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Collection FERVET OPVS

5

ANTIQUITATES ET LUMIÈRES

Étude et réception de l'Antiquité romaine
au siècle des Lumières

Sous la direction de
Marco CAVALIERI
et Olivier LATTEUR

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Between aesthetics and research The reception of Antiquity in the duchy of Parma and Piacenza during the Bourbon age

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Résumé

Il est démontré que les découvertes archéologiques qui caractérisèrent le XVIII^e siècle eurent un impact sur la politique culturelle des états de l'Italie pré-unitaire. Ce constat se trouve renforcé si nous le contextualisons dans le cadre du petit duché de Parme et de Plaisance, passé en héritage, en 1731, de la dernière Farnèse, Élisabeth, à son fils Charles III de Bourbon, Infant d'Espagne. Il faudra néanmoins attendre son successeur et frère cadet, Philippe, pour que soit introduite à Parme une politique éclairée, expansive et janséniste, qui fit de la découverte du *municipium* romain de Véleia un véritable laboratoire d'expérience archéologique de terrain, d'étude et de diffusion scientifique. Soutenu en cela, par Léon-Guillaume du Tillot, son Premier ministre, le duc introduisit des réformes qui assainirent les finances, renforcèrent le pouvoir de l'État et développèrent la culture comme moteur du prestige du duché. Prenant en considération ce climat culturel et politique, les pages de cet article viseront à étudier deux dimensions propres surtout à l'archéologie du XVIII^e siècle, celle néo-scientifique et celle esthétique, moyennant l'analyse de certaines pages presque inédites du premier manuscrit présentant les découvertes de Véleia. Cette approche nous permettra de réaliser des comparaisons utiles afin d'appréhender le rapport entre recherche et esthétique dans la culture du duché élaborée à la suite des fouilles *in agro Veleiatium*.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to show how the discovery of Roman Veleia influenced the culture of the small Emilian state, which was already imbued with the revolutionary ideas of the *philosophes*. Such topic has been overlooked until now, yet it is complex and multifaceted, and shows very well the contacts and exchanges intertwined by European erudites. Their interest and curiosity about classical antiquity stemmed from its potential value not only as a tool for education and a model for aesthetics, but also as an element of prestige, power and culture for both individuals and states. Such complexity dictates our approach: we shall start by defining the geo-political framework within which circumstances occurred and people acted. This will allow the best possible understanding of events: although briefly, Enlightenment and Antiquity, innovation and resistance to innovation came together to spark an experiment of unparalleled cultural perfection, possibly equalled only by Pericles' Athens, Augustus' Rome and Florence under Lorenzo il Magnifico.

In 1748, the treaty of Aachen entrusted to don Philip of Bourbon the duchies of Parma and Piacenza, plus the neighbouring Guastalla. Philip was the brother of don Charles of Bourbon (former ruler between 1732 and 1734, then king of Naples and Sicily), and second son of Elizabeth Farnese and Philip V of Spain. He was married to Louise-Elisabeth, the daughter of Louis XV of France. Under don Philip (1748-1765) Parma became international and multilingual, thanks to the strong and active presence of artists, craftsmen and scholars. Such was the reforming 'wave' that it impacted also on to the new government's legislation: among the many reforming laws we shall mention the suppression of the Inquisition Tribunal and the allocation of many ecclesiastical possessions to charities and public education bodies, as is well-known.¹ In this period Parma was second only to Paris for number of subscribers to Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*. Many of the 30.000 inhabitants were French.² Léon-Guillaume du Tillot, the enlightened minister of the Bourbon, marquis of Felino and strongly supported by don Philip, was the mastermind behind the duchy's policies up until 1771. While carrying out a complex reformation campaign, du Tillot entrusted to French architect Ennemond-Alexandre Petitot and sculptor Jean-Baptiste Boudard the task of re-designing the urban landscape, hence thoroughly transforming both the architecture and — more generally — the aesthetics of the little duchy. The underpinning idea of the whole project was to portray Parma as the new 'Italian Athens'. Unfortunately, what we have named an 'experiment of cultural perfection' was short-lived. In 1765 don Philip died

1 CAVALIERI (forthcoming).

2 MAMBRIANI (2015), p. 159-160.

and his fourteen-year old son Ferdinand succeeded. Don Ferdinand changed radically what was a filo-French political attitude into a more reactionary one, reversing the enlightened policies of his father with a clear steer towards Austria. Despite this, however, passion and taste for Antiquity remained, albeit to a lesser extent, as a sort of acquired inheritance from the earlier world, a legacy which did not dwindle and survived the restoration.

Culture at the service of enlightened politics

Léon-Guillaume du Tillot, the Duke's prime minister for over a decade, imprinted the duchy's history between 1750s and 1770s with his personality and political decisions. Du Tillot was the mastermind and coordinator behind a period of financial, administrative and ecclesiastical reforms, which he planned and carried out with the aim to strengthen the new ruling dynasty (Bourbon-Parma) in their sovereignty, credibility and political power. His most successful diplomatic achievement was to establish the little duchy at the forefront of the international stage, both on a political and a cultural level. This made Parma one of the most relevant foci in the so-called 'age of reforms', or 'enlightened absolutism', earning the little town the title of 'Italian Athens'. Such epithet stresses that from the advent of the Bourbon dynasty a new cultural environment was born, rich in intellectual innovation, international scope and open to the stimulus of modernisation, all thanks to the impact of foreign scholars, mainly French ones. A 'label' aiming to stress not only the great vitality of Parmesan cultural milieu, but also the fact that for some time Parma became a 'philosophical and intellectual laboratory' thanks to being a meeting place for the intelligentsia of the time. Parma became thus a microcosm within the macrocosm of Enlightenment, a sort of display for Spanish and French politics in Europe, a prototype of enlightened absolutism according to its Bourbonic declination.³

Du Tillot's enlightened policies developed along three main thematic lines: the choices he made regarding cultural issues, his reforming line, and the ruling elite's political culture. Although the three aspects are deeply intertwined, this work will consider only the first one. Du Tillot pushed with determination towards an internationalisation of culture — mostly with a French slant — in the fields of literature, philosophy, theatre and art. To some extent his intentions were eased by innovative ideas coming from France, where the complex and multifaceted nature of the Enlightenment was permeating all fields of knowledge. Moreover, an ideal link with France was strengthened by the

3 MADDALENA (2015), p. 128.

relationship between the Duke's wife, Louise-Elisabeth, and the French court. Cultural connections between Parma and Paris, however, were not only based on ideas: the duchy hosted a relevant number of distinguished French intellectuals. Among the others, particularly significant was the arrival of architect Ennemond-Alexandre Petitot, called to court in 1753, where he became official architect of the duchy and lecturer at the newly-established Academy of Fine Arts.⁴ The Academy also hosted another French artist, sculptor Jean-Baptiste Boudard, soon to become the Duke's sculptor. Étienne Bonnot, abbot of Condillac, was chosen in 1757 to become the prince's tutor. Condillac was a moderate, the leader of the Sensism current, a Newton and Locke scholar, he was close to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and many other important French followers of the Enlightenment, among whom Diderot. Condillac lived in Parma for nearly a decade and, once his employment with the prince came to an end, published a sixteen-volume work, the *Cours d'étude pour l'instruction du Prince de Parme*, showcasing his pedagogical model for raising a learned and literate prince. His presence alone attracted the attention of the European educated to Parma. The little duchy raised expectations particularly among the *philosophes*, with Voltaire and d'Alembert at the forefront. Later on, the new Duke's reactionary policies meant that Parma effectively failed to meet such expectations.⁵ Baron Auguste-Guy de Keralio was appointed as a sous-tutor, to help abbot Condillac educate young don Ferdinand. Keralio was a French nobleman coming from the military, his task was to instruct don Ferdinand according to the customs of European aristocracy. In fact, this was a pedagogical experiment stemming from the Enlightenment principles and writer Alexandre Deleyre, a well-established figure within the Parisian Enlightened milieu and author of various entries of the *Encyclopédie*, took part in it.⁶

The cultural choices made by the duchy, and in particular by du Tillot, can be seen clearly through other important examples. The purpose was not to establish cultural connections with France, but to import innovative knowledge, ideas and styles, different from the local traditions. Among these choices one stands out: the decision to appoint in 1761 father Paolo Maria Paciaudi, of the Teatines.⁷ Paciaudi, hired by suggestion of Count Caylus, was a

4 See *infra*.

5 MORA (2015), p. 208-209. In fact, already in 1765, following don Philip's death, count Caylus — a fundamental player in the cultural environment of the time, on whom see below — in a letter to P.M. Paciaudi (29 July 1765) foresaw the collapse of the enlightened state which was being shaped in Emilia: "D'ailleurs la société intime de quatre hommes [du Tillot, Paciaudi, Condillac and Keralio] de mérite et d'esprit peut se trouver dérangée, et je vous avoue que l'imagination me présente les tableaux plus fâcheux les uns que les autres".

6 GONZI, (1997), p. 79-86.

7 BURANI (2018a), p. 79-82.

Piedmontese erudite and archaeologist who became librarian and antiquarian for Infant Philip of Bourbon. His work was crucial in the establishment of a ducal library, opened to the wider public in 1769, over which he presided for many years. Another Piedmontese, Giambattista Bodoni, established the ducal print, soon to become one of the best in Europe for technology and taste. Paciaudi and Bodoni's initiatives added prestige to a cultural scenario including the recently-established Academy of Fine Arts and the Museum of Antiquities, a structure created following the archaeological excavations in the Roman city of Veleia. All initiatives paint the picture of a well-constructed and well-defined cultural project, supported by the crown through significant financial investments. It is easy to detect du Tillot's intentions behind the project: to revive the local cultural environment, and relaunch on a bigger scale the image of the ruling dynasty as sponsors of the arts and promoters of civil progress among their subjects. The project itself shows clearly its political significance and its promotional effects. In other words, Parma's splendid display of arts and culture was functional to asserting its political credibility and the prestige of its ruling dynasty. With this intention in mind, du Tillot's government coordinated and enhanced such plan, through a top-down series of actions and with the help of external input.⁸

The *Antiquitates Veleiatium*

Within this intellectual and political climate, in 1747 a great discovery suddenly pushed the little Roman *municipium* of Veleia⁹ (plate n. 1) on to the main international antiquarian stage: the finding of Trajan's *Tabula alimentaria*.¹⁰ Veleia was in fact situated on the Placentine Apennines, and therefore lay within the territories of the duchy. Within a few years' time, in 1760, this fortunate finding led to the creation of one of the very first archaeological museums opened to the wider public, in the capital Parma. The structure was meant to be mainly a display for all findings from Veleia. The finding of the *Tabula alimentaria* together with the foundation of the museum were the two linked events responsible for the awakening of a new perception of ancient objects. All in all, they contributed to the transformation of Parma into one of the main centres

8 MADDALENA (2015), p. 132.

9 "Une ville ancienne trouvée dans un lieu nommé aujourd'hui Macinisso, situé dans le voisinage de Plaisance, est une des curiosités de ce siècle. J'ai du moins le plaisir d'annoncer cette découverte au Monde curieux et de prouver la certitude de cet événement..."; CAYLUS, *Recueil*, IV, p. 182-87, tab. LIX.

10 CIL XI, 1147. It is still the largest bronze inscription (m 1,38 x 2,85 weighing around 200 kg) coming from the Roman world; it is a precious witness to emperors Nerva and Trajan's *Institutio alimentaria*; CRINITI (1991), p. 247-255.

for antiquarian studies, soon to be recognised as one of the most vital in the whole of Europe.



1. Aerial picture of the Veleia built-up area, at the heart of the Placentine Apennines. The Forum is visible at the centre, surrounded by what is left of the *basilica* and *tabernae*; on the upper side there is the church of St Antonino: this locality was named 'Macinesso', a place-name recalling the 'place of debris ['macerie']' as demonstrated by the remains of the old Veleia area. (Common domain).

In the second half of the eighteenth century, in fact, the state-funded excavation of Veleia (1760-1765 and 1776-1781), the 'Northern Pompeii' as it was called, became a reference point for the new-born archaeological discipline, contributing to the cult and study of antiquities in neo-classical Italy.

Such leading role of Veleia within the science of 'enlightened antiquarianism' of the eighteenth century was due to the involvement of count Caylus, one of the most illustrious Antiquity scholars of the time. His interest concentrated on the city of Veleia and its excavations, but mostly on the archaeological material retrieved in it. Count Caylus spent years researching ancient art, techniques and crafts. Thanks to him and to the correspondence he entertained with the first two directors of the digs — Placentine canon Antonio Costa and the Teatine Paolo Maria Paciaudi —, in several years Veleia became a true experimental laboratory for archaeological research. The Court sent regularly to Paris

all the recovered finds (ceramics fragments, glass, bronze, plaster, bones and other 'lesser' material, among which natural curiosities) — all to become the prime material on which Caylus carried out his experiments.¹¹

Caylus' research methodologies did indeed bring some fresh air in the antiquarian world of the duchy, firstly, for he was particularly interested in 'common' materials, and in the production and craftsmanship shown by these remains,¹² and secondly — later on — for his involvement in set designing at the local Museum of Antiquities.

And yet, this process was not completely straightforward. Caylus and Paciaudi's correspondence shows clearly the difficulties encountered by the latter in accepting Caylus' methodologies and inquiry lines. Such intellectual and methodological disagreements fit within the ongoing debate between scholars (not only Caylus, but also Johann Joachim Winckelmann¹³) which led to the creation of modern archaeological science.

On 14 April 1760, the duke don Philip of Bourbon officially opened the first excavation campaign in Veleia (1760-1763). The site was completely unknown (even to ancient sources: only a few words can be found in Pliny the Elder),¹⁴ Paciaudi notes this situation in a letter of July 1760 to Caylus: "*Personne ici n'a la moindre connaissance des découvertes de Velleja*".¹⁵

The Duke and his Prime Minister strongly wanted the appointment of Count Caylus as consultant to the Veleia initiative precisely because they wanted it to prove successful: the Count's scientific support was highly esteemed and would have brought great prestige and guaranteed success to the initiative. Such interest of the Court, and the care taken to ensure success, show that their objective was not only scientific, but mainly political. Don Philip was hoping to build up a patrimony again, just like the one which once belonged to the Farnese (to whom he was linked on his mother's side) and was later moved to Naples.¹⁶ His

11 "Je ne vous demandais que des matières rompues, inutiles. Qui pouvaient me conduire à l'examen de leur procédé chimique", letter of Caylus to Paciaudi, 20 November 1763; NISARD (1877), I: 376; PARENTE (2007a), p. 17-23.

12 "Je vous prie toujours de vous souvenir que je ne fais pas un cabinet, que la vanité n'étant pas mon objet, je ne me soucie point de morceaux d'apparat, mais que des guenilles d'agate, de pierre, de bronze, de terre, de vitre, qui peuvent servir en quoi que ce soit à retrouver un usage ou le passage d'un auteur, sont l'objet de mes désirs. Je ne fais point un cabinet, je fais un cours d'antiquité, et je cherche les usages, ce qui les prouve, les pratiques, ce qui les démontre", Caylus' letter to Paciaudi, 12 February 1758; NISARD (1877), I: 4-9.

13 Archaeologist and erudite (Stendhal, Prussia, 1717 – Trieste 1768).

14 Plin., *Nat. Hist.* III.7; III.20.

15 SÉRIEYS (1802), p. 164, letter 22 July 1760.

16 In 1734 don Charles wanted to move the family art collections from Parma and Rome to Naples, as he became king of Naples and Sicily. Parma lost all the artistic patrimony of the Farnese collections. Don Charles did not see this as a 'theft', but as a natural consequence of

was clearly an illusion. Somehow the Veleia initiative was in competition to Charles VII's archaeological campaign in Herculaneum: a sort of antagonism in a spirit of emulation where kinship was not irrelevant. The Duke hoped to achieve from Veleia similar results to the Campania digs and established the Museum of Antiquities in Parma (20 September 1760)¹⁷ with a clear purpose: to create a 'container' for the collection and a display for the duchy's archaeological remains. In it, according to modern scientific parameters, objects were stored not only to make up a private collection and to build up the prestige of the owner. Once again, the blueprint was the royal villa of Portici, the site of a newly founded Museum of Antiquities for the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily (1751).

Science at archaeology's service

As we have demonstrated elsewhere,¹⁸ clearly Veleia could not rival Rome or Herculaneum for the quantity of findings and the splendour of its artistic treasures, therefore the ducal strategy was to invest on methodological excellence. The archaeological dig was among the most advanced ones (if not *the* most advanced), relying on the best equipment for research and, in the final phase of Paciaudi's leadership (1776-1781), on the most modern engineering technologies for excavations, which were intended to ease the transport of soil, thus reducing times and costs¹⁹ (plate n. 2).

Therefore, modern tools as well as technological innovation — also stemming from enlightened principles — became the indispensable condition for archaeological work. In the first period excavations were entrusted to the Placentine erudite Antonio Costa. During this time the excavation produced a great number of finds, and gave life to some unpublished works, among which two manuscripts²⁰ compiled between 1760-1762. However, Costa's self-made

his new role: the heirloom of his family followed the legitimate heir. The collections amounted to more than three thousand pieces of art, according to the official inventory of the move, only counting paintings and art objects. Such numbers equalled in quality and quantity the Medici collection of the Uffizi or Pitti palace. On this, see FORNARI SCHIANCHI (2000), p. xxvii; ASCIONE, BERTINI (2015), p. 7-29.

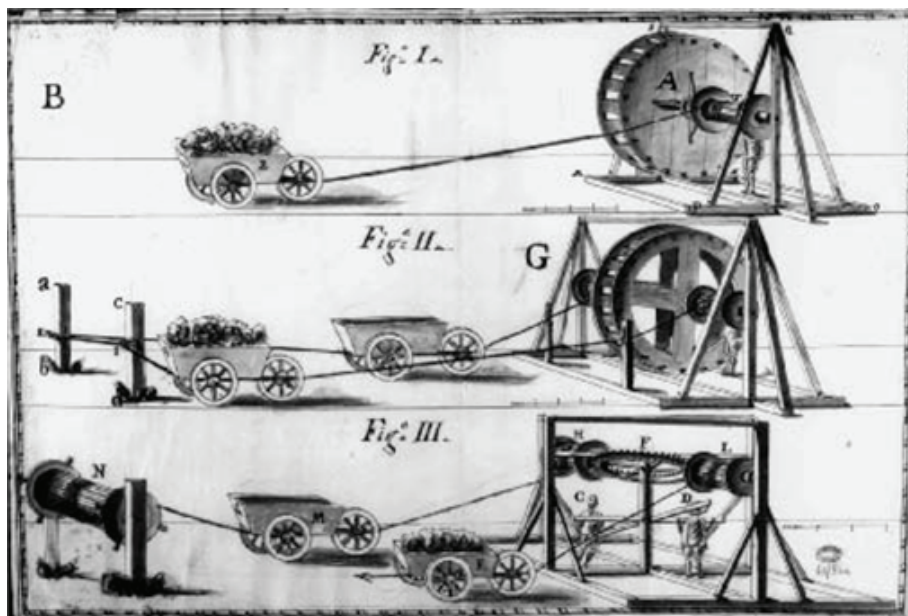
17 CAVALIERI (2006), p. 18-21; BURANI (2018a), p. 68.

18 CAVALIERI (forthcoming).

19 RICCOMINI (2005), p. 61-62.

20 *Raccolta dei Monumenti di Antichità che col mezzo dei Regi Scavi si sono tratti dalle Viscere della città dei Velati – Tomo Primo riguardante le scoperte del MDCCLX* (Ms. 49, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Parma). *Raccolta di varj pezzi di Antichità stati disotterrati col mezzo dei R. Scavi, umiliata a S.A.R. il Sig. Infante delle Spagne D. Filippo Borbone Duca di Piacenza, Parma, Guastalla – Tomo Secondo riguardante le scoperte degli anni MDCCLXI e MDCCLXII* (Ms. 50, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Parma). CONVERSI (2018), p. 49.

expertise was superficial and not completely absorbed by the canon. For this reason, du Tillot decided at first to give him the assistance of Caylus as a consultant, and later on (1763), on the count's suggestion, to replace Costa with Paciaudi, whose intellectual abilities were much superior.



2. Parma, Archivio di Stato. Mappe e Disegni, vol. 65, n. 54a. Macchine e carri per il trasporto della terra de' Regi Scavi di Veleia, 1777 (from A. M. RICCOMINI 2005, p. 62).

Still, ever since the early days of Costa's direction, the Veleia digs shone for their modernity: the quality and quantity of documentation detailing the ongoing work, especially visual records, is undoubtable (plans, drawings, etc.). Topographic analysis of the site (next to built-up areas), followed by a precise recording of the place and context where objects were found (especially where particularly relevant artistic finds were concerned) upon maps marked with different scales (both *braccia* and *piedi* were used); the use of a system of coordinates oriented according to well-known marking points;²¹ the

21 Caylus' intervention on the Veleia digs produced fruitful consequences. Following his teaching more accurate inquiries were carried out, as the importance of each single find became evident. Topographic surveys were considered more important and so was the provenience of individual objects. Costa gave instructions so that in drawing the site plan "segnati minutamente gli siti de capi che si anderanno trovando di mano in mano", letter by Costa to du Tillot, 21 September 1761; RICCOMINI (2005), p. 26-27.

recording of daily activities in a diary,²² all make these documents a sort of incunabulum of modern archaeological documentation. For example, a survey of the urban plan shows buildings as colour-coded and screened according to their function and nature, and accompanied by explanatory keys.²³ Within the buildings, each find is marked on the map with a progressive number in red, and explained in a key at the side, so that it is easy to find a basic description of each piece on the map itself (plate n. 3). Another example: ever since the beginning organisers felt it was important to create a catalogue of drawings to accompany the most relevant finds — relevant, that is, from the artistic point of view —. The two resulting volumes were embellished by maps and drawings by Giovanni Permòli, official sketcher and painter of the *Regi Scavi*. The quality of these images is often more artistic than documentary, however they are still fundamental today in reconstructing the first batch of discoveries from Veleia, for some of the pieces are now lost. The methodology behind such apparatus (description and illustration) shows that it had been influenced by the heavy tomes of the *Recueil d'Antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, romaines et gauloises* (1752-1767) by Caylus, where descriptions and images appeared together in the catalogue of antiquities. By comparing the Veleia volumes with the *Recueil* Paciaudi was able to spot the main faults in Costa's work, which he pointed out in two manuscripts that were never published, and described the research carried out in 1760-1762: lack of consistency and organisation of the material, a catalogue which resembled more an inventory, without comments and interpretation.²⁴ The iconographic apparatus of the manuscripts was in fact inadequate to the scientific need for objectivity, proportion and similarity: images were polished artistic pieces of work, more than faithful reproductions of the real object. Some of Paciaudi's objections were born out of personal interest: in 1763 he had already replaced Costa. Despite acknowledging a degree of inaccuracy and lack of scientific methodology in the two volumes, it would be unfair not to recognise Costa's great merit: he had posited the problem of publication of the excavation work theoretically, and not in terms of execution. Until the end of the eighteenth century nothing was published about the Veleia excavations.

22 Despite being the Director, Costa visited the Veleia excavations only once (in September 1761, on the Duke's visit) and delegated to his two envoys Ambrogio Martelli and Giacomo Nicelli, *Regii Commissarii alla Direzione degli scavi*, the management of the works. Then, he was able to access the results through drawings of objects and planimetries in a *Giornale delle scoperte e ritrovamenti*, duly compiled and including lists of all finds; MARINI CALVANI (1979), p. 233.

23 Under Costa's management, the 1761-2 reports' quality and graphic precision had increased, if compared to the 1760 manuscript. This shows that Caylus' excellent suggestions had been taken on board.

24 PARENTE (2007b), p. 52-53.



3. Parma, Archivio di Stato. Mappe e Disegni, vol. 25, n. 37. *Pianta delle scoperte fatte a Veleia negli anni 1761-1763*. © Mibact - ASPa.

Although some attempts were made, they did not pass the stage of manuscript, as had been the case with Costa's *Raccolta dei Monumenti di Antichità*. This shows that then (as well as now) the greatest difficulty archaeologists and conservationists encounter is to provide a consistent framework to the publication of the excavation outcomes. This was, and still is, the most complex phase of archaeological research, much more complex than the study of materials per se. In any case, in the two manuscripts²⁵ presenting the achievements of the first years of campaign, great attention was given to materials, drawings and topography, in a methodological approach that, since then, was never discarded and is still considered indispensable.

« Le frontispice est le vrai proxénète du livre »²⁶

Having briefly described the innovative methodological features of the Veleia excavation between the 1760s and 1770s, it seems interesting to spend some time going into more detail and examine the frontispiece of tome I of Costa's *Raccolta dei Monumenti di Antichità*.²⁷ After starting with a dedication to don Philip of Bourbon and a Preface, the volume includes a diary of the 1760 achievements and discoveries, together with many drawings collected in forty-five tables. So, why concentrate on a frontispiece with its '*antiporta* illustration'²⁸ — a drawing, perhaps a watercolour by Giovanni Permòli showing that Veleia's haughtiness is revived thanks to the generosity of the Duke of Parma? Simply because, as French writer Antoine Furetière stated in the second half of the Seventeenth century, a frontispiece is the 'access door' to the knowledge contained in a book. Metaphorically the facade or main entrance to the contents, the first point of contact between a spectator/reader and the book's subject, and therefore a privileged place for a declaration of intentions. Even the illustrator Permòli recognised this importance and could not avoid signing his work below the sheet of *antiporta* [literally: 'pre-door']. He wrote in small letters: *Gio. Permòli Pittore e Disegnatore dei Regi Scavi in(ventò) e dis(egnò)*.

25 See note 20.

26 Antoine Furetière, *Le roman bourgeois*, 1.II, *catalogue des livres de Mythophilacte*, 1666, Paris.

27 Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. Parm. 1246 (another copy in Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Parma, ms. 49). Paper, Parmesan binding from the XVIII century, leather, red (goat) (mm 387 x 260, cc 276); MARINI CALVANI (1979), p. 244, n. 464.

28 In Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century publishing the frontispiece was not the first page seen by the reader after opening the book cover. This was preceded by the *antiporta*, generally a page with pictures either on the *recto* or — more often — on the *verso* of the page, so that it faced the frontispiece. Such is our case, with an artistic table, called in fact '*antiporta* illustration'.

The reception of Antiquity in the duchy of Parma and Piacenza during the Bourbon age

Antiporta and frontispiece respond to two needs: a celebratory one and a planning one. The first uses allegory: there is emphatic mention of the intended recipient of the work, who is placed within a frame of natural beauty or architectures recalling Classical times. The second (frontispiece), recalls the book's contents without avoiding its author's competence and qualifications, as can be seen below:

RACCOLTA
DEI MONUMENTI DI ANTICHITÀ
*che con mezzo dei Regi Scavi
si sono fatti dalle Viscere della Città dei*
VELIATI
Con qualche riflessione del Conte Canonico Teologo della Piacentina Chiesa
ANTONIO COSTA
REGIO PREFETTO, E DIRETTORE DEI MUSEI
DI
S. A. R.
TOMO PRIMO
riguardante le scoperte del
MDCCLX²⁹

The image of the *antiporta* allows a better understanding of the program and cultural propaganda supported by the Veleia enterprise inside and outside the Duchy (plate n. 4). It is an allegory of the archaeological re-discovery of the city: the scene is set on a rural background, peppered with ruins (at the time a very fashionable feature) but clearly reproducing the real place. The Placentine hills are on the horizon, on the right there is the parish of St Antonino in Macinesso, surrounded by a thick wood. Over the wood one can see a building at the centre — the Wooden Arsenal and the Home of the guardian. Great part of the central portion of this illustration shows a realistic landscape, but this is secondary to the allegoric characters whom we shall discuss below. In fact, the scene at the centre stage is a snapshot of the research work on the field. There are busy people: a worker carrying a hoe walks in front of the dig looking for the *dallage* of the forum, partly unearthed. A second worker pushes a wheelbarrow while two others are bending over an inscription which is resting on the forum floor: it looks like they are following the instructions of a superintendent

29 'Collection of antique monuments emerged from the Royal Excavations in the city of Veleia, with some remarks by Count and Canon Antonio Costa of the Placentine Church, Royal Prefect and Director of the Museums of His Royal Highness. Tome one, about the 1760 discoveries'.



4. Parma, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Archivio storico. G. Permòli, *antiporta* illustration, showing Duke don Philip of Bourbon's Munificence while rediscovering the town of Veleia, from *Raccolta dei monumenti di Antichità* by A. Costa, 1760. © Complesso Museale della Pilotta.

of the work. The latter is holding a walking stick with his left hand,³⁰ is dressed with a long coat up to his knees (tailcoat) according to the fashion of the time,

30 This seems to be the same character pictured in the *antiporta* of tome II of the *Raccolta dei Monumenti di Antichità* (1761-1762) where — always carrying a long walking stick — he appears to be directing the works; see below on this aspect.

and wears a tricorn hat. He seems to point at two bystanders who stand at the dig's section looking towards the excavation, and shows them to two workers. One of the bystanders carries a parasol; the second wears a wide cloak, details showing that they are either visitors or scholars wanting to observe the new discovery — the inscription. Meanwhile, on the right of this scene there is a second superintendent sitting on what looks like a squared stone or a stool, and sporting a tricorn and managerial-looking clothes. He is writing on a large book with a long pen in his right hand. Behind him, next to a shotgun rack, there are two more characters: the first is standing and wears similar clothes to the two superintendents, the second is sitting. Both hold long shotguns (perhaps soldiers?). This picture represents everyday life on the site, albeit a simplified one — after research came the survey, annotation and even armed surveillance of the forum area, as evident from this and other sketches by Permòli. Armed men are unsurprisingly on site: the importance and prestige brought by the excavation to the Duchy were unquestionable and measures were taken to counteract the curiosity of unauthorised persons, and to avoid them note-taking and making sketches of the finds. Such measures show how du Tillot cared for the enterprise. After all, both Caylus and Winckelmann had encountered similar obstacles when trying to know more about the discoveries made at Herculaneum, where they were rebuked by marquis Tanucci, painstaking minister of the King in charge of surveillance of the site.³¹

Next to this painting inspired by the events of the time on the Macinesso site, the main stage on the page is taken by a celebratory section: at the top of the page an oval frame set against a clear sky includes the portrait of the Duke, supported by a winged *Fama* and *tubicinen* (the look of which, and particularly the draped clothes, seem to be inspired by the bronze Victory³² retrieved on the forum on 31 July 1760). Four pretty cupids with *psychai* wings support the flight.

On the bottom-left section of the page, instead, the scene shows a river-god (perhaps the torrent Chero, now flowing around five-hundred metres North-West of the Veleia forum, or the Riolo ford, marked on the maps on the West side of the digs) represented according to the ancient iconographic tradition³³ — the god is a strong-bodied bearded man, laying on the riverside among the vegetation (marsh canes); he is almost completely naked, and rests his left elbow on a wineskin from which some water is spilling. His right hand

31 MARINI CALVANI (1979), p. 232.

32 N. inv. B. 4.

33 The most illustrious and well-known parallel can be drawn with the statue coming from the *Iseum Campense* in Rome (near Santa Maria sopra Minerva), now in Paris, Museum of the Louvre, retrieved in 1512, n. inv. Ma 593.

holds a kind of shovel (in classic tradition, in fact, it was an oar), while the left hand makes a sign of appreciation of what is happening in front of him, on the opposite side of the scene. Here, a young woman is coming forward, alongside a little putto carrying a cornucopia turned upside down and full of coins. The woman is helping another woman, eyes pointed to the sky, raise from the ruins of the city (a half-column, inscriptions, various architectural fragments, vases and human bones). It is the personification of Veleia, helped by the Duke's Munificence to resuscitate from oblivion. In fact, the young woman helping Veleia with her left hand, shows to her with the right who is responsible for this rebirth, and points to the portrait of don Philip, hanging from the sky.

To explain the scene, behind the river-god, there is a winged hero similar to the ones described above, pictured while carving with chisel and hammer a Latin inscription placed on the main side of a tall basement, just like the ones retrieved in the dig and partly still on the site, in the city's forum. Here is the text:

PHIL(IPPO) BORBONIO
R(EGIS) HISP(ANIARVM) INF(ANTI)
PLAC(ENTIAE) PAR(MÆ) VAST(ALLÆ) DVCI
P(IO) F(ELICI) O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO) P(ATRI) P(ATRIA) /
RES{R} <P>(VBLICÆ) VELLEIATIVM
RIGENERATOR(I)

Aside from some Latin inaccuracies, the intended programme is very clear: don Philip was named as a *rigenerator*, the man who caused Veleia's re-birth. This title recalls some of the Roman emperors' titles, such as Maxentius, named in fact *restitutor Urbis suae*.³⁴ And to stress how such re-birth was a concrete matter, on top of the basement are some of the most remarkable finds of the time, a sort of pile of the 'wonders of Veleia', partly preserved to this day at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Parma: the winged Victory mentioned above;³⁵ the *Hercules bibax*;³⁶ the portrait of Antoninus Pious with the relative fragment of hand, probably pertaining to it;³⁷ the basement with a shaft for a bronze can-

34 CAVALIERI (2015), p. 279 and earlier bibliography.

35 See note 29. D'ANDRIA (1970), p. 38-39, n. 13, tab. VIII; CONVERSI *et al.* (2015), p. 331.

36 N. inv. B 105: found in the Veleia forum, 10 July 1760. D'ANDRIA (1970), p. 34-36, n. 11, tab. V-VI; CAVALIERI (2004), p. 191-193; CAVALIERI *et al.* (2015), p. 175-176; CAVALIERI (forthcoming).

37 N. inv. B. 1: found in the Veleia forum, 22 May 1760 with other bronze fragments: a hand (n. inv. B. 10), a foot and a portion of clothing. D'ANDRIA (1970), p. 44, n. 19, tab. XII and, for the hand, ID., p. 77, n. 95, tab. XXV; CAVALIERI (2006), p. 198-199; CONVERSI *et al.* (2016), p. 27-42.

delabra;³⁸ probably the well-known damascening bronze *pelike* (recognizable from its neck's edge, slightly twisted)³⁹ and perhaps a fragment of the lead *fistula aquaria* recently displayed in the Museum showcases (plate n. 5).



5. The picture shows a detail of the *antiporta* illustration of *Raccolta dei monumenti di Antichità* by A. Costa, 1760 (drawing by G. Permoli): it features some among the most famous bronze artefacts, found near the Forum in Veleia, in their current conservation state at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Parma. Among them, from left to right, the winged Victory, the portrait of emperor Antoninus Pious, and the *Hercules bibax*. © Complesso Museale della Pilotta.

Once we have sketched and analysed the eighteenth-century antiquarian and archaeological culture of Veleia, where scientific aims were intertwined with a political and celebratory intention, we can now place it against the backdrop of a wider picture: the cultural milieu of the duchy. In this way it will be possible to appreciate and quantify — if relevant — the extent to which such discoveries had inspired the taste of don Philip's enlightened court.

³⁸ Today this piece is untraceable in the Museum collections.

³⁹ N. inv. B. 361: from Veleia, without date of finding. D'ANDRIA (1970), p. 84-85, n. 115, tab. XXVII.

*Et veteres renovavit artes*⁴⁰

Don Philip and his wife Louise-Elisabeth (*fille de France*) kick started a significant revival of the arts in their duchy. This made Parma in the third quarter of the 1700s a ‘mirror of France in Italy’, a *miroir de France en Italie*.⁴¹ Supporters of this project, which was resting on the solid basis of *real politik*, knew very well that the prestige of the Bourbon-Parma dynasty could not rely on military achievements, but should depend on excellence in diplomacy and incentives to the arts and culture. Hence the creation of the Academy of Fine Arts in the Western wing of the ducal palace, the Palazzo della Pilotta, on 12 November 1752, followed in 1760 by the creation of the Museum of Antiquities in a specially-built area on the North side of the palace. The case of Parma was not isolated: around mid-eighteenth century all European courts felt it was important to encourage artistic gatherings also with didactic purposes. These groups would promote a new idea of art which was recalling Classical parameters, often in opposition to the *rocaille* fashion. At the Academy in Parma, for instance, even before the retrieval of the famous Veleia statues, local artists studied chalk copies of ancient statues while weaving connections with the lively art world of Paris. Thanks to the constant and consistent encouragement of the Duchess, and to the Duke’s passions for theatre and archaeology, Parma soon became an obliged stop along the road between the most important cities of the time — Paris and Rome —, the destination to which aristocrats and artists embarking in the *Grand Tour* wished to journey, if they wanted to admire the work of Correggio, the making of the Ducal Gallery and so forth. Diplomats travelling to the main Italian capitals (Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples) ‘strategically’ stopped in Parma. Both artists and diplomats were impressed by the magnificence, the neatness and the good taste displayed in the city and its palaces. They praised du Tillot’s economic and social initiatives and became vehicles for the good reputation of the *petite capitale*. Until du Tillot’s dismissal in 1771 the duchy retained a privileged connection with Versailles and Paris, thus crafting a Franco-Italian culture passionate about the Ancient world, but also willing to revisit it according to contemporary parameters.⁴² The re-discovery of the Ancient world relied on the Academy of Fine Arts and the Museum of Antiquities: on the one hand these institutions were seen as means to reconstruct the patrimony of the Duchy, and provide fame and prestige by advertising

40 Hor., *Od.* XV.12.

41 MALINVERNI, A. (2015), p. 77, note 2 with reference bibliography.

42 Louise-Elisabeth brought a French slant to the aesthetic of the Duchy, thanks also to the funding she derived from her father’s wealth (Louis XV). This can be seen particularly in furniture and in the improved decor of the ducal residences; MALINVERNI (2015), p. 81-87.

annual painting and architecture competitions; on the other hand they were considered as laboratories where new artistic ways of expression were tested, in the effort to synthesise French and Italian taste, and in the light of the new local archaeological achievements.

The era of the *Grand Tour* and a new aesthetics: The Academy of Fine Arts in Parma

The 1700s, more precisely from 1715 for the length of Louis XV's reign, have been considered a time of travel and exchanges, the time when Ancient and Modern clashed and intertwined, an era of philosophical, political and historical reflection. From that period comes a profound evolution of habits and taste. It was a century of departures and arrivals which also affected the duchy of Parma. The arrival of the Bourbon dynasty, from the time of Charles of Bourbon, had brought to the duchy a new mindset heavily marked by the principles of the Enlightenment. This attitude would take over the old baroque utopia of art and the wondrous, and replace the solemn world of baroque and gently rococo forms with a much more solid and classical set of aesthetic principles. In a way, this was a natural evolution, a transformation which already showed during the last years of the Farnese era. The architect and set designer Ferdinando Galli Bibiena was employed at the court of Francis Farnese (1711) and designed the Trianon fountain for the royal palace of Colorno. He conceived gardens where the backdrop to both the main axes and the transversal lines was marked by the presence of allegorical statues. For the little Duchy this was a very impacting visual and conceptual combination and, although on a minor scale, one to rival the popes' baroque Rome and the magnificent opulence of the *Roi Soleil*, with a nudge to the style of Bernini and to the geometries by François Mansart.⁴³

In 1731 the last Duke, Anthony Farnese, died heirless. With him expired the honour of his dynasty, who had taken pride in the eclectic style, branded as a cultural flag of self-identity for generations. Among the many *grand-touristes* travelling through Italy at the time, one in particular deserves attention for the role he played in the duchy,⁴⁴ where he stayed during the summer 1729 — Charles-Louis de Montesquieu. In his *Voyages*, in fact, he analysed the condition of the little new-born Bourbonic state. His opinion of Italy wavered

43 FORNARI SCHIANCHI (2000), p. XIII-XV.

44 The presence of numerous *grand-touristes* in Parma is certainly due to the fact that the local Court and people spoke French, as well as to its convenient road location and the beauty of the landscape — a scenery spanning from the plain to the Apennines, inspiring positive thinking and nearly-preromantic feelings. See the following text by Montesquieu.

between disgust and admiration; however, the grandeur of the artistic patrimony did not leave him indifferent. He wrote: ... *le premier coup d'œil de Parme est très agréable. Les rues en sont belles, larges, vastes, grandes ; les églises belles ; la fortification, en bon état. Les remparts font une très belle promenade. Les églises sont pleines de belles peintures du Parmesan et du Corrège.*⁴⁵

Montesquieu's vision of Italy and Parma is often limited to the picturesque. A different, more poignant attitude emerges from the *Lettres historiques et critiques sur l'Italie* by Charles de Brosses, published posthumously in three volumes in 1799. The Author sketches a picture of the country as a civilised place, although useless: perpetually conquered by others, fragmented, full of learned and literate people, but empty of ideas. De Brosses was in Italy between 1739-1740. The limits of his and many other voyagers' visions was to stick to a rather superficial aesthetic appreciation, sometimes a folkloric look, without being able to go deeper in the analysis of the place. In so doing, they failed to acknowledge innovative elements which were in fact emerging, and had often to do with the re-discovery of Ancient times, in their grandeur and importance *lato sensu*.⁴⁶

Such was the international appreciation of Italian culture. Within this climate, du Tillot's policies, together with social, agricultural and production reforms, had kick-started the renovation of the Duchy's culture, in accordance with the principles of the Enlightenment. Thus, it is easy to understand how the foundation of the Academy of Fine Arts was felt as an urgent move, inspired by the model of the *Académie Royale* in Paris. In 1759, the year of du Tillot's nomination as Prime Minister, the Academy began to advertise painting, sculpture and architecture competitions,⁴⁷ following an intense schedule established by its first secretary — abbot and poet Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni. The case is not isolated and Frugoni followed the path set by other Italian Academies: the most ancient — the Academy of St Luke in Rome, the Clementina in Bologna and lastly the Academy of Florence. In Parma the Academy strived to reach quickly the level of prestige which would be able to attract applicants from all Europe, and managed to do so by connecting with the French tradition via the appointment of Jean-Baptiste Boudard as teacher of sculpture, and of the Lyonnais Ennemond-Alexandre Petitot to teach architecture. Petitot would later be

45 'At first sight Parma is very pleasant: roads are beautiful, large, spacious and magnificent; churches are splendid; the fort in good state; the ramparts provide a most pleasant walkway. Churches are filled with exquisite paintings by Parmigianino and Correggio'.

46 See for instance the *Antiquitates italicae medii aevi* (6 vols, 1738-42) by Ludovico Antonio Muratori, a fundamental work for its civic and historiographical value. FORNARI SCHIANCHI (2000), p. xxiv-xxvii.

47 The annual announcements of competitions were advertised on two renowned French papers: the Parisian *Mercur de France* and the *Journal Encyclopédique* of Liege.

appointed as Court Architect. The birth of the Academy was crucial in defining a specific style, or better a taste. This was inspired by French architectural and decorative classicism and was then translated into shapes by Boudard. Alongside this trend there were the recent discoveries from Veleia, preserved in the Museum and the Ducal Gallery. All in all, the Academy formed generations of artists through the means of its theoretical-practical teaching methods, although it educated artists who proved more prone to repetition and application of the rules than to creation and spontaneity. For example, in the painting competition of 1771, under the same heading (*Il genio della guerra guida Annibale attraverso le Alpi*) the judging panel preferred a diligently academic piece of work by Paolo Borroni to another one displaying a very personal and original reading by Francisco Goya — both Goya and Borroni were competitors in the Parma contest. In Goya, however, the nudge to the past is clear, although mediated, in the composition and subject of the painting taken from Giovanni Battista Piranesi.⁴⁸

The Arcadia in Parma

In 1739 under the protection of the Duke, poet and abbot Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni created a 'branch' of the literary Arcadia. Arcadia was in fact a group of scholars inspired by the classical mythology of Arcadia, a region in the Peloponnesus renowned for its mountains and river — the Alpheus —, a naturally happy and thriving land with its population of shepherd-poets. At the end of the seventeenth century, literary Arcadia already existed in Rome, where a party of poets and scholars used to gather around Christine of Sweden. Soon such a 'literary container' became popular and developed in many of the cultural capitals of Italy, also thanks to the work of Pietro Metastasio, poet and librettist. In 1762 in the *petite capitale* a celebration was held in honour of Frugoni's seventieth birthday. Du Tillot himself commissioned a painting for the occasion, for Frugoni had applauded the Prime Minister with celebratory sonnets. The painting by artist Pietro Melchiorre Ferrari, 'Frugoni in Arcadia', echoed the more famous painting by Poussin, enigmatically entitled *Et in Arcadia ego*. It was in fact inspired by both Poussin and Watteau: *un lieu ombragé, caractérisé par un air rustique, avec des grâces et riant*.⁴⁹ It was a true French-style *divertissement*, and yet it had a solid 'Po-valley' background: in fact, despite

48 The painting is currently preserved in a private collection in Madrid. On the foreground, on the left-hand side, there is the allegory of river Po, with a bull's head and his back turned, perhaps inspired by the creations of the great Venetian architect and engraver. FORNARI SCHIANCHI (2000), p. XXXI-XXXV.

49 VIOLA (2000), p. 121, n. 720.

du Tillot's instructions, evident from the preparatory sketches, the final result was much more narrative than focussed on the landscape, wishing to distance itself from the French taste. Again, the French fashion crops up if one looks at the remake of the Duke's park, with its particular mix of care for architectural remains, classicism and restoration of antique finds (also from Veleia). The park surrounded what Montesquieu had earlier defined as *palais de plaisance* of the Dukes, on the left-hand side of the Parma torrent.⁵⁰ From 1754 architect Petitot worked in the Duchy to a grand project of urban renovation and advancement of the city, of the Ducal Palace and gardens. In 1769 under du Tillot's suggestion he designed and built a *boschetto d'Arcadia*,⁵¹ an 'Arcadian wood'. At the core of this he placed a ruined *tholos*, acting as archaeological wing, which was used for Frugoni's stagings 'Arcadia-style' and for the rural celebrations set up to celebrate the wedding between don Ferdinand and Maria Amalia of Habsburg (1769). A famous engraving, *Veduta del boschetto d'Arcadia dalla parte del Tempio* features in the Bodoni edition commemorating the noble wedding. It shows that the original project was enriched with vases and mythological sculptures, all created by Boudard, and that it has much in common with Ferrari's painting, if nothing the spacial plan, where the main focus is set behind arboreous wings (plate n. 6). The impact of the discovery of Veleia on the taste and aesthetics of the local court must be seen through the filter of the Vesuvian discoveries of the South: it was an intellectual process, for this 'filter' was not always consciously perceived, and because — in fact — although the Vesuvian discoveries had been more important and richer, they had been studied less thoroughly and certainly with less modern methodologies.

The ruins of the monopteral temple are in fact inspired to an ideal antiquity and to its imaginary models. They show a vaulted lacunar ceiling with octagonal blue lacunars on a yellow background, resting on brick columns of Tuscanic order (on an Attic base). The columns surround a space which — originally — was meant to be a water reservoir... this is a rather strange idea of architectural

50 Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, *Voyage de Gratz à La Haye, I, Italie*, XI, *Modène, Parme et Mantoue*, juillet 1729 (ed. Gallimard 1973): "Les ducs de Parme ont une belle maison de plaisance dans les murs mêmes de la Ville, qui est comme une espèce de maison de campagne, où ils passent trois à quatre mois l'année. Le bâtiment est beau, bien entendu : un grand corps de logis, avec deux ailes ; de grandes pièces de pré ; un très grand et beau bois ; une belle pièce d'eau, dans laquelle il y a une île. Cette pièce fut faite pour être la scène d'un opéra fait à l'occasion du mariage d'un prince de la maison. Il y a aussi des peintures".

51 Recent archaeological excavations during the philological restoration of the Ducal Park, show some plumbing layout near the monopteral. This suggests a landscape made out of fords, springs and wooden bridges, in the attempt to recreate the literary world of Arcadia; CATARSI, FAVA (2006), p. 223-224.

Antiquity, clearly not moulded on a Roman model, not even evoking the little Apennines town. Some hint to the ornamental patrimony of Veleia is perhaps recognisable in some of the decorations on marble vases crafted by Boudard on Petitot's sketches — the *Baccellato* style, and the appearance of some bronze artefacts found in the same years in Veleia,⁵² all suggest some common background. However, the overall impression is that — at least in the 1760s and 1770s — only a few artists exploited the Veleia finds to re-think the meaning of Antiquity — du Tillot, Costa, Paciaudi and Caylus: all acting as erudites before being enlightened scholars.⁵³



6. From the 1750s the new dynasty, the Bourbon, brought substantial improvements and restored the Palazzo del Giardino – one of the ducal residences – and its vast garden. The garden was newly planned by Pierre Contant d'Ivry (1752) and later modified by Ennemond-Alexandre Petitot (1753-1754), the court's *premier architecte*, who took inspiration from the Tuileries in Paris. Jean-Baptiste Boudard then furnished it with vases, statues and marble compositions recalling the myth. In the picture, Petitot's project and some copies of Boudard's fittings today (Common domain).

⁵² CAVALIERI (2004), p. 180-181, 186-189.

⁵³ In this sense could be interpreted the making of a bronze copy of the Veleia *Hercules bibax* in a 1:1 scale. This was most probably commissioned by du Tillot and given as a discreet and precious gift to a correspondent of his, perhaps somebody linked to the Bologna Academy; see CAVALIERI (forthcoming).

Imitatio naturae et antiquitatis:

The imitation of nature and antiquity in the synthesis by Petitot

In the Sixteenth and Seventeenth century the driving force for the *Grand Tour* trend was study. In the Eighteenth century this trend became a true fashion. The interest for the Antiquities and Ancient history had provided moral relevance to the study of the Antique world, which was seen as a source of beauty and knowledge. The learning process was therefore considered one of the paramount elements of education. Travelling to Italy was its highest point. In parallel to this process, which we could define as 'ethical and didactical', or a 'leisure time for the soul', a new attitude towards Antiquity was taking shape. Between 1700 and 1770 an evolution of archaeology took place, filling the local collections with antique finds, through the relentless work of artists, collectors, amateurs and erudites. The century was imprinted by their idea and science of Antiquity, which moulded the extrinsic features and aesthetic values of the time. New archaeological collections were created in Rome, Naples and Parma, and all of them were linked to excavations. These provided artefacts, no matter the size of the collection, and shared a new methodology. This was based on more precise surveying of architectural aspects and archaeological sites together with a more accurate reading of literary sources. Studying individual finds, their restoration, the making of moulds, more accurate measurements, sketching on site, reconstructive analysis, all contributed to the creation of a new culture of Antiquity, which fit in the culture of the time thanks also to the help of political imagery. Contemporary rulers had learned that they could help to transform a mere trend in an effective cultural weapon. The transition went from seduction and the appeal of beauty to the rediscovery of history and knowledge.⁵⁴

This environment would transform archaeology into a new science, apt to convey a more substantial idea of the Ancient and a new methodology to look at it. Architect Ennemond-Alexandre Petitot was part of this environment: he was nineteen when in Rome he attended the *Académie de France*, where he remained till 1750. For the following three years documents prove his regular contacts with count Caylus, for whose *Recueil* he prepared drawings and engravings. His discipline of drawing and engraving granted him a place within the restricted number of Seventeenth-century intellectuals who considered archaeology as a science and a fundamental didactic tool. Such opinion, in fact, responded to a precise need: to rethink Antiquity beyond aesthetics, that is beyond what fascinated and captivated the audiences of the two preceding centuries. Petitot was in Parma since 1753, in the capacity of *pre-*

54 FORNARI SCHIANCHI (1997), p. 107-108.

mier architecte. Here he updated residential and topiary architecture by using criteria inspired to a plain ‘Greek’ elegance, in accordance with the taste of his *patron*, count Caylus,⁵⁵ and to the so-called *grand goût* of the end of the Seventeenth century. Meanwhile, he also fell under the spell of Giovanni Battista Piranesi, whom he had met while attending the specialisation in Rome, at the *Académie de France*, and who taught him the magnificence of Rome and its patrimony. Petitot showed to be capable of strong eclecticism, influenced by the *encyclopédique* way of thinking, and close to Condillac’s Sensism. His style had been amplified while teaching at the Academy in Parma. Through it Petitot wished to appear to the intelligentsia of Europe as the last bastion of a cosmopolitan reformism born out of enlightened absolutism, which du Tillot tried to achieve.⁵⁶ As stated by Marc Fumaroli,⁵⁷ Petitot’s work is emanation of the “grand goût Louis XV, le style « à la grecque » : un style qui tire ses principes de l’art antique et de la Nature (catégories esthétiques et éthiques) : noblesse, simplicité, vérité, pureté, substance, par rapport au style du colorisme pictural « rocaille »”.

Such re-elaboration of Antiquity was a summa of stylistic elements coming from the Greek, Egyptian and Roman civilisation, all enriched with some Renaissance variants.⁵⁸ It was elaborated in Rome and supported by *archéolâtres*⁵⁹ of the like of Caylus and Paciaudi. The opportunity to access freely the recent finds of Veleia contributed to the formation of the architects’ creativity. The backbone of Petitot’s style was of encyclopaedic nature, but he re-invented Antiquity by experiencing a stylistic ‘laboratory’, that is, by trying new stylistic methods and elements in his work, an approach which evolved overtime while in Parma. In the end, he managed to build up a repertoire of ornaments which summarised and synthesised the Classical style.⁶⁰ In his approach to Antiquity Petitot mixed rationalisation and utopia; he considered his time as a theatrical century, when artists used a decorative and scenographical style. He frequented the world of Antiquity both as a student and while in Parma.

From this knowledge stems Petitot’s project for the setting of two monumental sculptures in basanite — the group of Dionysus and a satyr⁶¹ and a

55 DE SETA, (1997), p. 99-106.

56 MAMBRIANI (2015), p. 139-140.

57 FUMAROLI (2016), p. 36.

58 Recently exemplified in LERIBAUT (2010), p. 206-211.

59 This expression is taken from FUMAROLI (2016), p. 92 where he describes the two intellectuals as strong supporters of reformations of modern art according to Antique models: the time of Athens, the era of Augustus and the Constantine one.

60 FORNARI SCHIANCHI (1997), p. 113.

61 N. inv. 969.

Heracles,⁶² found in Rome, in the *Aula regia* of *domus Flavia* on the Palatino in 1724, and brought to the royal palace of Colorno by Francis Farnese.⁶³ The main challenge in this case was managing their gigantic proportions, and positioning them in the palace garden. The location, in fact, was considered ideal to recreate an appropriate context for the Roman ruins. The statues were associated to vase-shaped sculptures, to recall the neo-atticism of the time of Augustus.

The sculpture cycle of Veleia's *basilica*: The *Maniera* of Classicism

Elsewhere⁶⁴ I have already pointed out that the 1761 discovery of the twelve statues from Julio-Claudian time in Veleia had a massive repercussion on the perception of Antiquity in Parma (plate n. 7). As a consequence, teaching the reproduction and standardisation of a manner became an excellence in the Academy of Fine Arts of Parma, for example the way to reproduce the drapery. Reading the second tome of Costa's *Raccolta di Varj Pezzi di Antichità* one can clearly see how important this discovery had been. Once again, the *antiporta* illustration by Permòli takes a snapshot of the unearthing of one of the statues — the image of Livia Drusilla, sister of emperor Caligula⁶⁵ (plate n. 8). The setting is similar to the one mentioned in tome I. The Placentine hills with the Macinesso parish are the backdrop to the scene: an armed man is guarding the site, while some men are working to move long wooden poles and cut them with a saw. On the foreground some workers use the poles as levers to raise a marble statue from the ground, while men dressed in their tricorn hats, wig and tailcoats are assisting and commenting on the scene⁶⁶.

The opportunity to access the cycle of sculptures — now a style paradigm — attracted to Parma sculptors like Jean-Baptiste Cousinet (Paris 1743–Parma 1803) and Gaetano Callani (1736-1809), who studied at the Academy. Jean-Baptiste Cousinet was among Boudard's pupils in Parma, having won in

62 N. inv. 970.

63 BELLI PASQUA (1995), p. 89-90, n. 37, tab. XLII-XLIV; p. 98-99, n. 55, tab. LVII-LIX.

64 See CAVALIERI (forthcoming).

65 In the drawing the character is identified through the inscription on *bardiglio* marble (on the bottom right hand side, leaning on a wall which reminds the building technique found in the *basilica*, *CIL* XI, 1168). The inscription remembers the name of the woman, already a *diva*, that is after her death in 38 AD.

66 Particularly one of them, a man holding a stick and sporting a cockade on his chest, seems the same man acting as director of the digs in the *antiporta* illustration of tome I. Possibly one of the Placentine nobles overseeing the digs, he might be the Treasurer General of Piacenza, Ambrogio Martelli. Giacomo Nicelli, instead, could be the man holding a conversation on the left-hand side of the scene, on the background of two richly dressed gentlemen talking, one of them with the back to the observer.



7. The sculpture cycle includes twelve marble statues, from Veleia's *basilica*. These should be dated to the period between the age of Tiberius and the one of Nerva (10-98 A.D.). Today they are preserved in the Medals' Hall at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Parma (Common domain).

1761 the first prize for the Sculpture class. When Boudard died in 1768, Cousinet became the protege of Laurent Guyard⁶⁷, another Frenchman settled in the Duchy. He continued working for the Court, holding the position of 'marble sculptor of the Royal Court' ("scultore in marmo della R. Corte"). The prevailing feature in his work mannerism is in fact the recollection of Classical Antiquity via the knowledge of the cycle from Veleia's *basilica*. The connection

67 A document of 31 May 1788 witnesses to the strict and direct connection between these sculptors and the ancient exemplars. In it, minister Cesar Ventura issued an order to the Academy caretaker to retrieve and look after a group of statues, among which ten Veleia ones. These were kept at Guyard's atelier now cared for by his pupil Cousinet, after Guyot's death.



8. Parma. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Archivio storico. G. Permoli, *antiporta* illustration showing the finding of the statue of Drusilla, taken from *Raccolta di varj pezzi di Antichità* by A. Costa, 1761-1762. © Complesso Museale della Pilotta.



9. Parma. Galleria Nazionale. *Compassione, Carità, Aiuto e Amore del prossimo*, chalk by Jean-Baptiste Cousinet (1782 ca). © Complesso Museale della Pilotta.

is clear if one considers a group of allegorical characters he created to decorate four niches in the cross vault of the Hospital of Misericordia in Parma. This work was commissioned just after completion of the building restoration, and carried out on don Ferdinand's order (1782-1783) by French architect Louis-Auguste Feneulle. Each statue is crafted in three pieces (total height 2.5 mt) and has a wooden skeleton. Four images had been moulded in over the inner wooden frame: two females and two males. They are personifications of Compassion and Charity on one side, and Help and Love for the neighbour on the other⁶⁸ (plate n. 9). All sculptures are solemnly draped in the old fashion, but are somehow modernised to appeal to a more neo-classical taste. Surely much of this renovation of the taste has to do with the twelve Julio-Claudian statues, and the way in which they were crafted. However, cold academic mannerism emerges from the modern artefacts and distances them from the ancient Veleia ones, where the faces of the imperial family show some degree of attention to portrait. Differently, painter Gaetano Callani who also studied the Veleia sculptures, reveals a higher understanding and creativity when designing the eight *Beatitudes* for the church of St Antonio Abate in Parma. Here his work is still elegantly neoclassical and academic, but certainly more natural.

68 GASPAROTTO (2000), p. 204, n. 794.

‘The spring of the Enlightenment never made it to summer...’

So far, we have discussed the outcomes produced by the fact that the international court (inspired by the French *grand gout*) was based in Parma. Particularly, a strong cultural identity, albeit a transitory one, was encouraged and facilitated by hosting an international court (inspired by the French *grand goût*). Equally, from the aesthetic point of view, identity meant perceiving Antiquity not only ‘filtered’ through the Roman or Neapolitan discoveries but by the archaeological digs of Veleia. Were the Bourbonic reforms completely ‘enlightened’? Opinions differ, not only when focusing on the *contents* of these reforms, but also in terms of *appeal* and *outcomes*. Stuard J. Woolf⁶⁹ sees du Tillot’s policies as ‘an illusion, a superficial dusting of enlightened culture which never became an effective reform trend’. He claims du Tillot ‘was determined to create a court in Parma that resembled the Renaissance ones, intellectually ornate according to the latest cultural fashion’. For a decade ‘the city seemed a little Paris, a salon, opened to the ideas of the *philosophes*, where Condillac was the most beautiful ornament’.⁷⁰ Du Tillot’s idea was to showcase to all Europe the provincial little Italian city transformed into a lively and cosmopolitan focus of the Enlightenment. Hence the opening of the great library created by Paciaudi, hence the proposals for a university reform, hence the presence in Parma of French artists and thinkers, hence the infinite discussion — albeit not often transformed into practice — of new ideas, and the support given to archaeological research. Such reading highlights the limits of the unsuccessful experiment, especially due to the Duchy’s lack of financial autonomy, owing to its reliance upon the other Bourbon courts of Europe. Reforms remained thus almost always on the surface, perhaps with the sole exception of the annulment of ecclesiastical privileges, which culminated in the 1768 expulsion of Jesuits. Intellectual and social intelligentsia did not support them, as they hardly suffered the French domination; the Duke, although not opposing his Prime Minister’s work, never encouraged and supported him until he died (1765), for he thought that the priority should go to the necessities of the Court, rather than to those of the duchy. And finally, in 1771, following the pro-Habsburg intrigues woven by Maria Amalia, the wife of heir don Ferdinand, du Tillot was obliged to leave Parma and return to Paris, where he died in 1774.⁷¹ It had been a time of ideas, of forward thinking, of reforms but also of sudden stops, if not steps backwards. ‘A spring of Enlightenment which in

69 WOOLF (1973), p. 98-100.

70 All translations mine.

71 FORNARI SCHIANCHI (2000), p. xxviii-xxx.

Parma — and perhaps in the whole of Italy — never moved into a summer'.⁷² What was left from that experiment, which was first wiped out by the reactionary attitude of don Philip's successors, and finally quashed by Bonaparte's revolutionary Italian campaign? Something did indeed remain: the idea of taste, style and education stemmed out of the Academy of Fine Arts and the Museum of Antiquities. This idea of taste found a very innovative articulation through the way in which the antiquities of Veleia were received among scholars, albeit a restricted number of them. The substratum created by this period, a cultural, formal and somehow intellectual *humus*, will later be crucial in accepting and feeding a new time of enlightened innovation — the reign of Marie Louise of Habsburg-Lorraine (1816-1847). Not by chance her cultural policies will focus on the Museum of Antiquities (with a new, didactic mission), and on the Academy of Fine Arts as the melting pot of ideas and artists, makers of a new Nineteenth-century Classicism. Among them painter Francesco Scaramuzza who, on the vault of the Hall of Medals, in the Museum of Antiquities, painted the allegory of this new ideal of culture, based on the teaching of encyclopaedic knowledge (1844).⁷³

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⁷² *Ibid.*, p. liv. Transl. mine.

⁷³ CAVALIERI, BALDINI (2013), p. 13-67.

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