Annibale Carracci's *Hercules at the Crossroad* and Marco Dente's print

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The fact that Annibale Carracci quoted from print motifs in his paintings has already been pointed out in a number of occasions.[1] It is thought that he was familiar with prints which were in the collection of his brother Agostino, who was a painter and a trained professional engraver.[2] This paper will present another print which can be considered an additionally important source for Annibale's painting, *Hercules at the Crossroad* (fig.1).

Hercules at the Crossroad (1595-1597) was originally created to decorate the center ceiling of the so-called *Camerino* in the Farnese Palace in Rome. However, it was removed in 1622 and is now in the Capodimonte Museum in Naples. The decoration of the *Camerino* was Annibale's first commission in Rome from Cardinal Odoardo Farnese.[3] The subject of the painting is based on the following story invented by the sophist Prodicus:[4] when young Hercules sat contemplating whether to pursue a life led by virtue or by vice, personifications of the two values appeared to him in the form of two women who then tried to tempt Hercules to follow each of their values. The painting depicts Hercules who, flanked by the two women, makes his choice. Virtue stands on the left hand-side of the painting pointing towards a rocky mountain that towers behind her — signifying the difficult path toward glory — with a poet crouching next to her who keeps records of the fame brought about the honorable figure. Pegasus at the top of the mountain suggests the *impresa* of the Farnese family and also symbolizes the family as a patron of literature.[5] To the right of Hercules is Vice facing a luscious grove with a trail of objects that symbolize a life of pleasure by her side; playing cards, dice, musical instruments,

fig.1
Annibale Carracci, *Hercules at the Crossroad*, 1595-1597, oil on canvas, mm 1670 x 2370, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples

scores and theater masks are lined up beside her in the beautiful grove which symbolizes sensual pleasure. Despite Vice's temptations, Hercules's eyes are already turned toward Virtue, implying his choice of Virtue over Vice, which is all the more made explicit by the palm tree behind him which serves as a symbol of victory,.

Several sources are known for the composition and the motif of this painting, such as the classical marble relief, *Hercules and the Hesperides,* now in the Villa Albani in Rome. The composition of a seated male figure between two standing female figures, similar in both Annibale's painting and the relief, was pointed out by Erwin Panofsky who asserted that this composition would become the 'canonical formulation' for this particular subject matter for painters of later generations.[6]

Panofsky also showed that Annibale had fused the following three male figures for Hercules' pose: the classical sculptures *Ludovisi Mars*, *Hermes Fastening his Sandal* and Michelangelo's nude figure, *ignudo,* above Isaiah of the Sistine Chapel ceiling. As it is discussed often, this also suggests the famous *Farnese Hercules*, then in the courtyard of the palace.[7] The figure of the poet, Panofsky suggests, is a synthesis of an classical River God and the Cumaean Sibyl in the ceiling decoration of the Sistine chapel.[8] Various hypotheses have been proposed for the source of Vice, including Caravaggio's angel figure in *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, a female figure at the center of the engraving *Judgement of Paris* by Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael, the classical sculpture *Callipygian Venus*, and the female figure in the foreground of Tintoretto's *Presentation of the Virgin* in the Madonna dell'Orto in Venice.[9] For Virtue, no remarkable source has been proposed.

In addition to all of the above-mentioned sources, this paper proposes another important source for the painting: *Venus Wounded by a Rose's Thorn,* an engraving by Marco Dente (B. XIV, n. 321; fig.2).[10]

The figure of Venus derives from a scene in the so-called *Stuffetta* of Cardinal Bibbiena, designed by Raphael and executed by his workshop. Although the fresco of this scene no longer exists, the Hermitage Museum owns a painted copy from the same period which was originally in the Loggia Stati on the Palatine hill in Rome and later torn off from the wall.[11] The same Venus figure appears in a drawing generally considered to be a copy of a lost drawing by Raphael which is currently in the Nationalmuseum of Stockholm.[12] One thing to note here, however, is the reversed depiction of Venus in the print. Dente may have produced the engraving after Raphael's drawing of Venus for the *Stuffetta*, while the trees and landscape in the print are composed by Dente himself appropriating the print motifs by Albrecht Dürer.[13]

If we compare Dente's print with Annibale's painting, we soon notice that they have common elements. Although the print is of a female

fig.2
Marco Dente, *Venus Wounded by a Rose's Thorn*, engraving, mm 291 x 195, The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo

fig.3
Annibale Carracci, *Study for Hercules at the Crossroad*, c. 1596-1597, pen and brown ink with brown and gray wash on beige paper, cut at left edge and laid down, mm 166 x 149, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Paris
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figure —Venus — and the painting is of a male figure —Hercules — they both derive from the same motif of a nude figure in the center of the composition who sits on a rock in front of a palm tree with one knee raised. The image is divided into two with trees on one side, and a flat landscape on another which extends further to a rocky mountain towards the background. I would have to ask, can these similarities be merely coincidental?

Here I would like to compare the print with a preparatory drawing in the Louvre (fig.3).[14] The trees behind the figure deserve particular attention since, in my opinion, this is a decisive proof of Annibale's appropriation from Dente's print. Within the group of trees, we can find the same three trees in both works: from left to right, a palm tree, a tree which bends towards the right, and an upright tree (figs.4,5). In both, the palm tree and the third upright tree are highlighted from the left, but the central tree remains mostly in the shade and seems to recede a little in the background. We can also find two branches in the same positions (arrowed in fig.5). From these similarities, it seems

fig.4
Detail of fig.2

fig.5
Detail of fig.3

improbable that these coincidences occurred accidentally.

Although there are many thin trees drawn in the preparatory drawing (on the right side of Vice), they are drawn much more carelessly, implied only by parallel lines and lacking in chiaroscuro. If we imagine that the composition is not yet fixed, rough sketches of lines would be sufficient at this phase. However, if that is so, the question still remains why Annibale gave the three trees much more concrete presence. The difference of the artistic quality between the three trees and these thin trees in the same drawing may be explained only by whether he referred to an existing example or not. From these considerations, we can affirm that Annibale had drawn the preparatory drawing with Dente's print in front of him, which concludes that the common elements in the print and the painting are not by chance.

Annibale composed his painting modifying the composition and motifs of the print. Regarding the figures within the painting, Venus in profile is transformed into Hercules seen from the front who raises his right knee instead of the left as does Venus in the print. The reversal of the raised knee must have been out of necessity to maintiain *decorum* within the interior of the *Camerino*; since the ceiling decoration of the *Camerino* was shaded as if the sunlight were to enter from the left side of the composition, had Hercules been depicted with the left leg bent as in the original print, his groin area would have been exposed. In fact, the groin area is all the more darkened in Annibale's preparatory drawing that it is apparent that he gave extra attention to execute the matter with care. Also the bust of Hercules differs from that of Dente's Venus, where Annibale probably assimilated the several sources mentioned above. Finally, he completed the composition by adding the other figures.

Regarding the background, the palm tree behind Venus in the print changes its position in both the drawing and the painting, and, as a result, functions to emphasize the central axis of the painting. Contrary to the print, the right half of the composition is occupied by trees in the two works, which also seems to have been a conscious change by Annibale to make the symbolic correlation between Virtue and Vice more apparent. Symbolically, Virtue and the rocky mountain should be on the right side — the more virtuous side — seen from Hercules, while Vice and the wood must be on the left.[15] In the final painting, only the palm tree remains and the other two trees have disappeared, while, interestingly enough, the thin trees drawn quite roughly in the drawing remain in the painting and are given somewhat more presence.

It seems Annibale had good reason to make use of the print of Dente. Although it is uncertain if Annibale knew the frescoes of *Stuffetta* or that of Loggia dei Stati, we can safely assume that he was aware that Dente's print was based on the work of Raphael. The monogram

'SR' on the print (fig.6), in fact, stands for '*Scultore Ravegnano* (engraver from Ravenna)',[16] but Vasari unfortunately misunderstood it and wrote in his *Lives* that Dente had signed his prints with Raphael's initials, *Raffaello Sanzio*, the creator of the original composition.[17] We can assume that Annibale too misunderstood the monogram, however reading the *Lives* of Vasari we can also assume that he would have at least recognized that this monogram was of Dente and the print was after Raphael.[18]

fig.6
Monogram of Marco Dente
(detail of fig.2)

During the period he spent in Rome, Annibale was most conscious of Raphael along with Michelangelo and other classical sculptures. When he painted *Hercules at the Crossroad* for the decoration of the *Camerino*, it must have been a natural impulse for him to choose a print after Raphael for one of the main sources. Ironically, however, what survived in the final composition was Dente's additional contributions rather than Raphael's original composition.

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[1] The chief studies on Annibale's use of prints are the following two: M. Calvesi, 'Nota ai Carracci', *Commentari*, VII, 1956, pp. 263-276, and A. W. A. Boschloo, *Annibale Carracci in Bologna, Visible Reality in Art after the Council of Trent*, La Haye 1974, passim, esp., I, p. 68, II, pp. 187-188, n. 32, pp. 209-210, nn. 25-26.

[2] Boschloo, *op. cit.*, I, p. 68.

[3] Among the vast amount of research conducted on this particular painting, recent studies include: P. Leone de Castris et al., *Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, La Collezione Farnese, La Scuola emiliana*, Naples, 1994, pp. 129-131 (with previous bibliography); C. Robertson, 'Osservazioni sul mecenatismo del cardinale Odoardo Farnese', in *I Farnese. Arte e Collezionismo. Studi*, edited by L. Fornari Schianchi, Milan, 1995, pp. 75-76; C. Dempsey in *L'idea del bello, Viaggio per Roma nel Seicento con Giovan Pietro Bellori*, edited by E. Borea and L. De Lachenal, Rome, 2000, II, p. 232, n. IV, 1; C. Robertson in *The Genius of Rome 1592-1623*, edited by B. L. Brown, London, 2001, p. 121, no. 37; F. Mozzetti, 'Il Camerino Farnese di Annibale Carracci', *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, CXIV, 2002, pp. 803-836, esp., pp. 831-836; C. Robertson, *The Invention of Annibale Carracci,* Milan, 2008, pp. 105-112, esp., pp. 107-108; M. Utili in *Palazzo Farnèse: dalle collezioni rinascimentali ad Ambasciata di Francia*, edited by F. Buranelli, Rome, 2010, pp. 424-426, no. 200.

[4] Bellori was the first writer who analysed the subject of the painting. G. P. Bellori, *Le Vite de' Pittori, Scultori e Architetti Moderni*, Rome, 1672, edited by E. Borea, Turin, 1976 (repr. in 2009), I, pp. 47-49.

[5] For the symbol of Pegasus in this painting, see A. Caro, *Lettere familiari*, edited by A. Greco, Florence, 1957-61, III, pp. 144-145; J. R. Martin, *The Farnese Gallery*, Princeton, 1965, p. 26.

[6] E. Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheidewege und andere antike Bildstoffe in der neueren Kunst*, Leipzig, 1930, repr. in Berlin, 1997, pp. 126-128. Posner argues against Panofsky's opinion in Posner, *op. cit.*, II, p. 41, no. 93, while Macchioni predicts the possibility of existing other sources as explained in S. Macchioni, 'Annibale Carracci, Ercole al bivio. Dalla volta del Camerino Farnese alla Galleria Nazionale di Capodimonte: genesi e interpretazioni', *Storia dell'Arte*, XLII, 1981, pp. 151-170, esp., p. 160.

[7] For an analysis of the relationship between *Farnese Hercules*, see, for example, S. J. Freedberg, *Circa 1600: a Revolution of Style in Italian Painting*, Cambridge, MA and London, 1983, pp. 36-37.

[8] For Panofsky's analyses on the sources for Hercules and the poet, see Panofsky, *op. cit.*, p. 126, n. 1. As the source of the poet, Mozzetti suggests the relationship with the classical sculpture, *Dying Gaul* in Mozzetti, *op. cit.*, p. 835.

[9] For a comparative analysis with Caravaggio, see H. Voss, *Die Malerei des Barock in Rom*, Berlin, 1924, pp. 492-493. For Raimondi, see Panofsky, *op. cit.*, p. 126, n. 1. For *Callipygian Venus*, see Mozzetti, *op. cit.*, pp. 831-833. For Tintoretto, see C. Dempsey in *The Age of Caravaggio*, New York, c1985, p. 113, no. 25; Robertson, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 108. For other suggestions, see Calvesi, *op. cit.*, p. 271; Freedberg, *op. cit.*, p. 37; C. Strinati, "Annibale e i pittori romani", in *Annibale Carracci*, edited by D. Benati e E. Riccòmini, Rome, 2006, pp. 51-56, esp., pp. 54-55.

[10] For this print, see K. Oberhuber, *The Works of Marcantonio Raimondi and his School*, The Illustrated Bartsch, XXVII, New York, 1978, p. 12, no. 321; I. H. Shoemaker and E. Broun, *The Engravings of Marcantonio Raimondi*, Lawrence, 1981, pp. 186-187, no. 63; A. Gnann in K. Oberhuber and A. Gnann, *Roma e lo Stile Classic di Raffaello*, Milan, 1999, p. 107, no. 46 (with bibliography).

[11] For the frescoes of the Loggia dei Stati, see A. Forcellino, 'La Decorazione della Loggia Stati sul Palatino', *Storia dell'arte*, LI, 1984, pp. 119-126; T. K. Kustodieva, *Italian Painting, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, Florence, c1994, pp. 372-381. The fresco *Venus Wounded by a Rose's Thorn* is recorded in *ibid*, p. 375, no. 206.

[12] Inv. 749. For this drawing, see K. Knab et al., *Raphael: die Zeichnungen*, Munich, 1983, p. 609, no. 532.

[13] For examples of appropriated motifs from Dürer, see H. Delaborde, *Marc-Antoine Raimondi*, Paris, 1888, p. 167; Shoemaker and Broun, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

[14] Inv. RF609. For this drawing, see C. Loisel, *Ludovico, Agostino, Annibale Carracci*, Paris, 2004, p. 235, no. 491 (with previous bibliography).

[15] I am indebted to Prof. Kikuro Miyashita, for pointing this symbolism out in the picture.

[16] For Dente's monogram, see E. Borea, "Dente, Marco", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XXXVIII, directed by M. Pavan, Rome, 1990, pp. 790-794, esp., p. 790.

[17] For Vasari's account, see G. Vasari, *Le Opere*, edited by G. Milanesi, Florence, 1906, V, pp. 414-415.

[18] There is the volume of the *Lives* of Vasari annotated by Annibale. G. Perini, *Gli Scritti dei Carracci*, edited by G. Perini, Bologna, 1990, pp. 158-164.

アンニーバレ・カラッチ作《分かれ道のヘラクレス》の引用源について

渡辺晋輔

アンニーバレ・カラッチがローマのファルネーゼ宮二階の小部屋（カメリーノ）のために描いた油彩画《分かれ道のヘラクレス》は、その構図やモティーフの着想源として様々な作品があげられてきた。特に構図については、パノフスキーによって古代ローマ時代の浮彫《ヘスペリデスの園のヘラクレス》との関連が指摘され、この意見が後の大多数の研究者によって踏襲されてきた。本稿は、この浮彫以外に、ルネサンスの版画家マルコ・デンテがラファエロの原画をもとにして制作したエングレーヴィング《バラの棘に傷つくヴィーナス》が構図を決定するうえで重要な着想源となった可能性を提起する。

アンニーバレの油彩画とデンテのエングレーヴィングは、全体の構図や、描かれるモティーフにかなりの共通性が見られる。さらに油彩画の準備素描とエングレーヴィングを比較すると、両者にまったく同じ３本の木のモティーフが描かれていることに気づく。棕櫚、右に傾く木、まっすぐ生える木という組み合わせに加え、陰影や枝振りも共通することから、アンニーバレはデンテの版画を参考にしながら自作の構想を練ったと結論付けられる。

アンニーバレは過去のローマ美術を代表する画家であるラファエロ原画の作品を構図の下敷きにしつつも、図像の内容や装飾画という用途を意識しながら自作を作り上げたと考えられる。本稿はまた、モティーフの伝達の現象一般についても興味深い例を提供する。デンテの創意になるモティーフは、いわばラファエロの権威に寄生することで、アンニーバレの作品の中で生き延びていったのである。