

Paragone Past and Present: A Journal on Contestations in the Arts

Volume 4 (2023)

Journal of the Association for Textual Scholarship in Art History (ATSAH) Published
by Brill Academic Publishers

Abstracts

Damiano Acciarino, University of Ca Foscari, Venice, “First Notes on a Renaissance Bestiary by Ulisse Aldrovandi.”

A unique codex in the University of Bologna, crafted as a single monographic volume, transmits an extremely interesting treatise by the naturalist and antiquary Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605). Entitled *Discorso sopra alcuni animali quadrupedi per i quali si ponno esprimere i 7 peccati capitali*, literally ‘discourse about those animals through which it is possible to [symbolically] express the seven mortal sins,’ it was completed, according to an earlier copy (BUB Aldrov. 91, cc. 472r–482v), on 12 August 1578. The work was dedicated to Alessandro degli Orsi, a nobleman of the city and infantry commander in Hungary, who was honored in 1585 with the *gran croce*. This article suggests a reconstruction of lost decorations in one of the Orsi family mansions, either the Palazzo Orsi or the Villa Orsi. It also considers the moral implications of virtues versus vice represented by four-legged animals.

Giangiaco Gandolfi, INAF Osservatorio Astronomico di Roma, “Illustrated Horoscopes of the Italian Renaissance.”

Among astral representations in Renaissance paintings and frescoes, a particular and very complex class stands out: that of Illustrated Horoscopes, that is, complete charts disguised under the cover of innocent pastoral landscapes or conventional mythological scenes. Two examples

pertaining to this elusive class are proposed and analyzed in this article. The first is a Giorgionesque painting in the Royal Gallery in Dresden, the so-called *Horoscope*, that probably portrays the casting of a birth-chart for Ercole II d'Este, the son of Lucrezia Borgia, and at the same time a scene from the epic of Orlando and the Paladins. The second is Zucchi's *Assembly of the Gods*, a copper panel painted for Ferdinando de Medici's *studiolo* in the Roman Villa Medici, which arranges the planetary divinities in correlation to the zodiacal constellations, building the extraordinary nativity of the owner. Both astrological charts, albeit veiled and ambiguous by nature, are substantiated by internal signals, verified based on contemporary horoscopes, and justified by the overall painting narrative.

Cassandra Sciortino, Adjunct Lecturer in Arts & Design, UC Berkeley Extension & Diablo Valley College, Department of Humanities, "Armand Point's *The Princess and the Unicorn*."

This article discusses the literary and visual symbolism in Armand Point's *The Princess and the Unicorn*. Point composed several versions of this mysterious legend in pastel, enamel, and bas-relief. Under the artistic influences of the medieval tapestry of the *Lady and the Unicorn*, the French painter Gustave Moreau, and the Italian Renaissance painter Alessandro Botticelli, Point unveils a spiritual creation that in its form, content, and medium seeks to evoke the 'soul' in a work of art.