

Classical Tradition and the Painting of Giovanni da Udine

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present new literary evidence to understand the relationship between ancient Greek painting and some of the most important pictorial advances performed in the Roman Renaissance. In particular, I will focus on the classical tradition in the painting of Giovanni da Udine (1487-1564). For this purpose, I have used the testimony of George Turnbull (1698-1748). In one of his treatises, *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* (1740), he compares the painting of Pausias of Sicyon (IV century BC) and the Italian painter Giovanni da Udine. The observation and study of the Nero's Domus Aurea was a clear inspiration for Giovanni da Udine in his desire to create a painting all'antico. In addition, we discuss specifically the Loggia of Cardinal Bibbiena to see how the classically inspired Giovanni da Udine.

Keywords: Greek painting, Turnbull, Giovanni de Udine, Renaissance, Pausias.

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Jorge Tomás García¹

Introduction

Recovery of classical painting as a part of the Renaissance painting is a subject already well known. One of the painters who interpreted the classical tradition to create his painting was Giovanni da Udine (on I will refer to him as G. Udine). He and Rafael Sanzio were in charge of decorating some of the Vatican rooms from the discovery of the Nero's *Domus Aurea*. In addition to this archaeological event as relevant, this paper tries to indicate new data that emphasizes the importance of classical tradition in the painting of G. Udine. We can find an important literary reference in the treatise of the Scottish theorist George Turnbull, *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* (1740). In this treatise, Turnbull compares the painting of G. Udine with the Greek painter Pausias of Sicyon (IV century BC). Just as we will see below, both authors had a similar pictorial style. The possibility to know the painting of G. Udine from references to Pausias offers to us new possibilities for analysis.

The other main objective of this paper is to compare the painting style of the Nero's *Domus Aurea* with the Loggia of Cardinal Bibbiena (1516-19) decorated by G. Udine (Averini 1957; Furlan 1980; Nesselrath 1989; Custozza 1996). The analysis we will start out with the figure of Famullus, painter of the *Domus* according to Pliny (*Nat.* 34.84; 35.120) (Dacos 1968b; Meyboom and Moormann 2012). The colors used by Famullus were in ancient times a symbol of modernity. As Famullus, G. Udine used a similar color palette. Indeed, as noted Dacos (1966,1969), Raphael in itself did not seem particularly attracted at the beginning by the new ornamental system (Zaperini 2007). The relation of the painter's style with the discovery of the *Domus* and the subsequent execution of the grotesque as predominant artistic motifs are the main contributions to the subject made by Dacos (1966). For thousands of years, grotesques have captivated viewers for their elegantly orchestrated composition, combination of fantastical, man-made and natural elements, and juxtaposition of artistic restraint and unbridled exuberance. G. Udine was present with Raphael during the excavations of Nero's *Domus*, requested by Pope Leo X. One of its discovery well-know is the art of stucco, which G. Udine was the "new-founder" after the Antiquity. That occasion was given by discovery of the *Domus*, the ancient Nero's residence near Colosseum. At first year of sixteenth century Raphael and its students visited the *Mons Coelius*. Inspired by the Roman stucco, tirelessly experimenting and probably aided by the works of Vitruvius, they created the *stucco duro*. After visiting the

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caves along the master of Nero's *Domus*, G. Udine was so attracted to copy several times, even becoming a specialist in the area. Thus, the classical tradition in the painting of G. Udine can be redefined through the Turnbull treatise on painting and analysis of the style of the *Domus* (Boëthius 1960; Warden 1981; Luciani-Sperduti 1993).

With the purpose of understand the role of painting, it is necessary to point out a general characteristic of Turnbull's philosophy. He believed that human beings were made to contemplate and to imitate nature, and their happiness was mainly achieved through these two activities. In the opinion of the Scottish philosopher, the intellectual human being is perfectly constituted for the study of nature. We acquire knowledge through the observation of nature, and the desire to imitate it leads us to perform experiments that will enhance our understanding of it. Turnbull philosophical ideals were those who carried out the painters of the school of Sicyon in the fourth century BC. From the written testimonies that we preserve of Aristotle we can deduce that the teaching of painting and drawing was totally legitimized (*Pol.* 1338a40). Aristotelian realism shows the new intention of painting by imitating reality possible and plausible. The artistic productions are valuable by themselves (*EN* 1105a26-28), since technically the image is neither true nor false (*De mem. et remim.* 450a29). One of the main reasons that support the Aristotelian discourse on painting is reasoned from the certainty that a work of art is the construction of a reality that exists in nature, whose aim is in the mind of the creative artist (Nightingale 2001, 133-175). Especially clear is this relationship because at Sicyon the painting was part of the liberal education of youth. Since the early years of teaching in Sicyon, young students learned drawing and painting along with other important subjects in liberal education: painting was part of liberal education (*Plin. Nat.* 35.77).

Turnbull's 'A Treatise on Ancient Painting' (1740)

The main argument about the influence of classical painting in G. Udine is the Turnbull's *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* (1740), particularly due to the analysis of Pausias' painting and Nero's *Domus*. In the past decades many researchers have noted the importance of the frescoes of Nero had in the painting of Cinquecento. But now, literary new evidence possible us to establish with greater precision and detail some features of this way of painting *all'antico*. *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* (1740) rescues some aspects of Pausias and G. Udine (Bevilacqua 1971). Both artists offer a broader view of the classical tradition in Renaissance painting.

Turnbull (1698-1748) was a Scottish philosopher, theologian, teacher, and writer focused on the concept of education within the cultural context of the Scottish Enlightenment. Apart from his published writings on moral philosophy, known for his influence on Thomas Reid, noted as the first member of the Scottish Enlightenment to publish a formal treaty of theory and practice of education (Korsbaek 2011, 1-37). Although this could be taken as an indication of concern for the scholarship of his time, Turnbull showed great liking for classical moralists of Antiquity.

In his treatise, Turnbull introduced dissertations on the schools and the greatest painters of Antiquity. In terms of style, the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder is his paradigm

(Borst, 1994; Bert, 2006, 1-51). In the early Renaissance Pliny's work was used constantly. The encyclopedic nature of Pliny offered from the early Renaissance to the time of Turnbull data that were essential in the reconstruction of classical painting. As Gómez wrote: "The whole of Turnbull's Treatise, as he comments at the beginning of chapter seven, is designed to show the usefulness of the imitative arts for philosophy and education in general. After a recollection of the thoughts of the ancient philosophers on these arts, Turnbull dedicates the last two chapters of the book to sketch the reasons for incorporating the arts in the Liberal education program. This is where paintings can serve as samples or experiments" (Gómez 2011).

Turnbull's theory relies on the artist making exact "copies" of nature, and only then can they serve as proper samples. In the case of natural pictures, he allows two sorts of "copies": either exact representations of nature, or imaginary scenes, as long as they conform to the laws of nature. If they are not in these categories, then they shouldn't be taken as proper samples for the study of nature, and in Turnbull's case, not even as good works of art. Those works of art that do not imitate nature do not give us the pleasure derived from those that do. Turnbull published this ancient treatise on painting, in which he defended the utility of fine arts education, based on the idea that painting was a language focused on transmitting ideas and truths about life, philosophy and nature. The main objective was to enumerate and analyze works of painters of ancient Greece and Rome. In the cultural context of theoretical Scottish, classical painting could be an invaluable resource for Scottish eighteenth century for his portrayal of morality, virtue and human nature. The ancient painters found their own way to represent the virtues, so that the paintings were a powerful argument for the adoption of appropriate lifestyle (Townsend 1991, 349). A painting could convince of a moral truth, and could also be a piece of rhetoric, a persuasive argument in favor of virtue (Kivy 1992, 243-245; Llorens 2003, 343-368). Therefore, Turnbull's treatise must be interpreted in the general program of social improvement and ethics that characterized the early years of the Scottish Enlightenment.

Comparison between Pausias and G. Udine in the treatise of Turnbull

Turnbull's treatise offers many narrations on Greek and Roman painting. The narrative method used by the Scottish philosopher is characterized by comparison of artists from very distant historical eras, but who are able to share aesthetic ideals and artistic purposes in their style. For example, he compares the works of Pamphilus of Sicyon and Leonardo da Vinci, in the following terms (II.21): "The chief Excellence of Pamphilus, and Leonardo da Vinci, seems to have consisted in giving everything its proper Character; in the Truth of their Design, and the Grandeur of their Conceptions...". Especially important for us is the comparison between the Greek painter Pausias of Sicyon and the Italian painter G. Udine. What both artists had in common with so many centuries of difference? Why Turnbull chose these artists as the paradigm of some basic aspects of the artistic education of his time?

The style and thematic variety of Pausias' painting became the aim of study for Turnbull. Pliny is the clearest reference to describe the figure of Pausias (Plin. *Nat.* 35.125). On this occasion, the Scottish author explains that Pausias was a disciple of Pamphilus, and he mastered the technique of encaustic (*A Treatise...II.* 33). Pausias was famous among his contemporaries because he introduced the custom of painting ceilings of houses. He was also excellent in painting fruit and flowers (Plin. *Nat.* 35.125). The first master of painting in Sicyon was Pamphilus, who secured the introduction of drawing into the elementary schools, and this education was gradually adopted in other Greek poleis. Pausias was responsible for keep the school's academic style in relation to the tradition of design, symmetry, dignity of the art of painting as a science. Using the technique of encaustic painting, Pausias painted *lacunariae* where the *putti* were one of the preferred iconographies by the artist. Numerous researchers have highlighted how Pausias' style can be found in many examples of ancient art (Witthoft 1978, 49-60; Brecolaki 2000, 189-216; De Juliis 2002).

One of the clearest echoes of it can be found in the paintings of the *House of Vetii* in Pompeii. This House has preserved almost all of the wall frescos, which were completed following the earthquake of 62, in the manner art historians term "Pompeian Fourth Style". The major fresco decorations enliven the peristyle and its living spaces (*oecus*) and the *triclinium* or dining hall. Whole clans of cupids and their female counterparts, psyches, occur as a decorative theme in the *oecus*. The infant Cupids and Psyches carry out a range of human activities: viniculture, metal-working and jewelry making, perfume production, cloth preparation, and chariot racing. The style of these paints will also be present in the interior of the *Domus* and therefore in subsequent works of G. Udine.

As stated earlier, Pausias had a very avant-garde artistic taste and dominated lot of genres of painting. For this reason, Turnbull emphasized its similarity to the work of G. Udine (*A Treatise...II.* 34): "This Painter (Pausias) seems to have had much the same Taste as Giovanni d' Udina, one of Raphael's Disciples, who by the agreeable Variety and Richness of his Fancy, and his peculiar Happiness in expressing all sorts of Animals, Fruits, Flowers, and the Still- Life, both in Basso-relievo and Colours, acquired the Reputation of being the best Master in the World for Decorations and Ornaments in Stucco and Grotesque". Therefore, Pausias' style is really similar to G. Udine. Both conceived of painting as a science subject. The main themes they addressed in their paintings were very similar: all types of animals, fruits, flowers and scenes of everyday life. Pausias was mastery of bas relief, the use of colors, but especially he was the best painter in the decorations and ornaments in stucco and grotesque (fig. 1). For the decoration of the Palazzi Pontifici (Vatican), Raphael devised the scheme and provided the compositions for the narratives. Giulio Romano took charge of the figurative scenes with Gianfrancesco Penni collaborating on the preparation of the cartoons and G. da Udine as overseer of the decorative areas. As part of the decorative scheme, there is a series of reliefs on the pilasters. The vignettes in three of the stuccoes depart from the prevalent use of ancient models to show actions not only taken from modern life but referring specifically to the work in progress at the site of the loggia.

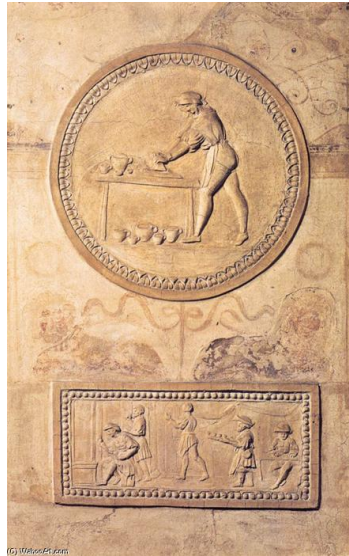


Fig.1.- G. Udine, *Stucco relief in a pilaster*, Loggia on the second floor, Palazzi Pontifici, Vatican (1518-19)

G. Udine and the painting all'antico

G. Udine's painting offers a large number of characteristics within their cultural context. He was born in Udine and he was apprenticed to Giovanni Martini (1535) and subsequently to Giorgione (1477-1510) in Venice. He later joined Raphael's workshop in Rome where he became particularly inspired by the Roman decorations discovered after the recent excavations. When Raphael died in 1520, he worked with Giulio Romano. By 1534 he was in Udine where he was involved in many decorations projects, mostly unrealized. One of the events that marked the formation of his painting was the study of ancient paintings of the Nero's *Domus*, which after 1480 had been studied by several generations of artists who had copied (Dacos 1968^a, 1-29; Varriano 2005, 8-14; Janick - Paris 2006). In his paintings, G. Udine was not limited to classical painting copy but he interpreted it to create an own original painting style. He is also renowned for his drawings of birds and fruit.

His favorite technique was the bas-relief, which for many earned him a reputation as the best decorator in stucco and grotesque of the Cinquecento. As we have been able to verify with the fragment of Turnbull, he was also dedicated in the representation of plant and floral scenes (Montini 1957, 37). The sumptuous festoons painted in the Villa Farnesina contain a treasure trove of important information on horticulture consisting of hundreds of images of fruits, vegetables and ornaments from more than 170 species. The variety of melons, watermelons, pumpkins and cucumbers that are represented in these frescoes have served as excellent model for botanical experts when classifying species and the types found in the sixteenth century (fig. 2).



Fig. 2.- Giovanni da Udine, *detail of border surrounding Raphael's Cupid and Psyche*, Villa Farnesina, Rome.

These are the common denominators of G. Udine's painting offers with Pausias, as both were considered the main artistic referents of his time. G. Udine was responsible for most of the decorative elements of Raphael's projects in Rome. For example, he was in charge of stucco decoration in the "Loggia di Raffaello" (Vatican) and in the "Loggia di Psyche" (Villa Farnesina) (Freedberg 1988:70; Rodriguez Lopez 2002, 90). In his pictorial decoration at Villa Farnesina (1515) he represented corn for the first time as a pictorial motif. Two years later (1517) corn was included within the ornamental motifs to decorate the Loggia of Raphael in the Vatican, project directed by Pope Leo X. Just as interesting is the interpretation of these representations fruit and vegetables a metaphor for sexuality in the Roman Renaissance.

His pictorial testimony is one of the most important of the sixteenth century. This was the modern renovation of a way to make painting *all'antico*. He imitated the white stucco with a classical painting genre, namely the mixed stucco decoration and grotesque. Dacos (1969) dates the origin of the grotesque from Roman sarcophagi. A detailed analysis of the stuccos designed by G. Udine clearly demonstrates interest in the archaeological culture. The vision of colors and designs of the *Domus* impressed Raphael and G. Udine, who appropriated a spirit of freedom and invention from ancient paintings (Yuen 1979, 263-272). So much so was the impact of the *Domus* paintings, which in a very short space of time became the prototype of the grotesque decoration in Rome and in the rest of Italy (Oberhuber 1999). When Nero's *Domus* was inadvertently rediscovered in the late fifteenth century, buried in fifteen hundred years of fill, so that the rooms had the aspect of underground grottoes, the Roman Wall decorations in fresco and delicate stucco were a revelation.

The great innovation of G. Udine's painting was the codification of the grotesque motifs in a completely new action on the formulation of the late Quattrocento (Nesselrath 1989, 237).

Roman decoration of the “Second style” (100-20 BC) contained dishes of fruits, masks and architectural perspectives opening onto other buildings or landscapes. Hybrid creatures (mermaids, satyrs, centaurs, winged horses and griffins) were painted on the walls of palaces. The abundance of hybridizations already showed a taste for transformations (Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* were composed in 8 AD).

The grotesque’s decoration transformed into a form of language erudite with multiple fantastic forms and metamorphic rocks (fig.3). The monstrous animations were very successful in the decoration of chapels, lodges, villas, artificial caves and covers. In Nero’s *Domus* artists as Raphael, Ghirlandaio or G. Signorelli took notes of his paintings and mosaics, and they were enormously inspired by these strange forms that had survived centuries in silence to wake up now stronger than ever under the name of *grotesche* (Picard 1981, 143-149). The sense of *grotesche* comes from the “caves” which were accessed by the still remaining rooms of the *Domus* intact when artists of the Renaissance penetrated into them to see his paintings. The term was known in Antiquity, and Vitruvius treated him at different points in his treatise on architecture. However, since Vitruvius was part of a current of opinion close to the classical arts, the concept was treated with some strangeness. Thus we read in *De Architectura* (VII, V: 3-4) that modern artists prefer figures that never existed and never will exist, a clear reference to the theme of the grotesque.

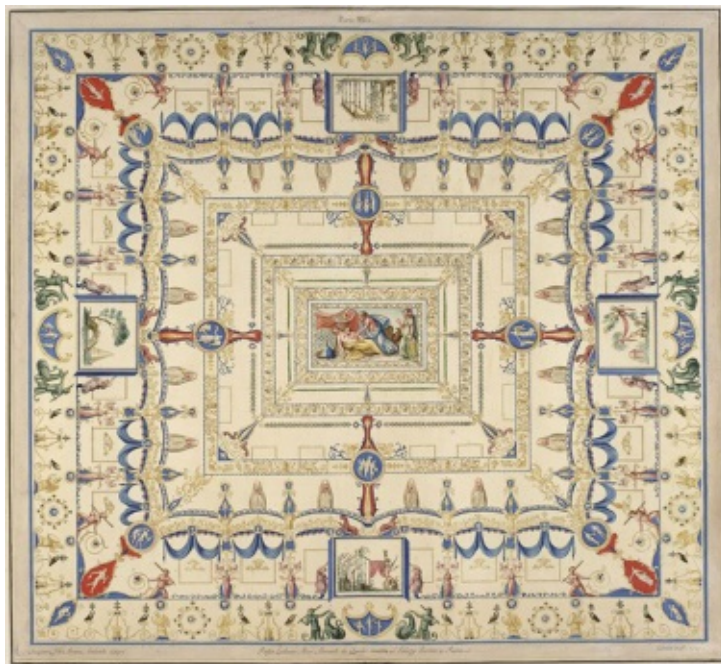


Fig. 3. From Room 26 of the *Domus Aurea*, Rome, first century.

The neronian influence in the Loggia of Cardinal Bibbiena

Nero’s *Domus* is considered the most representative example of the official Roman painting in Antiquity (Zamperini 2007). The pictorial decoration of the *Domus* is traditionally included in the “Fourth Pompeian style”. This style, also known as

“fantastic”, was special developed 41 to 79. The ornament is dominant in the interior of the building. Inside we can find hybrids and mythological figures, animals and plants, naturally mingled with other motives imaginary. The *Domus* is a key element in the settlement of the grotesque as establishing motive of artistic language. In addition to this vision of the work from the History of Art in ancient times, it has often been cited as a starting point to certain features of Renaissance painting (Warden 1981, 271). The most detailed description of the ancient sources on the *Domus* found in Suetonius (*Life of Nero*, 31). It is important to remember that the construction of the palace is part of the aesthetic trends of first century, when Rome had become by Hellenistic heritage at the heart of power and luxury (Boëthius 1960, 96). Pliny stands out in his work critically the new luxuries that were given in the art world at that time in Rome (Plin. *Nat.* 33.57; 34.13; 35.6; 35.157; 36.4, 36.48).

Domus was built by Nero in the Esquiline Hill after the fire of Rome in 64, but had to be finished after 68 (year of the death of Nero). They were brought numerous works of Greek art for the interior decoration of the house (Dacos 1968b, 210-226). The only reference we find in the work is in Pliny (*Nat.* 35.120). Pliny describes the work within an *excursus* on Roman painting of the painter Famulus (Meyboom and Moormann 2012, 136). Although it seems evident that not all the decoration of the work was done by the painter, it does seem that he was responsible for decorate the interior of the *Domus* (Bandinelli 2005, 155). According to Ramage (2005, 93), several scholars have suggested that Famulus was at least partially responsible for inventing the “Fourth style” of roman painting. The decorative motifs used were candelabra, small pinakes, painted panels, festoons, reedlike columns...and many rooms had a lower panel with yellow-ground frescoes and red designs.

Pliny defines the roman painter Famulus as *gravis* and *severus*, adjectives that certainly make mention of his artistic personality (Plin. *Nat.* 35.120). The adjectives *floridis* and *umidus* characteriz his pictorial technique (Ferri-Harare 2000). Previously Pliny (*Nat.*35.30) had defined these colors, so the *floridis* gives chromatic richness compositions, as occurs in the Nero’s *Domus* (Ferri 1962, 69-116). Vitruvius (*De Arch.* 7, 6-14) distinguished between the colors that are found in nature and the colors are prepared artificially, by artificial mixing procedures. We know from Pliny that *floridis* colors were *minium*, *armonium*, *cinnabaris*, *chrysocolla* (as “golden gum” or *malachite*), *indacum purpurissum* (indigo blue) and purplish-red, while all others are *umidus*. A common denominator is that *floridis* colors were extracted from rare or exotic materials (Plin. *Nat.* 35.30), and most of them can be found in the palace of Nero and later in the works of G. Udine.

The style of G. Udine were born with the direct observation in situ of *Domus*. We can even find his signature on the inside, specifically on the door n.92 cataloged as the “ZUAN DA UDENE FIRLANO” (Dacos 1995). The effect had these paintings in the Renaissance artists was so inspiring that they did not hesitate imitate their beauty in his paintings and stucco (Furlan 1980, 74; Custozza 1996, 45). This pictorial fashion was used in the chamfers of the rooms on a monochrome background. Stylistically, the pictorial decoration of Nero’s palace is part of the Roman tradition of imaginative and original

interior decorations, as evidenced by the Fourth Pompeian style (Luciani-Sperduti 1993, 45).

Within the entire catalog of G. Udine's paintings is notable the influence of *Domus* in the "Loggia of Cardinal Bibbiena" (Vatican Palace, 1516-1519). In addition to this room, Cardinal Bibbiena also commissioned to decorate the Stufetta or *calidarium* (Dollmayer 1890, 272-280). In this room the iconographic program is based on Ovidian verses in which Venus emerges from the water with an eye on the land (*Met.* X, 525-532). After the decoration of the Loggia, Raphael's pupils later reaffirmed their interest in classical Antiquity and its interpretation in the decoration of the Loggetta, a small porch adjacent to the Stufetta, or bath room, of Cardenal Bibbiena (fig. 4).

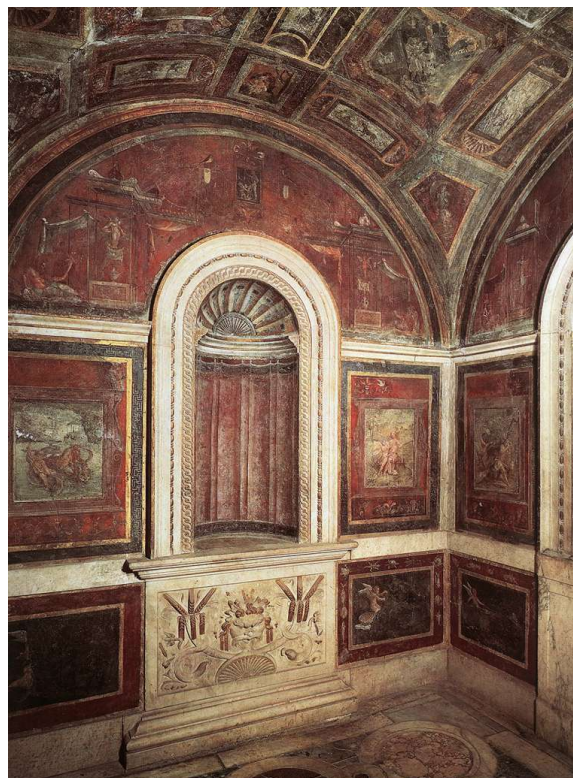


Fig. 4.- G. Udine, *Loggetta of Cardenal Bibbiena*, Vatican Apostolic Palace, 1519.

In Cardinal Bibbiena's Loggia, G. Udine added naturalistic elements (goats, fish, birds...) to the Neronian repertoire (fig. 5). Once established the great decorative lines, Rafael hoped to G. Udine the project details. In addition, many artists took part in the execution of the works, without forgetting the strict separation of competences of each of them. In the direction of the working group Rafael chose G. Udine, which not long ago had become the first specialist grotesque decoration.



Fig. 5. G. Udine, *Loggia of Cardinal Bibbiena*, Vatican Apostolic Palace, 1519.

Style, colors, schemes of decoration and use of the grotesque turn this work into the best artistic echo of the *Domus*. The Loggia was structured as a rectangular room of about 16 meters long (De Vecchi 2002, 294). The decorative schemes used in this work had no precedents in design and style. The spaces were prepared *all'antico* following the examples of the grotesque based on *Domus* (Freedberg 1961, 318; Dacos 1966, 43-49; La Malfa 2000, 259-270). The story of the rediscovery of the grotesque begins with Vasari and continues later with other artists such as Pinturicchio in Siena or Peruzzi. Raphael himself had used the grotesque in the years 1512-1513 in the Stanza della Segnatura. In the 1480s two generations of artists had already inspired the ancient Roman frescoes. According to La Malfa (2000, 259-270) can be used as a *terminus ante quem* of *Domu's* discovery date of 1479, as this year included the works of St. Jerome's Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome, whose influence is clearly demonstrated. According to Dacos (1966, 43-49), from the late fifteenth century the influence is huge in this grotesque Italian art, and the Chapel of Santa Maria is the first example that shows the vision of the grotesque polychrome based Nero's *Domus*. For the first time the use of the grotesque becomes dominant motive rather than a resource (Averini 1957, 33). The interior of the building is composed of architectural motifs and vegetables. With the interior decoration of this room Bibbiena, designed by Raphael and which also helped Giulio Romano, G. Udine recovered directly and completes the entire ancient atmosphere (Venturi 1889, 158).

In this work, G. Udine is focused on developing the natural sense of the matters taken from Antiquity, especially in relation to the iconography animal and vegetable, as Vasari transmitted to us (Bettarini-Barocchi 1966). The news about G. Udine is inserted in the *Vitta di Raffaello da Urbino. Pittore et Architetto*, 197, we can read: "*e per Giovanni da Udine suo discepolo, il quale per contrafare animali è unico, fece in ciò tutti quegli animali che papa Leone aveva: il cameleonte, i zibetti, le scimie, i papagalli, i lions, I liofanti et altri animali più stranieri...*". G. Udine was the consummate specialist from the

time the ornamental decoration of the interiors, 201: “*Fecevi fare da Giovanni da Udine un ricinto alle storie d’ogni sorte fiori, foglie e frutta in festoni che non possono esser più belli*”. This refined decorative complex was the logical completion of the Loggia and the last reflection of the classical tendencies of art at the court of Leo X.

The grotesque in the Loggia are considered the most prominent of the work for its modernity and classical inspiration. The characteristics of the grotesque are those who know from their use in ancient Rome: symmetry, lightness of composition, elements of fauna and flora, small floral motifs combined with human motives (Dacos 1977, 34). In the interior decoration are clearly represented sea creatures, winged cherubs with chariots drawn by snails, anthologies real wildlife (dolphins, cranes, cats) and imaginary (sphinxes, satyrs) crowded the walls next to vases, divinity and cupids (fig. 6). The sense that emerges from the work is that there is greater confidence of G. Udine and colleagues with the grotesque *all’antico*.

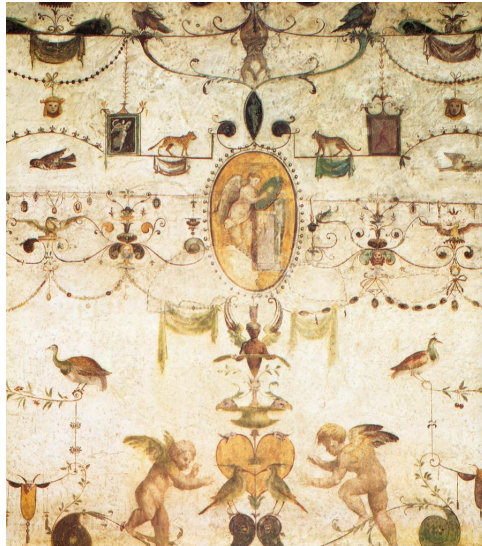


Fig. 6. G. Udine, *Detail of side corridor Loggia of Cardinal Bibbiena*, Vatican Apostolic Palace, 1519.

The importance of nature in this work is essential. The scrolls of acanthus and olive branches are intermingled continuously with small ornamental motifs. The sequence of medallions on the Loggia of Cardinal Bibbiena also appears to be directly inspired by the *Domus*, as the iconography of animal or vegetable decoration. Objects inserted into the grotesque decoration of G. Udine is a lot closer to the Nero’s *Domus* painting style marked by naturalism through realistic imitation of the compositions and objects. The early prototypes were used as a basis in this grotesque decoration. This attraction to the classical fantasy is perfectly reflected in the anonymous *Antiquarie prospettiche romane*, a short poem written in the vernacular from 1499 to 1503 and reflect perfectly the artistic and cultural atmosphere in which G. Udine was involved (Govi 1876, 125-31): “*Hor son spelonche ruinate grotte/di stuccho di rilievo altri colore /di man di cinabuba apelle*

giotte / Dogni stagion son piene dipintori / piu lastate par chel verno infresche /seconfo el nome date da lavori / Andian per terra con nostre ventresche /con pane con presutto poma e vino /per esser piu bizzarri alle grot-tesche /El nostro guidarel mastro pinzino /che ben ci fa aottare el viso elochio /parendo inver ciaschun spaza camino / Et facci traveder botte ranochi / civette e barbaianni e nottiline / rompendoci la schiena cho ginochi”.

Conclusion

G. Turnbull published *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* (1740) to argue in favor of the educational usefulness of the finer arts, based on the idea that painting was a kind of language, conveying ideas and truths about life, philosophy and nature. This treatise has been very useful for us to establish different conclusions. The comparison between Pausias and G. Udine is successful from different perspectives. The literary work of Pliny was still the most important referent to discuss the theme of classical painting. I am suggesting that in the cultural context in which Turnbull wrote his treatise, examples of classical artists could act as rules of conduct for contemporary artists. In addition to this, when Turnbull compares Pausias and G. Udine is legitimizing his argument on the validity of classical art in contemporary society (*A Treatise...II*, 147): “Moral Pictures, as well as moral Poems, are indeed Mirrours in which we may view our inward Features and Complexions, our Tempers and Dispositions, and the various Workings of our Affections. ‘Tis true, the Painter only represents outward Features, Gestures, Airs, and Attitudes; but do not these, by an universal Language, mark the different Affections and Dispositions of the Mind?”

Therefore, it is possible to establish various conclusions on the influence of classical painting in G. Udine. First of all, the style and thematic variety of both painters (Pausias and G. Udine) is extremely similar. Once analyzed all the data of both painters exposed, we can conclude that the pictorial innovations carried out in the artistic context of Greece in fourth century AC were disseminated in Rome in the sixteenth century thanks to the discovery of the old golden residence of Nero. Thanks to this stylistic link, both painters had a parallel artistic career in terms of themes and pictorial genres treated: representations of flowers, vegetables and animals. Given his artistic expertise and the avant-garde of his style, they were distinguished as the leading specialists in a particular technique: encaustic by Pausias, and stucco combined with white marble by G. Udine. As a final conclusion, it seems obvious and necessary to reaffirm the idea that it is possible to study classical Greek and Roman art from the posterior view given by the treaties of paintings by seventeenth and eighteenth century. This new perspective, combined with the material and written sources of Antiquity, provides a research methodology that can only enrich our knowledge of ancient material culture.

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