

A drawing by Ottavio Leoni:  
*the Portrait of the Duca Cesarini*



Bernardina Sani

**BILBOKO ARTE  
EDERREN MUSEOA  
MUSEO DE BELLAS  
ARTES DE BILBAO**

This text is published under an international Attribution–NonCommercial–NoDerivs Creative Commons licence (BY–NC–ND), version 4.0. It may therefore be circulated, copied and reproduced (with no alteration to the contents), but for educational and research purposes only and always citing its author and provenance. It may not be used commercially. View the terms and conditions of this licence at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-ncnd/4.0/legalcode>



Using and copying images are prohibited unless expressly authorised by the owners of the photographs and/or copyright of the works.

© of the texts: Bilboko Arte Ederren Museoa Fundazioa–Fundación Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao

### **Photography credits**

- © Archivio Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria": fig. 8
- © Biblioteca Marucelliana. Su autorizzazione del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Ne é vietata ogni ulteriore riproduzione o elaborazione: figs. 4, 7, 9, 10 and 11
- © Bilboko Arte Ederren Museoa Fundazioa–Fundación Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao: figs. 1 and 2  
Cortesía Bernardina Sani: fig. 12
- © Genova, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe di Palazzo Rosso: figs. 18 and 20
- © Roma Istituto nazionale per la Grafica. Per gentile concessione del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali: figs. 3, 5 and 6
- © 2012. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: fig. 19

Text published in:

*Buletina = Boletín = Bulletin*. Bilbao : Bilboko Arte Eder Museoa = Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao = Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, no. 6, 2012, pp. 113-149.

Sponsor:



**metro bilbao**

...but he who has made the most study in Rome is el Paduano, by not allowing any person in a position of dignity to go without being drawn in pencil, on blue paper, with its highlighting, with which he adorned his studio and on which he afterwards painted in colours

Francisco Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, 1649

Lines drawn with a soft black lead pencil on blue paper profile the face of a young gentleman wearing a doublet, the height of 17th-century fashion, adorned with a typical ruff from the early years of the century. Offering a detailed, realistic study of the physiognomy and the character of the sitter, the drawing is at the same time an explicit confirmation of the correct attribution to Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630) of the *Portrait of the Duca Cesarini* now in the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum [fig. 1]. The drawing came from the Boussac Collection in Paris, auctioned at the Georges Petit gallery in May 1926; from there it became part of the collection of José Palacio and, in 1954, María de Arechavaleta bequeathed it to the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum. Despite changing hands so often, the attribution to the Roman artist has remained unchanged. Crisanto Lasterra published the drawing's file in the Museum catalogue and, when she studied it, Ana Sánchez-Lassa identified the person portrayed as the Duke Giovanni Giorgio II (c. 1590-1635), of the Cesarini family<sup>1</sup>, suggesting that it had been executed some time around 1620. Unlike many of Leoni's drawings, this one bears neither date nor series number, inscriptions considered to be the marks of a probable group classification. However, on the back there is an almost illegible inscription written in pen and sepia ink: "S. Duca Cesarini" with final flourish or, possibly, "S.r Duca Cesarino" [fig. 2]. Inscriptions of this type are frequently found on the backs of the painter's drawings<sup>2</sup> and are not usually considered as genuine signatures. Instead

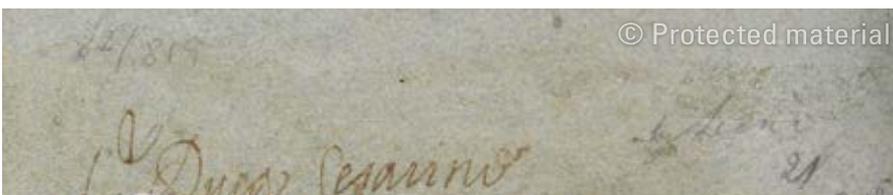
---

1 Lasterra 1969, p. 176, cat. 45-a; Sánchez-Lassa 2005 (the text refers erroneously to Giovanni Giorgio I, but the dating, which is correct, coincides with Giovanni Giorgio II).

2 Sani 2005, passim. The drawing on blue paper has been cut off on the right-hand side. There are thick strokes of black pencil and black grease pencil on grey-blue paper. Also appreciable are some very light touches of lead white on the nose and eyes. Flesh tones are treated as if they were seen under an intense light, but the remains of lead white are imperceptible. The lips involve slight strokes of black grease pencil. A few touches of pencil sketch the dimple between lips and goatee. On the use of blue paper in the drawings of Ottavio Leoni, see Tordella 2007, pp. 9-30.



1. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of the Duca Cesarini*, c. 1616  
Soft black lead pencil on blue laid paper, 21 x 14.9 cm  
Bilbao Fine Arts Museum  
Inv. no. 82/819



2. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of the Duca Cesarini*  
Bilbao Fine Arts Museum  
Inscription on back (detail)

they are generally attributed to some collector who probably owned the majority of Leoni's drawings. These annotations, which are important because they tell us who the sitter is, may of course have been added in the artist's studio, presumably by an assistant.

What this essay seeks to do is provide a new analysis of the drawing that emphasizes its function as a preliminary sketch for a portrait in oils and examines the pencil and lead white technique, prelude to the portrait *aux trois-crayons*. Furthermore, as a sort of continuation of research into Ottavio Leoni that has consolidated his status as an interpreter of the varying components of 16th- and 17th-century Roman society, I also concentrate on the artist's relationship with the Cesarini family, emphasizing the bonds between the most solidly established portrait painter in Rome in the early decades of the 17th century and a leading family of the Roman nobility that produced some outstanding patrons and collectors of art. The image of the duke Cesarini Leoni offers is an essential document of the artist's poetic manner and practice, as he portrayed the members of the great Roman families to preserve their memory or to celebrate the power and the glory that was theirs or the grand marriages they entered into; all this, bearing in mind several conditioning figurative factors, from the different senses of naturalism to the problems of expression proper to a Roman Baroque suffused with Classicism.

## Giovanni Baglione, the first source of information about Ottavio Leoni

Modern historiography has once again shed light on Ottavio Leoni's role in the development of the portrait between Mannerism and the Baroque thanks to the information and judgements conveyed by Giovanni Baglione [fig. 3], painter and art essayist who in 1642 published *Le Vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti* (Lives of Painters, Sculptors and Architects)<sup>3</sup>. In this key work on 17th-century Roman artists, Baglione includes the biographies of Ottavio Leoni [figs. 4 and 5], and his father, Lodovico (Padua, 1542-Rome, 1612) [fig. 6], known as *il Padovano*. Lodovico, a famous illustrator of medals who struck the likenesses of the University of Padua's leading professors, moved to Rome to further develop his professional career and work as engraver in the Pontifical Mint<sup>4</sup>; in his time in Padua, and also during his stay in Rome, he produced *ritratto in piccolo* (portraits in miniature), particularly small wax portraits, of which there are numerous examples amongst Paduan artists like Francesco Segala and Antonio Abondio, greatly appreciated at the Habsburg court. Although born in Rome, Ottavio never renounced his citizenship of Padua; he also inherited his father's nickname of *il Padovano* or, sometimes, *il Padovanino*, which has frequently led specialists to confuse him with the painter from the Veneto Alessandro Varotari. A contextual analysis of the two artists, father and son, reveals a number of interesting aspects of Roman society and culture as the 16th century came to a close and the 17th century began. Baglione stresses the dependence of the son on his father, to the point where they always lived together at their home on the strada Paolina, near the via Margutta and the piazza del Popolo, a street, and indeed a district, that was home to many painters; father and son shared the house until Lodovico's death. This close relationship explains the extent of the medallist's influence on the son's decision to become primarily a portrait painter, despite not occupying one of the foremost places in the hierarchy of a genre that suffered a sort of censorship after the Council of Trent, when Cardinal Paleotti considered it to be a type of portrayal acceptable only for honourable motives<sup>5</sup>.

---

3 Baglione 1995, vol. I (facsimile repro.), p. 321 [223].

4 Ibid, pp. 144-145; Sani 2005, pp. 21-24.

5 Genre coding and their scale of values are included in a letter by the marquis Giustiniani to Théodore Amayden. See Giustiniani 1981, p. 42. On the Counter-Reformation's theories concerning the genre of the portrait, see Paleotti 1961.



3. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of Giovanni Baglione*, 1620  
 Burin and drypoint, 14.5 x 11.3 cm  
 Istituto nazionale per la Grafica/Calcografia Nazionale, Rome  
 Gabinetto delle stampe  
 Inv. no. FC93026



4. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Self-Portrait*  
 Black pencil, sanguine and white chalk on blue paper. 23.5 x 17 cm  
 Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence  
 Vol. H, no. 1

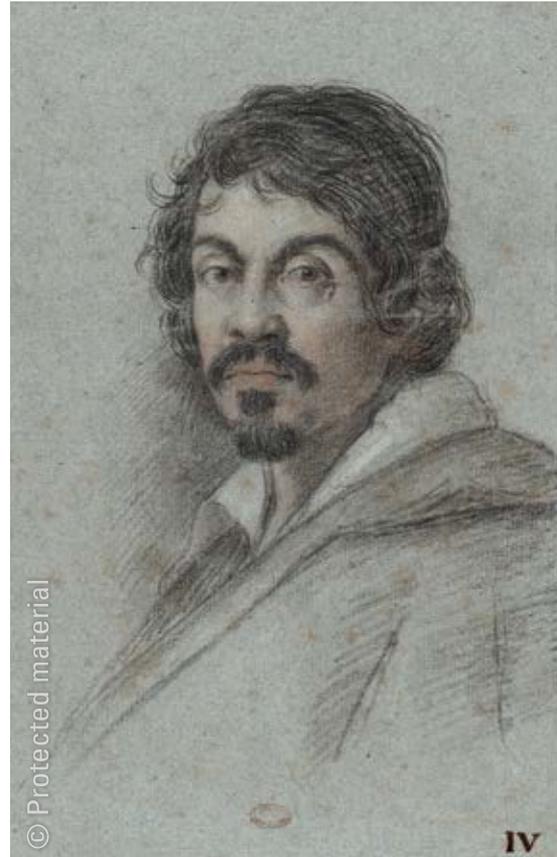


5. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Self-Portrait*, 1625  
 Burin and drypoint, 14.5 x 11.4 cm  
 Istituto nazionale per la Grafica/Calcografia Nazionale, Rome  
 Gabinetto delle stampe  
 Inv. no. FC93028



6. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of Ludovico Leoni*, 1625  
 Burin and drypoint, 14.4 x 11.2 cm  
 Istituto nazionale per la Grafica/Calcografia Nazionale, Rome  
 Gabinetto delle stampe  
 Inv. no. FC93027

7. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of Michelangelo Merisi, known as "Caravaggio"*  
Black pencil, sanguine and white chalk on blue paper, 23.5 x 16.5 cm  
Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence  
Vol. H, no. 4



Although at the beginning of the new century Baglione and Ottavio Leoni had taken opposing sides in theoretical skirmishes between painters, Baglione's biography of the artist was remarkably positive. It is worth recalling the events of 1603 because they give us an idea of the people he was in contact with and of Leoni's ideas and preferences at the time. Baglione accused architect Onorio Longhi and painters Michelangelo Merisi, "Caravaggio" [fig. 7], Orazio Gentileschi and Filippo Trisegni of having composed libellous verses about him. When the lawsuit came to court, Tommaso Salini testified about a note written in the hand of Orazio Gentileschi and Ottavio Leoni that feature the verses of the accused. During interrogation, Caravaggio answered that he knew of Ottavio Leoni but had never actually spoken to him<sup>6</sup>. Despite Caravaggio's declaration, the case shows how much in tune Leoni was with the Caravaggian painters, although the naturalism and the observation of ordinary people to be found in his portraits *aux trois-crayons*, where he portrays women from the popular classes, were only one of the multifarious seams of his work<sup>7</sup>. I would like to mention here the *Portrait of Ginevra Manfroni* [fig. 8] dating from 1621, which displays a remarkable realism. The very young girl gives the impression of being dressed in the typical fashion of ordinary Roman women (the *mezzaroba*), but her surname refers to a family of the nobility<sup>8</sup>. In this case the realist vein of Leoni's drawing seems to be in line with the object of making studies from the life typical of the leading figures of the Baroque, and Bernini in particular [fig. 9], with whom Ottavio Leoni was in contact at the time.

6 Sani 2005, pp. 56-62.

7 Ibid, pp. 56-66.

8 On the Manfroni family, see Amayden 1987, p. 94. Ginevra Manfroni was daughter of Florentine nobleman Camillo del Palagio and Alessandra Falconieri. She married Flaminio Pichi and, later, Antonio Manfrone (Tordella 2011, p. 119). Two types of sanguine are present in the drawing.



8. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of Ginevra Manfroni*, 1621  
Black pencil, sanguine and white chalk on blue paper, 23.2 x 16.2 cm  
Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria", Florence  
Inv. no. 734

A primary source for any attempt to reconstruct the artist's movements, Baglione's "Life" of Leoni<sup>9</sup> interprets the painter's success from a social perspective when he states that he "portrayed not only the Popes of the age, but also the Cardinal princes and the gentlemen of the nobility and of any other condition"<sup>10</sup>, an option he chose under the direction of his father, described as a man who "walked ever the path of honour and had dealings with the nobility; and had friendships with persons of high rank."<sup>11</sup> The painter and author of treatises on art attributes to Leoni a special role in the genre of the Roman portrait, distinguishing the portraits "in black pencil on turquoise paper with touches of chalk of great skill and very similar [to those] touches of sanguine that seem coloured and of flesh", a procedure that matured in Rome in the early Baroque. He also shows that Leoni's painting was fairly wide-ranging: he mentions a series of altar pieces or retables, most of which are still on view in Roman churches, and that he produced, in the chapel of Saint Anicetus, scenes from the life of the saint<sup>12</sup>, while also alluding to an enormous number of portraits in oil that the painter apparently executed for the leading Roman families, portraying princes, cardinals and even popes; but from his words we may deduce that his drawn portraits were of higher quality than those done in oils, even when the latter, "of fine technique and great likeness", accomplished their mission of making memory last and when in the palaces of Roman princes and noblemen they made up whole galleries.

With the 1642 life, Ottavio Leoni took a prominent place in the history of art that he retains even today, as a first-class portrait artist, specializing in three-pencil portraits and a "virtuoso" devoted to large and small format commemorative iconography. Baglione's text is important in this respect, as it shows that the interest

---

9 Baglione 1995, p. 321 [223].

10 Ibid, p. 321 [223].

11 Ibid, p. 145.

12 Ibid, p. 322 [224].



9. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of Gianlorenzo Bernini*  
Black pencil, sanguine and white chalk on blue paper, 23.5 x 16.5 cm  
Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence  
Vol. H, no. 15

in the portrait as a means of transmitting memory was not confined to the large scale, full-length or bust portrait, oriented towards display in the galleries of the palaces of pontiffs and nobles, but was also done in smaller formats to feature in studies and libraries, where smaller portraits and drawn and engraved portraits were usually hung. A propos this latter form, not limited to illustrative plates for folders but actually intimately related to the art of printing, as it provided images for the title pages of books, Baglione himself testifies to the importance of Ottavio Leoni when he recalls that, with the practice of the etched and burin engraving, he carried off a "task of great virtuosity"<sup>13</sup>, which, in the biographer's words, led to the painter's death from the poisoning caused by the acids he had so profusely used. Indeed, the etching and the burin engraving are a highly valuable part, in terms of representation and rendering, of the body of the artist's oeuvre, stressing the painstaking characterization of the sitter and, in formal terms, concentrating on the careful grading of the inking to set off the values of light. This experience makes him one of the innovators of the art of engraving and something of a groundbreaker in Roman intellectual research and experimentation around the time of Urban VIII's papacy.

Ottavio Leoni began his experiments towards the end of the second decade of the century, some years before 1624, when the Frenchman Claude Mellan (who achieved some notable results, principally when working for the Barberini) arrived in Rome<sup>14</sup>. Critics agree that the Roman artist's graphic experiments would seem to have oriented Anton van Dyck<sup>15</sup>. In line with Baglione, there is good reason to think that Leoni, through his experiences in engraving and the portrait *aux trois-crayons*, actually laid the foundations of the Baroque portrait *aux trois-crayons*, which, at the time the *Lives* was printed, had acquired its mature formula with

---

13 Ibid, p. 322 [224].

14 Rome 1989.

15 Luijten 1999, pp. 73–91.

the works of Gianlorenzo Bernini and Rubens. In terms of expression and technique, Leoni's work anticipates the production of these great artists, through the grading of the black pencil associated with lead white and chalk, with the later addition of sanguine to achieve maximum realism in the flesh tones. Leoni clearly comes within the frame of the 16th- and 17th-century debate on coloured drawing and on the potential of sanguine.

## What Francisco Pacheco thought of Ottavio Leoni

The other source that has enabled us to assess and evaluate Ottavio Leoni properly is the painter Francisco Pacheco, who, in his treatise *Art Of Painting*, published in 1649, in the chapter entitled "On the painting of animals and birds, fishing and the still life and on the ingenious invention of portraits from the life", describes the development of the portrait drawn *aux trois-crayons*, the origins of which he attributes to Leonardo da Vinci:

Also making portraits in drawing were the great Leonardo de Vinchi, Federico Zúcaro, Enrique Golzio, the *Caballero* Josefino, but he who has made the most study in Rome is *el Paduano*, by not allowing any person in a position of dignity to go without being drawn in pencil, on blue paper, with its highlighting, with which he adorned his studio and on which he afterwards painted in colours<sup>16</sup>.

Pacheco wrote his treatise between 1634 and 1638, after Leoni's death, and he seems to have been very well informed, although not entirely up to the minute. He insists with several artists who, though important, do not represent the excellence of the portrait in drawing of the age; furthermore, he actually makes no mention of Rubens or Bernini. Pacheco's son-in-law, Diego Velázquez, had been in Rome between 1629 and 1631, returning there in 1649, but one doesn't get the impression that it was he who provided the painter and writer from Seville with his information. Precisely because Pacheco is so attached to the culture of the late 16th century and is clearly well informed on the portrait *aux trois-crayons*, but much less so about the portrait in general, the only Spanish artists he mentions are Antonio Moro, Alonso Sánchez and Felipe Liaño, and of the Italians only Sante Peranda and Scipione Pulzone, nicknamed "Scipione da Gaeta" or "Gaetano". This confirms his interest in late 16th-century Italian culture after the Council of Trent, in both the arts and treatises on the arts. Scipione Pulzone is frequently considered to have been Ottavio Leoni's maestro, but the few surviving youthful works by Leoni hinders any in-depth analysis of the issue. One hypothesis worth considering is that Juan de Jáuregui, respected man of letters, translator of Tasso's *Amintas* and cited in *Arte de la pintura* as the author of pencil portraits in the chapter following the one in which Leoni appears, may well have had an important role as Pacheco's informant. Jáuregui was in Rome around 1607<sup>17</sup>, when Leoni was in the early phase of his career as an artist, which possibly justifies Pacheco's comments. Even so, I should stress a very important factor in understanding the function of collections of drawn portraits similar to the ones produced by Ottavio Leoni; take, for instance, the case of Pacheco himself, who in 1599 put together the book *Retratos de Illustres y Memorables varones* (Portraits of Illustrious and Memorable Men), a collection of portraits from the life complemented by brief texts about the illustrious sitters, in which we cannot but identify a tradition inaugurated by Paolo Giovio<sup>18</sup>, Bishop of Como, one that is also the basis of the drawings produced by Pacheco and Leoni alike.

---

<sup>16</sup> Pacheco 1990, p. 527.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, prologue by Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas, p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Giovio 1999.



10. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of Annibale Carracci*  
Black pencil and white chalk on blue paper, 23.5 x 16.5 cm  
Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence  
Vol. H, no. 2

Pacheco received information on the phase of Leoni's career that developed between the period of training with his father and his Roman experiences, in which the foremost influence was the example of the art of the drawn and engraved portrait given by Hendrick Goltzius, who was in Rome in 1591, invited there by Federico Zuccari. A painter and the author of drawings from the life, some of which are portraits, Goltzius may possibly have induced Leoni to work in a medium proper to the culture of the north, one that would provide him with models for drawing *aux trois-crayons* developed in the French culture of Clouet, Dumoustier and Lagneau. However, Federico Zuccari may well have been an even greater theoretical and practical influence. Zuccari's ties to Lodovico Leoni are no secret; in a letter to the nobleman and man of letters Pierleone Casella on 6 February 1606, he asks him to give his greetings to "Lodovico Padovano, Ottavio his son, excellent portrait artist in miniature."<sup>19</sup> Such testimony is highly significant for the light it sheds on relations between artists and between artists and men of letters. Furthermore, Zuccari being a painter who re-launched the academy of Saint Luke, the role of Leoni father and son in the affairs of the Roman academy is also easier to understand, especially Ottavio, who held several posts, in particular that of prince (Ottavio was admitted to the Academy very early on, in 1604, and was named prince of the academy in 1614 and again in 1627<sup>20</sup>).

At this juncture I should like to emphasize both Zuccari's theoretical side, as revealed in the statutes of the Academy he drafted in 1592, and his considerable international experience. As a theoretician, Zuccari gave enormous importance to drawing, distinguishing between internal drawings, more intellectual and oriented towards invention, and external drawings associated with the natural world. As the human being was the

---

19 Sani 2005, p. 34.

20 Ibid, pp. 66-72.

ultimate object of the natural world, it was inevitable that Zuccari should value the portrait and, logically, the drawn portrait, very highly. Via this painter at the court of Philip II who worked on the decoration of El Escorial monastery, Leoni received the stimulus he needed to start drawing from the life, like Zuccari in rapid portraits of his acquaintances, and this interest in being in contact with reality set Leoni off in the direction of portrait forms popular at the Academy of the Carracci in Bologna, when Annibale [fig. 10], Lodovico and Agostino Carracci portrayed from the life the apprentices working in their studio. From this contact with the experience of the Carracci, which fast transformed into Classicism, one of the cornerstones of 17th-century culture, Leoni would keep a permanently watchful eye on what Annibale's disciples Guido Reni and Domenichino were doing. But, even so, Zuccari's naturalistic orientations should continue to be considered essential to the artist's career; Leoni's attention never strayed from reality, and he was attracted by the extreme realism of Caravaggio, referred to above in the episode of the 1603 lawsuit, an experience that surfaced several times in Leoni's career and which obtained some notable results in a wide-ranging set of painstakingly drawn portraits of village women, on the backs of which are written the names of the sitters<sup>21</sup>.

Leoni appears to have forged his career by following different stylistic registers suitably adapted to themes and situations. With his experience at the court of Philip II, Zuccari was one of the transmitters of this interest in both painting from the life and the official portrait, the style of court portrait that had led to the sitter being crystallized in all his power and glory<sup>22</sup>. Still very young in 1599, Leoni could certainly have heard of a painter like Sofonisba Anguissola, as he had spent some time in Mantua at the court of the Gonzagas to portray Duke Vincenzo I, his wife Eleonora de' Medici and his sister Margarita, widow of Alphonse II of Este, Duke of Ferrara, who retired to Mantua to found the convent of the Ursulines, converted to all intents and purposes in a small court that even had a portrait gallery with paintings by Lucrina Fetti, sister of the famous artist Domenico Fetti. His experiences at the court of Mantua was important for the young painter, who during his time with the Gonzaga clan learnt how to manage the special features of painting the portraits of high-ranking personages. Together with the protection of Cardinals Alessandro Montalto and Francesco Maria del Monte, this experience enabled Leoni to make contact with the leading Roman families and use their portraits to experiment with the iconography in a range of technical registers, drawing, engraving and small and large-format painting. Leoni's loyal clientele included the Orsini family (remember the really beautiful portrait of Paolo Giordano Orsini, rendered from Berninian models) and the Altemps clan, which, apart from their palace chapel, commissioned him to produce portraits of the entire family. Today we only have the version in drawing, with a documentary value so precise that it is as if the painter followed the physical transformations of the sitter. He also worked for the Aldobrandini family from Florence, whose contribution to the Church was pope Clement VIII; the Borgheses, the family of Paul V; the Peretti, the head of the family being Cardinal Montalto, and the Barberinis, Urban VIII's family.

The study of relations between artists and heavyweights from the Curia and the Roman court is not limited to the creation of documentary images of great historical value, but also extends to the cultural ties, as these noble families were responsible for the sweeping transformation, in urban development, architecture and art, of the city of Rome. These were the years of the transition from the early, severest phase of the Counter-Reformation, when the portrait was also the object of censure by Cardinal Paleotti, to the explosion of Roman Baroque, and Leoni's links with these families greatly conditioned the way his drawings were

---

21 Sani 2005, pp. 62-66.

22 It should be remembered that the first phase of Ottavio Leoni's activity coincided with the time in Spain when portrait artists like Pantoja de la Cruz (c. 1553-1608) were active. On this point, see Kusche 1964, Kusche 2007, Jordan Gschwend/Pérez de Tudela 2008.

collected. Critics are unanimous in their positive assessments of the testimonies in Baglione's *Lives*, particularly in view of the author's proximity to the artist; likewise specialists have all accepted the idea that an enormous part of his drawn portraits were eventually housed in the collection of the prince Marcantonio Borghese: "and now the drawings are in the possession of the lord Prince Borghese", a well-founded statement as documentary proof exists of the acquisition by this powerful Roman family of works by Leoni, even though the sheets involved in the purchase are not actually detailed in the inventories<sup>23</sup>. However, we do not know whether, during the artist's lifetime, other collectors also collected images of Roman society, nor how, after his death, the portraits were scattered in more or less numerous groups now to be found in public and private collections in Europe and the United States. One of the bigger groups is now in the Département des arts graphiques at the Musée du Louvre and another in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, to which should be added the groups at the Biblioteca Marucelliana<sup>24</sup> and the Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria" in Florence. Also worthy of mention is the collection in the Drawing and Print Gallery at the Palazzo Rosso, or Red Palace, in Genoa.

These collections helped me to reconstruct Leoni's development as a draughtsman and his cultural links with major landmarks in Italian painting from Federico Zuccari to the Carraccis, Caravaggio and Bernini. However, his work in painting is still virtually unknown today. A few paintings on religious themes, on a list established by Baglione, are still in Rome, but portraits on canvas that can be attributed to him with any certainty are scarce. Kept in the most private areas of palaces or in the galleries of illustrious men, the large-scale portraits have been passed down from one generation to the next, valued largely for their commemorative significance, the name of the artist frequently forgotten; in some cases, not even the name of the sitter, passed on down the years by word of mouth, can be confirmed. Any portrait, whether drawn or done in oils, that comes to light from private collections or the market, captures the attention of scholars, and assumes its role as an historical document, particularly when it contains references to personalities with ties to Italian families in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and creates problems in a range of research areas, problems that go beyond the purely aesthetic aspect to refer to the history of images and the history of art collecting, not to mention Italian political history. Though the wealth of information in Baglione paints a broad canvas and is useful in reconstructing the history of Leoni's portraits as a whole, Pacheco's opinion is valuable because he places Leoni at the end point of the evolution of the drawn portrait in modern Europe. With fundamentally critical intent, he traces a line that begins with Leonardo and continues with Federico Zuccari, Hendrick Goltzius and the Cavaliere d'Arpino.

## The portraits of the three Cesarini brothers: the Duke, the Cardinal and the poet

The *Portrait of the Duca Cesarini* at the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum is a telling reminder of the relationship between the artist and a powerful Roman family that achieved noble title in the late 15th century and constructed its own access to power by claiming descent from the Caesars<sup>25</sup>. For generations, the Cesarini family monopolized the office of *Gonfaloniere* of Rome and, in 1585, Sixtus V elevated the city of Civitanova, in the

---

23 Baglione 1995, p. 321 [223]; Robbin 1996, pp. 453-458.

24 Some of the portraits in the Biblioteca Marucelliana reproduced here [figs. 4, 7 and 10] featured recently in an exhibition held at the Palazzo Galavresi, in Caravaggio (see Caravaggio 2010).

25 Calcaterra 2004, p. 35. See also Sickel 2007.



11. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of Galileo Galilei*  
 Black pencil, sanguine and white chalk on blue paper, 23.5 x 16.5 cm  
 Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence  
 Vol. H, no. 18



12. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of Cardinal Alessandro Cesarini, 1627*  
 Black pencil, sanguine and white chalk on blue paper, 23.1 x 16.5 cm  
 Present whereabouts unknown

Marche, to the status of dukedom. Civitanova was in the family's possession together with the castles of Genzano, Lanuvio and Ardea, not far from Rome<sup>26</sup>. In an accentuated process of return to the feudal regime, the Cesarini became dukes in the last year of the life of the Marquis Giovanni Giorgio I (1550-1585) and, to all effects, the first Duke was Giuliano II (1572-1613). The Cesarini family was ever distinguished by its urge to collect artworks and antiques<sup>27</sup>, activities to which Giovanni Giorgio I, Giuliano II and the Duke Giovanni Giorgio II (c. 1590-1635) devoted themselves, as did Livia Cesarini (1646-1711), after her controversial marriage to Federico Sforza, which marked the beginning of the house of Sforza Cesarini. Another notable family member was Virginio Cesarini (1595-1624), brother to Duke Giovanni Giorgio II and the third of the brothers, who was respected in scientific and literary circles. Virginio was a poet in Latin and vulgate, a member of the Linceana academy, a friend of Galileo Galilei [fig. 11] and Maffeo Barberini, greatly esteemed by the latter and his court, while the second, Alessandro (1592-1644), brother to Giovanni Giorgio II and Virginio, ascended to the cardinalate in 1627. Plenty of documentary evidence is available to show that the Cesarini were loyal patrons of Leoni: they enjoyed the work of Lodovico Leoni and, later, the work his son produced. A portrait of Clelia Cesarini by Lodovico is mentioned in a letter by Emilio dei Cavalieri to Bianca Capello dated 1 October 1582, and a small oval portrait of Clelia by Ottavio's father was exhibited in the Tribuna of the Uffizi<sup>28</sup>. This is Clelia Farnese, wife to the Marquis Giovanni Giorgio I, who much appreciated

26 Petrucci 1999, pp. 229-230.

27 Buttarò 2004.

28 Sani 2005, p. 22.



13. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of a Gentleman*, 1607  
 Black pencil and lead white on grey paper, 22.2 x 15.3 cm  
 Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin  
 Inv. no. 17070



14. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of a Gentleman with Hat*  
 Black pencil and lead white on grey paper, 21.3 x 15.5 cm  
 Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin  
 Inv. no. 17158

the virtuous arts of the Paduan medallist; besides being symbols of the close political alliance between the Cesarini and the Farnese, these works are the reminder of a cultural link between the Cesarini, the Farnese and the Medici families<sup>29</sup>. Of Alessandro Cesarini we have a superb image Ottavio Leoni produced on the occasion of his designation as cardinal, a drawing that captures with great delicacy the noble authority of the personage and which gives the impression of having been inspired by the classical-style portraits produced by Guido Reni and Domenichino. It is probably a study for a painted portrait, but which, like many other drawings, has also achieved the autonomy proper to a collectable object, as is clear from the series number and the date corresponding to the designation.

If we compare the *Portrait of Cardinal Alessandro Cesarini*<sup>30</sup> (with the number "380" inscribed on it with the date "settembre", or September, in the lower left part and "1627" in the central part) with the *Portrait of the Duca Cesarini* in the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, with no series number or date, we see that the latter shows less precision in the presentation of the body, a detail that suggests the drawing may be a mere study for a portrait and was not designed as an object for collection. The painter concentrates on the face, while the barely outlined bust is rendered without particular care; the drawing of the huge ruff blurs at the sides and behind the head, thus helping to highlight the head. Sarcastically known as a "lettuce", the ruff characterises

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>30</sup> Inscription on the upper part in pen and sepia ink: "Card.e Cesarino" (possibly not autograph); in the lower part: "380 / settembre" "1627"; and on the back: "card. Cesarino". The drawing came onto the London art market many years ago and we are unaware of its present whereabouts.



15. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of a Gentleman*  
 Black pencil and lead white on grey paper, 20.3 x 14.3 cm  
 Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin  
 Inv. no. 17086



16. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of a Young Man*, 1611  
 Black pencil and lead white on blue paper, 21.2 x 14.8 cm  
 Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin  
 Inv. no. 462

in various ways the portraits of gentlemen drawn by Ottavio and fulfils a function not exclusively iconographic; besides reflecting social position, it also takes on a compositional value that helps to present the sitter in the way best adapted to his condition and character. The clothes glimpsed in the drawing were fashionable in the late 16th century and may be identified as a jerkin, marked by slashed shoulder pads. In male dress, a doublet with a "lettuce" at the neck was worn under the jerkin<sup>31</sup>. One of the first drawings to feature a voluminous, painstakingly described ruff is the *Portrait of a Gentleman* in Berlin's Kupferstichkabinett [fig. 13]<sup>32</sup>, which plays with the grey, black and white tones, and is dated 1607. In this work the collar is of almost geometric precision. Less detailed but equally effective in the presentation of the face, we come across it again in the *Portrait of a Gentleman with Hat* in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin [fig. 14]. As we know from the almost erased inscription on the back ("S.<sup>r</sup> Bonifazio Caietano"), the gentleman in question is a member of the Roman family of the Caietani, whose family tree has multiple branches and which wed into the Cesari family: the Duke Giovanni Giorgio II married Cornelia Caietani after long negotiations. In the drawing, the tight touches of lead white echo the lights of the face and bring out the drawing against the grey background of the paper. In another *Portrait of a Gentleman* in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin [fig. 15] the ruff drawn three-quarters follows the line of the torso and marks a slight contrast with the face, accentuating the force of the eyes. In this drawing too, the lead-white brings out the physiognomy against the background, which contains all the shades of grey graded to black.

31 Giorgetti [1992?], pp. 206, 208. For 16th century dress, see also Levi Pisetzky 1964-1969, vol. II (1966).

32 The paper has filigree in the shape of a rhombus.



17. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of Francesco Peretti*, 1619  
 Black pencil and lead white on blue-grey paper, 22.4 x 15.2 cm  
 Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin  
 Inv. no. 17078



18. Ottavio Leoni (1578-1630)  
*Portrait of the Marquis Paris Spinelli*, 1622  
 Black pencil, lead white and sanguine on grey paper, 22.7 x 15.5 cm  
 Museo di Palazzo Rosso, Genoa  
 Inv. no. 2414

In this context, the *Portrait of a Young Man*, dated 1611 in the lower central part and in Berlin's Kupferstichkabinett, stands out for compositional and stylistic reasons [fig. 16]. This is one of the portraits Ottavio Leoni executed with delicate, agile strokes, small and precise as lace; the moustache ends curving upwards and the stiff hair express a youthful joie de vivre. And in this subtle play, which reveals the artist's mature mastery, the ruff with white flecks on the chest attracts the viewer's gaze, while, behind the head, one hardly makes out the blue background forming a sort of halo. In this case the drawing on a clear blue background can be distinguished from the ones from the last decade of the 16th century and the first of the 17th century, involving marked black pencil strokes that contrast strongly with the blue paper, giving rise to a different modality. The ruff is not always almost exaggeratedly wide and ample; when it is small it also frames the face, emphasizing the expression, as in the *Portrait of Francesco Peretti* [fig. 17], a member of Cardinal Alessandro Peretti di Montalto's family who was friend and patron to Lodovico and Ottavio Leoni, and who is identified from the inscription on the back. The paper is dated 1619, the number 151 and the inscription "etat", possibly with the intention of adding the sitter's age.

In this series of portraits which goes from 1607 to 1619 the predominant features are the black pencil lines highlighted by lead white applied on blue paper, with the consequent contrast; around the end of the second decade, however, sanguine—as we have seen in the portrait of Cardinal Alessandro Cesarini—appears more and more often. Sanguine is a red pencil, which, from the late 16th century, was considered more suited to flesh tones, as it gives body and colour to drawings that until then featured a virtuoso play of mo-

nochrome tonalities in a scale of greys. From that moment, the ruff, large or small, drawn with precision or hinted at by small chalk stains, becomes the basic element in the composition of portraits, elegant, expressive and with a noble pose that invites us to see in these masterpieces something akin to sculptured busts. This is particularly appreciable in the *Portrait of the Marquis Paris Spinelli* [fig. 18], dated "18/genaro/1622" (18 January 1622), and also in the *Portrait of a man* in the Gallery of the Red Palace in Genoa (inv. no. 2421).

This brief roll call of male portraits, whose faces are very close to the one in *Portrait of a Gonfaloniere*, signed and dated by Artemisia Gentileschi in 1622 and now in the municipal collections of art in the Palazzo d'Accursio in Bologna, provides an opportunity for comparisons with the *Portrait of Duca Cesarini* in Bilbao to achieve an accurate identification of the sitter and the date of the work. Clearly the painter is interested exclusively in physical appearance; composition is not a concern here. It is therefore a preparatory study for a painted portrait, completely unmotivated by a desire to produce something "collectable". The young duke's face is represented with precision: elegant black pencil strokes draw wavy, uncombed hair summarily framing a smooth white face, a sign of the subject's youth and the painter's great ability for synthesis, which does not relegate more characteristic features to the background. The eyes have been captured at a moment of particular attention and one might say that the lips are almost close to speech. This is evidence of the importance in Roman circles, before Bernini's sculptures even, of the problems concerning the representation of the "snapshot" expression, in which Ottavio Leoni and Simon Vouet were closely involved<sup>33</sup>. On the back, the inscription "S.<sup>r</sup> Duca Cesarini" is written in a hand that recurs in many of the artist's drawings, which obviously formed part of a group and probably belonged in the same collection. The drawing could possibly have been produced as the study of a head for a full-length portrait, a sketch the artist made with the sitter before him and which Baglione called *ritratti alla macchia* (stain portrait).

To date no painted portrait of the Duke Cesarini has been found, although documents testify to its existence. Essential in this regard is the artist's own will, which is the original cause of the dispersal of his goods and assets and of the drawings in his

studio at his death. In his will, he named as his heirs Caterina, his wife, and Ippolito, her son, adopted by Ottavio, who took the surname Leoni and worked as a portraitist, also with a preference for the portrait *aux trois-crayons*. On 3 September 1630, when the will was opened, the inventory was begun of the goods at the dead man's home. And in the list of possessions in the living room, which was probably used a workplace as well as a reception room, we find "forty-four paintings of heads, some finished and others not finished, of Cardinals and other portraits". Amongst these portraits is "An entire portrait of the Lord Duke Cesarini"<sup>34</sup>, proof that Leoni had painted one of those monumental, full-length portraits that hung on the walls of princely homes and which usually went on to form portrait galleries. We may imagine that the sitter either wore armour or, even more likely, that he was richly dressed. The presence of the portrait of Duke Cesarini at Leoni's house may mean it was a model the artist conserved to help him finish other portraits for the Duke's and his family's other houses, and the documentary reference also reminds us that Ottavio Leoni, known today above all as a master of the portrait *aux trois-crayons*, had also consolidated his position as a portraitist of the Roman nobility and was part of the phenomenon of the official portrait, which had developed and peaked in the mid-16th century, to take on the new connotations of the court portrait in the 17th century.

---

33 On the talking portrait, see Sutherland Harris 1992; Sani 2005, pp. 153-159.

34 Sani 1996, p. 63; the document has also been published in Robbin 2000, p. 84.

Leoni is heir to the great Italian tradition of the portrait that runs from Raphael to Titian and Bronzino, but for the houses of the Roman nobility he usually adapted his models to the ones most in fashion and recurrent in the Empire and which filtered through to Italy via a host of channels. The portraits in oils by Ottavio Leoni that have come down to us do not include representations of gentlemen, with portraits of Cardinals prevailing, like the *Portrait of Cardinal Toschi* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), the *Portrait of Scipione Borghese* (Musée Fesch, Ajaccio) and the *Portrait of Cardinal Sacrati Strozzi* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara), from which we may also verify that the artist composed all his images in perfect harmony with the role of the sitter, as if they were "portraits of social types like the masks of the *Commedia dell'arte*"<sup>35</sup>. A more profound knowledge of the art of the Roman portrait, which the private nature of the works makes more difficult, would be essential in understanding how Leoni proceeds when formulating the full-length image of the body, bearing in mind that a prince of the papal court was first and foremost an armed soldier whose role involved defending Catholicism.

Although the inventories published to date do not record the presence in the Cesarini and Sforza Cesarini collections of any portrait of the Duke Cesarini<sup>36</sup>, the 1687 inventory of the paintings of Federico Sforza and Livia Cesarini, published by Benocci, extends the traces of the collaboration between Ottavio Leoni and this family, already commented on with reference to the portrait of Cardinal Alessandro. The inventory lists a *Portrait of Ranuccio Farnese* and another of his wife Margherita Aldobrandini, by *Padovano the elder*, probably a pseudonym for Ottavio Leoni, although one cannot completely rule out the possibility of it referring to his father Lodovico<sup>37</sup>. This citation helps me to clear up a problem concerning Ottavio Leoni's career that was left unsolved in my essay on the artist and which I now go back to, after having had the opportunity, thanks to the research done for the present article, to access the bibliography on the Sforza Cesarini family. The mention of "two portraits, one of Ranuccio Farnese and the other of his wife, by *Padovano the elder*, with smooth golden frame, *doblas* 4 sc. [escudos] 12" in part backs Detlef Heikamp's hypothesis that Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte had sent the portrait, by Ottavio Leoni, of Margherita Aldobrandini, future wife of Ranuccio Farnese, Duke of Parma, to Florence. Heikamp associates Leoni's name with the following comment made by the Cardinal: "I send to Y.S.H. the present portrait of the Duchess of Parma (if what is said is true) not knowing what greater and more beautiful thing to send you from here, and I do so that you may also see the excellence of the painter, who is a young protégé of mine, and who works better and is more diligent, and better sets down, beyond compare, the likeness than poor Scipione Gaetano". The powerful Cardinal, representative of the great Duke Fernando I de' Medici at the Roman Curia, apparently played the role of *maestro* or, more correctly, instructor, in respect of the young Leoni. Although several experts have investigated the portrait, no painting has appeared in Florentine collections that matches the citation in the inventory. The clue provided by the Sforza Cesarini collections thus becomes a subject for much further study, not only in analyzing the *Portrait of Duca Cesarini* but also in reconstructing the iconography of the family. Indeed, what happened in many other Roman families clearly happened in this case. Ottavio executed

---

35 Petrucci 2006: "The schema of the portrait thus is in perfect agreement with the role of the personality portrayed in society, in a mechanism of immediately intelligible recognition. Portraits of social types like the masks of the *Commedia dell'arte*, not individual identities".

36 Debenedetti 2008, pp. 69-99. Contacts with this author and with the curators at the Palazzo Sforza Cesarini have been entirely fruitless and I have been unable to visit the palace.

37 "ASR, Archivio Sforza Cesarini, I. parte busta 465:158. Doi ritratti, uno di Ranuccio Farnese e l'altro della moglie del Padovano vecchio, con cornice indorata liscia, doppie 4 sc.12". See Benocci 2001, pp. 101-129. This inventory note confirms Detlef Heikamp's hypothesis in the sense that Cardinal del Monte had sent Ottavio Leoni to Florence for him to make a portrait of Margherita Aldobrandini in view of the marriage negotiations then in progress. See Sani 2005, p. 41; above all Heikamp 1966, pp. 62-76. The Farnese were related to the Cesarini because Giovanni Giorgio I had married Clelia Farnese.

his first work and then continued doing portraits of other members of the family and even repeated some on more than one occasion. Aware of this, with regard to the identification of the sitter, I must say I agree with Ana Sánchez-Lassa, curator at the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, in that he is Giovanni Giorgio II, Duke of Civitanova (c. 1590-1635), while acknowledging that Ottavio Leoni's dates (1578-1630) would also be compatible with the Duke's father, Giuliano II (1572-1613). There are several reasons for accepting the identification as Giovanni Giorgio II: the look of the young subject differs from the mature physiognomy of Giuliano in the last decade of his life, as a portrait by an unidentified painter<sup>38</sup> shows him as thickset and corpulent. The stylistic features of the drawing recall, at the very least, the artist's early maturity, thus placing it at the end of the first decade of the 17th century or in the first half of the following decade, which suggests this is Giovanni Giorgio, first born of Giuliano II and Livia Orsini. I disagree slightly with Sánchez-Lassa's conclusions as regards the date, as I consider the portrait should be dated within the set of drawings executed with a grid for male portraits with "lettuce" ruff.

A propitious occasion for the execution of the portrait in oils seems to have arrived in 1616. That year the Duke married Cornelia Caetani, daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Sermoneta. The wedding took place in Civitanova and must have been a memorable event. The chronicles talk of the couple having their court in the city for a long period in the first half of the 17th century. The wedding itself, which was preceded by long negotiations between the Caetani and the Cesarini families<sup>39</sup>, was particularly lavish: there were theatre performances, set down in a work printed by Pietro Salvioni in Macerata and which is dedicated to Virginio Cesarini, brother of the groom; there was a theatrical interpretation of the adventure of the Argonauts in their search for the Golden Fleece, followed by a representation with figures of the coat of arms of the Cesarini and Caetani families combining poetry, music, song and dance in a show enhanced by some outstanding special effects: Pallas Athene appears in a cloud and in the sky the throne of Zeus with a black eagle representing the emblem of the Cesarini family; poetry was interspersed between choir performances<sup>40</sup>. The wedding was certainly a good moment for painting a full-length portrait, but a drawing could have been made previously and conserved for use whenever family occasions so required; Ottavio Leoni's ability to reproduce the sitter faithfully suggests the model would only be used for a relatively short time and that the painter would study the features of the person in question at different times in his life. A dating of the drawing close to that year, 1616, would have many stylistic arguments in favour. I think it was probably produced before the oil painting, which in turn might have been painted just before the wedding.

Having found the images of the two older brothers, Giovanni Giorgio and Alessandro, I decided to focus research on Virginio to see whether Ottavio Leoni had done a portrait of him too. I have no knowledge of the existence of any portrait where it states in writing that the sitter is Virginio Cesarini (1595-1624) and it is certainly striking that Ottavio Leoni did not include the image of this personage in the collection today in the Biblioteca Marucelliana in Florence, which contains portraits of Rome's leading artists, poets and scientists<sup>41</sup>. This collection possesses portraits of some excellent artists, including the famous one of Caravaggio and of Annibale Carracci, Guercino, Gianlorenzo Bernini and many others. Amongst the poets are Raffaello Chiabrera, whose poetry includes a work written to mark the death of the young Virginio; Marino, the most

---

38 See the reproduction in Rosini 2009. See also Montecosaro : percorsi di storia... 1995.

39 Rosini 2009.

40 See a small work entitled *Intermedi de' balli fatti per le nozze del Signor Giangiorgio Cesarini Duca di Cività Nuova e Gonfaloniere perpetuo del Popolo Romano e della Signora Cornelia Caetana* (Macerata : impr. Pietro Salvioni, 1616).

41 Kruff 1969; Sani 2005, pp. 172-180.

famous and controversial Italian poet of the Baroque and others; one of the scientists featured is Giovanni Ciampoli, a friend of Virginio Cesarini, who, like him, exchanged letters with Federico Cesi, founder of the Academia Linceana, set up to study the natural sciences using the experimental method. Ciampoli, Cesarini and Galileo Galilei, whose image is one of the illustrious presences in the Biblioteca Marucelliana, were all members of the Academy. Proof of the close connection between Virginio and Roman intellectual and scientific circles is that Galileo wrote *Il Saggiatore* as a dialogue with Virginio Cesarini. The collection of the Biblioteca Marucelliana may be considered a sort of Parnassus of Roman culture of the time of Urban VIII, conceived as a way of disseminating the images of the great players of Baroque culture. Ottavio Leoni had executed at different times series of portraits linked by a theme: one was devoted to artists and their relationship with the Academy of St. Luke. Barnes<sup>42</sup> interprets the series as an attempt to portray the illustrious men in the *Galeria* of Marino. In fact, one gets the impression that the various series by Ottavio Leoni had a rather more general purpose. The Biblioteca Marucelliana series is a collection of faces in which the artist imbues the action portrait and portraits expressing feelings and emotions with maximum expressiveness. Leoni works in a Roman context in which Simon Vouet and Gianlorenzo Bernini had promoted these experiments, and so masters expressions and attitudes that he is able to establish a dialogue with these artists, helping to establish the great Baroque art of the portrait in the process. The series is clearly informative in intent, as can be seen from the fact that their engravings are also shown with many of the portraits, the engravings always being executed in the same direction as the paintings and never in reverse prints.

It certainly strikes one as odd that in a series of this nature the artist did not include a portrait of Virginio Cesarini, despite the year of his death (1624) coinciding with the period when the painter was working on the series. One possible reason for this omission is that Virginio died very young, devoured by tuberculosis, at a time when his talent as a poet and scholar had yet to reach full maturity. The image of Virginio, third son of Giuliano II, would enable us to recall the links, to which we have referred more than once in this essay, between the Cesarini and Farnese families: Virginio, brother of Alessandro, was educated at the court of Parma, where he lived until 1610. The bust of him that Nava Cellini attributes to Duquesnoy and which Ann Sutherland Harris considers to be by the young Bernini, conveys the air of the thoughtful, fatally ill intellectual charged with *pathos*. This wonderfully attractive sculpture crowns the commemorative monument Urban VIII had built in the room of the Captains of the Palace of the Conservators on the Campidoglio<sup>43</sup>. This extraordinary sculpted portrait, which could be seen close up in the exhibition on Bernini and the birth of the Baroque portrait held at the Museum of the Bargello<sup>44</sup>, is not the only sure documentary source for the image of Virginio. There is also the one provided by Claude Mellan, who, in the frontispiece of the funeral address in memory of Virginio Cesarini delivered by the Jesuit Alessandro Gottifredi, engraved a portrait of the dead man with an extraordinary likeness to the Bernini bust, although without the lynx skin announcing his membership of the Academia Linceana. Another image features in the edition of the *Carmina* of Cesarini printed in Rome in 1658, where Virginio is portrayed with the lynx skin in an engraving by Giovanni Battista Bonacina [fig. 19].

These two engravings familiarise us with the representative techniques that Ottavio Leoni experimented with, but neither of the images compare with the Roman artist's own engravings. The *ethos* and the *pathos*

---

42 Barnes 1989.

43 Sutherland Harris 1989. Daniel Freedberg has opted for the François Duquesnoy attribution. See Freedberg 1994.

44 Bacchi/Montanari 2009.



19. Giovan Battista Bonacina after a drawing by Gregorio Tomasini  
*Portrait of Virginio Cesarini*  
 In Carmina, Rome, 1658  
 Vatican Apostolic Library, Rome  
 Inv. no. Impr. Chigi, 69

that emerge from these figures are extraordinarily intense, and the *pathos* can also be seen in a portrait by Anton van Dyck in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. Seated in a *cathedra*, the subject turns towards an interlocutor, a pose that recalls the one in the *Portrait of Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio* by Van Dyck, although from the features Freedberg identifies the sitter as Virginio<sup>45</sup>. Van Dyck was in Rome from February to June 1622 and from March to November 1623, time enough for him to produce a portrait of the already ill third Cesarini brother, friend of Maffeo Barberini. The situation makes it likely that poet and painter met and it is clear that the features and the expressive force of the St. Petersburg portrait are really very close to those of the Roman bust and represent someone who is ill. The sequence of the sculpted, engraved and painted images is a genuine stimulus for an in-depth search amongst Ottavio Leoni's drawings, and if critics have accepted the identification of the Van Dyck portrait, in my opinion there is nothing to stop us from identifying the subject in the *Portrait of a man* in the Palazzo Rosso in Genoa as Virginio Cesarini [fig. 20]. The drawing shows the same physiognomic details as both the Van Dyck portrait and the Roman bust: the high forehead, the long, sharp, slightly aquiline nose, the large eyes, the moustache and the goatee. It portrays a young man with an attentive look, but not ill; indeed, he is almost smiling. If we then go back to look at the photograph of the profile of the bust in the Campidoglio, we inevitably see identical anatomical details, like the long, very prominent nose. Therefore, Ottavio Leoni portrayed a very young Virginio, perhaps between 1610, the year he returned to Parma from Rome, and 1618, when he became a member of the *Accademia Linceana*. The Genoa drawing, without the lynx skin, symbol worn by members of the academy and which appears in the

45 Freedberg 1994.

20. Ottavio Leoni (1578–1630)  
*Portrait of a Man*  
Black pencil and lead white on blue–grey paper, 19.3 x 14 cm  
Museo di Palazzo Rosso, Genoa  
Inv. no. 2443



Bernini portrait, is from the same period of time I have assigned to the portrait of the Duke Cesarini. Drawn in black pencil, it also has technical affinities with the Bilbao portrait and a close look at the faces of the two brothers reveals physical likenesses, but also a marked difference in the expression, as befits two very different characters. In recovering this image, we fit one more piece in the iconographic mosaic of the Cesarini family, while reinforcing the idea of the importance of Ottavio Leoni's contribution, in the second decade of the 17th century, to the formation of the portrait, alive and talking, of Baroque Roman culture.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **Amayden 1987**

Teodoro Amayden. *La storia delle famiglie romane*. 2 vols. Roma : Edizioni Romane Colosseum, 1987 (Facs. Reprod. of Rome ed. : Collegio araldico, [1910]).

### **Bacchi/Montanari 2009**

Andrea Bacchi ; Tomaso Montanari. "Ritratto di Virginio Cesarini : atelier di Gian Lorenzo Bernini", *I marmi vivi : Bernini e la nascita del ritratto barocco*. [Exhib. Cat., Florence, Museo nazionale del Bargello]. Firenze : Firenze Musei : Giunti, 2009, pp. 268-273.

### **Baglione 1995**

Giovanni Baglione. *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti : dal pontificato di Gregorio XIII del 1572 in fino a' tempi di Papa Urbano Ottavo nel 1642*. Jacob Hess ; Herwarth Röttgen (eds.). Città del Vaticano : Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1995 (Anastatic reprint of the Rome edition : A. Fei, 1642).

### **Barnes 1989**

Susan J. Barnes. "The uomini illustri, humanist culture, and the development of a portrait tradition in early seventeenth-century Italy", *Cultural differentiation and cultural identity in the visual arts*. [Proceedings of the Symposium, Washington, National Gallery of Art, 3-14 March 1987]. Susan J. Barnes ; Walter S. Melion (eds.). Hanover [N. H.] : University Press of New England, 1989, pp. 81-92.

### **Benocci 2001**

Carla Benocci. "La magnificenza di due casati uniti : l'inventario del 1687 dei quadri di Federico Sforza e Livia Cesarini", *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, Roma, LXI, 1-2-3, January-December, 2001, pp. 101-129.

### **Buttaro 2004**

Alessia Buttaro. "La collezione Cesarini tra i secoli XVI-XIX", *Castelli romani : vicende, uomini, folklore*. Ariccia, 2004.

### **Calcaterra 2004**

Francesco Calcaterra. *La spina nel fianco : corti e cortigiani nella Roma barocca*. Francesco Petrucci (azterketa ikonografikoa estudio iconográfico iconographic analysis). Roma : Gangemi, 2004.

### **Caravaggio 2010**

*Caravaggio: mecenati e pittori*. M. C. Terzaghi (a cura di). [Exhib. Cat., Caravaggio, Palazzo Gallavresi]. Cirisello Balsamo, Milano : Silvana, 2010.

### **Debenedetti 2008**

Elisa Debenedetti. "Quadreria e decorazione in Palazzo Sforza Cesarini", Francesco Sforza Cesarini (ed.). *Palazzo Sforza Cesarini*. Roma : De Luca, 2008, pp. 69-99.

### **Freedberg 1994**

David Freedberg. "Van Dyck and Virginio Cesarini : a contribution to the study of Van Dyck's Roman Sojourns", Susan J. Barnes ; Arthur K. Wheelock (eds.). *Van Dyck 350*. [Proceedings of the Symposium, University of Maryland at College Park, 8-9 february 1991]. Washington : National Gallery of Art, 1994, pp. 152-174.

### **Giorgetti [1992?]**

Cristina Giorgetti. *Manuale di storia del costume e della moda*. Firenze : Cantini, [1992?].

### **Giovio 1999**

Paolo Giovio. *Scritti d'arte : lessico ed ecrasi*. Sonia Maffei (ed.). Pisa : Scuola normale superiore, 1999.

### **Giustiniani 1981**

Vincenzo Giustiniani. "Discorso sopra la pittura", *Discorsi sulle arti e sui mestieri*. Anna Banti (ed.). Firenze : Sansoni, 1981.

### **Heikamp 1966**

Detlef Heikamp. "La Medusa di Caravaggio e l'armatura del Scia' Abbas di Persia", *Paragone*, Firenze, no. 199, September 1966, pp. 62-76.

### **Jordan Gschwend/Pérez de Tudela 2008**

Annemarie Jordan Gschwend ; Almudena Pérez de Tudela. "El Retrato del príncipe Felipe Manuel de Saboya : la imagen de un príncipe italiano en la corte española", *B'07 : Buletina = Boletín = Bulletin*. Bilbao : Bilboko Arte Eder Museoa = Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao = Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, no. 3, 2008, pp. 17-73.

**Kruft 1969**

Hanno-Walter Kruft. "Ein Album mit Portratzeichnungen Ottavio Leonis", *Storia dell'arte*, Roma, 72, 1969, pp. 447-458.

**Kusche 1964**

Maria Kusche. *Juan Pantoja de la Cruz*. Madrid : Castalia, 1964.

**Kusche 2007**

—. *Juan Pantoja de la Cruz y sus seguidores B. González, R. de Villandrando y A. López Polanco*. Madrid : Fundación Arte Hispánico, 2007.

**Lasterra 1969**

Crisanto de Lasterra. *Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao : catálogo descriptivo : sección de arte antiguo*. Bilbao : Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao, 1969.

**Levi Pissetzky 1964-1969**

Rosita Levi Pissetzky. *Storia del costume in Italia*. 5 libk. 5 vols. Milano : Istituto editoriale italiano, 1964-1969.

**Luijten 1999**

Ger Luijten. "L'iconographie : les portraits gravés de Van Dyck", *Antoine Van Dyck et l'estampe*. [Exhib. Cat., Antwerp, Musée Plantin Moretus ; Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum]. Carl Depauw ; Ger Luijten (eds.). Anvers : Musée Plantin-Moretus, 1999, pp. 73-91.

**Montecosaro : percorsi di storia... 1995**

*Montecosaro : percorsi di storia*. Montecosaro : Comune di Montecosaro, 1995, pp. 325- 328.

**Pacheco 1990**

Francisco Pacheco. *Arte de la pintura*. Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas (edition, introduction and notes). Madrid : Cátedra, 1990.

**Paleotti 1961**

Gabriele Paleotti. "Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane", Paola Barocchi (a cura di). *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento : fra manierismo e controriforma*. Vol. 2. Bari : Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1961, pp. 117-509.

**Petrucci 1999**

Francesco Petrucci. "Committenti nei Castelli romani", Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco ; Dieter Graf ; Francesco Petrucci. *Giovan Battista Gaulli, il Baciccio, 1639-1709*. Milano : Skira, 1999, pp. 223-232.

**Petrucci 2006**

—. "L'iconografia del principe romano e i ritratti del duca di Bracciano tra disegno e pittura", Carla Benocci. *Paolo Giordano Il Orsini nei ritratti di Bernini, Boselli, Leoni e Kornmann*. Roma : De Luca, 2006, pp. 35-53.

**Robbin 1996**

Carmen Roxanne Robbin. "Scipione Borghese's acquisition of paintings and drawings by Ottavio Leoni", *The Burlington Magazine*, London, 138, no. 1120, July 1996, pp. 453-458.

**Robbin 2000**

—. "Ottavio Leoni as a painter : new evidence from an inventory of his house on via del Babuino", *Storia dell'arte*, Roma, no. 99, maggio-agosto 2000, p. 84.

**Rome 1989**

*Claude Mellan, gli anni romani : un incisore tra Vouet e Bernini*. [Exhib. Cat., Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'arte antica]. Luigi Ficacci (ed.). Roma : Multigrafica, 1989.

**Rosini 2009**

Patrizia Rosini. "Costituzione della dote di Livia Orsini e contratto matrimoniale con Giuliano Cesarini (1589)", *Nuovo Rinascimento* [on-line database 9 December 2009]. <http://www.nuovorinascimento.org/n-rinasc/document/pdf/rosini/contratto.pdf> [Kontsulta: Search: 11 July 2011].

**Sani 1996**

Bernardina Sani. "Carte d'inventario : Ottavio Leoni e Domenico Manetti", *La Diana : annuario della Scuola di Specializzazione in Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte dell'Università degli Studi di Siena*, Siena, II, 1996, pp. 55-84.

**Sani 2005**

—. *La fatica virtuosa di Ottavio Leoni*. Torino ; New York : Umberto Allemandi, 2005.

**Sickel 2007**

Lothar Sickel. *Der Romgedanke in der Selbstdarstellung der Familie Cesarini im Rom des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 2007 [online]. [http://www.ducatocezarini.it/articoli\\_e\\_studi/articolo%20di%20Sickel%20L.pdf](http://www.ducatocezarini.it/articoli_e_studi/articolo%20di%20Sickel%20L.pdf) [Search: 11 July 2011].

**Sutherland Harris 1989**

Ann Sutherland Harris. "Bernini and Virginio Cesarini", *The Burlington Magazine*, London, no. 131, 1989, pp. 17-23.

**Sutherland Harris 1992**

—. "Vouet le Bernin et la ressemblance parlante", *Rencontres de l'Ecole du Louvre : Simon Vouet*. Stéphane Loire (ed.). Paris : La Documentation Française, 1992, pp. 192- 208.

**Tordella 2007**

Piera Giovanna Tordella. "Sulla carta azzurra nei ritratti disegnati di Ottavio Leoni e una rilettura di Bernardino Licinio a Alnwick Castle", *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria"*, Firenze, N. S. 58, 2007, pp. 9-30.

**Tordella 2011**

—. *Ottavio Leoni e la ritrattistica a disegno protobarocca*. Firenze : L. S. Olschki, 2011.