

SALLY HICKSON

## THE INGANNO OF GIUSEPPE OROLOGI. ON DECEPTION AND SEDUCTION IN ART AND COLLECTING

In 1562, the Gioliti press in Venice published the dialogue *L'Inganno*, written by a fairly obscure Veronese humanist named Giuseppe Orologi<sup>1</sup>. It appears to be the first treatise in the Italian vernacular to exclusively address the subject of deceit, a concept earlier symbolized in the emblems of Andrea Alciati, appearing for the first time in the Venice edition of 1546<sup>2</sup>. Labelled «In fraudulentos», Alciati depicts deceit in the form of a spotted gecko, accompanied by a verse which begins: «The little lizard, a newt bestarred on his body with black spots, who inhabits hiding places and hollow tombs, bears

<sup>1</sup> G. OROLOGI, *L'Inganno. Dialogo di M. Gioseppe Horologgi*, Venice, Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari, 1562. I consulted copies in the Beinecke Library at Yale University and the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. I would like to thank the librarians at both those institutions for their helpfulness in my research. I'd also like to thank my colleagues at the University of Guelph for their kind support of my research, and thank you to the University of Ferrara and to the editors of the present volume for inviting my participation.

<sup>2</sup> For works on lying, plagiarism and issues related to fraud and deceit in early modern art see the Introduction to Sh. GREGORY & S.A. HICKSON, *Inganno – The Art of Deception: Imitation, Reception and Deceit in Early Modern Art*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2012. For more on Orologi, please see my essay in that collection. All of the editions of Alciati's *Emblematum Liber*, in their various translations, are now valuable at: <http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/index.php>. The edition to which I refer is the *Emblematum Libellus*, Venice, Aldus, 1546, at 7r.

in his colouring symbols of envy and depraved deceit»<sup>3</sup>. By the time of the Italian edition of Alciati's book, produced in Lyons in 1551, the concept of deceit had expanded to two different emblems; the «Fraudulent» represented by the spotted gecko, and «Deceit against one's own», represented by a duck that leads their own unwitting brace into a hunter's net<sup>4</sup>. When Cesare Ripa produced his *Iconologia*, in 1593, the subject of *inganno* had grown even more complex, taking several forms; the figure of a gold-clothed man whose body ends in two tapering snake's tails, a two-faced woman with a serpent's tail, a goat-skin clad man carrying fish-hooks and a net full of fish, tricked into being caught through the fisherman's deception, and finally a male figure dressed in yellow, holding fish-hooks in one hand and, in the other, a bouquet of flowers from which a snake emerges<sup>5</sup>. The main observation to be made about this evolution, aside from its gradual refinement into different kinds of deceit, is its metamorphoses from animal to human form. Clearly, by the end of the sixteenth century, there was an increased preoccupation with the art of human deception in its myriad forms. Orologi's dialogue, then, offered a contemporary reflection on the increasingly complex facets of deception and fraud in the practices of everyday life.

This essay deals with only one aspect of Orologi's interest in the art of deception, and that is with the deception of art itself. In its very nature as a practice of imitation, art was long perceived to be an exercise in deceiving the senses. However, the growing status of art objects as both intellectual and economic commodities in Orologi's time created a mania for conspicuous consumption that led collectors to deceive each other in their frenzy to acquire objects, to falsely assume an expertise in evaluating the worth of such objects,

<sup>3</sup> In the 1546 edition (see n. 2), the verse appears in Latin: «Parva lacerta, atris stellatus corpora guttis | Stellio, qui latebras, & cava busta colit, | Invidiae praviq'; doli fert symboli pictus. | Heu nimium nuribus cognita zelotypis. | Nam turpi obtegitur faciem lentigine quisquis, | Sit quibus immersus stellio, vina bibat. | Hinc vindicta frequens decepta pellice vino, | Quim formae amisso store relinquat amans».

<sup>4</sup> A. ALCIATI, *Diverse Imprese*, Lyons, Macé Bonhomme for Guillaume Rouille, 1551, pp. 52 and 53.

<sup>5</sup> C. RIPA, *Iconologia ovvero descrittioni dell'imagini universalì, &c.*, Rome, Gioliti, 1593, p. 152 s.; see [http://www.labirintoermetico.com/04Iconologia/Ripa\\_Cesare\\_Iconologia\\_\(1593\).PDF](http://www.labirintoermetico.com/04Iconologia/Ripa_Cesare_Iconologia_(1593).PDF).

and to confuse ownership and acquisition with self-worth, self-image and self-knowledge<sup>6</sup>. The result was a continuous chain of deception and self-deception, which Orologi examines in his treatment of deception in art<sup>7</sup>. Not only was all art illusion, but its true value was also frequently confused with its illusory value as a signifier of wealth and erudition. In Orologi's analysis, the status of art and antiquities as commodities filled the new, modern cognoscenti with an all-encompassing appetite for their consumption and drove them to fraudulent practices:

There are some in Rome called antiquarians by everyone, who assume the task of recognizing everything and they say the most lying and scurrilous things in the world [...] This type of man is accustomed to playing strange jokes on the moderns using the appearance of ancient figures, and they say things and then they go back and say them again in a manner better suited to their purpose, finding others' ears well-disposed to believe everything they feel like saying. And I liken them to dreams that feature things both present and past, but never wholly as they are, or as they were<sup>8</sup>.

By mid-century, following the Sack of Rome in 1527, Venice, where Orologi lived, worked and wrote in the latter half of the century, had quickly supplanted Rome and even Florence as the Italian center of artistic production. By the 1560s, when Orologi was in Venice, Sansovino's *all'antica* motifs graced the colonnades of the Marciana library, and provided an impregnable but graceful architectural screen for the Venetian zecca. Veronese, Tintoretto and Titian were at work on an astonishing array of sacred and secular

<sup>6</sup> For collecting as a «status symbol activity» in which agents and antiquaries had a personal stake, see B. FURLOTTI, *Connecting people, connecting places: antiquarians as mediators in sixteenth-century Rome*, «Urban History», 37, 2010, pp. 386-398; she mentions Orologi at p. 390.

<sup>7</sup> A case of excessive antiquarian mania and self-deception in the case of an early 18<sup>th</sup>-century antiquarian is explored by A. GRAFTON, *Jean Hardouin: The Antiquary as Pariah*, «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», 62, 1999, pp. 241-267.

<sup>8</sup> «Questa maniera d'huomini sogliono far il piu delle volte di strani scherzo a i moderni con le apparenze delle figure antiche, e dicono, e ridicono come lor torna meglio; trovando le orecchie altrui ben disposte a dar credenza a tutto quel, che vien loro in animo di dire, & io li assomiglio a i sogni che rapresentano e le cose presenti & le passate; ma non mai del tutto come sono, ne come furono già» (OROLOGI, *L'Inganno*, cit., fol. 125).

paintings. At the same time, many Venetian collectors were accumulating vast collections of antiquities for display in their impressive palazzi along the Grand Canal. Casting a cynical, and undoubtedly slightly satirical, eye on this vast wealth of material objects, Orologi decried the wealth of deceptions that underlay the spirit of plenty. While in Orologi's view, all men deceive through their appearance and their behavior, he was particularly critical of collectors and merchants of art and antiquities who «love those mute (and) insensible things more than enough; with little respect for God, who gave them life and breath; so that they are already mad and lost to that artificial beauty, leaving them to vent their love on marble reduced by art into a human semblance»<sup>9</sup>. The material, he warned, resulted in moral and spiritual privation.

Orologi's own preoccupation with matters of art is inherent in his very choice of interlocutors for his dialogue, Lodovico Dolce and Girolamo Ruscelli, fellow editors of his at the Gioliti press in Venice. Dolce and Ruscelli had both earned their public distinction through frequenting academic and artistic circles among the city's growing intellectual, academic and artistic classes. Dolce, in particular, had gained contemporary fame for the famous dialogue he wrote on the art of painting, the so-called *Aretino*, a spirited defense of the art of Titian and of Raphael<sup>10</sup>. Ruscelli spent some time as part of an Accademia Segreta, publishing a Book of Secrets under the pseudonym Alexis of Piedmont, as well as editing and annotating editions of important Italian literary texts<sup>11</sup>. Dolce, Ruscelli and Orologi all worked among the Venetian poligrafici as editors for the Gioliti press. Orologi's publication of the *Inganno* was perhaps conceived as his own entree into the arena of public intellectual debate, and although the tone of the dialogue itself is somewhat

<sup>9</sup> «Et pur ci sono di quelli a tempi nostri che amano assai piu queste mutte, & insensibili; con poco rispetto al grande Iddio; che le vive, e spirituali; & ce ne furono gia; che impazziti, e perduti per quella artificiosa bellezza, si lasciarono sdrucchiolare a sfogar il loro Amore; con il marmo ridotto dall'arte alla sembianza humana» (ivi, fol. 126).

<sup>10</sup> For an analysis in English of Dolce's *Aretino* see M. ROSKILL, *Dolce's Aretino and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> W. EAMON, *Science and Popular Culture in Sixteenth Century Italy: The "Professors of Secrets" and Their Books*, «Sixteenth Century Journal», 16, 1985, pp. 471-485.

tongue-in-cheek, his passages on art carry a sting of serious social criticism. Using Dolce and Ruscelli as his authorities on intellectual life in modern Venice, Orologi constructed a cynical dialogue about the widespread inclination of his peers to deceive each another in every possible way, and his work provides some lively and surprising insights into contemporary Venetian intellectual, literary and artistic culture.

Dolce and Ruscelli begin the dialogue by agreeing that it is the nature of man to deceive, but that there are various forms of deception. There are deceptions that are obvious and therefore harmless, such as the card-tricks and sleights of hand performed by gypsies, and those which are endemic to human nature, more destructive because they are hidden from sight through false appearances. As Ruscelli says, «those who take the part of deception might be very similar to the gypsies if you could recognize them, but because they are hidden and masked by the mask of the world, you can't tell them from the others, except as I said for their effects»<sup>12</sup>. To see deception, one must see through the appearance to the reality. Such a paradigm is, of course, perfectly suited to the discussion of art which occurs about midway through their conversation.

Ruscelli begins this discussion by venturing that «almost all of the arts are a mixture of appearance and of substance, and the art of painting, as you can see, participates more in appearance than all the other arts, being that its perfection is founded, in the force of its colors and the artifice of its lines, in creating a subtle deception for the eyes and making them see on a flat plane bodies in relief in various ways»<sup>13</sup>. For this reason, painters are the most practiced of deceivers:

<sup>12</sup> «Quelli che sono da la parte che inganna sarebbero molto simil a i Cingari se si conoscessero, come quelli; ma perche vanno di nascosto, e mascherati de la maschera del mondo, non si conoscono da gli altri, se non come ho detto per gli effetti» (OROLOGI, *L'Inganno*, cit., fol. 2).

<sup>13</sup> «Quasi tutte le arti sono un mischio di apparentia, & di esistentia; & l'arte della pittura come si vede, partecipa assai piu dell'apparenza che tutte le altr'arti, essendo tutta la sua perfeffione fondata; in far che la forza de i colori; & l'artificio delle linee; facciano un dolce inganno a gli occhi, facendoli apparere una equalità piana; corpi rilevati, in diverse maniere» (ivi, fol. 96).

We can say that their art is nothing more than a continual deception, and an endless cheat, that with lines artificially colored, and with various shades and contours they make appear before the eyes of others things that are not; and the crazy world that knows that their works are nothing other than fictions, false appearances and deceptions, nevertheless reap the full sail, valuing many times more a wall, or piece of wood or canvas, being taken in by the artificial delight of scrawled colors<sup>14</sup>.

For Dolce, however, the deceptive nature of painting is not nearly as dangerous as its misuse by those who exploit it for their own ends, particularly the art of portraiture which, of course, offers only the merest semblance of the self.

The rich and powerful are wont to love this art, having themselves drawn «del naturale» — at all stages, driven by the vain desire to immortalize themselves this way, covering their ambition in this pursuit with the veil of virtue<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> «Potiam dire che l'arte loro non e altro che un inganno continuo; & una gionteria senza fine, che con linee artificiosamente colorate; con varie ombre, & varij contorni, fanno apparer a gli occhi altrui quel che non e; e' il mondo pazzo che conosce che le loro opre non sono altro che fittioni, fuchi apparenze, & inganni; si lascia però cogliere a piene vele, a stimar piu, molti volte un pezzo di muraglia, o di bosco, o di tela tutta piena, tratti da quella artificiosa vaghezza de colori impiastrati, che fine relevi, motti, scurzi, lontani, & figure in vari gesti, mute & senza spirito, che le figure vere sensibili & spiritali, che si movono da dovero, tanto e vago di lasciarse cogliere da gli inganni» (ivi, fol. 95).

<sup>15</sup> «I Ricchi e potenti sogliono amare quest'arte; facendose ritrare del naturale in tutte le etati sue spinti dal vano desiderio di immortalarsi per mezzo suo, coprendo la loro ambitione in questa parte con il velo della virtù, dicendo che i loro antichi, come quelli ch'erano pieni di valore, volsero ancora lasciando a quelli che venivano dopo, i ritratti al naturale di se stessi lasciar quella memoria, a fin che come in uno specchio s'havessero del continuo a specchiar nelle loro opere virtuose mirando le faccie loro, & accendersi con ogni spirito a imitarle; & con questo colore di virtù vanno adombrando e miniando l'ambition sua, che è senza fine; la loro pazzia ancora che non ha un minimo che di rossore a lasciar a i loro descendent, il ritratto di quei loro visacci schiffi, & balordi, che rendono spavento a chi i mira vivi, vedete quel che debbono fare non havendo ne senso, ne spirito, le loro simiglianza distese da meschi di colori, onde che i mira per di fuori & conosce i foranti a affetti del loro animo plebeo per di dentro sta in dubbio che habbia piu schiffezza in se il ritratto della faccia o quello di i loro vicii: non vi essendo alcun vantaggio; & se pur vene è serà nella faccia» (ivi, fols. 96-97).

Moreover, he continues, «they do not so much as blush to leave to their descendents a portrait of their loathesome ill-favored faces; such fools are those that fear their living aims, seeing what they must do, having neither sense nor spirit, their likenesses expanses of mixed wine colors that seek themselves from outside and know that on the inside their base souls are in doubt as to who has more loathesomeness in them, the portrait of the face or the living soul»<sup>16</sup>.

The discussion then moves on to sculpture, which Dolce suggests is less deceptive than painting because, being in relief, it does not deceive the eyes the same way that painting does in trying to give dimension to a flat surface. Ruscelli, however, counters this by pointing out that deceptions of sculpture do not exist in its material form, but rather in what it leads people to believe about the nature of truth, particularly «the ambitious who seek to have themselves cast and sculptured in order to believe that they will live forever» and are fooled by the «ravenousness of time [which] buries them to their neck, their arms, their nose and their legs so that they resemble Maestro Pasquino, and at that moment they find themselves in such bad repair that no one knows them for anything but resurrected fragments»<sup>17</sup>.

Although it is possible that the whole of the *Inganno* was conceived by Orologi as nothing more than a diversion, a *passatempo* designed to deceive time by causing it to pass unnoticed; his observations on the nature of art can be interpreted to have more substantial and serious implications. At heart, of course, the whole discussion of painting versus sculpture relates very specifically to the contemporary *paragone* debates except, of course, that the real debate in the *Inganno* is not about the relative superiority of painting over sculpture, or vice-versa, but over which is

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> «La scultura ancora ha la sua apparenza, con la quale inganna gli occhi de i goffi & ignorant; ingannando medesimamente gli ambiziosi che si fanno coniare e scolpire dandosi a credere di viverci perpetuamente almeno di metallo, o di marmo poi che non ci possono viver come sono; o con qualche fama vera di valore immortale; & non piu presto dicono a Dio al mondo che la ingordiggia del tempo i sotterra fiaccandogli il colo, le braccia, il naso, o le cambe che assomigliano poi dissotterate a maestro Pasquino & talhora si trovano cosi mal'acconci che non è alcuno che i conosca per altro che per fragmenti di figure de rileno» (ivi, fol. 124).

inherently more deceptive, not in its nature but in its intent<sup>18</sup>. Pictures can lie in their appearance but sculpture lies in its very materiality, because it mimics the substance of living beings, existing as form without spirit.

This aspect of the discussion leads me to reconsider several contemporary portraits of collectors in their studioli, surrounded by their mute, insensible objects of desire. For that reason, for the remainder of this paper I wish to examine Orologi's criticisms of art collecting in light of portraits of contemporary Venetian merchants and collectors involved in the antiquarian trade. Although there is, as yet, no comprehensive history of the profession of the antiquarian in the Renaissance, Orologi's dialogue offers interesting insights into conflicting economies of expertise, at least in Venice, between the new merchants of culture and *cittadino* and non-*cittadino* consumers<sup>19</sup>.

For example, we might well imagine Lorenzo Lotto's melancholic Andrea Odoni (1527, Windsor, Royal Collection) falling victim to this love for «marble reduced by art into a human semblance», forever surrounded by the mute vestiges of fragmentary statues, their identities lost through the vagaries of time. To one side of the collector, Anteus wrestles with Hercules; a demi-god striving to uproot the giant rooted in the earth and thus destroy him, undoubtedly a trope for the very awakening of statues. To his other side a strangely lifelike bronze flickers with animation in the shadow of a headless Hercules. Diana Wronski Gallis once posited that Lotto's portrait was a warning against collecting earthly treasures, a conclusion roundly rejected by scholars, if only because it seems impossible that Odoni would want to have himself depicted in such a

<sup>18</sup> For the *paragoni* debates see L. MENDELSON, *Paragoni: Benedetto Varchi's Due Lezioni and Cinquecento Art Theory*, Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1982.

<sup>19</sup> For general insights into the role of antiquarians in sixteenth century culture, some major sources are R. WEISS, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1969; F. HASKELL, *Patrons and Painters: Art and Society in Baroque Italy*, New York, Harper & Row, 1971; CH.L. STINGER, *The Renaissance in Rome*, Bloomington & Indianapolis, Univ. of Indiana Press, 1998; see B. FURLOTTI, *Connecting people, connecting places: antiquarians as mediators in sixteenth-century Rome*, «Urban History», 370, 2010, pp. 386-398, for excellent sources in the emergent literature on merchants and agents involved in the antiquarian trade.



moralizing tone<sup>20</sup>. More Recently, Monika Schmitter, in response to a recent cleaning of the painting which reveals that Odoni is fingering a gold crucifix around his neck, has posited that «the painting is a reflection upon the values and meanings of collecting as much it is a “portrait of a collector”»<sup>21</sup>. Lotto’s theme might well be vanity – the shining light of spiritual immortality perhaps dimmed in the lengthening shadow of the past cast by the resurrection of antiquity.

A comparison between Lotto’s Odoni and Parmigianino’s slightly earlier *Portrait of a Collector* (London, National Gallery, before 1524), reveal that Lotto’s meditation was but a continuing reflection on similar themes, evoking in the mind of the viewer possible admonitions against being lured by the enticements of antique sculpture. Parmigianino’s unidentified sitter is flanked to the left by an ancient marble relief depicting Venus, Mars and Cupid, and a painted landscape, and to the right by a bronze statue of Ceres – love and abundance, the hallmarks of human indulgence. Ancient medals, typical symbols of human vanity, are scattered on the table. The sitter holds a breviary, which has been identified as the *Offiziolo Durazzo*, an illuminated book of hours (now housed in the Biblioteca Civica Berio at Genoa), made by the artist Francesco Marmitta<sup>22</sup>. The gold lettering and purple parchment of the manuscript make it the most elegant and material of iterations on the necessity to cultivate the spiritual and eternal and to resist the siren call of material luxury. The sitter seems to epitomize the struggle between the spiritual, ephemeral and eternal and the material vestiges of a measureable and material past; he stands poised on a continuum of time that

<sup>20</sup> N. SCHNEIDER, *The Art of the Portrait: Masterpieces of European Portrait-painting, 1420-1670*, Köln, Benedikt Taschen, 1994, p. 101.

<sup>21</sup> M. SCHMITTER, “Virtuous Riches”: *The Bricolage of Cittadini Identities in Early-Sixteenth-Century Venice*, «Renaissance Quarterly», 57, 2004, pp. 908-969: p. 955.

<sup>22</sup> At least one drawing by Marmitta, of an *Entombment*, related to illuminations in this codice, is now in the collection of the British Museum. Marmitta, who hailed from Parma and died in in c1505, was probably commissioned by the sitter to illuminate this Book of Hours, see the British Museum entry o this drawing at: [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search\\_the\\_collection\\_database/search\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=717549&partid=1&output=Terms%2F!!%2FOR%2F!!%2F13264%2F!!%2F%2F!!%2FEmilian%2F!!%2F%2F!!%2F%2F!!%2F&orig=%2Fresearch%2Fsearch\\_the\\_collection\\_database%2Fadvanced\\_search.aspx&currentPage=5&numpages=10](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectId=717549&partid=1&output=Terms%2F!!%2FOR%2F!!%2F13264%2F!!%2F%2F!!%2FEmilian%2F!!%2F%2F!!%2F%2F!!%2F&orig=%2Fresearch%2Fsearch_the_collection_database%2Fadvanced_search.aspx&currentPage=5&numpages=10).

reaches from the past towards eternity. In Dolce's words, «there are those who in our time love those mute and insensible things more than enough; with little respect for God; who gives them life and breath; so that they are already mad and lost to that artificial beauty, leaving them to vent their love on marble reduced by art into a human semblance»<sup>23</sup>.

Tintoretto's rather strange portrait of a *Young Man with a Bust of Lucrezia* (1553-55, München, Alte Pinacothek) seems to further echo Orologi's passage on the collector's all-consuming love for dead marble<sup>24</sup>. The bust of Lucrezia is markedly similar to the now greatly ruined *pasquina* sculpture (albeit less monumental), fondly referred to as *Madonna Lucretia* still located just off the Piazza Venezia in Rome<sup>25</sup>. Lucrezia is, of course, the self-sacrificing symbol of Roman fidelity. The young man stands next to her fragmentary figure in much the same attitude as Rembrandt's later Aristotle would contemplate the bust of Homer; provoking a meditation on the past, although the subject of the dialogue between past and present in the Tintoretto remains shrouded in mystery. Is this to be read as a double portrait in flesh and stone? an act of mourning? a pledge of love? a regretful rumination on the Roman past? Or could it perhaps be an allusion to the pride of the collector or to the arrogance of the antiquarian? – the type of man who, according to Orologi, «is accustomed to playing strange jokes on the moderns using the appearance of ancient figures» and whom he accuses of being faithful «to dreams that feature things both present and past, but never wholly as they are, or as they were»<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> See n. 9: «Et pur ci sono di quelli a tempi nostri che amano assai piu queste mutte, & insensibili; con poco rispetto al grande Iddio; che le vive, e spirituali; & ce ne furono gia; che impazziti, e perduti per quella artificiosa bellezza, si lasciarono sdrucchiolare a sfogar il loro Amore; con il marmo ridotto dall'arte alla sembianza humana» (OROLOGI, *L'Inganno*, cit., fol. 126).

<sup>24</sup> TINTORETTO, *Opere Complete*, a c. di R. Pallucchini e P. Rossi, Milano, Electa, 1982, I (Ritratti, 80).

<sup>25</sup> The so-called *Madonna Lucretia* is not nearly as well known as the *Pasquino* himself, or the *Marforio*; for the tradition of the Pasquino statues see L. BARKAN, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture*, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1999, pp. 209-230.

<sup>26</sup> «Questa maniera d'huomini sogliono far il piu delle volte di strani scherzo a i moderni con le apparenze delle figure antiche, e dicono, e ridicono come lor torna meglio; trovando le orecchie altrui ben disposte a dar credenza a tutto

In Orologi's world collectors are actually not so much possessors as possessed by the objects they allow to consume them. For example, if we look through Orologi's eyes at Titian's portrait of the Venetian collector *Jacopo Strada* (1567, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), the avaricious antiquarian reveals himself to be obsessed by conspicuous wealth and perhaps deceived by the very objects he purports to possess. Titian depicts Strada clad in the luxurious but slightly absurd fur of his mantle, choked by the encircling loops of his heavy gold chain, from which dangles an even heavier gold medallion. As he gazes towards us, he caresses a statue of Venus as though she might awaken to his touch. In some ways, he seems almost as crass and carnal as the coins scattered before him on the table<sup>27</sup>.

Orologi might well have had good reason to resent the pretensions of Strada whom, it is said, Titian also disliked. Strada was the epitome of the academy-sanctioned intellectual that Orologi had come to deeply resent. Under Marcellus II in Rome, Strada was a member of the Accademia della Virtù, along with fellow antiquarians like Antonio Agustin, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, Pirro Ligorio and Onofrio Panvinio<sup>28</sup>. As a result of this involvement, in 1557, Strada published two works by Panvinio, the *Festivals and Triumphs of Rome* and the *Summary of the Roman Popes* (Epitome Pontificum). The first volume was widely criticized for its poor quality, being badly bound and cheaply produced, and the second volume was published without Panvinio's permission, illustrated with plates recycled from

quel, che vien loro in animo di dire, & io li assimglio a I sogni che rapresentano e le cose presenti & le passate; ma non mai del tutto come sono, ne come furono gia» (OROLOGI, *L'Inganno*, cit., fol. 125).

<sup>27</sup> «Vi sono di quelli in Roma chiamati antiquari da ogn'uno; che pigliano l'impresa di riconoscerli tutti & dicono le piu ladre e manigolde cose del mondo; come se fossero allhora allhora partiti di làdove sono quelli, a i quali vogliono che siano simiglianti, I tronchi di marmi spezzati, che si ritrovavano tutto di» (ibid.).

<sup>28</sup> For some insights into Strada's career see H. LOUTHAN, *The Quest for Compromise: Peacemakers in Counter-Reformation Vienna*, New York & Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997, and P.H. SMITH - P. FINDLEN, *Merchants & Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe*, New York, Routledge, 2002.

one of Strada's earlier works<sup>29</sup>. In fact, most of Strada's antiquarian publications have been characterized by Jennifer Fletcher as «a mixture of erudition and nonsense» and it is probably not accidental that Titian has so prominently featured Strada's books as an indication of his intellectual pretension, precisely the kinds of books that Orologi criticized as unworthy of the Venetian presses<sup>30</sup>. As an antiquarian agent for the Duke of Bavaria, Albrecht V, Strada made incredible amounts of money, enough to build himself a new home in Vienna around 1566. It was precisely his practices as an agent that brought him into conflict with established Venetian patrician and *cittadini* values. In 1560, working for Albrecht V and in league with the agent Nicolo Stoppio, Strada managed to talk the heirs of Andrea Loredan (whom Stoppio had once called «well over 80, and totally decrepit, with one foot in the grave») into selling the bulk of the famous family collection, which he then arranged to have exported to Munich in the middle of the night. Despite the cash transaction that took place, Strada's purchase was performed as though it were an act of theft which, in some ways, it was – it converted Venetian cultural currency into cold hard cash, and conferred less status on its purchaser than was perceived to have been lost by its seller. In 1567, again as an agent for Duke Albrecht, Strada would return to Venice to purchase antiques from the heirs of Gabriel Vendramin, convincing the Vendramin heirs break the term of their elder's will, another means of draining patrimony that was patrician, familial and civic<sup>31</sup>.

In almost all of the extant Renaissance depictions of a collector and his collection, three-dimensional sculpture seems to be accorded the most problematic ontology between nature, artifice and desire, and presents itself as the most obvious locus for the intersection of seeing and touching, the most sensible of insensible matter, the most fully “alive” vestige of a living past. I would argue that in some of these portraits there is also a hierarchical material

<sup>29</sup> For Strada and Panvinio see Introd. in *Reading Inscriptions & Writing Ancient History: Historical Scholarship in the Late Renaissance*, «Bulletin Institute of Classical Studies», 48, S86, 2005, pp. 1-20.

<sup>30</sup> *Titian*, ed. by Ch. Hope & J. Fletcher, London, National Gallery, 2003.

<sup>31</sup> See J. ANDERSON, *A Further Inventory of Gabriel Vendramin's Collection*, «The Burlington Magazine», 121, 1979, 919, pp. 639-648.

emphasis, in which one might read bronze objects in light of Ovid's progression of the ages of man; in the age of bronze men tended to war but not to impiety, in the iron age that follows men are greedy and impious, and truth is nowhere to be found.

Much of the *Inganno* is also concerned with a newly-emergent class consciousness, an indictment of those who consume art in a frenzy of conspicuous consumption, misusing it as a means of immortalizing themselves and establishing a false sense of worth. Orologi's condemnation of these practices does not seem motivated by any sense of moral indignation, only a cynical view of the culture of collecting, which permits the false elevation of individuals through their mania for acquisition and display. In the same way, he mentions in an aside, the networks of the academies permitted the elevation of literary hacks to the level of public intellectuals<sup>32</sup>. This latter sentiment is particularly evident in a long excursus that Orologi includes on the dangers of the presses that he claims publish all sorts of scurrilous tracts which only divert the true course of learning and are printed solely to advance the ambition of their authors<sup>33</sup>. Orologi's dialogue is, therefore, a commentary on the contemporary culture wars in Venice. It is a criticism of collectors and connoisseurs who are deceived by the image of themselves they see reflected in their portraits, amateurs, lost, in their love of objects, caught in a looking-glass of surfeit beauties, «born back ceaselessly into the past»<sup>34</sup>.

ABSTRACT. – This article deals with the dialogue on art and deception found within Giuseppe Orologi's broader discussion of contemporary deception in

<sup>32</sup> According SCHMITTER, "Virtuous Riches", cit., p. 918, collecting was «an excellent forum for competition between groups within the elite and a particularly useful way to increase social prestige and distinction by transforming economic capital into cultural capital», especially among the Venetian *cittadino* class; see for her analysis of the portrait of Andrea Odoni, *ivi*, p. 930.

<sup>33</sup> The conversation on writers is found in OROLOGIO, *L'Inganno*, cit., fols 105-123.

<sup>34</sup> From the last line of F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, *The Great Gatsby*, New York, Scribners, 1925.

his work on *Inganno* (published in Venice in 1562). Beginning with a brief overview of emblematic representations of the concept of *inganno* in Ripa and Alciati, I go on to examine Orologi's reflections on contemporary Venetian anxieties about antiquities, authenticity and the perils of collecting in an age of artistic deception.