'.⁶⁷ Interestingly, the majority of Pietro's tapestries had secular subjects, some of which could possibly have underlined the themes of virtuous womanhood represented in the biblical ceiling frescoes. For example, the inventory includes a set of tapestries with the life of Iphigenia.⁶⁸ Another set was devoted to the chaste goddess Diana, which would have been particularly appropriate for a villa, given the possibilities it offered for scenes of hunting.⁶⁹ While perhaps less obviously exemplary, a large group of tapestries illustrating the story of Dido and Aeneas, would again have been suitable for the bucolic setting.⁷⁰

The eventual choice of subjects for the frescoes followed a general trend towards religious decoration in Counter-Reformation villas, such as the Casino of Pius IV and the winter apartment of the Villa Farnese at Caprarola. The extent to which they conform to a "Counter-Reformation spirit" is, however, debatable. Cesari's nudes are highly voluptuous, as is his bare-breasted Judith. This was not lost on contemporaries. Both Agucchi and Marino, who was also an intimate of the Aldobrandini circle, and who wrote a series of poems on the Villa Belvedere, drew attention to the sensuous nature of these depictions.⁷¹ The prudish

Clement VIII would probably not have approved: one of his first acts was to have the churches of Rome inspected for any offensive images.⁷² But such sensual images are entirely consistent with Cardinal Pietro's taste. A striking example is the gratuitously semi-nude St Barbara that he commissioned from Cesari for the chapel of the Bombardieri.⁷³ Although Pietro had apparently intended to decorate more rooms, his plans were thwarted by his uncle's summons to the Cavaliere d'Arpino to work on the decoration of the cupola of St Peter's in 1603, and the vicissitudes of Pietro's career following Clement's death in 1605.⁷⁴ We can only speculate as to whether more of Antoniano's suggestions would have been adopted.

Antoniano's letter has much to tell us both about Counter-Reformation sensibilities in relation to decoration in an essentially secular context, especially with regard to the categorisation of subject matter and notions of decorum. It also serves to underline the complex and extended process of negotiation involving several parties which were involved in the composition of iconographic programmes. Despite the modesty of Antoniano's claims to have "poco cervello", he offered his patron a remarkably learned and almost encyclopaedic series of suggestions from which to begin that process.

⁶⁷ "Un paramento di panni arazzi di Fiandra in sei pezzi con l'istoria di David armati con tela et corda segnati con l'arme del Signore Cardinale sopra la tela con lettera F alti ale 6 et di ale 53 1/2 di giro, sono in tutto ale 321" *Inventario*, fol. 246. I am grateful to Xavier Salomon for drawing my attention to the importance of Pietro's tapestries.

⁶⁸ "Un paramento di panni arazzi di Fiandra in sette pezzi con l'istoria d'Ifigenia armati con tela et corda segnati con l'arme del Signore Cardinale sopra la tela con lettera E, alti ale 6, et di ale 62 di giro, sono in tutto ale 372. Usi." *Inventario*, fol. 246.

⁶⁹ "Un paramento di otto pezzi di arazzi fini di Fiandra nuovi con seta con l'istoria di Diana, alti ale cinque, et si compiutano le ale a ragione di palmi 2 1/2 di canna per ala, et girano tutti insieme ale quarantanove, armati di tela bianca, et segnati con l'arme del Signre Cardinale et lettera L." *Inventario*, fol. 248.

⁷⁰ "Un paramento di undici pezzi di arazzi di ale settecento sessanta sei e mezzo, alti ale sette con l'istoria di Didone et Enea, armati di tela bianca, e segnati con l'arme del Signore Cardinale, et la lettera R". *Inventario*, fol. 249. Another set was devoted to the "istoria di Troia", and one to St Paul (*Inventario*, fols. 248 and 246, respectively).

⁷¹ For Agucchi, see above, n. 59. Marino's poems are partly quoted in Röttgen, loc. cit.

⁷² D. Beggiao, *La visita pastorale di Clemente VIII (1592-1600). Aspetti di riforma post-Tridentina a Roma*, Rome 1978; A. Zuccari, *Arte e committenza nella Roma di Caravaggio*, Rome 1984, pp. 9-13. S. Macioce, op. cit. n. 11 above, pp. 13-15; O. Mansour, op. cit. n. 32 above, ch. 2, argues for the limited nature of Clement's ability/will to censor images in practice.

⁷³ Röttgen, op. cit., pp. 87 and 311, cat. no. 70.

⁷⁴ Röttgen, op. cit., pp. 117-21.

APPENDIX

Cardinal Silvio Antoniano to Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini,
6 October, 1601
(Frascati, Archivio Aldobrandini, fondo Villa Belvedere,
vol. XII, fasc. 4)

Note: I have expanded contractions, and modernised the
punctuation. For ease of reference I have numbered the
paragraphs in Antoniano's description.

Illustrissimo e Reverendissimo signor padrone osservandis-
simo,

Ho fatto parte dell'obediencia che Vostra Signoria Illustris-
sima m'ha imposta, et ella farà bene che parte di penitenza,
se potrà haver patientia di legger tutta questa mal digesta
farragine, ch'io le mando, imputilo Vostra Signoria Illu-
strissima à se stessa, et supporti le mie impertinenze, come è
solita di fare per sua bontà...

Di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e Reverendissima, humilis-
simo et obbligatissimo servitore, Silvio, Cardinale Antoni-
ano.

[verso] *All'Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Signor Mon-*
signore Osservandissimo il Signor Cardinale Aldobrandino

1. *L'inventione delle figure che si desiderano per sette,*
ouero otto camere, pare che si debbia cavare, come da
alcune fontane, o dalle cose divine, o dalle naturali, o
dalle morali, che tutte son vere, o dalle favolose, che
sebene son false, hanno riguardo e relatione al vero.
2. *Bella et vaga pittura saria, s'io non erro, l'opera della*
creatione del mondo, distinta in sei giorni, ai quali
facilmente si aggiongeria il settimo e l'ottavo. Poiché il
gran fabricatore di questa gran macchina del mondo si
riposò il settimo giorno, et da principio era quel con-
fuso Chaos, tanto celebrato dai poeti, et adombrato
nella divina scrittura. Ma queste cose no' si possono
ripresentare sotto figure humane et sono come historie
della natura chè forse hauriano bisogno di maggior
campo di quello che si è disegnato in quelle volte.
3. *Credo che saria materia artificiosa all'eccellente pittore*
il cielo e la terra senza ornamenti, et la tenebrosa fac-
cia dell'abisso, et lo spirito di Dio supra l'acqua, et la
formatione della luce, et la divisione della luce dalle
tenebre, et vedo che l'esprimer queste cose, co' colori et
co' buon disegno, no' saria senza molta difficoltà.
Sebene alcune cose riusciriano assai vaghe, come il ger-
mogliar la terra l'erba verde e gli alberi et le piante,
nel mare la copia dei pesci e belve marine, nell'aria la

copia et varietà degli uccelli, et nell'istessa terra gli ani-
mali quadrupedi, la formatione dell'huomo, e poi della
donna etc.

4. *Si potriano dal Genesi pigliar qualche cose insigni: lo*
stato dell'innocenza dei primi huomini nel paradiso, i
medesimi fuori del paradiso et nello esilio di questa
vita, il sacrificio di Abel, la translatione di Enoch,
anchor vivo dopo tanti secoli, li giganti no' favolosi,
descritti nella sacra scrittura, la torre di Hembrotte etc.
5. *Sono anchora dei santi Padri distinte l'età del mondo*
in certi personaggi molto insigni et celebrati nelle
divine scritture, cioè: prima età Adamo, seconda Noè,
terza Abramo, quarta Mosè, quinta David, sesta Giuda
Maccabeo, settima Christo signor nostro etc.
6. *Li quali personaggi si representariano co' alcune loro*
note proprietà, come Adamo nel paradiso [marginal
note: piace], Noè con l'arca, Abramo col sacrificio,
Mosè sul monte quando prese la legge, o quando vide
il rubo ardente, David nel duello col Filisteo etc.
7. *Et da questi personaggi si pigliarà la appellatione delle*
camere molto acconciamente.
8. *Ma oltre questi sono nelle scritture sante molte persone*
celebri, che dariano grato nome alle camere, et si
ripresentariano con vaga pittura, come Sansone,
Gideone, Melchisedech, Samuele, Salomone, Giosuè et
anchora qualche donne famose [marginal note: piace],
come Giuditta, Ester, Debhora.
9. *Et quando l'inventione di questi personaggi piacesse,*
saria facile il descriver il modo di ripresentarli, facendo
l'elettione di quelli che più piaceressero, fra quali si può
numerare Nabuccodonosor co' la sua statua, et i tre
fanciulli, la visione di quel grande albero, il convito di
Balthassar, quando vide la mano che scrivea sul pari-
ete, Giona profeta, Sennacherib quando l'angelo occise
in una notte centottantacinquemila de suoi. Fariano
vaghezze di paesi et boschi et monti, che di questo si
compiacesse, massime in villa, Elia, Eliseo, san Gio-
vanni Battista, san Paolo padre eremita, santo Anto-
nio, san Benedetto, san Romualdo, che abitorono lochi
solitarii e boscarecci.
10. *Le piaghe di faraone, co' le quali fu percossso da Dio,*
potriano forse dar inventione.
11. *Et insomma l'antico e novo Testamento sono tanto ric-*
chi e abondanti di bellissime historie, che non può
mancar materia al valente pittore no' solo per poche
figure, ma per molti quadri, quando le gloriose attioni
di sua santità delli quali fu parlato si volessero riservare
per altro loco. Et certo per mio parere, in casa di
principe christiano et ecclesiastico, crederei che
stessero molto bene cose christiane et ecclesiastiche.

12. *Passando hora dalle cose divine et sacre alle naturali, si può dire che da queste si può cavare copiosa inventione, come ripresentando i sette pianeti, le quattro stagioni dell'anno, le hore più principali del giorno: aurora, meriggio, occaso del sole, i quattro elementi che se bene paiono difficili da ripresentare si aiutariano con certi accompagnamenti, come per esempio del foco [marginal note: piace]. No'solo si esprimeria co' colori il foco nella sua più alta sfera, ma si potria fare uno Elia rapito nel carro del foco, alcune arti piu basse che si fanno col foco, come i ciclopi alla fucina, le artiglierie sparate col foco etc. Sono cose parte naturali e parte artificiali, che fariano forse vaga vista e dariano conveniente nome alle camere, come la caccia, ripresentando varie caccie d'animali, la pescagione, l'uccellare, l'agricoltura, divisa in cultura delle biade, delle vigne, de gli oliveti, l'arte pastorale, divisa in greggie, armenti, nutrimento dell'api, razze di cavalli, horti, pomarij.*
13. *L'economia et la politica possono dar copiosi soggetti, se bene le cose dette poco fa appartengono all'economio e i contadini sono parte della città.*
14. *Ma volendo quasi per i suoi gradi ripresentare come si so' fatte le città, si porria nel primo luogo la congiuntione legitima dell'huomo et della donna per le nozze et matrimonio, segue nel secondo la procreazione dei figli, onde già si fa la casa di marito e moglie, di padre e figlio, di padrone e servo, ponendo come Aristotile dice, per il servo il bove aratore.*
15. *Di molte case si fa il vico, o villa, o contrada, e di molti vichi si fa la città et della città poi si potriano co' qualche vaghezza ripresentar le sue più insigni parti, cioè l'ordine dei sacerdoti, il senato, i giudici, i soldati e cavalieri, gli artefici, gli agricoltori e ciascuno di questi stati e professioni si ripresentaria credo vagamente co' una o più figure, come saria un huomo co' abiti sacerdotali su la porta di un tempio, alcuni uomini di robba lunga in un consesso, un tribunale co' un giudice et alcuni litiganti, un cavaliere armato a cavallo, un fabbro co' suoi ordigni, un contadino co' zappa e aratro.*
16. *Sono le età dell'huomo naturali et credo che siano capaci di esser ripresentati co' alcuni contrassegni. L'infantia, u' bambino nella culla, co' la nutrice a lato, uno scherzo di fanciullini. La pueritia, putti che altri faccino giochi puerili, altri stiano leggendo la tavoletta. L'adolescencia, u' giovanetto a cavallo, cani et uccelli. La gioventù, armeggiare parte, parte studio di scienze. La virilità bisognaria controssegnarla co' forma di magistrato, di agricoltura, navigatione e simili. La vecchiezza, residente in senato, figli e nipoti d'intorno. La decrepità, languida a giacere in un letto.*
17. *Si potria anco pensare a qualche altro contrassegno, come erbetta verdeggiante, prato fiorito, arboselli co' fiori, alberi co' pomi maturi, biade verdi e manipoli di spiche, alcune animali come corvo e cervo, per denota la vecchiezza e decrepità, /*
18. *Hor passando alle cose morali più espressamente, vi sono le sette virtù, cioè le quattro morali, che si dicono cardinali, et le tre theologiche, queste sono assai ordinarie et tutte si rapresentano come donne, che pare troppo uniformità.*
19. *Converria veder il modo comune di pittori et aiutarlo co' qualche nova inventione no' solo nella figura stessa, ma in altre d'intorno, come la prudenza si fa col serpe, si potria ripresentar co' tre occhi in testa, se no paresse cosa mostruosa, poichè la prudenza considera il tempo presente, preterito e futuro, et l'arbore duro è simbolo della prudenza. La fortezza si dipigne co' una colonna, ma il leone staria bene ai suoi piedi, e si potria far armata a uso di Pallade.*
20. *Le scienze et arti liberali possono esser materia di pittura, come la Grammatica, la Retorica, la Poesia, la Filosofia, la Theologia, la Matematica, l'Architettura, Scultura, Pittura.*
21. *Le Muse si sogliono anchor ripresentare in scultura e pittura e bisognaria osservare come Raffaello et altri valenthuomini hanno figurato le dette scienze et arti et avvantaggiarli co' qualche accorgimento di hodierna inventione.*
22. *Per ultime vi sono le cose favolose delle quali Ovidio è il maestro, come dire Narcisso, Atteone, Mida, Prometeo, Aracne, Marsia, Argo et simiglianti, Fetonte etc.*
23. *Vi sono dei personaggi celebri, Atlante sostenente il cielo, Anteo/occiso in aria da Ercole, Perseo col suo Pegaso, il Minotauro col suo labirinto, gli Argonauti al vello d'oro etc.*
24. *Dall'istoria romana si possono cavar molte inventioni et per quadri et per figure sole: i primi sette re, il primo Bruto, Curtio che si getta nella voragine, il ratto delle Sabine, il duello degli Oratii, Clelia, Mutio, Horatio Cocle, Camillo quando rimanda i figli de Veienti col pedante legato, Fabritio che disprezza l'oro dei Sanniti et altri senza numero.*
25. *Tutta questa scrittura che è come u' zibaldone et un' ogliapotrida, s'è fatta per obedire a chi si deve e perché serva per trattenimento al padrone, et all'ingegnoso pittore, che ambedue vadano pensando, l'uno dove havria maggior inclinatione et l'altro dove meglio crederia poter spiegar l'eccellenza dell'arte sua, considerato il campo, il luogo di villa, il signore di essa, la nobiltà della fabrica, et altre circostanze. Et quando questi due, cioè il padrone et il pittore, si concordassero in qualche particolare di tanti che si propengono, si potria poi, co' studi, co' libri et conferenza co' persone intendenti, cercar di dar qualche forma et polimento a cose rozzamente abbozzate. Intanto no' saria male far conservare questa scrittura, quale ella è, perché colui che l'ha così imbastita, ha poco cervello et no' sapria più strecciare questa matassa.*