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Forging Historical Truth: Samples from Early Modern and Modern Italian Art Literature

Luigi Crespi's official debut in art literature [12, II, pp. 323–351, n. CXIV; 351–362, n. CXV; 363–375, n. CXVI] is a detailed critical analysis of the 1751 reprint of the *Descrizione delle immagini dipinte da Raffaello da Urbino* by Giovan Pietro Bellori [6], first issued posthumously in 1695 [5].¹ Reflecting contemporary mainstream French views [16, cfr. 58], Bellori counters Vasari and ignores visual evidence, to uphold Freart de Chambray's idea that Raphael's grand style is an autonomous development of his art, owing nothing to Michelangelo [6, pp. 206–223]. Crespi proves that most of Bellori's arguments are based on misquotations, misrepresentations and/or misunderstandings of texts by Vasari and others. Crespi's debunking is accurate and meticulous, occasionally a bit overstated and somewhat manipulative. Of course. It takes a thief to catch a thief. Crespi's biography is undisputable evidence of his total lack of scruples as an art dealer, an art historian and a painter – and even as a priest [51]. Being economical with the truth is his standard. Still, he misses the main point of Bellori's exercise in manipulation, which is political [37; 40; 46; 13]. Bellori always has a strategy in mind, putting his own advantage in the broader context of a network of mutual favours and far-reaching policies, whereas Crespi is self-centered, acting exclusively for his own presumed, immediate profit, with no eye to further advantages. This is a major difference that may well account for their different reputations nowadays.

Crespi's well-deserved negative reputation rests on his numerous failures and shortcomings, but also conceals his positive ability to create and take advantage of new genres and opportunities in art literature. On the contrary Bellori's lingering success, proven by a number of recent translations of his *Vite* into modern Western languages [3; 4], is based on a well-orchestrated promotional campaign started in late 17th-century Rome. Undeterred by his lack of originality and his modest standards both as an antiquarian and a historian, his popularity is equally oblivious to his proven indifference to accuracy and truth and uninterested in his inadequacy as a theoretician – indeed Bellori often mistakes theory for rhetorics, enthymemes for syllogisms. A born secretary, he was ever ready to put his limited, well-polished skills to the service of anybody deemed powerful – be it Carlo Maratta, Christine of Sweden and Charles Errard in Rome or Jean Baptiste Colbert in Paris. His very obsequious mediocrity is the hallmark and main cause of his long-lasting success.

Truth is often mistaken for a commodity whose value is both conventional and unwarranted – like bitcoins. Ever since the fabrication of the so called “Donatio Constantini” and up to the nineteenth century, in Western Europe the tools both for forging historical documents

¹ Two more letters by Crespi discussing Maratta's restoration of Raphael's frescoes in the Farnesina, extolled by Bellori [5, pp. 86–93; 6, pp. 194–206], are printed in [12, III, pp. 264–284, n. CXC; 285–301, n. CXCII].

and for debunking their fabrication have much to do with the Roman Catholic Church, as a major agent of (biased) literacy. In 1440, with the aid of textual analysis and Latin philology, the Lateran canon and humanist Lorenzo Valla conclusively proved that the Donation was a medieval forgery – a discovery immediately finding its way into art literature thanks to Ghiberti's allusion at the beginning of his second *Commentario* [62; 17, p. 83]. Even so, around 1518 Raphael and his team glorified the *Donation* on a wall in the Room of Costantine in the Vatican Palace, as it lay the very foundation of Papal claims to worldly sovereignty. In the previous year, 1517, at the very time when Reformation was starting in Germany, Ulrich von Hütten had printed Valla's book together with other writings on the subject. Needless to say, Valla's book was listed as forbidden by the Church [22, fol. Iiir], while canonists went on arguing the case for the Donation's historical truth for centuries, to protect its political value. Only in 1870, when Rome was finally reunited to the Kingdom of Italy thanks to a special military operation, did the Donation issue become obsolete and Valla's truth accepted².

In the seventeenth century, Jean Mabillon and the French Benedictines of the Congregation of St. Maur (also known as Maurists) largely contributed to the shaping of truthful history-writing. The fall-outs of their work on Western historiography in general and on art literature in particular have already been the object of comparatively recent studies [2, esp. I and II; 9, pp. 123–223], at times leaving out one of its protagonists, Carlo Cesare Malvasia, a Professor of Law (and Theology) at the University of Bologna, an aristocrat and a glorious standard-bearer of European art history [31; 32; 33; 34; 35; 38; 42; 47; 49; 52]. One reason for this is a factual mistake, i.e. the erroneous merging into one of two homonymous yet unrelated sixteenth-century authors by the name of Bernardino Baldi, whose life-spans happen to overlap. One is the obscure, minor Bolognese Counterreformation painter (†1612), whose writings, perused by Malvasia, are now lost, while the other one is a fairly famous clergyman, poet, mathematician and scientist from Urbino. Hence the erroneous but successful idea that Malvasia's new method in art historiography stemmed from his nonexistent interest in natural sciences, rather than from his acknowledged competence in law and documented timely acquaintance with both Maurists (including their Italian followers, Benedetto Bacchini and Gaudenzio Roberti) and Bollandists, who also tried to apply a new, more critical approach to hagiography [32; 49, pp. 163–164].

This gross misrepresentation of Malvasia's intellectual background would hardly have been successful without the preparatory, plurisecular smear campaign masterminded and enacted against him by the Roman clique of Bellori, Maratta and their faithful protégé, the Spanish dauber and hack canon Vicente Victoria [48; 60]. The latter's indifference to factual truth is substantiated by his still-lives, occasionally signed as "Diego Velazquez". His slanderous pamphlet (*Osservazioni sopra il libro della Felsina Pittrice*) published in 1703 under the false date of 1679 openly reflects Bellori and Maratta's opinions [65]³. He misrepresents and misunderstands Malvasia's stance very much in the wake of Bellori's manipulation of Vasari's text in his *Descrizione*. (Meaningfully enough, a plate at the very beginning of Vittoria's libel shows Bellori's very hand

² This acceptance is almost universal, although there are still some areas of lingering ignorance, as I realized when, as the supervisor of an MA thesis on Ghiberti, I clashed against the unshakeable determination of a student who stubbornly refused to acknowledge the fact that Ghiberti, influenced by Valla, put the blame for the demise of classical art on the rise of Christianity and its ruthless eradication of paganism.

³ The false date 1679 is just one year after the publication of Malvasia's *Felsina Pittrice*, whereas the true date 1703 is ten years after his demise, which explains why Malvasia did not (i.e. could not) answer.

sharpening a pen) [48]. The reason for this has less to do with the harsh confrontation of opposite poetics and aesthetics (Classicism vs Baroque) than with personal conflicts and political concerns. Malvasia's book is a powerful statement in favour of a notion of history-writing based on the quest for truth, achieved via research, documentation and visual inspection, as opposed to a kind of biography relying mostly on rhetorical praise and decorous exemplarity achieved via factual selection, i.e. censorship and omissions. This is the real issue at stake⁴. Hence it is no surprise if Bellori is largely appreciated in the world of today's fictional world of "cancel culture" and its pseudo-history, which shamelessly retrieves some mistifying and hideous Counter-reformation rituals, including the debasing use of "disclaimers" resurfacing in the paratexts of Anglo-American studies conforming to a globalist, anti-European vision of the world.

Vittoria's most vicious (and to date unproven) charge concerns Malvasia's assumed fabrication of documents [65, pp. 92–93], whenever his document-based narration does not conform to the received Roman wisdom. Not only does this charge slander and subvert the very heart of Malvasia's new method, based on a relentless quest for oral and written evidence. It also provides a convenient argument for anybody feeling ill at ease with information supplied by Malvasia, whenever it does not tally with different, newer, undocumented, often fanciful assumptions [49]. This is why it is still recursively retrieved by outdated or run-of-the-mill art historical research, especially if carried out by connoisseurs, from Longhi to Mahon, Shearman and their younger acolytes.

In the first decade of the 18th century Malvasia was promptly and effectively defended by Zanotti in Bologna and by the Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture in Paris [66, pp. 4–5, unnumbered [but fol. A4r]; 67; 29, IV, pp. 113–114, 116: cfr. 35, pp. CXCVII–CCII; 20, pp. 67–103, esp. 68–70]. While Malvasia's reputation as an antiquarian has always been and still is impeccable [27, 38], his reputation as an art historian started lacking lustre as soon as Baroque style and aesthetics were dispelled by Neoclassicism. This is not due to the revolution in taste *per se*, but rather to the new, often undeserved credibility acquired by its presumed harbingers and ancestors, like Bellori. A lie becomes truer than truth if first told by assumed authorities, to be subsequently repeated over and over again, out of habit, within and subsequently also without the original clique that generated it, to the point of being simply accepted at face value and taken for granted everywhere, without any further inquiry. Even so, truth is never democratic. It does not depend on the quantity of followers and "likes". It is objective, independent of favour and politics. Lie overshadowing truth has got many implications, well beyond Malvasia, or the history of Bolognese painting, where it obscures the leading role of Ludovico Carracci, strongly upheld by Malvasia (and Reynolds) against Bellori's unstinted promotion of Annibale, especially in his Roman days [15, 36, 43, 44, 45, 47, 50]. Paolo Prodi's modern [54, 55], universally adopted opinion that the Carraccis were the promoters of Paleotti's ideals in art [e.g. 10, 57] stems partly from this, even if it goes largely against the historical evidence now available. As a patron of the arts, Paleotti unflinchingly supported late Mannerist painters, even of inferior merit.⁵ When writing his

⁴ The English commented translation of his *Felsina Pittrice*, whose publication is currently under way [26], is the outcome of this reassessment of his art historical value, first championed simultaneously by the late Charles Dempsey and me in the very early 1980s.

⁵ Prodi, a historian of ideas and institutions, studied the Cardinal's activity some sixty years ago [54]. He could not supply any evidence of direct contacts between Paleotti and the Carraccis, other than their living at the same time in the same place. In the footnotes of his book he lists letters to and from the major (and minor) Mannerist artists of the period preserved as half-burnt relics in Paleotti's family archive. Cardinal Paleotti employed some of these painters for the decoration of the vault of the apse, the presbyterium and

allegedly influential *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane* [30; cfr. 54], he turned for artistic advice to a well-established Mannerist artist (Prospero Fontana) rather than to Fontana's former student Ludovico Carracci, a master painter in his own right since 1578 and the founder of a private art academy in the very same 1582, when the *Discorso* was first published.

There are equally good reasons to doubt Paleotti's influence on the Carracci work. His strict prohibition of mythological paintings in private residences [30, pp. 42v–54r, 121v–124v] was not very effective even within his diocese, and especially with the Carraccis.⁶ Their collective debut in Bologna (1584) is marked by a frieze in the Fava Palace, right opposite the Cathedral, illustrating various episodes of Jason's life and deeds, framed by the feigned statues of a score of Pagan deities, starting with Venus and ending with Victory [41]. In 1590 the three Carracci depicted the story of Romulus and Remus in the main room of Lorenzo Magnani's brand new palace, adding some celebrated frescoes featuring a *Sleeping Bacchus*, *Cupid wrestling with a satyr*, and a *seated Apollus* in the chimney-pieces of the rooms on the ground floor [63], where Lorenzo Magnani was portrayed as *Hercules-Priapus* in a naked statue by Gabriele Fiorini, a sculptor close to the Carraccis⁷. Finally, right before splitting up their joint venture in 1595 due to Annibale's departure for Rome, the Carraccis decorated the ceilings and chimney-pieces on the first floor of the Sampieri palace with the stories of Hercules and other pagan demigods [56]. Working for the Farnese in Rome, Annibale depicted yet again Hercules' story in the *Camerino*, drawing on inventions by Ludovico [45, p. 123]⁸, then frescoed the celebrated *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* (1602) and the love stories of several pagan gods in the adjoining Gallery (1602), plus a large canvas showing a *Sleeping Venus*, now in Chantilly [11]. It is as pretty well known as conveniently forgotten that Pope Clemens VIII Aldobrandini was not too pleased with the Carracci's work [68]. Clearly, style was not the issue.

In 1588, a new literary academy was established in Bologna, bearing the name of *Gelati* (the Frozen ones). Their academic device, painted by Prospero Fontana, was engraved as a plate for the frontispieces of their books by Agostino Carracci, possibly one of its early members.⁹ The main room where they convened in Melchiorre Zoppio's palace was called *Hermathena*, just like Achille Bocchi's earlier, heretical academy [8]. The room displayed a dozen pictures (probably canvases) by unknown artists depicting stories of Mercury and Minerva, now lost, together with a frieze depicting the Academy's *impresa* and the emblems and coats of arms of each academician, including their Cardinal Protector's, Maffeo Barberini, later to become Pope Urban VIII [61; 21]. In 1614 Zoppio delivered a speech where he intertwined Greek, Roman and even Egyptian lore and mythology with modern Catholic patronage in a way that sounds seamless, effortless and perfectly acceptable. His discussion of whether *Hermathena*

the crypt of his Cathedral, as well as for his long-destroyed family chapel. Both Ludovico and Annibale were invited to contribute to the latter's decoration, but had only a very minor share in the worst possible location, right under the large window at the top of the wall, which would make their work almost invisible when the sunlight would pour in [7, pp.187–188].

⁶ This prohibition is a complement to and an echo of the early Christian iconoclasm of the IV and V centuries denounced by Lorenzo Ghiberti at the beginning of his second and in his third *Commentaries* [17, pp. 83, 107–110].

⁷ A portrait of Fiorini by Ludovico was recorded in a 19th-century private coll. in Florence [15, p. 509].

⁸ Ludovico's original invention for his uncle Carlo's chimney piece (a detached fresco now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London) had already been put to use by Annibale in a small chiaroscuro in the cornice of his fresco in the Sampieri Palace, Bologna [see 56, fig.11].

⁹ Also Lucio Faberio (i.e. Lucio Favari), who delivered the speech at Agostino's funeral, was a member of both the Gelati and the Carracci academies.

was originally one statue having two heads and one body blending the attributes of both sexes and gods (like in Zuccari's awkward fresco in Caprarola) or rather consisted of two separate statues, one for each god, harks back to the commentaries on the erroneous representations of the Trinity as one body with three heads in Counterreformation treatises, such as Molanus's [28, fols. 16r–19r: cfr.; also 18, fol.72r;19, fols.84v–85r].

Contrary to received wisdom, we can therefore infer that Counterreformation was effective and pervasive only at some very general level, while being largely ineffectual in many specific circumstances. It did not eradicate nor curb the revival of classical culture (which in turn did not lead to the dreaded revival of paganism), nor did it manage to prevent the birth of new, even weird, erroneous or blasphemous Christian iconographies. In fact it never managed to establish sets of iconographical specifications valid everywhere, which is why neither Gabriele Paleotti nor Federico Borromeo ever finished their treatises on images¹⁰, nor did the former succeed in creating an *Index imaginum prohibitarum* to match the *Index Librorum prohibitorum* first printed in 1559 [22]. The positive results obtained were mostly a matter of the unstinting determination of a Church which styles itself as catholic (i.e. encompassing everything) to be in control of every intellectual pursuit simply by infiltrating and therefore weakening it and thwarting it from within, without actually confronting, repressing or eradicating it, unless it became absolutely necessary on occasions, to teach some memorable lesson. Evidence can be gleaned from different areas and contexts.

Since the Middle Ages painted or sculpted family escutcheons had been fairly ubiquitous in churches throughout Europe, not only on the walls of family chapels, altars and altarpieces, but even on liturgical vessels, chandeliers and even garments. The same is true of the portraits of laymen, top clergy, aristocrats and, of course, rulers. These were present on tombstones and family sepulchres, but also in mosaics, stained glasses, frescoes and altarpieces, where they often recorded secular donors or patrons, sometimes disguised as their eponymous saints (portraits “a lo devino”, more frequent in Spain than in Italy). Paleotti devoted several chapters of his *Discorso* to fight all this [30, esp. fols. 256v–272r, 153r–160r, 168r/v], but very little changed [7, p. 186], even after his book was translated into Latin (1594) and peddled all over Europe¹¹.

Research has recently unearthed a very unconventional depiction of the *sacrifice of Isaac* to be found in paintings, prints and verbal descriptions all over Europe and its American colonies, crossing all confessional boundaries within Christianity, from the 16th through to the early 20th centuries. (It is mentioned by Gogol in an unfinished tale, as part of the decoration in a Cossack house) [23, p. 118]. In this peculiar iconography Abraham points an old-fashioned firearm (a musket, a blunderbus or the like) at his son, who is rescued by a male angel pissing on the prime of the gun, thus wetting it and preventing it from shooting. According to Paleotti's classifications, this iconography is new, preposterous, erroneous and obscene. It updates tradition in a way that may easily appeal to the populace. Intriguingly enough, in

¹⁰ This is probably why Durandus' *Rationale divinatorum officiorum* remained a basic reference work well into the 17th century [14] and was quoted by Molanus. Its latest reprints date to the 19th century.

¹¹ The 1582 edition was targeted to a very small and selected circle of readers, most notably cardinals and lay advisors chosen by the author. The copy now in the Biblioteca Casanatense, Rome (originally from the Library of Cardinal Altemps, where it was bound in purple-coloured velvet) bears this handwritten warning facing the title page: “Occorrendo a chi leggerà il presente discorso alcuna cosa da notare, si degnarà mandarla in mano di chi gli havrà dato il libro, senza divulgarla ad altri, poiché non si è stampato hora per publicarlo, ma per copia da rivedersi”. The handwriting is rather neat and impersonal, belonging to a scribe and is present in other extant copies of this book.

Bologna it was adopted by Giovannino da Capugnano, a naïf painter whose cousin was a Dominican friar, Girolamo Zannini (or Giovannini), the Inquisitor in Vicenza and a famous censor of books [39; 53; 59, pp. 218–219].

Indeed the Catholic notion of orthodoxy is very flexible. Giovanni Andrea Gilio da Fabriano's *Dialogo sugli errori ed abusi dei pittori nelle storie* was published in 1564, soon after the end of the Council of Trent. It is dedicated to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, for Gilio hoped to become his theological advisor. Accordingly, in the *Dialogo* he allows the representation of God as a human, following the prevailing, well-established Catholic visual tradition [19, fols. 84r–85r and passim]. Yet in the previous year (1563) he had published another theological text (*Trattato dell'emulazione del demonio a Dio*) dedicated to Cardinal Alessandro's sister, Vittoria Farnese, the wife of Guidubaldo II della Rovere, duke of Urbino. In this book he had strongly supported the idea that God should never be represented as a human, following the traditional Greek Orthodox theological stance [18, fols. 70r–73r, 92v–93v, 100v, 108v–109r].¹² Such a sudden U-turn on a major iconographical and theological issue is puzzling. This is probably why the date of the issue of Gilio's *Trattato* is often anticipated to 1550, because of one single copy at the Biblioteca Casanatense in Rome bearing this date. Its title-page, however, is coarsely forged, possibly in order to help explain Gilio's sudden change of mind as a result of the Council of Trent [24]¹³.

This limited sampling is sufficient, I think, to recall the multifaceted implications of history-writing, especially when, like in Thucydides, history strives to become a κτήμα εις αιεί (a possession for eternity), a solid and truthful account of the past, in order to understand the present and build up the future. Denying history is denying the future. The everchanging, unverified digital collection of often imprecise, unreliable data called *Wikipedia* is no part of history-writing. Advertised as a free source of “unbiased information”, it is run by an American private no profit company (Wikipedia Foundation Inc.),¹⁴ creating endless, pervasive spin-offs. Shame that whatever is free has hidden costs, whatever claims to be unbiased is programmatically factual and standardised, i.e. devoid of critical scrutiny. Finally, whatever is simple is deceptive, as it eliminates vital complexity. The obsolescence of memory and knowledge is instrumental to the impending obsolescence of mankind foreseen by Günther Anders nearly seventy years ago [1]. The only antidote is staying Europeans, fighting to defend our common heritage, built over the centuries, nay, the millennia thanks to the efforts, brains and blood of so many, starting from the Greeks, the Romans, the Jews, as well as of Humanism, Reformation, and eventually the French and the October revolutions. The outcomes of these momentous events address mankind and belong to it. They are not race-specific, gender-specific or culture-specific. To deny their universality is to serve the biggest lie ever against humanity.

¹² Paleotti always arguments his cases referring to both Latin and Greek Orthodox Patrology. The same cannot be said for Molanus nor the Borromeos, who rely mostly (but not exclusively) on Western references.

¹³ Cardinal Casanate, whose library is now public, started his career as a Dominican friar, a telling circumstance recalled by the ink-print impressed on the frontispiece of each volume in his possession, featuring the black and white robe of the Order, and the star of Thomas Aquinas. As is well known, *Domini canes* would run the Inquisition throughout Europe.

¹⁴ Its name sounds a bit like the heroic, libertarian *Wikileaks* by Julian Assange: thus mystification starts from its very name. It is instructive to compare how differences between the two are listed and explained in <https://www.dictionarium.com/e/wikileaks-wikipedia> and in https://www.diffen.com/difference/wikileaks_vs_wikipedia (the latter being an offshoot of Wikipedia itself). Also: by Italian standards it is puzzling that an American no-profit company may have share-holders (hence its incorporated status). It sounds all the more peculiar, if one realizes how many times sensitive entries (such as, in Italian, “Rus’ di Kiev”) change over time (e.g. from February 2022 to date), or in different languages (as in the entry on Dagobert Frey).

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Title. Forging Historical Truth: Samples from Early Modern and Modern Italian Art Literature

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Abstract. Drawing mostly on a number of factual and methodological contributions I have published over the years on the fabrication of visual and verbal documents in art history and/or on their interpretative manipulation, I provide a brief survey of case studies where documented facts clash against received but unsubstantiated wisdom. The sampling will be centered on Bolognese art and art literature from the 16th

through to the 18th centuries. It will include the questioning of the assumed and yet unproven close relations between Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti's pastoral and theological attitude and the Carracci reform of painting, i.e. the latter's supposed allegiance to Counterreformation values; the actual impact and degree of pervasiveness of Counterreformation (with its nuanced, local interpretations) in different cultural contexts, like private literary academies (e.g. the Bolognese Accademia dei Gelati) or the production of new, uncodified and therefore unacceptable Old Testament iconographies in Bologna and elsewhere in Italy and Europe, from Germany, Switzerland, France and England to Poland and even Russia; the conflicting interpretations of the Carracci's work produced by Bellori and Malvasia, and the political and cultural reasons why the former's lies and inaccuracies have got and still get the upper hand in scholarly studies over the latter's truth and accuracy; finally how Luigi Crespi, a notorious con-man, made his official debut in art literature in 1757 by systematically debunking Bellori's last work, *Descrizione delle immagini dipinte da Raffaello d'Urbino* (published posthumously in 1695). The last example stands to prove that "it takes a thief to catch a thief", and also how ineffectual telling the truth can be, when intellectual conformism, stubborn ignorance and oversemplification turn into the most effective allies of masterminded manipulation, helping lies to prevail and create consensus. Debunking is always swimming against the tide, ever since Lorenzo Valla wrote *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione* (1440), whose impact on art history writing is witnessed by Lorenzo Ghiberti's II *Commentary*.

Keywords: forgery, debunking, Luigi Crespi, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Lorenzo Valla, Carlo Cesare Malvasia, Giovan Pietro Bellori, Ludovico Carracci, Giovannino da Capugnano, Giovanni Andrea Gilo

Название статьи. В поисках исторической правды: примеры в итальянской литературе об искусстве Нового времени

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Аннотация. Опираясь главным образом на ряд фактических и методологических материалов, посвященных фабрикации визуальных и вербальных документов в истории искусства и/или их интерпретативному манипулированию, опубликованных мною на протяжении многих лет, я предоставляю краткий обзор тематических исследований, в которых документированные факты, будучи недостаточно обоснованными, противоречат здравому смыслу. Выборка будет сосредоточена на болонском искусстве и литературе XVI–XVIII века. В статье поставлены вопросы: о предполагаемой, но пока недоказанной тесной связи между папской и богословской позицией кардинала Габриэле Палеотти и реформой живописи Карраччи, то есть предполагаемой приверженностью последней ценностям Контрреформации; о фактическом влиянии и степени распространения Контрреформации (с ее нюансами, местными интерпретациями) в различных культурных контекстах, таких как частные литературные академии (например, Болонская Академия Гелати) или создание новых, некодифицированных и, следовательно, неприемлемых иконографий Ветхого Завета в Болонье и в других местах Италии и Европы, от Германии, Швейцарии, Франции и Англии до Польши и даже России; о противоречивых интерпретациях работ Карраччи, предложенных Беллори и Мальвасией, а также о политических и культурных причинах, по которым ложь и неточности первого взяли и до сих пор берут верх в научных исследованиях над правдивостью и точностью второго; наконец о том, как Луиджи Креспи, известный мошенник, официально дебютировал в искусствоведческой литературе в 1757 г., систематически разоблачая последнюю работу Беллори, «*Descrizione delle immagini dipinte da Raffaello d'Urbino*» (опубликованную посмертно в 1695 г.). Последний пример доказывает, что «чтобы поймать вора, нужен вор», а также насколько неэффективно бывает говорить правду, когда интеллектуальный конформизм, упрямое невежество и чрезмерное упрощение превращаются в самых успешных союзников искусной манипуляции, помогая лжи восторжествовать и создать консенсус. Опровержение всегда идет против течения, с тех пор как Лоренцо Валла написал «*De falsocredita et ementita Constantini donatione*» (1440), влияние которого на искусствоведение засвидетельствовано во II «Комментарии» Лоренцо Гиберти.

Ключевые слова: подлог, разоблачение, Луиджи Креспи, Лоренцо Гиберти, Лоренцо Валла, Карло Чезаре Мальвасия, Джован Пьетро Беллори, Людовико Карраччи, Джованнинно да Капуньяно, Джованни Андреа Джилио