

THE EXHIBITION

In a Venice by then open to the inland, Daniele Barbaro, authoritative exponent of the illustrious Barbaro family, heir to Francesco and brother of Marcantonio, was one of the greatest intellectuals of the sixteenth century. He engaged in philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, optics, history, music and architecture, weaving a dense network of relationships with the most prominent exponents of the political, religious and cultural scene of his time. The Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana holds the core of his most conspicuous and important autograph manuscripts, only a few of which have been published. Housed today in different collections, these manuscripts were once all on his desk, in Padua, Maser and most of all Venice. They are scholarly testimonies of the ways in which the writing of literary, scientific, and theological works and letters was undertaken in the Renaissance, and of how editions were completed in their printing stages.

Through the images that depict Daniele in the various periods of his life, he is imagined in his library while writing and editing his texts. One of the two portraits executed by Titian that we know of (Madrid, El Prado Museum) shows him around 1545, as a thirty-year-old doctor *in artibus* in Padua and already author of literary works. In the portrait by Paolo Veronese (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) - painted in all likelihood in the early sixties - Barbaro appears dressed as a clergyman and scientist in an ancient setting, having been elected Patriarch of Aquileia in 1550. At that time, Daniele was continuing to perfect his commentary on Vitruvius developed with Andrea Palladio - who produced the plates - and published in two different editions in 1556 and 1567. The first of the two editions, depicted in Veronese's portrait, includes woodblock images allegedly made from drawings by Giuseppe Porta Salviati. Salviati is notably one of the artists featured in the beautiful decoration of the ceiling of the Libreria Sansoviniana, in the second sequence of tondi starting from the entrance. Relations between Daniele and Giovanni Battista Zelotti and Paolo Veronese - authors respectively of the fifth and sixth sequences of tondi - have also been proven. There is no evidence of Barbaro's direct intervention in the iconographic program of the Libreria di San Marco, but there is no doubt on his pre-eminence in the educated society and in the academies of the time, that both played such an important role in the design of the Libreria.

The exhibition takes place in the Sale Monumentali of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (Libreria di San Marco), for which the Serenissima requested cycles of allegorical and emblematic figurations, in the years in which Daniele was working and involving artists and academics who belonged to his circle. These culminated in the *Sapienza* by Titian, in the ceiling of the vestibule. The *Sapienza* (wisdom) is reflected in God and is the culmination of a process carried out by figures: the study favours the development of the virtues necessary to the patricians to consciously participate in public life.

The figurative cycles of the Libreria, made in the sixth decade of the sixteenth century, and the documents on display mirror each other. They are a complex and coherent expression of the Venetian Renaissance.

THE TRAINING PERIOD

Daniele Barbaro was born in Venice on February, 8th 1514. Prominent members of his family were Francesco Barbaro (1390-1454) and the great-uncle Ermolao (circa 1453-93), whose philosophical and literary work played a key role in his nephew's career. Little or nothing is known of Daniele Barbaro's childhood: he probably started his studies in Verona, the city where the eponymous paternal grandfather held the position of captain. Around 1535 we find him in Padua, where he attended the School of the humanist Giovanni Benedetto Lampridio and the cultural circle based at the Catajo Castle, home of the noblewoman Beatrice Obizzi.

In 1540, still in Padua, he was one of the founders of the Accademia degli Inflammati, a cultural circle that, with the motto *Arso il mortal, al ciel n'andrà l'eterno* [Cat. 1], set out to determine the 'vera et natural idea' of writing about philosophical and literary topics in prose and verses in vernacular. Established on the initiative of the patron and scholar Leone Orsini, the Accademia brought together the major literary figures operating in those years in Padua. On September, 19th of the same year Daniele graduated *in artibus* at the University of Padua, and still in 1540 he published what may be considered his first edited work: a sonnet to St. Catherine, inserted in *La vita di Catherina Vergine* by Pietro Aretino [Cat. 2].

Two years later, Barbaro entered the world of publishing. He published, at the press of Aldo Manuzio's heirs, a commentary on the texts of the Greek philosopher and theologian Porfirio. That same year he also published the *Predica de i sogni* [Cat. 3-4], a treatise written by the young Daniele hidden behind the academic name of Hypneo da Schio. Still in 1542 the *Dialoghi* of Sperone Speroni were published, for which Barbaro was not the author but the editor [Cat. 5].

In 1544, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* was published in the translation of his great-uncle Ermolao, accompanied by a commentary written by Daniele [Cat. 6]. In the same year Barbaro also published the *Compendium Ethicorum* and the *Compendium scientiae naturalis* by Aristotle, again in the translation of his great-uncle.

Daniele explored several literary genres: the famous polygraph Girolamo Ruscelli would print, but only in 1557, his *Della Eloquenza* [Cat. 7], a dialogue between Nature, Art and Soul, composed by Barbaro during his studies in Padua. His *Tragedy* on Isabel of Poland, which remains an autograph manuscript, is dated roughly around 1548 [Cat. 8].

PUBLIC OFFICES

Between 1545 and 1546 Barbaro was involved in the construction of the Botanical Garden of Padua. In 1544 he had published the *Compendium scientiae naturalis* of Aristotle, and perhaps in this work, or in his special interests of those years, a possible motivation of his involvement in the creation of the Giardino dei Semplici of Padua is to be found. His interest in Greek texts is demonstrated by the fact that in the spring of 1548 he obtained the *Cynegetica* of Oppiano, once belonged to Bessarione, as a loan from the Libreria di San Marco.

That same year, the Venetian Republic appointed Barbaro as Provveditore di Comun, a lower judiciary role. Indeed, Venetian nobles were expected to take an active participation in public life. In October 1548, Barbaro was appointed ambassador to England and left for London in the summer of the following year. Of this period remains the *relazione* that Daniele Barbaro read in the Senate in April 1551 [Cat. 10]. We also have a series of theological letters sent from London to his Aunt Cornelia, a nun in the monastery of Santa Chiara in Murano [Cat. 11].

This assignment, however, ended soon: on May, 17th 1550 Daniele Barbaro was appointed *in pectore* Patriarch of Aquileia, as the successor of Giovanni Grimaldi, and thus returned to Venice. While the government of the Republic entrusted Barbaro with these public office charges, the appointment actually took him away from the political scene and brought him back to his interests and studies. As a matter of fact, although he perceived a revenue, he was not required to exercise any specific function related to the position.

In 1560, Barbaro was appointed public historian by the Republic, a role previously covered by Andrea Navagero and Pietro Bembo. This was a mandate with no pay and perhaps no results. However, a substantial chronicle running under Barbaro's name was widespread in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries [Cat. 9]. The early sixties also saw the participation of Daniele in the Council of Trento. His speeches (January, 30th and February, 20th 1562), aimed at protecting the interests of Venice, mainly concerned the control and blacklisting of the books.

BARBARO AND VITRUVIUS

According to Barbaro's allegations in a passage of the first edition of the Vitruvian commentary (1556), the gestation of the work had begun nine years earlier. The year 1547 had seen the publication of the famous letter written by Claudio Tolomei to Agostino Landi, where they openly claimed a new translation of the monumental and complex text, and Barbaro was able to accept the invitation. The two manuscripts on display can be traced back to the first years of work on the text [Cat. 17, 20], where Barbaro's hand can be detected in the drawings.

In the early fifties, Barbaro was undoubtedly regarded by his contemporaries as an expert in architecture and fine arts. In 1552, Giuseppe Porta Salviati - a painter who in the following years would be engaged in the decoration of the Palazzo Ducale and the Libreria of San Marco - dedicated his *Regola di far perfettamente col compasso la voluta et del capitello ionico et d'ogn'altra sorte* to Barbaro [Cat. 18]. The dedication ends with the recognition that 'Your Eminence, besides the cognition of various sciences, has much knowledge and seizes incredible enjoyment in the things that belong to Architecture.'

In 1556, *The Ten Books of Architecture by Vitruvius translated and commented by Monsignor Barbaro elected patriarch of Aquilegia* are published by Francesco Marcolini [Cat. 19]. It is a complex editorial product, in a large-format, richly illustrated with drawings by Andrea Palladio.

Exactly ten years later, Barbaro received the dedication of the first five books of Serlio's treatise from the publisher Francesco de' Franceschi. At the end of the dedication, de' Franceschi hints at a future collaboration with Barbaro, recognised as an expert in architecture. In 1567, de' Franceschi would in fact publish the second edition of the Vitruvian commentary [Cat. 21-22], once the privilege of ten years of printing granted for the Marcoliniana edition had come to an end. The second edition, in a reduced format compared to the first, was published in two versions: in vernacular and in Latin, the latter clearly aimed at an international audience. This is not a mere translation of the edition in vernacular but a new edition altogether, with an increased number of illustrations and an expanded and updated text.

In Venice too, academies and individual prominent personalities had their own devices. *Io volo al ciel per riposarmi in Dio* recites the motto of the Accademia Veneta, which was housed in the Vestibule of the Libreria, between 1558 and 1561 [Cat. 13-15]. Daniele Barbaro chose as his device a fire topped by a star, accompanied by the motto *Volentes, o Deus adiuvat volentes* [Cat. 16, 6].

LA PRATICA DELLA PERSPECTIVA

After a long process of maturation, probably lasting about fifteen years, in 1568 Barbaro published *La Pratica della Perspettiva* in the workshop of the brothers Camillo and Rutilio Borgominieri [Cat. 28-29]. These publishers had made a name for themselves in the Venetian market for the high quality of their products.

Barbaro dedicated this work, published in at least five different versions between 1568 and 1569, to his friend Matteo Macigni, met during the years in Padua. In the dedication, in addition to confirming the bond of friendship and reminiscing the common early studies, Barbaro confirmed how this work had engaged him for many years. Barbaro's intention to publish a treatise on the practice of perspective addressed to artists had in fact already been outlined in some detail in the two editions of the Vitruvian commentary (1556 and 1567).

The Marciana Library currently owns three manuscripts relating to the treatise on perspective, all from the Library of Daniele [Cat. 25-27].

In the ms It. IV, 39 (= 5446) [Cat. 27] it is possible to distinguish at least three different assembled entities. In it, issues related to geometry and perspective are examined extensively, and these would then be presented, in a reduced form, in the published volume. It includes several geometric drawings, attributed to Barbaro himself. It is a collection of notes and study material in raw form and then selected, refined and synthesized for the publication.

The ms Lat. VIII, 41 (= 3069) [Cat. 25] collects materials of the treatise on perspective and numerous drawings for an edition in Latin, never published. Comparing the material contained in the code with the printed edition, it is possible to follow the development of the subject in a totally parallel manner. The manuscript ends abruptly with a description of the Ionic capital (Part Four, Book VIII), that is to say at about two-thirds of the published material. Hence, at some point Barbaro abandoned the plan of creating two versions and prioritised the Italian version. In the second part of the volume numerous drawings can be found.

The ms It. IV, 40 (= 5447) [Cat. 26] is the precious lay-out delivered by Barbaro to the print. There appear manuscript texts and drawings, but also numerous cut and pasted test woodcuts, instructions for the printer, and stylus marks made by the printer in preparation for printing (which faithfully respect the manuscript).

These three codes, together with the printed edition, constitute an exceptional *corpus* that allows us to study and try to understand Barbaro's working method, and to follow step by step the stages of production of an illustrated book of sixteenth-century Venice.

Meanwhile, Daniele's scientific interests were various: the activities of the fifties and sixties are shown by the ms *De horologiis* [Cat. 23]. Fabrizio Mordente dedicated to him a rare engraving with the development of a drawing tool [Cat. 24].

THE LIBRARY

When he wrote his will shortly before his death, Daniele entrusted his books to his brother Marcantonio. Nevertheless, the library collection of the Barbaro family - famous for the volumes of the Patriarch of Aquileia as well as for those of the ancestors Francesco and Ermolao - would soon begin a process of slow and total dispersion between donations, sales to collectors, and hereditary passages among Venetian patrician families.

Between 1567 and 1575, the Greek scribe and merchant of books Giovanni Natanaele, active in Venice, had compiled an inventory of Greek manuscripts and Greek and Latin printed editions from Daniele Barbaro's personal library. The manuscripts are the only part that has been identified, and a common element in many of the volumes is a full leather binding 'in the Greek manner', with dry impressions.

This type of cover, spread in the humanistic environment from the second half of the fifteenth century, was intended as a reference to the ties of the Byzantine codes, but was decorated with Western tools. In Venice, home of an important Greek community and crossroad of cultural and commercial exchanges with the East, the ligatures 'in the Greek manner' experienced a considerable fortune. For his own Greek codes Barbaro followed this refined fashion too, whereas it is not possible to recognize a similar decorative project for the Latin and Italian volumes so far emerged from his library.

His bindings, known as 'legature Barbaro', share techniques, materials and decoration, and were created in a limited timeframe: according to the watermarks on the guard papers, they can be dated between 1566 and 1568. The texts are characterized mainly as writings of the Fathers of the Church and were copied in the third quarter of the sixteenth century.

This group of codes is in several ways related to the edition of the Aurea catena on the Psalms of David, edited by Barbaro and published by Giorgio Cavalli in 1569: on the one hand for the patristic content, and on the other for the decorated covers with the same patterns in at least two copies [Cat. 30]. It is therefore demonstrated that, in order to promote his work in scholarly environments, Barbaro had commissioned the binding of a few presentation copies to the same Venetian workshop that had printed the Greek manuscripts. In this case, however, his choice of binding fell on Western classic examples, embellished with gold and silver stamping, with gold and embossed cuts and other luxurious details.