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## A New Narcissus Named “Lygdamus”: A Poetical Source for a Different Interpretation of Michelangelo’s *Crouching Youth* from the Collection of the State Hermitage<sup>1</sup>

An important manuscript known as *Palladium eruditum*, preserved in the University Library in Bologna, contains copies of three unpublished, contemporary epigrams in praise of Michelangelo as a sculptor attributed to one Giovan Francesco Fabri<sup>2</sup>. His work and existence are unknown to seemingly exhaustive national and international bio-bibliographical indexes [40; 52; 58]. No eighteenth- to twentieth-century comprehensive history of Italian literature ever mentions him [e.g. 2; 38; 56; 57; 60; 78; 81; 82; see also 10, 25, and 31], the only partial exception being Quadrio, who refers to two sonnets by him [70, II/1, p. 353 and V, p. 104]. He cannot be identified with Giovanni Francesco Fa[b]brini from Figline (the champion of Michelangelo’s art as a painter in Ludovico Dolce’s fictional dialogue on painting published in 1557, where he acts as the counterpart of Aretino exalting Titian and Venetian art) for various reasons, including age. Fabbrini lived for over 60 years [75], whereas the three unpublished sixteenth-century anonymous epitaphs in honor of Giovan Francesco Fabri lament that he died young<sup>3</sup>, whatever this might have meant (Raphael died young, at 37).

This lack of basic biographical information is odd. Some sort of *damnatio memoriae* seems to be at work here. Reasons for this are usually political. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, politics had often much to do with religious controversies, but Fabri’s name does *not* appear in the several lists of the Italian Protestants investigated, prosecuted or executed by the Catholic Church, nor of their Italian supporters and sympathizers, although several of his acquaintances (including Michelangelo) had well-known links with the Reformation.

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Maria Elisa Micheli, an archaeologist, and Sonia Maffei, a specialist in Renaissance art literature in Latin, for helping me with the Italian translation of Fabri’s poems and for discussing some points with me. The powerpoint I showed during the conference in Moscow can be seen in my website on Researchgate. An earlier, less elaborate version of this paper was given in Rome in 2002 under the title “Un’ipotesi sulla storia iniziale dell’*Adolescente* dell’Hermitage: documenti poetici inediti su Michelangelo scultore”, but was never published. It is mentioned in [9, p. 66].

<sup>2</sup> BUB (Biblioteca Universitaria, Bologna), ms 52, folder II, file 1, fol. 418v. [44, pp. 129–138, esp. 137].

<sup>3</sup> Accademia Rubiconia dei Filopatridi, Savignano sul Rubicone (Forlì), ms. n. 71, formerly in the possession of Giovanni Cristofano Amaduzzi (section 6: “In obitu Joannis Francisci Fabri”, “Eiusdem Tumulus”, “Eiusdem alter”. I am grateful to Giulia Cantarutti for providing me with photographs of this section).

In the past decade Fabri's name started resurfacing again in Italian literary studies thanks to books and electronic databases indexing sixteenth-century Italian printed collections of contemporary poems published mostly in Venice by Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, since the 1540s [14, pp. 318, 320–321, 331–332, 333–334, 339–340, 420; 28, pp. LXXX–LXXXI, XCII, CXXXVI, CXLI, CXLIII; 59, pp. 110–114; 71, pp. 211, 223–224, 226; 73, pp. 63, 67, 76–77, 80, 87–88, 93; 84, *ad annos* 1547 (n. 8) and 1551 (n. 7)]. Fabri is usually present with one or more compositions, only to disappear in later anthologies<sup>4</sup>. Thus there are about thirty poems in Italian by him, mostly sonnets, but occasionally also blank verses, madrigals and *canzoni*. The editors of such collections are often fairly famous, ranging from Ludovico Domenichi to Ludovico Dolce (both involved in the Italian Reformation), but occasionally include lesser men of letters such as the Bolognese Ercole Bottrigari, a nobleman closely linked to the Pope's *entourage*, who assembled his collection on behalf of the Bolognese printer Anselmo Giaccarello in 1551 [59, pp. 110–114; 11; 20; 32; 34; 88].

Bottrigari's book includes no fewer than 25 poems by Fabri in Italian, the largest selection of his works ever printed [20, pp. 59–74]. Some of these poems make reference to the River Reno in Bologna [20, pp. 60 and 70], thus we can assume that Fabri was a resident there and that he was either Bolognese or, more probably (as his family name seems to suggest), from some neighbouring area in the North East, possibly Romagna<sup>5</sup>. In Bologna, he must have met Emanuele Grimaldi, a little known Genoese poet, with whom he exchanged sonnets [20, pp. 52–54, 58, 60]. Grimaldi was registered as a student of law in Bologna University, but he is better known as a friend and correspondent of Monsignor della Casa, Marcantonio Flaminio, Benedetto Varchi and Annibal Caro [20, pp. 52–59; 78, pp. 86 and 290]. The famous Add. Ms. 25,596 in the British Library, a miscellaneous collection of poems by Bolognese authors from the 14<sup>th</sup> through to the 17<sup>th</sup> century [51, p. 115], contains two poems addressed to Fabri in October, 1549 by yet another Genoese poet, Agostino Gottuzzi, to become a professor of medicine at the University of Bologna between 1570 and 1577, when he died [55, p. 159, n. 1620]. His acquaintance with Fabri must date to his days as a student, although there is poetical evidence that Fabri visited Genoa at some point [73, pp. 76–77]. Fabri's circle of poetical connections (apparently shared with his friend Grimaldi) included also Rinaldo Corso, Girolamo Donzellino (or Donzellini)<sup>6</sup>, and one Landi, who is to be identified as either Costanzo Landi or, more intriguingly, as the famous Ortensio Lando (or Landi) [20, pp. 60, 72–74]. Most of them (including Corso, who later became a staunch advocate of the Counterreformation) sympathized with Italian Reformation and were involved in it at different degrees throughout the 1540s [41, pp. 364–368, 375–376 and *passim*].

<sup>4</sup> Among electronic resources, one should mention at least: SNAC (Social Network and Archival Context) at [socialarchive.iath.virginia.edu/ark:/99166/w6xb2m6j](http://socialarchive.iath.virginia.edu/ark:/99166/w6xb2m6j); and ALI-RASTA (Antologia della Lirica Italiana — Raccolte a STampa, by the University of Pavia at <http://rasta.unipv.it/>), both *ad vocem* “Fabri Giovan Francesco”.

<sup>5</sup> His name does not occur in any of the Bolognese “Fabri” or “Fabbri” family trees drafted by Baldassarre Carrati: BCB (Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna, l'Archivnassio), mss. B 699 (pl. 83), B 701 (pl. 77), B 704 (pl. 46), B 712 (pls. 43, 44, 78) and B 725 (pls. 101–110).

<sup>6</sup> As a physician who graduated in Padua in 1541, he became involved with Reformation supporters in Venice in 1545–1549. These included another doctor called Matteo Fabri [41, pp. 375–376]. It is currently impossible to say whether the latter was related to Giovan Francesco or not.

Fabri may have attended University in Bologna or elsewhere, but never graduated (just like his friend Grimaldi) [22; 47]. He could write fluently in Latin, although his 7 compositions in this language (including his three poems on Michelangelo) are all still unpublished<sup>7</sup>. They consist of two epicedia in honour respectively of Emilio Bianchi (a Bolognese nobleman, *cameriere segreto* of Popes Leo X, Clemens VII and Paul III [33, p. 157]) and of Ludovico Boccadiferro, a famous professor of philosophy at the University, where he taught between 1530 and 1545, when he died [33, p. 169; 55, p. 58, n. 510]. One more epigram celebrates Pope Julius III (1550–1555) as a new Atlas, while the last epigram is about one Ligurinus (obviously a nickname)<sup>8</sup> and sounds like a gay joke<sup>9</sup>. Given that the poems for Bianchi, Boccadiferro and Julius III seem to be arranged in some chronological order, it might be inferred that the three poems in honour of Michelangelo, which precede them and were probably conceived on one and the same occasion, must belong to roughly the same period — within the 1540s — and possibly even slightly predate the other four poems. After 1551, there is no extensive record of Fabri's work, thus we may assume that he died sometime in the 1550s, possibly even before the death of Julius III, and that he was born perhaps some thirty years earlier. Thus his life-time must have spanned a period between roughly 1520 and 1555.

Obviously, Fabri must have seen Michelangelo's work (and possibly, though not necessarily, met the artist personally) in either Rome or Florence, for Michelangelo never came back to Bologna after 1508 [1, p. 116]. As is well known, Michelangelo left Florence for good in 1534 leaving behind many unfinished works including the *Crouching youth* now at the Hermitage. He was 59 by then and spent the rest of his exceptionally long life in Rome, where he was to die thirty years later.

One of Fabri's sonnets indicates that he spent some time in a city on the River Arno [20, p. 60]. It is either Florence (the residence of the Medici court since 1535) or Pisa (the only University city in Tuscany at the time). Even in the latter case, it is hard to believe that Fabri would not have stopped in Florence on his way to Pisa from Bologna. In his first poem<sup>10</sup>, he refers to crowds petrified, because they watched human features converted into marble portraits by Michelangelo. Thus the sculptor works the same miracles as both Medusa, petrifying her onlookers<sup>11</sup>, and of Deucalion, repopulating the Earth after the Flood, by throwing stones that would become people as soon as they touched the ground<sup>12</sup>. As if in a mirror, in front of Michelangelo's absolute command of his art as a sculptor, humans are petrified, stunned by the divine quality of his art, while in turn, the stones carved by him become real people, breathing and moving. This is virtually a pendant to Giovan Battista Strozzi's well-known

<sup>7</sup> See above, note 2.

<sup>8</sup> It might refer to a man of Ligurian origin, but it more likely harks back to Horace: see note 25.

<sup>9</sup> A similar composition to Ligurinus by Lisia Fileno, i.e. Camillo Renato features elsewhere in the same Bolognese manuscript as in note 2 (fol. 442r/v).

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix, n. 1.

<sup>11</sup> The *topos* of the petrifying art of an excellent sculptor has been discussed by Shearman [77, pp. 46–50].

<sup>12</sup> For this *topos* as applied to Cellini's *Perseus* by Paolo Mini, see [77, p. 57]. It had been earlier used in praise of Andrea Sansovino in the *Coryciana*. For writings by Doni applying this *topos* to Michelangelo, see 86, III, p. 953, note 502 and p. 1021, note 511. On the iconographic diffusion of the myths of Deucalion and of Medusa see the Warburg Institute Iconographic Database (in warburg.sas.ac.uk) *ad voces*, and also www.iconos.it/le-metamorfoosi-di-ovidio/libro-i/deucalione-e-pirra/immagini and www.iconos.it/le-metamorfoosi-di-ovidio/libro-iv/perseo-e-medusa/immagini.

praise of the *Night*<sup>13</sup>. In fact, Fabri's poem makes better sense in Florence than in Rome, as the former city hosted plenty of marble statues<sup>14</sup>, whereas in the latter, Michelangelo was known as a painter and an architect rather than a sculptor (save for his youthful *Piety*, his *Moses* and his *Christ*). Tellingly enough, in 1552, Anton Francesco Doni in his *I Marmi* famously used a similar comparison with Medusa in relation to Michelangelo's petrifying art in the New Sacristy [36, pp. 22–24; 77, pp. 46–48]. Whether he was quoting Fabri, or venting a Florentine commonplace, or had reached the same conclusion on his own, it is hard to tell.

The New Sacristy in San Lorenzo was opened to the public in 1545 [41, p. 155]. The idealized portraits of Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici, as well as the living countenances of the *Madonna and Child* and of the allegorical figures of the *Times of Day* would be taken as paragons of beauty. [1, pp. 150–197; 19] Besides, the artist's deserted studio in via Mozza hosted the unfinished figures of the *prisoners* for the tomb of Julius II, veritable visual translations of Deucalion's miraculous creation of humans from stones, as they were frozen half-way in their metamorphosis by the sudden departure of their creator for Rome [1, pp. 116–126, 214–229 and 234–235]. Finally, in Florence, one could also see the unfinished *Matthew* for the Cathedral and the *David* in the Piazza della Signoria [1, pp. 70–83 and 110–113], while *Brutus* was half hidden in the Ridolfi collection, before being acquired by the Grand Duke Francesco I in the 1570s–1580s [1, pp. 242–245]. This visual context best explains why all Fabri's poems celebrate Michelangelo *exclusively* as a sculptor.

As is well known, Michelangelo's famous letter to Varchi of 1547 [18, I, p. 82] openly challenges the attempt set forth by Varchi and shortly afterwards by Vasari — two of the leading intellectuals in Cosimo I's Court — to depict him as a painter and a sculptor in order to state the equivalence of the sister arts. Michelangelo was ostensibly upset by this Florentine attempt to convert his individual, exceptional universality as an artist (as shown best in his work at the Papal Court in Rome) into a general theoretical formula, at least as much as he was annoyed by the underlying diplomatic schemes to lure him back home from Rome [29].

In his native city they should have known better. As he saw it, he was a painter and an architect *because* he was a sculptor, first and foremost. His covert dig at his fellow national and former rival Leonardo (“the man who wrote that painting is more noble than sculpture, if he had had comparable understanding of everything else he has written about, then my handmaid could have said the same far better”) is a retort in strictly Florentine terms, showing contempt for his one-time competitor, by then long dead, as well as for the current ruler, Duke Cosimo I, only too eager — via his courtiers — to credit every supposed past and present excellence in art and literature to his subjects, especially if resident in his own dominion [37, esp. pp. 63–75, 103–120, 177–188, 205–222].

In this context, Fabri's writings sound closer to the artist's heart and mind than Varchi's<sup>15</sup> — whether by happy coincidence, intelligent perception, hearsay, or personal knowledge of the

<sup>13</sup> Their literary exchange was first printed by Vasari in 1550 (and again in 1568): see 86, I, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> I believe that this holds true, despite the content of Fabri's third epigram, which may sound defiant of Cosimo I's tightening of laws on sodomy in July 1542. As Margaret Gallucci observes, “the duke was keen to use the law to silence opposition and consolidate his power”, as in the case she has examined of Benvenuto Cellini's trial (1557), but otherwise he was fairly clement and tolerant [37, pp. 37–46, esp. 39 and 41].

<sup>15</sup> Varchi went back to Florence in 1543, after spending some time in Padua and in Bologna, as a student of Boccadiferro's. It is currently impossible to say whether he ever met Fabri [41, pp. 218–290].

artist, it is impossible to say. One may presume that the young Fabri was trying his luck as a court poet in Florence participating in the attempt of the newly established Cosimo court to win the nation's most prestigious living artist back home. Still he applied a strategy which was the opposite to the one already conceived (or still to be conceived?) by the leading intellectuals in Florence, only to be shared later on by such an extravagant person and a half-expat like Doni. This very originality may have been the reason for Fabri's failure at the Court, as he would complain about his bad luck [20, pp. 59 and 60]. (Although this is a *topos*, it must also be true to some extent). It is feasible that Fabri was in Florence from the mid- to late 1540s, when the new Medici Court was most attractive (the private literary Academy degli Umidi was gradually changing to become the official Accademia Fiorentina in the 1550s) [37, p. 42; 41, pp. 167–191] and most inclined to foster heterodoxy [41] — which might have been an added value for Fabri.

Fabri's second epigram<sup>16</sup> celebrates the miraculous ability of Michelangelo's learned hand in his art (sculpture) by stating that Nature has only to learn from Michelangelo, even though she created him. This can be taken as a clever variation on the usual rhetorical *topos* of the artist overcoming (Mother) Nature, his works being superior to hers. The reference to the artist's "docta manus" (a Renaissance *topos* in its own right) may also echo Michelangelo's sonnet "An excellent artist can have no conception", where such an artist's "hand obeying to intellect" is extolled as being capable, alone, to capture the artist's invention, whatever this may be, which is virtually present, albeit hidden, inside any marble block. This is one of Michelangelo's sonnets in honour of Vittoria Colonna, and it won almost immediate fame by Varchi's learned commentary, read in the Accademia in 1546, the year before Vittoria's death [43; 85, pp. 7–54].

Whatever may be of this, Fabri's third epigram is the most striking<sup>17</sup>. It extols the statue of a young boy named Lygdamus, whose portrait was made by the artist's "learned hand" no less beautiful or true than the reflection of Narcissus in the water. The youth blooming on his cheeks would be seen forever thanks to this sculpture. This poem ends with two rhetorical questions concerning the poet: How could he hope not to be burnt by such fire, made eternal by art? Even if the very quality of art adds fire to fire?<sup>18</sup>

Leaving aside the obvious homosexual implications in the last couplet, many more issues are at stake here. As is well known, there is no extant portrait sculpture of a young boy by Michelangelo, nor is there any references in the literature on the artist other than to the quite undistinguished funeral portrait-bust of Cecchino Bracci designed (but not executed) by Michelangelo for the tomb of a boy in the Church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli in Rome, in 1544–1545 [1, pp. 259–260]. Its weakness deserves no praise, nor do the 50 odd poems that Michelangelo had to write as epitaphs in his honour, under pressure from his friend Luigi del Riccio, the dead boy's uncle and a Florentine banker active in Rome. The human figure sketched in a corner of one of Michelangelo's projects for this tomb [5, p. 45; 7, p. 78; 9, pp. 66–67] bears neither resemblance nor visual connection with the monument or the Hermitage statue [17, pp. 188–190, n. 150]. Besides, nothing in Fabri's poem stands to suggest that "Lygdamus" is

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix, n. 2.

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix, n. 3.

<sup>18</sup> The *topos* of beautiful marble statues making their beholders fall in love with them had already been applied to Michelangelo's *Night* and *Dawn* in the New Sacristy by Varchi: see his sonnet to Bartolomeo Bettini [86, III, p. 1021, note 511].

dead. On the contrary, he sounds alive, albeit detached, simply indifferent to (or mercifully unaware of) the emotions his looks may arouse in the poet or any beholder.

If the quality of this statue can exceed the mirror image of Narcissus in factual truth and beauty, this must imply that the boy's pose would somehow recall the latter's image, thus prompting the poet's pen to evoke it for his readers. The only extant work by Michelangelo that fits this assumption is the *Crouching Youth* at the Hermitage. Both its attribution to Michelangelo and its origin and function have been the objects of disputes<sup>19</sup>. While any lingering doubt on its attribution can be dispelled by the praise bestowed on it by Fabri (if it had been a workshop work, Fabri's lines would have outraged Michelangelo, instead of flattering him), this poem also clarifies that the sculpture had been conceived (or at least had eventually come to be acknowledged) as an independent work of art, not as a part of a whole — whether it was the tomb for Pope Julius II (as first suggested by Springer) or one of Medici's tombs (as is more often stated). Probably it was originally meant as a response to antiquity (the famous *Cavaspino* in particular, but also bathing gods and goddesses)<sup>20</sup>, or, alternatively, as a willful competition with antique sculpture like in Michelangelo's youthful *head of Satyr* and *Sleeping Cupid* (both lost [1, pp. 14–25 and 44–45]), or in the wobbling *Bacchus* [1, pp. 50–54], or in his unfinished *David/Apollo* [1, pp. 210–214]. Later Florentine statues of *Narcissus* by Valerio Cioli and by Benvenuto Cellini entirely missed Michelangelo's point, becoming far too obvious exercises in Mannerist artistic ingenuity and gay reverie, as well as covert attempts to reconstruct the Roman *Cavaspino* as *Narcissus*<sup>21</sup>. Not surprisingly, only Rodin was later to recapture a fraction of Michelangelo's invention in his *Femme accroupie* (*Crouching Woman* or *Lust*) originally meant as a figure for his *Gates of Hell*<sup>22</sup>. The originality of Michelangelo's *Narcissus/Lygdamus* becomes all the more obvious when compared with antique, medieval and modern depictions of the mythical youth<sup>23</sup>. It can be partly matched only by Caravaggio's

<sup>19</sup> Past shifts in attribution and disputes on the statue's origin and function are discussed in great detail in Androsov [5; 6; 7; 8; 9]. Among Italian scholars who either doubt or deny its attribution to Michelangelo, see e.g. Baldini [12, pp. 104–106, entry n. 38] later to revise his opinion [13, p. 34]; Negri Arnoldi [27, pls. LXXV–LXXVI and relevant entry: made for the tomb of Pope Julius II], Donati [35, pp. 145–165, esp. 148–150: for the Medici tombs], Salvini [74, pp. 94–119, and 178, n. 14: for the Medici tombs], correctly countered on stylistic grounds by Venturi [87, pp. 91–93 and 98, fig. 82], followed by Parronchi [64, pp. 26 and 39]. Pope-Hennessy was uncertain [69, p. 335], whereas Goldscheider went so far as to state: “Its authenticity is entirely unsupported, and therefore doubtful” [46, pp. 19 and 213–215 (italics mine)].

<sup>20</sup> On Michelangelo and the antique, at various stages in his life, see esp. [3; 62; 63].

<sup>21</sup> As is well known, Cellini's *Narcissus* was made from a statuary fragment of Greek marble sent from Rome in 1548 to restore a bust in the Uffizi Gallery (which is now known as *Ganimedes*). Cellini decided instead to use this marble to create a new modern statue in the shape of *Narcissus*, possibly following an idea inherent to the fragment itself [15, pp. 93–94, n. 48 and pls. XXVII–XXIX; 24, pp. 42–43, nos. 36–39; 66, pp. 132–139, n. 15; 68, p. 231, pls. 132 and 135–136]. In 1566 a fragmentary marble copy of the *Cavaspino* was excavated on the Palatine Hill in Rome, and became part of the Este collections (later Pacetti and then Borghese, before ending up at the Louvre) [23, pp. 89–90; 61, pp. 63 and 68, note 2]. The fragment reworked by Cellini into a *Narcissus* may have been originally similar to the Este one.

<sup>22</sup> In Florence in 1876 Rodin had seen a cast of the Hermitage statue donated by the Russian Grandduchess Maria Nikolaievna Romanova to the local Academy of Fine Arts [39, pp. 132–135 and 294–295; 80, pp. 90–107, n. 1 and pp. 136–140, n. 6]. While his *Gates of Hell* were his response to both Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise* in the Florentine Baptistery, it is interesting that the young boy's ephebic charm is converted into an aged woman's distorted figure and that this in turn becomes the symbol of Lust.

<sup>23</sup> For the iconography of Narcissus throughout the ages see the Warburg Institute Iconographic Database

much later painting in the Barberini collection, whose attitude may in turn recall Michelangelo's inventions for the Pauline Chapel.

The name Lygdamus is obviously redolent of classical culture. Ligdamus was a famous Latin poet of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., whose work was included in the *Corpus Tibullianum*. Although his true identity is uncertain, he is thought to have died young, for his poems are few [26, p. 330]. They are delicate and unmistakably heterosexual. In the Renaissance, the Greek sounding names of *Lycda*, *Lygden* and *Lygdamus* suddenly became standard names for young male lovers in the erotic Latin poetry of the young Pietro Bembo [65, pp. 11, 19, 30–31, 40, 47 and *passim*; 67; 50, p. 149] as well as of Tebaldeo before him, or of the rather obscure Ulisse Bassiano from Bologna, a friend of Marcantonio Flaminio's [38, I, pp. 391–392; 76, pp. 17–24; 83, fols. 26v and 99v–100r]. In Italian, Fabri wrote love poems for both women (nicknamed *Camilla* and *Luce*, for *Lucia*) and boys as shown in his most popular long poem “Arrio pastor” [32, pp. 320–328].

Fabri's epigram on Lygdamus (just like the one for Ligurinus) could be understood as an emulative exercise in a different, pseudo-antique literary genre (just like in Bembo, Varchi, and many other late Renaissance poets), rather than as a serious statement about the author's sexual inclinations<sup>24</sup>. The hint must have been taken from Horace who dedicated two gay love poems to one “Ligurinus”, within the context of a multitude of straight love poems<sup>25</sup>. In sum, in poetry and in life, just like in sculpture, not everybody was Michelangelo, and gay literature was partly a joke, although a dangerous one, to be dropped after the end of the Council of Trent (1563), virtually coinciding with Michelangelo's own death (1564) [79, II, p. 127]. Fabri's obscurity may be the result either of full understanding, or of some gross (mis)understanding of his original intentions in love poetry. In any case, it is the evidence of the changing tide in official moral values.

Given the time gap of the decades dividing Tebaldeo, Bembo, and Fabri's poems, the name Lygdamus cannot be identified as one and the same boy. Whether Fabri wished to refer to a specific individual loved by either Michelangelo or somebody in his circle, it is hard to say. The unfinished quality of the statue's face, as well as Michelangelo's idealizing definition of portraiture documented by Niccolò Martelli in 1544 [54, fols. 48v–49r; 86, III, p. 993, note 508], paved the way to the generalization of the individual as a love-boy, especially considering that Michelangelo had been away from Florence for over ten years, at the time when Fabri must have composed his verses. By then any youth he may have loved would have become a man, possibly married.

The *Crouching youth* has a Medici provenance, but until 2009, it had not been identified in Medici inventories. That year Carlo Gasparri suggested that it was part of Cardinal Ferdinando's collection in his Villa in Rome, convincingly identifying it with “the shepherd Martius extracting a thorn from his foot” mentioned in the 1670 inventory [45, p. 394, n. 8] (this was

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*ad vocem*; also [www.icons.it/le-metamorfose-di-ovidio/libro-iii/narciso/immagini](http://www.icons.it/le-metamorfose-di-ovidio/libro-iii/narciso/immagini), and also *Monumenta rariora* ([www.mora.sns.it](http://www.mora.sns.it)) *ad vocem* “Narcisus”.

<sup>24</sup> Something comparable can be found in Bronzino's *La serenata*, line 117 [21, pp. 129–135, and commentary on p. 6].

<sup>25</sup> Beside Horace (*Odes*, IV, 1 and 10), also Martial wrote an epigram centered on a scribbler and bad poet named Ligurinus (*Epigrams*, IV, 45). In Italian Renaissance and Baroque literature this name surfaces time and again in the prose and poems of both minor and major authors such as Bernardo Tasso, Giovan Battista Marino, Nicola degli Angeli, Giovanni Andrea Moniglia, sometimes in open emulation of Horace, sometimes not.

the standard Baroque interpretation for the *Cavaspino* on Capitol Hill)<sup>26</sup>. More questionable, perhaps, is the other identification with “a sitting young faun, unfinished” listed in the 1588 inventory [45, p. 454, n. 1304], for the boy bears no resemblance with a faun. In both records, the statue’s original meaning seems lost or removed. May Fabri have seen and described the statue in Rome, and written his poems in this city, rather than in Florence? As a poet looking for court patronage, and possibly a subject of the papal state, he might easily have ended up in Rome, especially in 1550, for the Jubilee and/or Julius III’s election. If so, the boy might have been taken (or mistaken) for one of Pope Julius III’s lovers [4, pp. 233–235].<sup>27</sup> This speculation, however, finds little or no support in the datings of the statue based on stylistic analysis and visual evidence<sup>28</sup>. On the contrary, it may be argued that the statue was moved from Florence to Rome at a time when Fabri had been long dead and when Ferdinando had possibly left Rome to succeed to his brother as the Grandduke in Florence [49, esp. pp. 15–21 and 47–57]. In any case, the statue’s function as a collector’s item for private view, first suggested by Sergey Androsov [5, p. 44; 6, p. 95; 7, p. 78; 8, p. 21; 9, p. 65], is now more firmly established on documents and its history within the Medici collections somewhat clarified.

## Appendix

### In Michaelem Angelum Bonarotum Ioannis Francisci Fabri

Dum sua conversum Bonaroti marmor in ora  
Spectat turba frequens, obstupefacta riget:  
Hocne est in silices hominum mutasse figuras?  
Aut nostrum e saxis iam reponasse genus?  
Quid tua Deucalion? Rigidiae quid secla Medusae  
Miramur? Tanta nil minus arte datur.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> This identification with Michelangelo’s statue has been either ignored or implicitly rejected in a recent exhibition (*Spinario — Storia e fortuna*) held in Rome in Spring 2014, whose catalogue has not been published. Captions and the list of exhibits ([www.museucapitolini.org/mostre\\_ed\\_eventi/mostra/spinario](http://www.museucapitolini.org/mostre_ed_eventi/mostra/spinario)) followed Mansuelli [53, I, pp. 148–149, n. 118] and Cacciotti [23, p. 90, nota 102], who had tentatively identified the item present in the 1670 inventory with a marble copy of the *Cavaspino* currently in the Uffizi. For the several different names and descriptions of the *Cavaspino* in Renaissance and Baroque relevant literature, as well as for lists of their copies, see [48, pp. 308–310, n. 78; 72, pp. 235–236, n. 203; 30, pp. 415–418 + CD, n. 42], as well as the Warburg Institute Iconographic Database, and *Monumenta rariora* ([www.mora.sns.it](http://www.mora.sns.it)), both *ad vocem* “spinario”.

<sup>27</sup> Not surprisingly, Cardinal Innocenzo dal Monte (Julius III’s former lover and adoptive son [31, vol. 38, pp. 131–141]) possessed one of the many marble copies of the *Cavaspino* [23, p. 90, note 102].

<sup>28</sup> Androsov, following Justi, has correctly drawn the attention to the figure of the *Prisoner* in the foreground to the right, in Battista Franco’s *Battle of Montemurlo* (1537) [6, p. 94; 8, pp. 16–17]. This painting is an anthology of Michelangelo’s inventions, ranging from the *Rape of Ganymedes*, to the *Dream* and this *Youth*. In fact, the *Prisoner* is closer to Michelangelo’s prisoners in the extant drawings for the Medici tombs (especially the one in the Louvre) and to a figure in his *Dream* (and painted copies thereof [16, pp. 94–95]) than to the statue at the Hermitage (which is taller than the crouched statues planned for the Medici tombs [6, p. 95; 8, p. 19]), but it can still work as a *terminus ante* for the statue as well, for it stems from the same general invention and strikes a similar pose.

<sup>29</sup> BUB, ms 52, busta II, n. 1, c. 418v:

*For Michelangelo Buonarroti by Giovan Francesco Fabri.*

While crowds watch Buonarroti’s marbles / converted into human features, they stiffen in amazement. / Is this not converting human figures into stones? / Or recreate our stock from stones? / Why, Deucalion, do we



**In eundem**

Docta iam Bonarote manu tantum efficit: artem  
Ut natura suo discat ab artifice.<sup>30</sup>

**In effigiem Lygdami pueri ab eodem sculptam**

Verius haud finxit Narcissum, haud pulchrius unda,  
Artificis quam te, Lygdame, docta manus.  
Hinc tibi quae malas spargit nunc flore iuventa  
Ibit in aeternos conspicienda dies.  
Ast ego perpetuo sperem non urier igne?  
Hac quoque si facibus suggeris arte faces?<sup>31</sup>

**Title.** A New Narcissus Named “Lygdamus”: A Poetical Source for a Different Interpretation of Michelangelo’s *Crouching Youth* from the Collection of the State Hermitage.

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**Abstract.** The discovery in a well-known manuscript preserved in the Bologna University Library of three still unpublished poems in Latin (epigrams) by an obscure 16<sup>th</sup> century poet called Giovan Francesco Fabri sheds some new light on the appreciation of Michelangelo’s sculptures amidst his contemporaries. The essay unravels their connections with the Florentine debate on Michelangelo’s work, especially in Varchi’s and Doni’s literary oeuvre. In particular, one of Fabri’s epigrams seems to describe the *Crouching Youth* at the Hermitage, thus proving that it is an autograph work and that it was conceived as (or at any rate early taken for) an autonomous work of art. Besides, the essay refers to recent archaeological literature suggesting that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the statue was kept in Villa Medici, Rome. It also offers an attempt to give some biographical and cultural substance to the author of these poems, Giovan Francesco Fabri, now almost forgotten, but somewhat famous in his days for his Italian poems.

**Keywords:** Michelangelo Buonarroti; Crouching youth, State Hermitage museum, Saint-Petersburg; Giovan Francesco Fabri; Benedetto Varchi; Villa Medici inventories.

**Название статьи.** Новый Нарцисс, или «Лигдам»: поэтический источник для новой интерпретации «Скорчившегося мальчика» Микеланджело из коллекции Эрмитажа.

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**Аннотация.** Обнаружение в известной рукописи из библиотеки Университета Болоньи трех до сих пор не опубликованных эпиграмм на латыни, принадлежащих перу малоизвестного поэта XVI в. Джiovана Франческо Фабри, позволяет по-новому раскрыть осмысление и оценки скульптур Микеланджело его современниками. Статья выявляет связь этих сочинений с дискуссией о работах Микеланджело во Флоренции, особенно в трудах Бенедетто Варки и Антона Франческо Дони. В частности, есть основания полагать, что в одной из эпиграмм Фабри описан «Скорчившийся мальчик» из коллекции Государственного Эрмитажа. В таком случае эпиграмма может служить доказательством того, что это собственная работа Микеланджело и что она была задумана (или по крайней мере вскоре стала существовать) как самостоятельное произведение. Кроме того, с опорой на современную на-

wonder at your days? / Or at those of stiffening Medusa? / When art is so great / nothing less takes place” (translation by the author).

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem:

“For the same [Michelangelo].

Buonarroti, thanks to your learned hand you obtain this much: / that Nature herself has to learn art from her artist”. (translation by the author).

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem:

“For the image of a youth called Lygdamus sculpted by the same [Michelangelo]

Waves have depicted Narcissus with no greater truth nor beauty / than the artist’s learned hand has done with you, Lygdamus, / So that youth now blooming on your cheeks / will be admired for ever and ever. / But should I hope not to be burnt by this eternal fire? / Even if by such an art you add fire to fire?” (translation by the author).

учную литературу по археологии в статье высказано предположение, что в XVII в. статуя находилась на вилле Медичи в Риме. Также предпринята попытка собрать сведения о жизни и творчестве создателя эпиграм — Джiovана Франческо Фабри, сегодня почти забытого поэта, который при жизни, однако, пользовался известностью по крайней мере как автор итальянских стихотворений.

**Ключевые слова:** Микеланджело Буонаротти; «Скорчившийся мальчик»; Государственный Эрмитаж, Санкт-Петербург; Джiovан Франческо Фабри; Бенедетто Варки; инвентарные описи виллы Медичи.

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