

**RSA ATSAH ONLINE rev April 15, 2021 12:00-1:30 pm.**

**Session 2:** ATSAH Affiliated Society of RSA

**Session Title:** Artistic Transitions: Literary and Visual Considerations  
Organized and Chair: Liana De Girolami Cheney, President of ATSAH  
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I. Speaker: Elena Aloia Independent Scholar, Italy  
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**Title:** Giorgio Vasari in Umbria: Città di Castello, Gubbio, Perugia.

**Abstract:** Between 1534 and 1566 in Umbria are witnessed works by Vasari: various architecture and painting works in Città di Castello in Palazzo Vitelli alla Cannoniera and in San Francesco, in Gubbio in San Pietro, in Perugia where three paintings are preserved in the Abbey of San Pietro.

In 1543 a team of painters from Tuscany and Marche decorated, between spring and autumn, the castle's residence in the Rocca Paolina, a mighty structure commissioned by Paolo III Farnese after the Salt War, which had seen Perugia rebel and fight in vain against the same pontiff. Vasari speaks of these artists in the life of Cristoforo Gherardi, and states that, in addition to Gherardi himself, there were Lattanzio Pagani, Raffaellino del Colle, Dono Doni, Tommaso Papacello. The local historian Serafino Siepi describes the iconography of the mural paintings that no longer exist due to the destruction of a large part of the Rocca Paolina. The painters involved in the decoration of the residence may have been indicated by Giorgio Vasari to Paolo III, in fact it dates back to 1542 the beginning of relations between the painter and the Farnese family.

**Bio:** Elena Aloia is an independent researcher in Renaissance Umbrian art. She received her bs in Conservation of Cultural Heritage and a MA in Art History from University of Perugia. Aloia attended the School of Specialization in Historical Artistic Heritage of Gubbio. She dealt with Bronzino: the commissioning of Bartolomeo Panciatichi, the Descent into Hell in Santa Croce in Florence by the same author; a fresco found in a medieval house in Perugia; Luigi Carattoli as director of the Academy of Fine Arts in Perugia. She is the author of *Culture, Faith and Love: Bartolomeo Panciatichi*, in *Agnolo Bronzino: The Muse of Florence*. Dr. Aloia collaborates with the company that manages the museum circuit of a small Umbrian village, Panicale; is on the board of directors of the Amici Curiosi cultural association and organizes conferences on Umbrian artistic themes.

II. Speaker: Brian D. Steele, Ph.D.  
Texas Tech University  
[Brian.Steele@ttu.edu](mailto:Brian.Steele@ttu.edu)

**Title:** Beyond Naturalism: Light, Shadow, & Reflection in Italian Paintings ca. 1450-1520”

**Abstract:** Reflective surfaces and light effects in Flemish painting have received considerable scholarly attention, while those in Italian Renaissance paintings (with some exceptions) often have been passed over as jokes or as demonstrations of virtuosity appealing, perhaps, to sophisticated collectors and

potential patrons. A consensus view in previous scholarship holds that the quest for naturalistic representation in the two geographic regions during the Early Modern era is marked by similarity of aims achieved by differing approaches; thus it seems less fruitful to search for specific ‘influences’ than to identify points of inspiration which, in this case, impelled Italian artists to rival Flemish effects of verisimilitude that on closer examination prompted viewers to question the reality of the physical appearances depicted. I examine conceptual similarities that inform naturalistic anomalies in works by painters including the Italians Giovanni Bellini, Piero della Francesca, and Gherardo di Giovanni del Fora, and the Flemings Robert Campin, Petrus Christus, and Hans Memling. Effects that these artists create comprise the following: evoking numinous drama by means of light and shadow, presenting a reflective window onto metaphysical experience, or situating a viewer tangent to transcendental reality.

III. Speaker: Donato Mansueto, Independent Scholar, Italy  
[mansud@hotmail.com](mailto:mansud@hotmail.com)

**Title:** Curing the flock. On some emblems of sacrifice

**Abstract:** Pro lege, pro grege. The sovereign is ready to dye, the sovereign is ready to kill. Dying pro grege, actually, the king never dies. And his murders are rather sacrificial deaths, needed to save the flock. Death, in both cases, is converted into life. Previous studies have analysed the symbolic representation of these mechanisms, through the iconographic motives of the dying phoenix and the wounded pelican, in XVI- and XVII-century emblems. This paper extends the analysis to other emblematic representations of self-sacrifice, and in particular of the subjects’ sacrifice, seen as a way to immunize the herd. In the context of the comparison of the prince to a doctor, what is at stake is nothing less than the protection of the weal of the body of the state. My aim is to shed some light on the different ways those symbolic relations were going to change, when “their center of gravity shifted from the ruling personages of the Middle Ages to the ruled collectivities of early-modern times, to the new national states and other political communities” (E. H. Kantorowicz).

**Bio:** Donato Mansueto is an independent scholar. He received his PhD in Theory of Language from the University of Bari (Italy) and specialised in emblem studies. His current research activities, crossing the borders of literary, political and semiotic studies, centre upon the relationship between Italian emblems and their political context, with particular attention to the role and functions of emblems and impresse in the self-representation of cultural élites and in the communication between populations and institutions. He is author and editor of works on emblems, G. Bruno, G. B. Vico, rhetorics and political communication.

**4 Speaker:** Karen Goodchild, Wofford College  
[GoodchildKH@wofford.edu](mailto:GoodchildKH@wofford.edu)

**Title.** Delight and Possession: Using Architecture to Control the Charms of Women and Landscape across the 16<sup>th</sup> century

**Abstract.** In 1604, Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga wrote a letter saying he would like to “fare una camera...di tutte le piu belle dame del mondo.” This talk traces the emergence of the use of women as room décor, discussing examples of women as actual architecture, in works such as Dosso Dosso’s Rooms of the Caryatids at the Villa Imperiale and Belriguardo and Niccolò dell’ Abate’s caryatids at the Palazzo Poggi, women eternally framed by Architecture as in the “beauties” inhabiting the Palazzo Salvadego in Brescia, and concluding with permanently-installed portrait groups such as the one posited by the Duke above. The manners of depiction and level of ancient reference in these images shift as the century progresses, but, in most cases, the women are connected to landscapes, either real or fictive. I argue these images of women and landscape relate to the development of an aesthetic of virtuosic ornamentation in which displays of artistic skill reflect the patron’s ability to command and control visual pleasures.