

Piselli Ciuccioli, Orazio

Notizie storiche della chiesa parrocchiale di S. Maria in Monticelli di Roma col ristretto della Vita del regnante Pontefice Clemente XI. restauratore della medesima.

Montefiascone, Stamperia del Seminario, 1719

QUARTO (220 × 155 mm), (113)ff. signed π1 (half-title *Notizie storiche*; verso blank) π⁴ A–Z⁴ Aa–Dd⁴ and paginated (10) 1–115 (*i.e.* 215) (1). Woodcut initials and ornaments.

PROVENANCE *Biblioteca Fondazione Marco Besso*, inkstamp on verso of title-page (repeated on D1r, Dd4v) — deaccessioned (certificate from the librarian, dated 21 March 2007, loosely inserted) — Bloomsbury Auctions, ‘Libri e Autografi. Asta 2: Grand Tour’, Milan, 17 March 2007, lot 188

Short tear in the half-title (repaired at time of binding), paper fault in folio O1 (resulting in loss of a dozen letters); headcap torn and slight abrasions to binding, otherwise in very good state of preservation.

BOUND in contemporary Italian speckled calf, back decorated in gilt.

ONLY EDITION of an account of the medieval church of S. Maria in Monticelli in Rome and its renovation in 1715–1716 by the architect Matteo Sassi (1646–1723), a pupil of Carlo Fontana, modifying the designs of a fellow-pupil, Domenico Antonio de Sanctis.¹ On 21 November 1716, Clement XI had reconsecrated the church with a dedication to the Presentation of the Virgin, however the altars remained unfinished until 1719 (Piselli Ciuccioli pp.74, 82).

The author, parish priest of S. Maria in Monticelli, dedicates his book to Cardinal Annibale Albani (1682–1751), a cousin of Clement XI (Giovanni Francesco Albani), and its second half is a review of the programme of restoration and embellishment of the early Roman churches which Clement had instigated. The author was well-informed: among much valu-

¹ Allan Braham and Hellmut Hager, *Carlo Fontana: the drawings at Windsor Castle* (London 1977), p.180; Claudia Bolgia, ‘S. Maria in Monticelli nel primo Settecento: la riscoperta dell’edificio medievale e la sua ristrutturazione’, in *L’arte per i giubilei e tra i giubilei del Settecento*, edited by Elisa Debenedetti (Rome 1999), I, pp.175–194.

able information he offers in this latter part is the first mention of Specchi’s new façade for the Roman church of Sant’ Anna de’ Palafrenieri (p.142).²

In the first half of the book, together with accounts of the re-laid mosaic floor of S. Maria in Monticelli, and other elements retained to preserve the memory of the antiquity of church, Piselli Ciuccioli describes the newly-decorated interior, mentioning over-door *tondi* painted by Andrea Procaccini, altarpieces in the side chapels painted by Odoardo Vicinelli (‘The Agony in the Garden’), Jean Baptiste Van Loo (‘Christ flagellated’),³ Giovanni Antonio Creccolini, Giovanni Battista Puccetti (‘Saint Ninfa’, ‘Saint John the Baptist preaching’), Pietro Rasina, and others.

The book is a product of the occasional press established about 1695 in the Seminary in Montefiascone⁴ and is thus relatively uncommon: four copies only can be located in North American libraries (Harvard, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Columbia University, National Gallery of Art Library), a single copy by COPAC in the United Kingdom (British Library), a single copy in France (Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art, Paris), two copies in Germany (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin–Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Universitätsbibliothek München), and just eight copies in Italian libraries (including Bibliotheca Hertziana and British School at Rome).

REFERENCE Ferdinand von Platner, *Katalog der Bibliotheca Platneriana enthaltend Municipalstatuten und Staedtegeschichten Italiens* (Rome 1886), p.325; Leo S. Olschki, *Choix de livres anciens, rares et curieux en vente, XI: Roma* (Florence 1936), no. 17821; Antonio Pescarzoli, *I libri di viaggio e le guide della raccolta Luigi Vittorio Fossati Bellani. Catalogo descrittivo* (Roma 1957), no. 957; Ludwig Schudt, *Le guide di Rome: Materialien zu einer Geschichte der römischen Topographie* (reprint Farnborough 1971), no. 925; Sergio Rossetti, *Rome: a bibliography from the invention of printing through 1899* (Florence 2000–2004), no. 8237

² Milton J. Lewine, ‘Vignola’s church of Sant’ Anna de’ Palafrenieri in Rome’ in *The Art Bulletin* 47 (1965), p.218 (note 95).

³ Maria Pia D’Orazio, in *Flemish masters and other artists: foreign artists from the Heritage of the Fondo edifici di culto del Ministero dell’interno*, catalogue of an exhibition held at Palazzo Ruspoli, Rome, 1 July–10 September 2008 (Rome 2008), pp.32, 34–35 (with previous bibliography).

⁴ See Dennis E. Rhodes, ‘Note sui primi libri stampati a Montefiascone’ in *La Bibliofilia* 76 (1974), pp.139–142; and the same author’s ‘Primo libro stampato a Montefiascone’ in *La Bibliofilia* 77 (1975), pp.253–254, giving details of ten editions printed 1698–1752.