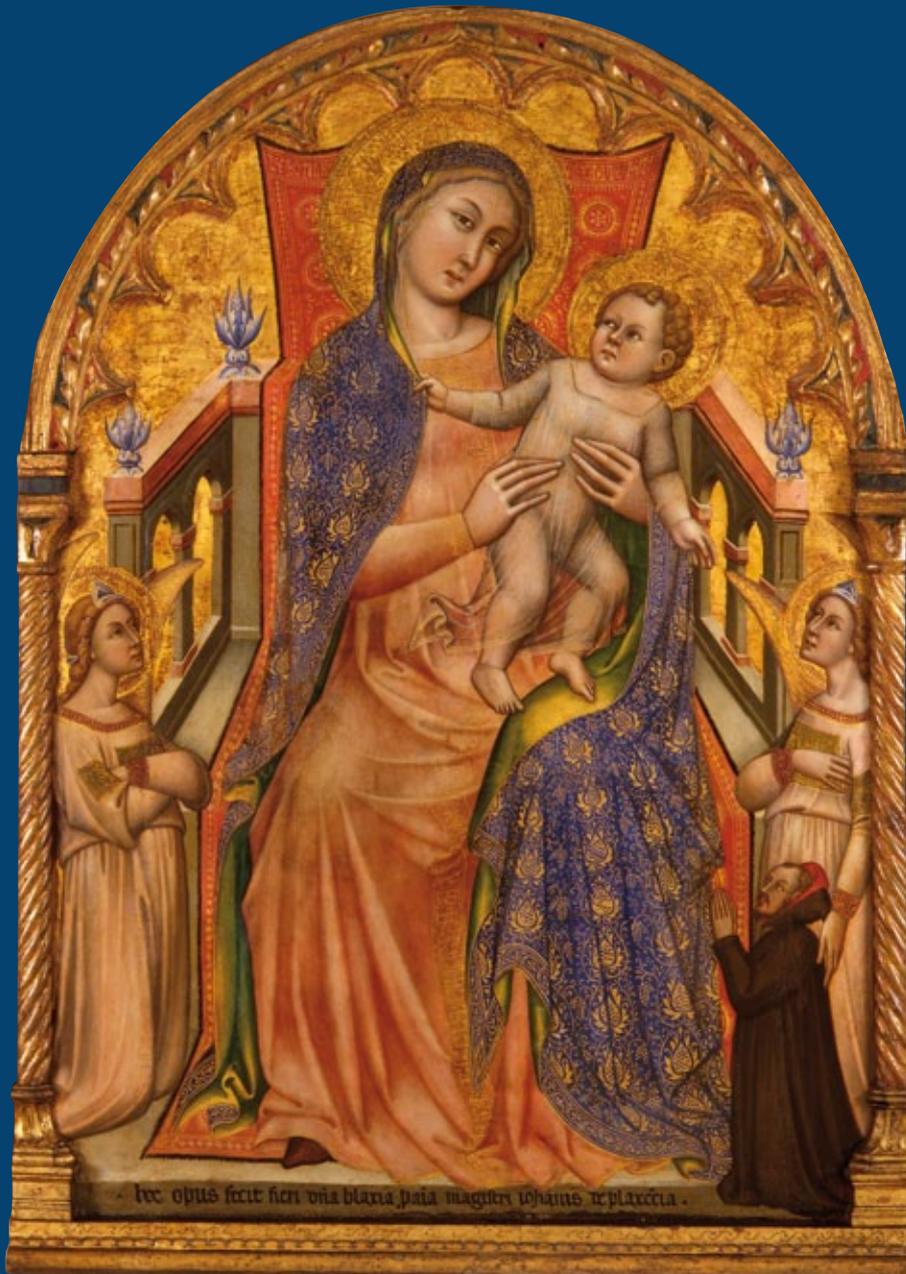


CARLO CESARE MALVASIA'S
Felsina pittrice
LIVES OF THE BOLOGNESE PAINTERS



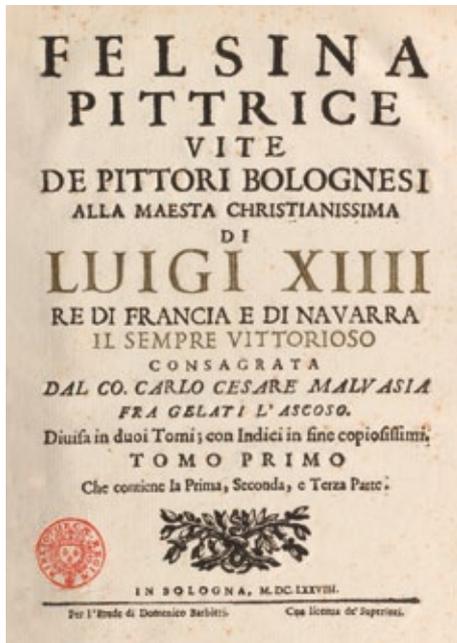
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THE *FELSINA PITTRICE*



2.

Count Carlo Cesare Malvasia's *Felsina pittrice*, or *Lives of the Bolognese Painters*, first published in two volumes in Bologna in 1678, is one of the most important sources for the history and criticism of painting in Italy. Conceived in part as a response to Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (1550/1568), the *Felsina pittrice* combines close observation with documentary history, and careful analysis with polemical debate. It offers the fullest account of Bolognese artists from Simone dei Crocefissi to Prospero and Lavinia Fontana, from Guercino to Elisabetta Sirani. The Carracci are treated as a family of artists, and their school (including Guido Reni, Domenichino, and Francesco Albani, among others) is documented by Malvasia in far greater detail than by any other biographer. The great art historian Luigi Lanzi (1732-1810) said that no other school in Italy had been described by a more capable pen, and he considered the two volumes of the *Felsina pittrice* to be "a treasure of the most beautiful knowledge gathered from the pupils of the Carracci, whom Malvasia knew, and who helped him in this work, which was, however, accused of sometimes burning with an excessively patriotic zeal."

THE CRITICAL EDITION

Accusations of excessive passion for his local school, combined with unjustified charges of forgery and unreliability, have for centuries clouded the reception and understanding of Malvasia's extraordinarily important text, which was last edited and published in 1841-44. In this new critical edition by Lorenzo Pericolo, which will appear in a series of volumes, there will also be published for the first time in their entirety Malvasia's relevant preparatory notes to the *Felsina pittrice*, or the *Scritti originali*, preserved today in the Biblioteca Comunale dell' Archiginnasio, Bologna (Ms. B16-17). Rich in information, these notes allow the reader to follow Malvasia's construction of his text over the years. Reference is also made to the fine copy, or *Imprimatur* volume (Archiginnasio, Ms. B1375), submitted by Malvasia to the Bolognese Inquisition in 1677, and to the *Schede autografe* (Archiginnasio, Ms. B1729), Malvasia's glosses to his own copy of the *Felsina pittrice*. Detailed historical notes keyed to both the Italian text and the English translation will establish Malvasia's many literary and archival sources, and document the history of the works of art in question. Careful analysis of all these materials will make it possible to reevaluate Malvasia's status as a historian, and provide new information about the construction of the *Felsina pittrice* as a book.



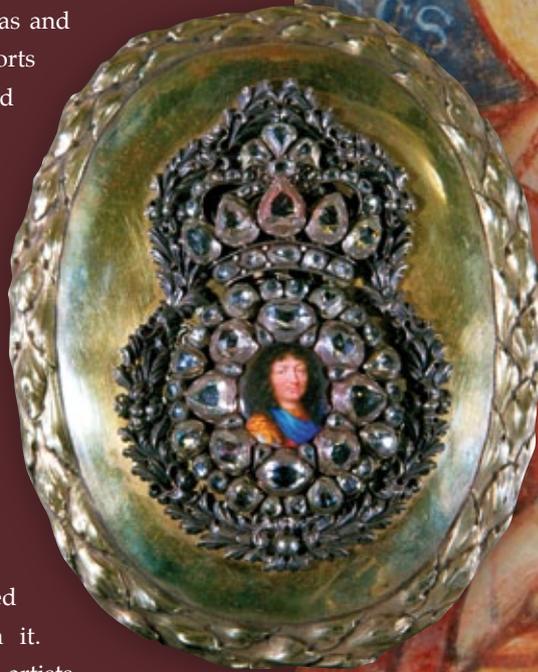
3.

1. Cover: Simone dei Crocefissi, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Angels and Giovanni da Piacenza*, c. 1378, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna
2. *Felsina pittrice*, Bologna 1678, volume 1, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
3. Carlo Cesare Malvasia, the *Madonna dei Servi* by Cimabue, drawing after Francesco Cavazzoni, Ms. B17, fol. 298r, Biblioteca Comunale dell' Archiginnasio, Bologna

CARLO CESARE MALVASIA

Count Carlo Cesare Malvasia (1616-93) was a legal scholar, canon of the Metropolitan church of Bologna, an antiquarian and collector, and an amateur artist. He remains the most important authority for the understanding of Bolognese art from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century. Malvasia's account of the Bolognese tradition, like those of his contemporaries in other cities, such as Raffaello Soprani in Genoa or Carlo Ridolfi in Venice, took as its point of departure the example of Giorgio Vasari, whose *Vite* were reprinted in Bologna in 1647. Rather than simply continuing Vasari's account, Malvasia sought to set the record straight about the importance of the Bolognese school, past and present, in the face of Vasari's Tuscan-Roman bias and his view of the Renaissance. For his efforts Malvasia received a diamond-encircled miniature portrait of King Louis XIV of France, to whom he had dedicated the book.

The significance of Malvasia's record of the art of his own time also places him in the company of the Roman writer Giovan Pietro Bellori (1613-96). Current views of painting in the seventeenth century are very much conditioned by the accounts of these two men. Malvasia was aware of Bellori's enterprise (his *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti moderni* was published in 1672), and distanced himself from it. Where Bellori wrote only of the twelve artists he considered most worthy, Malvasia touched on the lives of dozens. Bellori's Ciceronian oratory soars, whereas Malvasia's digressive, additive, broken style and often popular language reflect his desire to simply throw his words directly into print. Where Bellori's text reads seamlessly, Malvasia's manifests the incorporation of notes and anecdotes, letters, documents, and published texts, all of which he compiled through discussion with artists, through wide correspondence and careful reading and comparison of evidence.



1.



2.

1. The "Gioiello della Vita", miniature portrait of Louis XIV by Jean Petitot, second half of the seventeenth century, surrounded by diamonds and later set in gold, Collezioni Comunali d'Arte, Bologna
2. Saint John, twelfth-century fresco, Madonna del Monte, Bologna

THE TRANSLATION AND HISTORICAL NOTES



1.

Malvasia's text presents great difficulties even to modern Italian readers, and a full translation of the *Felsina pittrice* into English has never been attempted. The Malvasia Project involves a team of highly qualified international scholars who are known for their work on Bolognese painting. The goal is to produce a translation that is useful to the general reader while remaining faithful to the complexities of the original. Each volume will be an indispensable reference work for anyone interested in the art and culture of early modern Europe. The historical notes will identify Malvasia's sources and direct the reader to further information on the artists and works in question. Attention will also be given to annotations in surviving copies of the *Felsina pittrice* by attentive readers. Each volume will be illustrated in color, with special emphasis given to paintings discussed in detail by Malvasia, many of which are not well known.



2.

Individual volumes will be published in order of completion. Each of the fifteen volumes proposed will include one or two introductory essays in addition to the critical edition and translation. The series will be extended to include a sixteenth volume with a critical edition and translation of Malvasia's *Il Claustro di San Michele in Bosco* (1694), accompanied by an essay and historical notes.



3.

1. Lippo di Dalmasio, *Coronation of the Virgin with Christ Blessing*, 1394, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna
2. Francesco Cavazzoni, *The Miraculous Image of the Madonna di San Luca in Corona di Grazie*, Ms. B298, fol. 35, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna
3. Francesco Francia, *Bishop Altobello Averoldo*, c. 1505, Samuel H. Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington

VOLUMES OF THE *FELSINA PITTRICE* IN PREPARATION:

Volume One:

Early Bolognese Painting (2012)

Critical Edition by Lorenzo Pericolo

Introduction and Translation by Elizabeth Cropper

Bibliographical Essay by Carlo Alberto Girotto

Historical Notes by Elizabeth Cropper, Lorenzo Pericolo, Giancarla Periti, and Jessica Richardson, assisted by Alexandra Hoare

This richly illustrated volume provides a translation and critical edition of the opening part of the *Felsina pittrice*, which focuses on the art of late medieval Bologna. In response to Vasari's account of the Renaissance of painting in Florence, Malvasia offers a colorful and valuable portrait of Trecento painting in Bologna, noting the location and condition of destroyed or whitewashed frescoes, dismantled polyptychs, and paintings for which no other record survives. Malvasia provides crucial information on works by important fourteenth-century painters such as Lippo di Dalmasio, Simone dei Crocefissi, and Vitale da Bologna. Included in the volume are historical notes to the text and to the transcriptions of the *Scritti originali*, published here in their entirety for the first time. Elizabeth Cropper's introductory essay serves to establish the significance of Malvasia as a historian of art, while Carlo Alberto Girotto's bibliographical essay analyses the production and reception of the *Felsina pittrice* as a whole.

Volume Two:

Lives of Francesco Francia, Lorenzo Costa, and Marcantonio Raimondi; with Malvasia's Critical Catalogue of Bolognese Printmakers from Giulio Bonasone to Giovan Battista Pasqualini

Critical Edition by Lorenzo Pericolo

Introduction and Translation of the Lives of Francesco

Francia and Lorenzo Costa by Alessandra Galizzi

Historical Notes by Alessandra Galizzi

Introduction and Translation of the Life of Marcantonio Raimondi and Malvasia's Critical Catalogue of Bolognese Printmakers by Naoko Takahatake

Historical Notes by Naoko Takahatake

Volume Nine:

Life of Guido Reni

Critical edition, Introduction, and Translation by

Lorenzo Pericolo

Historical Notes by Lorenzo Pericolo

Volume Eleven:

Lives of Alessandro Tiarini and Giacomo Cavedone

Critical edition by Lorenzo Pericolo

Introduction and Translation by Philip Sohm

Historical Notes by Philip Sohm



1.

Volume Thirteen:

Lives of Domenichino and Francesco Gessi (2013)

Critical edition by Lorenzo Pericolo

Introduction by Elizabeth Cropper

Translation by Anne Summerscale

Historical Notes by Anne Summerscale, Alexandra Hoare, and Lorenzo Pericolo

Volume Fourteen:

Life of Guercino

Critical edition by Lorenzo Pericolo

Introduction and Translation by Shilpa Prasad

Historical Notes by Shilpa Prasad

Further volumes will be organized as follows:

Volume Three:

Lives of Bartolomeo Ramenghi, Francesco Primaticcio, and Pellegrino Tibaldi

Volume Four:

Lives of Orazio Samacchini, Prospero Fontana, Lavinia Fontana, Lorenzo Sabbatini, Bartolomeo Passerotti, and Denys Calvaert

Volume Five:

Lives of Procaccini, Giovan Battista Cremonini, Bartolomeo Cesi, Cesare Aretusi, and Cesare Baglione

Volumes Six and Seven:

Lives of Ludovico, Agostino, and Annibale Carracci

Volume Eight:

Lives of Antonio Carracci, Antonio Scalvati, Francesco Brizio, Lucio Massari, Pietro Faccini, and Innocenzo Tacconi

Volume Ten:

Lives of Mastelletta, Leonello Spada, Giovan Battista Viola, Giovanluigi Valesio, and Dentone

Volume Twelve:

Lives of Francesco Albani and Lorenzo Garbieri



1.

Volume Fifteen:

Lives of Angelo Michele Colonna, Agostino Metelli, Simone Cantarini, Giovanni Andrea Sirani, and Elisabetta Sirani

Volume Sixteen:

The Claustro di San Michele in Bosco

The Malvasia Project is conducted under the auspices of the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Washington. It has been supported by CASVA's Paul Mellon Fund, and by a grant from the Robert H. Smith Family Foundation.

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Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, called Guercino
The Madonna and Child with Escaped Goldfinch, early 1630s
Andrew W. Mellon Fund, National Gallery of Art, Washington

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