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Intorno a Giovanni Luigi Valesio

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Questa relazione si basa in gran parte sui resoconti redatti dai vari responsabili dei settori ed uffici in cui sono articolati la Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, Casa Carducci, il Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale e il Museo del Risorgimento.

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Valesio, the Archiginnasio,
and the first American at the University
of Bologna

Giovanni Luigi Valesio (ca. 1561?-1633) was an artist and poet associated with the Carracci school. The son of a Spanish soldier for whom both the date and place of birth are unknown, Valesio was best known as a poet who associated with other writers like Giambattista Marino and Cesare Rinaldi, and as an engraver who produced nearly 200 prints. These two activities were related, since the artist's engravings provided a forum for visual expression of his literary imagination.¹ Thus, many of Valesio's engravings, particularly his heraldic designs, are striking for their iconographic inventiveness and originality. This attention to literary content and iconographic inventiveness also characterizes his paintings.

The recent scholarship of Veronika Birke demonstrated that Valesio was more active as an engraver than was formerly known.² Now, it appears that his activity as a painter, which received less attention from the early sources than his engravings, was also more substantial than was previously thought. Valesio's newly rediscovered frescoes in Alto Lario, published in this journal by Andrea Comalini, join the small group of frescoes by the artist in Bologna and Rome that

¹ As Veronika Birke observed in *The Illustrated Bartsch, 40 (Commentary, Part 1): Italian Masters of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* by Veronika Birke, New York, Abaris Books, 1987, p. 21.

² *Ibidem.*

were already known. This essay will attribute another fresco in the Archiginnasio of Bologna to Valesio, suggesting that he may have been more productive and inventive as a painter than has been thought.

Valesio's activity as a painter was eclipsed for posterity by the work of his more famous Bolognese contemporaries, like the Carracci, Reni, and Domenichino, resulting in a lack of information about many of his paintings. The early writers, more interested in the works of these other great painters, said little about Valesio's activity as a painter. Masini characterized Valesio as an excellent engraver and miniaturist and mentioned only five paintings by the artist in Bologna and Rome.³ Malvasia noted that Valesio was a better engraver than painter, and listed only a dozen paintings by the artist, in contrast to fifty-two engravings discussed by the biographer.⁴ Baglione confined his discussion to Valesio's painted works in Rome, most notably his paintings for the church of S. Maria sopra Minerva.⁵ Marcello Oretti provided the fullest picture of Valesio's accomplishments as a painter, describing some two-dozen works in Rome and Bologna.⁶

This absence of information on the artist's production as a painter applies to his work in both fresco and oil. Although this essay will focus on Valesio's frescoes, it is worth noting that many of his oil paintings have probably also been lost or misidentified. His two seventeenth-century Bolognese biographers, Masini and Malvasia, recorded only five oil paintings produced for Bolognese churches. Oretti added several works to this short list, including a half-dozen oil paintings for private collections. This addition is important, since an artist of secondary prominence, like Valesio, almost certainly produced more

³ ANTONIO DI PAOLO MASINI, *Bologna Perustrata*, in Bologna, per Carlo Zenero, 1650, p. 751-752 and Bologna, per l'erede di Vittorio Benacci, 1666, I, p. 80, 131, 135, and 343.

⁴ CARLO CESARE MALVASIA, *Felsina Pittrice. Vite de' pittori bolognesi*, in Bologna, per l'erede di Domenico Barbieri, ad istanza di Gio. Francesco Dauico detto il Turrino, 1678, II, p. 95-104; and Id., *Le Pitture di Bologna*, in Bologna, per Giacomo Monti, 1686, p. 41, 76, 112-13, 135, 142, 164, 224, 246, and 248.

⁵ GIOVANNI BAGLIONE, *Le vite de' pittori scultori et architetti*, in Roma, nella stamperia d'Andrea Fei, 1642, p. 354-355.

⁶ MARCELLO ORETTI, *Notizie de' Professori del Disegno*, n.d., unpublished manuscript in the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna, ms. B.125, p. 586-587 and ms. B.126, p. 386-407 bis.

works for private than for public patrons in early Seicento Bologna. Moreover, Oretti's list of Valesio's private patrons is conspicuous for the intellectual and literary character of its personae: it includes «Casa Cospi», the Bolognese Senatorial family who were notable for their interests in antiquity and modern art and their close association with the Medici;⁷ the Cavalier Marino, a prominent poet who praised Valesio in his poetry;⁸ and «Casa Rinaldi», the family of Cesare Rinaldi, a Bolognese writer who knew Valesio.⁹ Oretti's additions suggest that Valesio was closely associated with a group of humanists and intellectuals who appreciated the poetic imagination evident in his works, and it is likely that the artist produced many more such paintings for private collectors that are no longer known.

One example of such a work for a private collector is Valesio's hitherto unknown painting of a female martyr saint, illustrated in plate 1. This picture was catalogued in a recent auction at Sotheby's as an anonymous work of the Bolognese school, although it is inscribed with the artist's monogram, «VALE», which is also found on his engravings.¹⁰ This work, now in a private American collection, dem-

⁷ On the Cospi family, see LORENZO LEGATI, *Museo Cospiano annesso a quello del famoso Ulisse Aldrovandi e donato alla sua patria dall'Illustrissimo signor Ferdinando Cospi patrizio di Bologna e senatore Cavaliere Commendatore di S. Stefano, Bali d'Arezzo, e March. Di Petriolo...*, in Bologna, per Giacomo Monti, 1677; MIRIAM FILETI MAZZA, *Archivio del collezionismo medico: Il Cardinal Leopoldo*, Milano and Napoli, R. Ricciardi, 1993, I, p. 3-91; and EDWARD L. GOLDBERG, *Patterns in Late Medici Art Patronage*, Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press, 1983, p. 34-53.

⁸ As noted by FR. PELLEGRINO ANTONIO ORLANDI, *L'Abecedario Pittorico dall'autore ristampato, corretto, ed accresciuto di molti professori e di altre notizie spettanti alla pittura*, in Napoli, a spese di Nicolo e Vincenzo Rispoli, 1733, p. 248, and Id., *Notizie degli scrittori bolognesi e dell'opere loro stampate e manoscritte*, in Bologna, per Costantino Pisarri all'insegna di S. Michele, 1714, p. 167; and by M. ORETTI, IV, p. 386.

⁹ Rinaldi (1559-1636) was a Bolognese writer who was best known for his poetry. According to GIOVANNI FANTUZZI (*Notizie degli scrittori bolognesi*, in Bologna, nella stamperia di S. Tommaso d'Aquino, 1781-94, VII, p. 187-88), Rinaldi was a devotee of painting and a particular friend of the Carracci. His engraved author's portrait, which served as the frontispiece for part three of his *Delle Rime di Cesare Rinaldi Bolognese* (in Bologna, per Vittorio Benacci, 1590), has been tentatively attributed to Agostino Carracci (See *The Illustrated Bartsch*, 39, *Commentary, Part I: Italian Masters of the Sixteenth Century*, by Babette Bohn, New York, Abaris Books, 1995, n. 3901.240x).

¹⁰ Sotheby's, 15 April 1999, lot 414, in oil on canvas, measuring 86.5 x 72.5 cm. The four letters are intertwined and overlapping and appear at the lower center of the picture.

onstrates the artist's stylistic debt to Ludovico Carracci, with its Ludovician figure style, emotional expression, and dramatic lighting.

Ludovico was a key figure for Valesio in many respects. According to Malvasia, when Valesio was over thirty, Ludovico supplied the would-be artist with drawings of various animals that led the way to his artistic career.¹¹ Carracci also provided the artist with the designs for at least three of his engravings.¹² Thus it is not surprising that some of Valesio's drawings have been wrongly attributed by modern scholars to the better-known Ludovico, whose painterly drawing style influenced such drawings by Valesio as the *Coat of Arms of Cardinal Girolamo Pamphili with Allegorical Figures* (plate 2). This work, which was previously attributed to Ludovico Carracci, is instead Valesio's preparatory study for an engraving dated 1606.¹³ One of the few known drawings by Valesio that supplied the final compositional design for a print, the sheet provides an important basis for ascribing other sheets to the artist. Its characteristically elongated and generalized figure style, rather over-abundant draperies, and extensive reliance on wash are also to be found in other drawings by Valesio.¹⁴

This essay will consider Valesio's three fresco paintings for the Archiginnasio in Bologna: one destroyed; a second ascribed to the artist by the early writers; and a third that is a new attribution. In considering these works, we will attempt to consider further the character of Valesio's work as a painter – his style, his iconographic originality, and his reception and reputation in early Seicento Bologna, a city dominated by the presence of other, more prominent painters. Although Valesio was stylistically dependent on such artists as Ludovico Carracci, his iconographic inventions were truly original, and

¹¹ C.C. MALVASIA, *Felsina Pittrice* cit., II, p. 95.

¹² See *The Illustrated Bartsch*, 39, *Commentary, Part 2: Italian Masters of the Sixteenth Century*, by Babette Bohn, New York, Abaris Books, 1996, p. 156-158.

¹³ Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. n. 7723, in pen and brown ink with brown wash, 292 x 387 mm; published in B. BOHN, *I disegni di Giovanni Luigi Valesio*, «Grafica d'arte», XXIX, 1997, p. 29-30. On the engraving, which is inscribed «Il Valesio inu. F. 1606», see *The Illustrated Bartsch*, 40 (*Commentary, Part 1*), 1987, cit., n. 4002.142.

¹⁴ Nine other drawings by the artist are published in B. BOHN, *I Disegni* cit., p. 29-35.

it is in the exercise of his poetic imagination, seeking visual form in fresco, that his greatest artistic contributions were made. Valesio's intellectual inventions were particularly well suited for appeal to the scholarly and ecclesiastic communities of early modern Bologna.

As noted above, neither the date nor the place of Valesio's birth is known. He was the son of a Spanish soldier who was sent in 1580 to Correggio, where the family is documented until 1598.¹⁵ Several of the early sources remark that before becoming an artist, Valesio was a dancing master, fencer, lutenist, and poet. The date of Valesio's arrival in Bologna is unknown, but it seems likely that it predated his activity as an engraver, which began by 1594.¹⁶ This chronology would also conform with the accounts that Valesio became associated when he was over thirty with Ludovico Carracci, who provided the artist with drawings of lions, eagles, angels, virtues, and other figures as models for study.¹⁷ Valesio also worked in cities near Bologna, including Modena and Reggio Emilia. His contacts with the Ludovisi family, who commissioned numerous engravings from the artist, led to his transfer to Rome after the election of Alessandro Ludovisi as Pope Gregory XV in 1621. In Rome, Valesio worked particularly for Gregory's nephew Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi, for whom he produced a variety of engraved and painted works. The artist evidently remained in Rome until his death there in 1633.

Masini and Malvasia, Valesio's two seventeenth-century Bolognese biographers, mentioned eight frescoes by the artist in the city. Masini noted only one: «la prospettiva del Collegio Pannolini, a vista della

¹⁵ NICOLETTA ROIO, *Giovan Luigi Valesio*, in *La Scuola dei Carracci: dall'Accademia alla Bottega di Ludovico*, a cura di Emilio Negro and Massimo Pironi, Modena, Artioli, 1994, p. 335 and 338, n. 4. Although Roio gives Valesio's date of birth as ca. 1560, I have adopted the date suggested by several of the early writers, including M. HUBER – C.C.H. ROST, *Handbuch für Kunstliebhaber und Sammler*, Zürich, Orell, Gessner, Füssli und compagnie, 1796-1808, III, 1799, p. 277; and ADAM VON BARTSCH, *Le Peintre-Graveur*, a Vienne, de l'imprimerie de J.V. Degen, librairie place St. Michel, 1803-1821, XVIII, p. 211.

¹⁶ Valesio's first print, a *Portrait of Francesco Panigarola*, can be dated by its inscription to 1594, as Birke noted, *The Illustrated Bartsch*, 40 (*Commentary Part 1*), 1987, cit., n. 4002.001). The print is signed with Valesio's monogram: «VALO». One of only two portraits in his printed oeuvre, the engraving shows the influence of Agostino Carracci's many engraved portraits in oval format.

¹⁷ P.A. ORLANDI, *L'Abecedario Pittorico* cit., p. 248.

¹⁸ A. MASINI, *Bologna Perlustrata* cit., 1650, p. 752.

chiesa di S. Giacomo maggiore». ¹⁸ Malvasia listed seven others, including the *St. Roch curing plague victims* in the Oratorio di San Rocco; the frescoes for the Ferri chapel, San Nicolò di San Felice; a frescoed frieze for the Palazzo Pubblico (plates 3 and 4); the frescoed laterals for the chapel of the Speciali in the Church of the Mendicanti; two ceilings in the Palazzo Fava; and one fresco for the monument to San Carlo Borromeo in the Archiginnasio (plate 5). ¹⁹

One of Valesio's most important frescoes in Bologna was evidently his frescoed frieze in the *sala della guardia de' Svizzeri*, in the Cardinal Legate's apartments of the Palazzo Pubblico, which was recorded by both Malvasia and Oretti (plates 3 and 4). ²⁰ These well-documented and well-preserved works, commissioned in 1611 by Cardinal Maffeo Barberini during his first year as papal legate to Bologna, ²¹ provide a revealing insight into Valesio's approach to fresco painting, during the same period as his activity in the Archiginnasio. In addition to heraldic depictions that feature the coats of arms of Barberini and the reigning pope, Paul V Borghese, the frieze portrays a group of twenty-two female allegorical personifications of Virtues. Here Valesio expands upon the traditional groups of three theological and four cardinal virtues, adding less commonly represented Virtues such as *Amabilitas*, *Benignitas* (plate 3), *Clementia*, and *Concordia*, that were not even described by Cesare Ripa in his *Iconologia* of 1603. Even Valesio's conventional Virtues often do not conform to their standard iconographies. *Caritas* (plate 4), for example, is a fully clothed, winged figure who extends a piece of bread to an implied recipient,

¹⁹ C.C. MALVASIA, *Le pitture* cit., p. 135, 142, 164, and 248; ID., *Felsina Pittrice* cit., II, p. 96. Baglione also mentioned two frescoes by Valesio in Rome, in the churches of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and in the Madonna di Costantinopoli (*Le vite* cit., p. 354).

²⁰ C.C. MALVASIA, *Felsina Pittrice* cit., II, p. 96; ID., *Le Pitture* cit., p. 164; M. ORETTI, *Notizie versi fregi nel publico palazzo nell'anticamera dell' Ementissimo Legato* in *Il Microcosmo della pittura*, in Cesena, per il Neri, 1657, p. 368. The fresco was also noted later by ANTONIO BOLOGNINI AMORINI, *Vite dei pittori ed artefici bolognesi*, Bologna, Tipi governativi alla Volpe, 1841-1843, II (1843), p. 128.

²¹ Barberini was appointed by Pope Paul V and served as legate from 1611 to 1614. See MARINA FERRETTI - MARTA PASQUALI, *Cronotassi critica dei legati, vicelegati e governatori di Bologna dal sec. XVI al XVIII*, in «Deputazione di Storia Patria per le province di Romagna. Atti e memorie», n.s., XXIII, 1972, p. 142-143.



Pl. 1. GIOVANNI LUIGI VALESIO, *Female Martyr Saint*, oil painting, private collection.



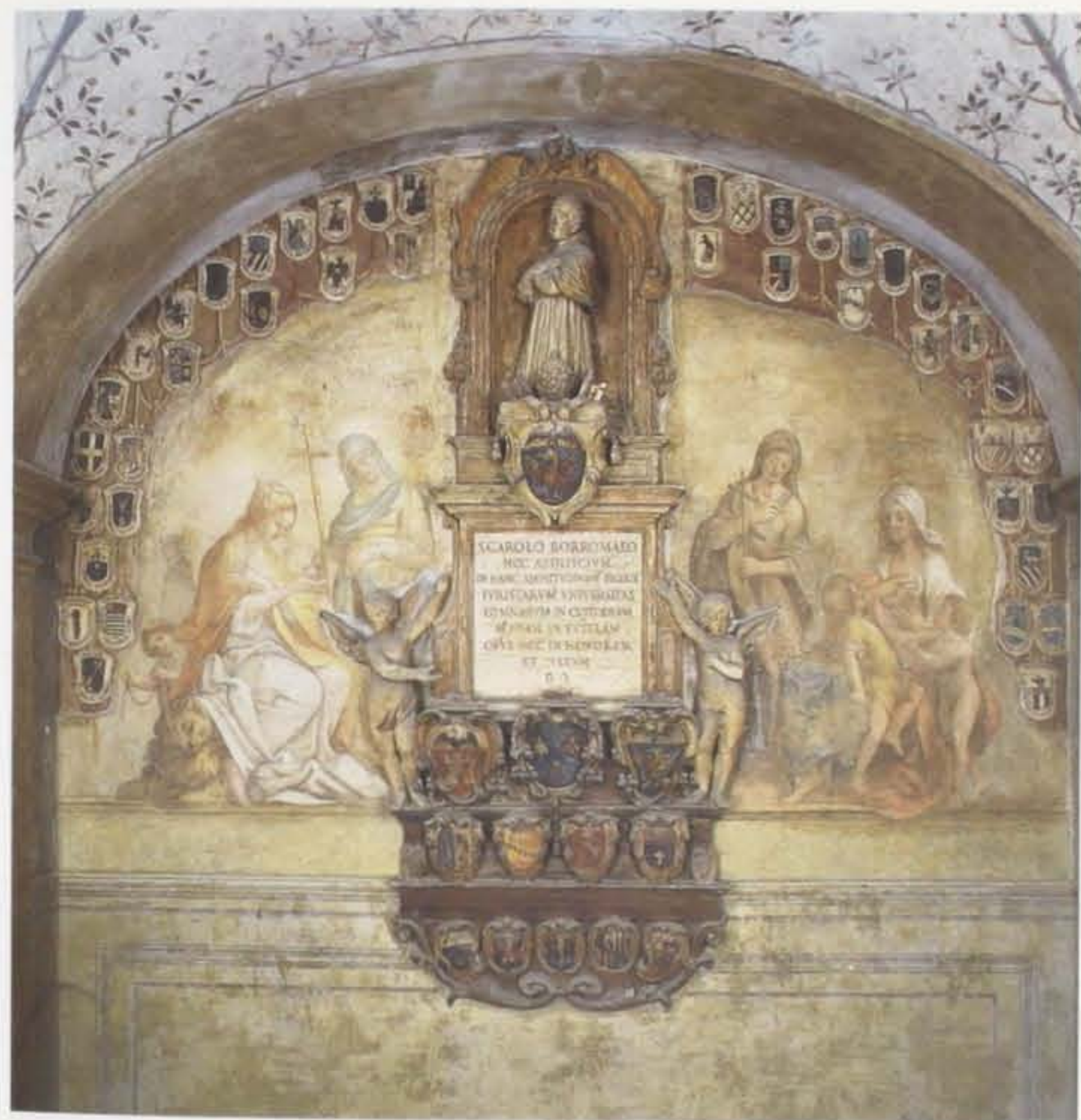
Pl. 2. GIOVANNI LUIGI VALESIO, *Coat of Arms of Cardinal Girolamo Pamphili with Allegorical Figures*, ca. 1606, drawing, Paris, Musée du Louvre (© Photo RMN).



Pl. 3. GIOVANNI LUIGI VALESIO, *Benignitas*, 1611, fresco, Bologna, Palazzo Pubblico.



Pl. 4. GIOVANNI LUIGI VALESIO, *Caritas*, 1611, fresco, Bologna, Palazzo Pubblico.



Pl. 5. GIOVANNI LUIGI VALESIO, *Four Virtues (Monument to San Carlo)*, fresco, Bologna, Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio (Photo Studio Pym and Studio Cesari, February 9, 2000).



Pl. 6. GIOVANNI LUIGI VALESIO, *Monument to the Cardinal Benedetto Giustiniani*, fresco (before restoration), Bologna, Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio (Photo Studio Pym and Studio Cesari, February 7, 2000).



Pl. 7. GIOVANNI LUIGI VALESIO, *Monument to the Cardinal Benedetto Giustiniani*, fresco (after restoration), Bologna, Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio (Photo Studio Pym and Studio Cesari, March 7, 2003).



Pl. 8. GIOVANNI LUIGI VALESIO, *Coat of Arms of Cardinal Facchinetti with Allegorical Figures*, before 1606, engraving, Wien, Graphische Sammlung Albertina.

instead of her traditional portrayal as a bare-breasted woman nursing infants. In Valesio's original conception, it is *Benignitas*, rather than *Caritas*, whose spouting breasts are her identifying attribute. Thus the fresco supplies a telling example of Valesio's inventiveness as an iconographer.

Valesio's best-known work in the Archiginnasio is his fresco of *Four Virtues* in the *Monument to San Carlo Borromeo* (plate 5). It dates from 1610-12, making it contemporary with the Palazzo Pubblico frescoes, with which it shares many stylistic and iconographic features. Both Malvasia and Oretti mentioned this fresco, which was evidently one of Valesio's best-known public paintings in Bologna.²² Probably inspired by the canonization of San Carlo Borromeo in 1610, the monument was conceived to honor Borromeo, who was Cardinal Legate to Bologna when the building of the Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio, new seat of the University, was initiated in 1561.²³ The monument, on the wall of the first ramp of the *scala dei Legisti*, consists of the central features of a commemorative inscription flanked by angels and, above, a statue of the saint by an anonymous sculptor, flanked by Valesio's fresco of four female allegorical figures of Virtues. It seems clear that Valesio's fresco was executed first, since the sculptural decoration partially obscures the painted figures, complicating the identification of those Virtues whose identifying attributes are no longer visible.²⁴

²² C.C. MALVASIA, *Felsina Pittrice* cit., II, p. 96 and *Id.*, *Le Pitture* cit., p. 248; M. ORETTI, *Notizie* cit., (BCABo, ms. B.126), IV, p. 388 and *Id.*, *Le pitture che si ammirano nelli palazzi e case de' nobili nella città di Bologna e di altri edifici in detta città*, unpublished manuscript in the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio di Bologna, n.d. (BCABo, ms. B.104), I, p. 9. The fresco was also noted by GIROLAMO BIANCONI, *Guida del forestiere per la città di Bologna e suoi sobborghi divisa in due parti con tavole in rame*, Bologna, per Annesio Nobili, 1820, p. 267 and by A. BOLOGNINI AMORINI, *Vite* cit., II, p. 128.

²³ The building was officially commissioned by Pope Pius IV, but its true patron, who financed and supervised its construction, leading up to its inauguration in 1563, was Pier Donato Cesi, Borromeo's vice legate and Bishop of Narni. See RICHARD TUTTLE, *Il Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio in una relazione inedita di Pier Donato Cesi al cardinale Carlo Borromeo*, in *L'Archiginnasio. Il Palazzo, l'Università, la Biblioteca*, a cura di Giancarlo Roversi, I, Bologna, Credito Romagnolo, 1987, p. 67.

²⁴ Donatella Biagi Maino notes that the monument was erected in 1610 and enlarged in 1612 in *Id.*, *La gratitudine e la memoria. I monumenti affrescati d'età barocca*, in *L'Archiginnasio. Il Palazzo* cit., I, p. 119.

Valesio's Virtues are not all easily identifiable, although presumably they were all selected to honor appropriate virtues in the saint. Here Valesio's inventiveness as an iconographer poses problems in interpretation, particularly since none of the early writers supplies specific information on the Virtues' identities. At right, the figure of Faith is depicted standing nearest the center, holding a cross.²⁵ Her downcast gaze and introverted demeanor contrast with the gregarious sensibility of Charity, a more youthful figure seated at right. Charity, a more conventional depiction of this Virtue than her counterpart in the Palazzo Pubblico, smiles down at the two children who accompany her, as she bares her breast to offer them nourishment. Her colorful garments also contrast with the somber grayish browns of her sister's clothing. Faith and Charity are the two most conventional depictions of Virtues here, making them the easiest to identify.

The two Virtues at left, who are also contrasted in pose, clothing, and sensibility, are more difficult to interpret. The seated figure at far left, dressed in white and gold, looks down at a small orb in her right hand and places her left hand on her heart to demonstrate her sincerity. She is seated on a lion whose reins are held by a putto, the only figure in the fresco who looks out and makes direct eye contact with the viewer. Although previously identified as the personification of Justice, it seems more likely that this figure represents Magnanimity. Although she does not correspond in every particular to Cesare Ripa's description of this Virtue, Magnanimity is the only Virtue described by Ripa who sits on a lion, the noblest of all beasts, who allegedly showed himself to hunters to distract them from other animals, generously risking his own life, so as to enable the weaker animals to escape.²⁶

²⁵ She holds something else in her right hand, but the present condition of the fresco makes it impossible to identify this object.

²⁶ Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, in Roma, appresso Lepido Facij, 1603, p. 300. Ripa's description also includes a putto behind the woman, although Ripa specified that the putto held a large cornucopia with coins spilling out. Other elements described by Ripa, like the woman's crown and scepter, were not included by Valesio here. Biagi Maino identified the figure as Justice in *Io, La gratitudine e la memoria cit.*, p. 142, n. 4.

The veiled figure standing next to Magnanimity, holding a pastoral staff, eludes clear identification in the absence of any other visible attributes. Presumably she refers in some way to the pastoral mission of San Carlo Borromeo, who as bishop of Milan tended actively to his flock, increasing assistance to the poor and needy, establishing programs for the religious instruction of children, feeding thousands of people during the famine of 1570, and even personally ministering to the afflicted during the plague of 1576. It is worth noting that in Ludovico Carracci's painting of *San Carlo baptizing during the plague of Milan* (Nonantola, Abbazia, 1613-16) of just a few years later,²⁷ a similar pastoral cross is conspicuous in the composition. Perhaps Valesio's allegory and Carracci's painting both refer to a specific type of Christian charity, performed by the clergy during the Counter Reformation, with its strong emphasis on this particular virtue. As Mauro Carboni has commented, Counter Reformation Bologna enjoyed a particularly strong emphasis on the «religione delle opere», promoting the founding, in late Cinquecento Bologna, of a series of charitable institutions, including the Opera dei Mendicanti (1563), the Compagnia dei Poveri (1576), the Pio Cumulo della Misericordia (1576), and the Monte del Matrimonio (1583).²⁸ This religious context may account for Valesio's unprecedented inclusion of two different types of charity, one applicable to the laity and the other to the clergy.

In both iconographic inventiveness and figure style, this fresco is markedly similar to the contemporary fresco of Virtues by Valesio in the Palazzo Pubblico. Both works demonstrate the artist's willingness to be unconventional in his depictions of Virtues, and both employ idealized, graceful figures with little anatomical detail visible underneath their draperies. The generalized, oval faces with small features are

²⁷ On this painting, see FRANCESCO ARCANGELI, *Natura ed espressione nell'arte Bolognese-emiliana*, Bologna, Alfa, 1970, n. 63 and B. BOHN, *Ludovico's Last Decade*, in «Master Drawings», XXV, n. 3, 1987, p. 225.

²⁸ This phrase is taken from ADRIANO PROSPERI, *I tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari*, Torino, Einaudi, 1996, p. 21. MAURO CARBONI compellingly suggested its applicability to Bologna (*Le doti della 'povertà': famiglia, risparmio, previdenza: il Monte del Matrimonio di Bologna [1583-1796]*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1999, p. 17).

reminiscent of both Correggio and the late works of Ludovico Carracci, Valesio's teacher. Although the condition of the fresco makes such judgments tenuous, Valesio appears to demonstrate little interest in spatial illusionism here, portraying his figures with little volume and placing them in the foreground, with no evident indication of a background.

If his fresco for the monument to San Carlo Borromeo quickly became a well-known work in Bologna, this fate was not shared by Valesio's two other frescoes for the Archiginnasio. One fresco on the ground floor was cited only by Oretti: «Nella camera d[etta] la buja a canto la sud[detta] cappella il volto è dipinto dal Valesio».²⁹ No trace of this work remains today, since it occupied a portion of the Archiginnasio that was destroyed by bombing during World War II. It is impossible, without even a photo of the lost work, to judge the validity of Oretti's attribution of this fresco to the artist.

A third fresco (plates 6 and 7), also on the ground floor of the palace, has evidently never been attributed to any artist. Despite its prominent position in the vault of the entryway to the Archiginnasio, it is mentioned by none of the many writers who discussed the Archiginnasio's frescoes, apart from Sorbelli, who transcribed the inscriptions without mentioning an artist.³⁰

The fresco depicts an elaborate *concetto*: A large globe appears, set against a field of blue, in which a wind deity with inflated cheeks appears in each of the four corners. At the top, below a long banderole inscribed, «ADVOCAVIT BONONIAM TE COELVM DE SVRSVM», two putti carry a cardinal's hat. Below this, standing at the summit of the globe, are two female allegorical figures, representing Justice and Peace. These figures are clearly identifiable, both by their traditional attributes (Justice holds scales and a sword, whereas Peace holds an olive branch and a flame that is turned down to extinguish a collection of arms) and by the inscription on the smaller banderole that they jointly support.³¹ They flank a large golden escutcheon with

²⁹ M. ORETTI, *Le pitture cit.*, I, p. 10.

³⁰ ALBANO SORBELLI, *Le iscrizioni e gli stemmi dell'Archiginnasio*, Bologna, N. Zanichelli, 1916, I, p. 15. Sorbelli gives full transcriptions of all the inscriptions in the fresco.

³¹ It is inscribed: «IVSTITIA ET PAX PROPTER TE, SE SE OSCVLATAE SVNT».

a castle surmounted by an eagle, the arms of the Genoese Cardinal Benedetto Giustiniani. Below Giustiniani's arms, more putti support a large, inscribed banderole; and below this, three more heraldic escutcheons appear, surrounded with further inscribed banderoles. The three coats of arms on the lower register, moving from left to right, are those of Lima, Peru (with the three Magi); the city of Bologna; and Didacus de Leon Garavito (with helmet, rampant lions, and arrows). At lower right, the last inscription also supplies the date of the monument: 1607.

As the inscription in the cartouche at lower right explains, the monument celebrates the accomplishments of Didacus de Leon Garavito, the first student at the university of Bologna to come from the Americas. A student in the faculty of jurists, who was born in «Novo Orbe» and came to Bologna from Lima, Peru, Garavito commissioned and paid for the fresco in 1607, the year that he was named to the high office of «priore dei giuristi». In 1607, Cardinal Benedetto Giustiniani was papal legate to Bologna (he served from 1606-1611), which explains his prominent acknowledgement in the fresco. A letter from Giustiniani, written in July of 1607, expresses the Cardinal's approval of the work.³² Although this is Garavito's only commissioned monument in the Archiginnasio, his historical importance as the first «American» incorporated in the increasingly global reach of the university is confirmed by the recurrence of his coat of arms in six places on the walls of the Archiginnasio.³³

Although there is no record of the artist who executed the fresco for Garavito, that artist was surely Giovanni Luigi Valesio, whose authorship is indicated by several factors. First and foremost, the style of the fresco is characteristic of Valesio's early Correggesque-Ludovichian manner, with its small, oval faces, elongated bodies, inattention to anatomy beneath the draperies, and disinterest in spa-

³² This letter, which is part of manuscript B.1303 in the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna, was published by GUALTIERO TONELLI, *Una 'memoria' nell'Archiginnasio al primo studente venuto dalle Americhe all'Università di Bologna*, «Strenna storica bolognese», VIII, 1958, p. 265-273.

³³ *Ivi*, p. 272.

tial illusionism. The composition, with its symmetrical arrangement of putti, allegorical figures, and escutcheons, is similar to many of Valesio's heraldic engravings, such as the *Coat of Arms of Cardinal Facchinetti with Allegorical Figures* (plate 8), a print that probably predates 1606.³⁴ The symmetrical compositions, exaggerated curvature created by the contrapposto stance, similar arm positions, turned heads, and rather fussy arrangement of the draperies are strikingly similar in both works.

A second compelling reason for attributing the fresco to Valesio is its characteristic iconographic inventiveness. In this fresco, commemorating the global reach of the university population in Bologna, with the first student from the Americas, the artist portrayed a globe, with the four cardinal directions indicated by the four winds in the corners. Although the fresco is damaged today, it is clear that the right side was originally darker than the golden tonality of the left, expressing the conceit that the dark, or unknown side of the globe that houses the Americas is now made visible and known, under the auspices of Cardinal Giustiniani, by the virtues of Justice and Peace. Thus Bologna is unified with distant Lima, through the arrival of Garavito, as their adjacent coats of arms express.

Although there is no written documentation of Valesio's responsibility for the Garavito fresco, his authorship is compellingly indicated by the style and iconography of the painting. In addition, it is tempting to speculate that Valesio's half-Spanish origins might have supported his connection to the Spanish-speaking Garavito. Valesio's successful invention in the Garavito fresco was probably influential in helping the artist to secure the subsequent commissions, only a few years later, for the *Monument to San Carlo Borromeo* and for the *Virtues* in the Palazzo Comunale.

In any case, the Garavito commission of 1607 provided the artist with the opportunity to create his most original large-scale monument

³⁴ A. BAERSON, *Le Peintre-Graveur* cit., XVIII, 227, n. 71; *The Illustrated Bartsch*, 40 (Commentary, Part 1), 1987, cit., n. 4002.125. Birke argued that these arms were probably those of Cardinal Antonio Fachinetti, who died in 1606, and also related the work stylistically to another engraving of 1602.

in fresco. Building upon his experience as an engraver with heraldic designs, the artist conceived a fresco that incorporated heraldic imagery, allegorical figures, and global references to express the broad geographical reach of Bologna's university community. Perhaps because Valesio was as yet unestablished as a fresco painter in 1607, his responsibility for the work was long forgotten. But the iconographic inventiveness of Valesio's fresco provides compelling evidence of the intellectual vitality and sophistication of this poet-painter of the Carracci school and reminds us of the close links between literary and artistic creativity during this period. Valesio's literary gifts were particularly well suited to meeting the needs of Bologna's intellectual university community, who would have been as unable to afford the high prices of Ludovico Carracci and Guido Reni as they were capable of appreciating the nuances of iconographic originality.

I am grateful to Dr. Pierangelo Bellettini for his support, assistance, and encouragement on this essay. I also wish to acknowledge my debt to Dr. Veronika Birke, who has done so much to restore modern critical awareness of Giovanni Luigi Valesio.