

**Egon Verheyen, *The Palazzo del Te in Mantua: Images of Love and Politics*. Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977. 156 + xvi pp., 84 illus., \$22.50**

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shop is the portrait medallion of Neri Capponi (Fig. 2). Following Planiscig, Schulz very effectively compares the medallion to Antonio's signed and dated portrait bust of Giovanni Chellini of 1456 in the Victoria and Albert Museum. We are given a beautiful analysis of the portrait medallion which stresses Antonio's technical virtuosity. It is a virtuosity that will emerge fully developed in the 1460s in works such as the Nori Madonna and that key monument of the second half of the fifteenth century, the tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal. Taking the conclusions of the book only slightly beyond what Schulz has provided, it may not be an exaggeration to say that Bernardo's most impressive production as a sculptor was his brother Antonio.

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EGON VERHEYEN *The Palazzo del Te in Mantua: Images of Love and Politics*. Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977. 156 + xvi pp., 84 illus., \$22.50.

This volume is 'little' only in thickness, not in its intellectual density. In an epoch when archival research is as obligatory as it has been fashionably trivialized, it is a relief to find precise summaries of information contained in documents presenting, for the most part, no particular problems of formulation or nomenclature. Greater issues are clarified or introduced with economy, while fastidious accumulations of references not borne out by extant documentation are rejected except when some principle is at question. Verheyen's discussion accordingly unfolds as an unusual example of rigorous choice of subject and approach prior to research and development.

The discussion of principles naturally involves received ideas and interpretation founded upon the amount and nature of information available at any given period. As a result, principles may consciously be placed where they must needs be, as the foundations of critical fabric, as determinants rather than incidental considera-

tions grafted onto the trunk of History. Preoccupations of other epochs are not ours and, moreover, do not readily lend themselves to the current demand for symmetrical conclusions of 'incontrovertible' nature, results which might surpass the exegete just as the original problems often surpassed contemporaries. A number of issues here raised are neither comfortably resolved to the point of equilibrium or expressional formulae; nor are they apt to be other than disturbing in their seeming candour.

What if we were to accord inscriptions (placed by order of the patron, often situated in part of the oldest building fabric, and which form no visually incidental detail in the decoration) as some real indication of a general programme: FEDERICVS GONZAGA II MAR. V S.R.E. / ET REIP. FLOR. CAPITANEVS GENERALIS / HONESTO OCIO POST LABORES AD REPARANDAM / VIRT. QUIETI CONSTRVI MANDAVIT. What if a survey of the documentation for the series of ingenious chambers and dependencies executed from 1525/26-34 on the Isola del Te suggests, among other things, that it was virtually impossible to maintain stylistic or conceptual homogeneity, save in a very general sense, because of changing circumstance? Had windows been established as functions of interior decorative schemes (pp. 11-12), how could these equally serve the much-discussed courtyard façades of what originally was a *villa suburbana* – if only by its location – that eventually became a palace conditioned by and incorporating all prior structures? (The crucial early view of the structure is best appreciated in the colour reproduction, *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, XII [1969], p. 165, fig. 4.) It is to be remarked that the impression of architectural regularity and symmetry is implicit in motif, e.g. the north façade, but not by any objective measure. Further, that an impressive argumentation can be made for the tapering off of activity from campaign to campaign, culminating in the virtual abandonment of interior decoration after the adoption of more expedient techniques than *stucchi*. Were this accepted, the willed and eccentric Mannerism defined in Pevsner's essay 'The Architecture of Mannerism' (1946) would be

considerably infirmed – and, with it, the keystones to an entire exegetical approach inconsiderately extrapolated to other contexts since that date.

One may regret the concision of Verheyen's analysis of the *rustica* designs (pp.47-48). This, admittedly, is no immediate consideration within the history of the Te as designed and executed by Giulio Romano, since it lends itself to extensive theoretical discussion on the basis of the evidence offered. The Te is constructed of stucco over brick, and the continual visual and intellectual alternance of *ars* and *natura* is explicit in the façades, just as it is implicit in the renderings of the Strada drawings of 1567/68 (*Art Bulletin*, XLIX [1967], figs. 2-5): the 'falling triglyphs' on the east and west of the court are prevented by structural design from falling below a certain point, even as it is visually apparent that they would never reach that point. Art has anticipated the ruinous effects of Nature and forestalled them (fig. 28), and this conceit is appropriately contrasted with the orthodox treatment of the north-south court axis. The Manneristic tendency to juxtapose, or, more properly speaking, to superimpose visual and historical memory of Renaissance theory and practice finds a splendid and personal statement in this its proper place.

In like manner, the organization of this study rightly supposes a threefold restatement, albeit in different context and emphasis, of: interpretation *cum* exposition; a *catalogue raisonné* of architectural and decorative schemes and motifs, along with their surviving evidence (pp. 107-32); and only then the documents themselves (pp. 133-45), these latter arranged chronologically, being further indexed by workers. Unlike F. Hartt's *Giulio Romano* (2 vols., 1958), these are not limited 'almost exclusively to the publication of documents in which Giulio's name appears,' and afford new insights into the nature of workshop practice and the use of drawings (pp. 49-50). In them, we come to understand the lack of certain types of documents as well as the proper usage of others, when essential discussions were doubtless of oral nature and never put down.

The Palazzo del Te provides food for thought at many levels. Al-



FIGURE 1. Engraved by Philippe Galle after Maarten de Vos, *Manesah in his Affliction*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Estampes. Cf. Verheyen, fig 52.

though it was never as systematically – or contemporaneously – recorded as the Galerie François I<sup>er</sup> at Fontainebleau (cf. *Revue de l'Art*, nos. 16-17, 1972), Verheyen shows what can be made of commonly known documentation hitherto used exclusively, or wrongly. The implications of the Heemskerck sketchbook in Berlin bear witness to this, as does the proof of the use of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* in the Sala di Psiche (discussion, pp. 116-19). Illustration has of necessity been severely compacted, although its very arrangement gives some real idea of the solutions envisaged, modified, or altogether abandoned (legends on figs. 3 and 4 reversed, however); it complements a text supported by many years of articles and notes on specific queries, here reduced to the bone for effortless comprehension. Sufficient photographic details are given to appreciate the nature and original purpose of the decorative schemes, while the excellently scaled and oriented plans permit a reader who has never been to Mantua to visualise the problems involved. In this way, one of the better functions of the critic – to provide a verbal structure which distils the controversies surrounding objects so that future readers may exercise their capacities at a significantly higher level – is satisfied with exemplary disinterestedness. Not all evidence does speak for itself, but close reasoning and a matter-of-fact presentation assume that readers should be capable of coming to grips with facts, concepts, and even the governing and omnipresent abstractions. *A bon entendeur, demi-mot . . .*

A phenomenon has then been reconstituted in laboratory form for both the general reader and art historian. (The reviewer, for example, is more than struck by a certain similarity between the *Arcturus setting* over the sole window in the Sala dei Venti and an engraving by Philippe Galle after Maarten de Vos (here Fig. 1; cf. Verheyen, fig. 52). Its appended text, combined with the orienting inscriptions in this chamber and the loggia of the Grotta might help to allay Gombrich's concern over the 'disturbed' sequence of the Arcturus scenes.) In any event, this initiative is most welcome and should do much to restore art history from the preserve of simple erudition it has become. What a pity that this should be the last art book published by the Hopkins Press. How rewarding for the discipline that it should not be simply another monograph.

W. MCA. J.

H. JAMES JENSEN *The Muses' Concord – Literature, Music and the Visual Arts in the Baroque Age*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1976. 320 pp., illus., \$12.95.

The question of concord between the various art forms is one which has interested writers through the ages. Ever since Wincklemann evolved the concept of the 'art period,' it has become apparent that the characteristics of each of these arbitrarily named 'periods' are also reflected in other than visual art forms. The chronological correspondence is not always exact, but development will generally follow along somewhat parallel paths. The extent of the Baroque age is variously considered by some to be as short as 20 years, and by others as long as 150; however, there certainly appears to have been some correspondence between literature, the visual arts, and music during the seventeenth century. In his book, Jensen attempts to show just how much, and why, this is so. The author, however, would have been wise to heed the warning of Arnold Hauser, who writes: 'one-dimensionality and two-

dimensionality, linearity and spatiality, simultaneity and successive-ness . . . are used, in the different arts, to signify such utterly different perceptions that their transposition from the visual arts into music and *vice versa* must appear precarious from the very start' (*Philosophy of Art History*, 1958, p. 263).

Jensen dogmatically states that all of the seventeenth-century art forms are built upon a faculty psychology and a rhetorical process – an assumption that few modern scholars would accept and one that Jensen never adequately defends. In an 'Afterword' (which the reader would be well advised to read *before* the text), Jensen very clearly sets out what his intention has been: 'Whereas the general Baroque idea is that the artist pleases or delights to make his instruction or great end palatable, I have tried to instruct to enhance pleasure.'

This constitutes a clear warning that we are to take the medicine before we receive the proverbial spoonful of sugar. Dryden was correct when he said that 'Sweet is pleasure after pain.' Painful is perhaps an unkind way to describe a scholarly book which has clearly involved its author in an incredible amount of reading and research, yet it must be stated that much of the text is extremely ponderous. The didactic purpose of the book would have been much better served if the plethora of notes and references had been controlled differently. The text is riddled with parentheses, with a resulting vitiation of whatever argument the author attempts to develop. Many of its numerous quotations are from books such as Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and consequently we find ourselves wrestling with quaint old English phraseology and spelling. It is impossible to resist quoting from one of the more obscure of these to illustrate the point: 'Whenas any difficulty ariseth and opposeth itself to the desire or the concupiscible, [the irascible] comes presently to succour it; and enflaming the blood, excites choler, hope, courage, or some other like passion . . . to make him surmount the difficulties which cross the contentment of the soul.' In this case translation, though tedious, is not impossible; but I defy the average reader to make any sense of the following of Puttenham's transla-