*Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts - Volume 3, Issue 2 – Pages 125-144*

# Hercules and Rinaldo: Annibale Carracci's Invenzione of Tasso's Epic Hero

*By Esthy Kravitz-Lurie*[*]

This paper deals with Annibale Carracci's portrayal of Rinaldo, Tasso's epic hero, in his rendition of the scene in which Rinaldo is subjugated to Armida's love in her enchanted palace. In discussing Annibale's depiction, I follow the use of the myth of Hercules and Omphale (Iole) in Renaissance literature, as well as the painter's depiction of Hercules and Iole on the ceiling of the Farnese Gallery, where the artist deliberately changed Hercules' traditional attribute, thus preparing the ground for the first interpretation of an effeminate Rinaldo in the visual arts. [1]

## Introduction

In his epic poem, *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581) the Italian poet Torquato Tasso (1544–1595) warns his hero, Rinaldo, against entering Armida's palace by describing a relief engraved as a warning sign on the palace gate. In the relief Tasso addresses the shameful episode in which Hercules, captivated by love, loses his strength and masculinity and turns into a maid who turns a spindle in the chambers of Iole, queen of Lydia (XVI:3).[2] This tale was known in the Cinquecento, it was mentioned in Ovid's *Heroides* (IX:73–134) and *Fasti* (II:303–358), and it reappeared in Angelo Poliziano's (1454–1494) *Stanze* (I:14), among other mythological love scenes borrowed from Claudian's *Epithalamium*.[3]

The relief was supposed to prevent Rinaldo, the bravest of the Christian warriors, from falling into the trap of the beautiful sorceress Armida, niece of Hydrotes, ruler of Damascus, who was siding with the infidels against the Christians. However, Rinaldo missed the warning, as he was asleep when Armida abducted and carried him in a flying chariot to her enchanted island,

[*] Department of the Arts, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.

1. Acknowledgments: I wish to thank Olga Kuminova for guidance in the writing of this paper and my adviser, Daniel Unger, for his critical reading and valuable comments.

2. All the quotations are taken from Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered, Gerusalemme liberata*, ed. and trans. Anthony M. Esolen (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000).

3. Angelo Poliziano, *The Stanze of Angelo Poliziano*, trans. David L. Quint (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), I:14.

https://doi.org/10.30958/ajha.3.2.4 doi=10.30958/ajha.3.2.4

*l'isola di Fortuna* (XIV: 68–69), where she temporarily succeeds in neutralizing the Christian knight with her magic power of love.

In this paper, I argue that in his rendition of *Rinaldo and Armida* (1601–1602), Annibale offered an interpretation of Rinaldo by connecting Hercules' situation on the relief (XVI:3) with Rinaldo's situation in Armida's palace. This depiction of the epic hero accorded with Tasso's description of a passive Rinaldo in *canto* XVI, and was based on the characteristic features that traditionally corresponded with the episode of Hercules in Omphale's chambers. I suggest that Annibale emphasized Rinaldo's femininity by returning to his depiction of *Hercules and Iole* (Figure 1), one out of four *quadri riportati minori*, frescoed on the ceiling of the Farnese Gallery (1597–1601). In these four paintings, Annibale elaborated the conception of the reversed roles of women and men in the game of love. These earlier depictions became the visual models that Annibale used to represent the same conception of love in *Rinaldo and Armida*. The most influential of the four is *Hercules and Iole*, where Annibale borrowed Tasso's descriptive composition of Rinaldo holding Armida's mirror to portray Hercules holding Iole's tambourine. This *invenzione* of Hercules imitating Rinaldo's gestures visually linked the two heroes and led to the first representation of an effeminate Rinaldo in the visual arts.

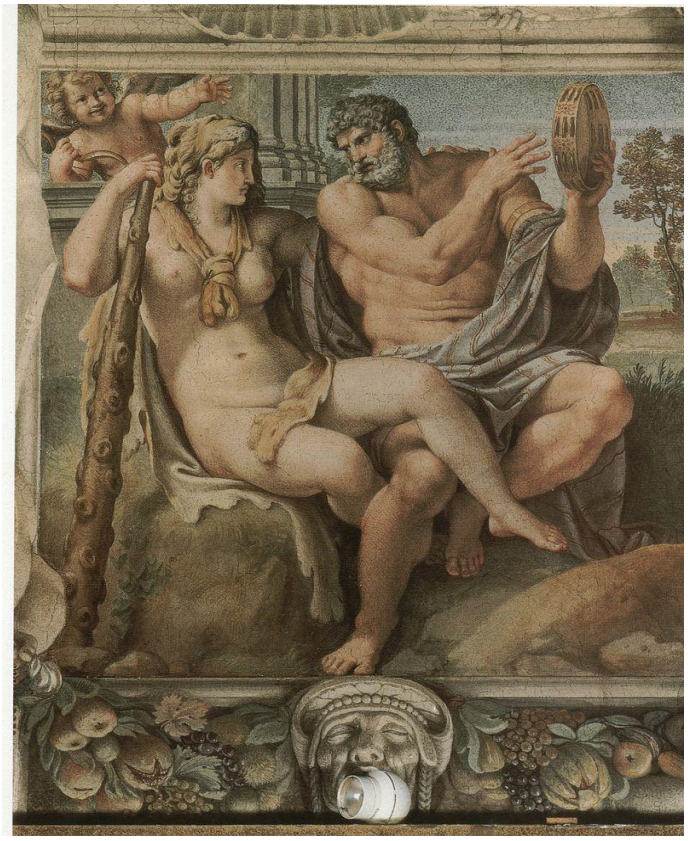

**Figure 1.** *Annibale Carracci, Hercules and Iole (1597–1601), Farnese Gallery, Rome*

*Rinaldo and Armida* was commissioned by Cardinal Odoardo Farnese (1573–1626) for the Farnese Palazzetto and was painted soon after Annibale completed the ceiling of the Farnese Gallery for the same patron. At the time when *Rinaldo and Armida* was exhibited, the art theoretician, ***Monsignor Giovanni Battista Agucchi*** (1570–1632) praised the painting, linked it to Tasso's poem and attributed it to Annibale.[4] However, in modern times Rensselaer W. Lee criticized Annibale's dull rendition of Tasso's poem, while other scholars attributed *Rinaldo and Armida* to Annibale's pupils.[5] Rudolf Wittkower judged Annibale's work as "mainly studio."[6] Donald Posner excused his discomfort regarding the painting, "its air of physical lassitude and dramatic vacancy," by attributing the execution almost entirely to Antonio Maria Panico (ca. 1560– ca. 1609).[7] Catherine Puglisi suggests Francesco Albani (1578–1660) as Annibale's assistant,[8] and Clare Robertson points at Innocento Tacconi (1575– after 1625), another pupil of the Carracci, as a more plausible assistant for *Rinaldo and Armida*.[9]

In contrast, Giovanni Careri in his *La fabbrica degli affetti* explains Annibale's rendition of *Rinaldo and Armida* by focusing on the painter's fidelity to the details in Tasso's epic poem: as a game that Annibale (who could recite the poem from memory) was playing between the verse and the painted object.[10]

---

4. Agucchi described *Rinaldo and Armida* as: "*un quadro d'una favola del Tasso, divinamente in pittura rappresentato dal S. Annibale Carracci*," in Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice, Vite De'Pittori Bolognesi*, ed. Giampietro Zanotti (Bologna: Tipografia Guidi all'Ancora, 1841) III, 360. See also, Anne Summerscale, *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 334–352; Denis Mahon, *Studies in the Seicento Art and Theory* (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1947), 149; Donald Posner, "Antonio Maria Panico and Annibale Carracci," *Art Bulletin* 52, no. 2 (1970): 181–183; Clare Robertson, *The Invention of Annibale Carracci* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2008), 179–180.

5. Lee described *Rinaldo and Armida* as an "intolerable picture, which does as much violence to the sentiment of the poem as it faithfully reproduces its details": Rensselaer W. Lee, "Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting," *Art Bulletin* 22, no. 4 (1940): 247–248. He regretted the accusation in the preface to the second edition of the volume (W. W. Norton, New York, 1967). VIII.

6. Rudolf Wittkower, *The Drawings of the Carracci in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle* (London: Phaidon Press, 1952), 178.

7. Posner, "Antonio Maria Panico," 183.

8. Catherine R. Puglisi, *Francesco Albani* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 131–132.

9. Robertson, *The Invention of Annibale Carracci*, 160 and 179; See also, Claudio Giardini, *La scuola dei Carracci, I seguaci di Annibale e Agostino*, ed. Emilio Negro and Massimo Pirondini (Modena: Artioli Editore, 1995), 261 and 265.

10. Giovanni Careri, *La fabbrica degli affetti: La Gerusalemme liberata dai Carracci a Tiepolo* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2010), 154–155.

In *Rinaldo and Armida* Annibale depicted the deserting warrior lying passively in the company of his lover, tamed by her love and unaware of reality. Rinaldo is holding Armida's mirror and gazing into her eyes, while she looks at her reflection in the rounded object (Figure 2). The knight is no longer clad in armor, his curls are loose, and he is wearing a pink silk gown, which might easily have been taken from Armida's wardrobe. His sword lies neglected beside him, a silent reminder of his glorious past, and he submissively serves Armida by holding her accessories, her flowery belt, and her enchanted mirror. While he is performing a maid's tasks, she rises strong and beautiful from behind him, supporting his relaxed figure with her own body. Leaning toward the mirror, she brings a lock of her hair very close to his face. Her braid seems to adorn Rinaldo's smooth and rosy cheeks, as if to render his appearance even more girlish. At the lovers' right, Annibale depicted two knights in full armor, who are hiding behind the bushes and observing the couple. These are Carlo and Ubaldo, who, according to the poem, were sent by Godfrey of Bullion (1061–1100), leader of the Christian armies, to find the deserter and bring him back to the battle. Unlike Rinaldo, they gained entry to the place by themselves, so they saw the relief at the entrance (XVI:3). In Annibale's painting, these two knights play the role of external focalizers, providing the viewer with an opportunity to realize the moral dangers implied in Rinaldo's domestic situation.[11] In Tasso's poem, as Carlo and Ubaldo proceed on their mission, they (as well as the readers) expect to find Rinaldo in Hercules' shameful state.

**Figure 2.** *Annibale Carracci, Rinaldo and Armida (1601–1602), Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte*

11. On the focalizer as the interpreter, see, Mieke Bal, "The Laughing Mice: Or: On Focalization," *Poetics Today* 2, no. 2 (1981): 202–210, 204–205.

Careri suggests that Annibale's representation in *Rinaldo and Armida* was actually the first portrayal of Rinaldo's femininity.[12] Although he stresses Rinaldo's feminization, he dismisses the similarities between Hercules and the epic hero, finding the mythical hero in Annibale's painting embarrassed, ridiculous, and less feminine than Rinaldo.[13] For Careri, Rinaldo's feminization is based on his similarity to Armida.[14] He finds the source of this resemblance in Marsilio Ficino's concept of love, which appears in his *Libro del Amore* (Chapter VIII), where the Neo-Platonist describes how the lover evolves and becomes more and more like his beloved.[15]

I suggest that in *Rinaldo and Armida* Annibale portrayed the conception of love embodied in the myth of Hercules and Omphale. The painter was familiar with this antique conception of love, which involved an exchange of the traditional passive and active roles.[16] He had already painted this reversed love in his four *quadri riportati minori* on the ceiling of the Farnese Gallery, and in *Rinaldo and Armida* he continued to elaborate its characteristics.

---

12. Careri, *La fabbrica degli affetti*, 152–153.

13. Ibid., 156. See also, Jonathan Unglaub, *Poussin and the Poetics of Painting: Pictorial Narrative and the Legacy of Tasso* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 103; and Charles Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci*, *The Farnese Gallery, Rome* (New York: George Braziller, 1995), 31.

14. Ibid., 154.

15. Ibid., 138–139. Careri stresses the similarity between the lovers throughout *canto* XIV:66–67, when Armida, who had come to kill Rinaldo, glances at the sleeping youth and falls in love with him, a scene that was painted by Nicole Poussin. Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida* (1628–1629) depicts Armida's hate changing into love, as she seems to merge into Rinaldo's sleeping figure, just as Narcissus' image merged with the pond: ibid., 137–143.

16. This antique conception of love, where the traditional passive and active roles of the lover (*erastēs*) and his beloved (*erōmenos*) are exchanged, can be traced back to Alcibiades' speech in Plato, *Symposium*, trans. with an introduction and notes Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1989), 215b–222c; see also Kenneth James Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 91–100. Bellori may have hinted at Plato's *Symposium* when he described the conception of love depicted on the ceiling of the Farnese Gallery: "The painter wished to represent with various symbols the war and peace between heavenly and common love formulated by Plato.": Giovan Pietro Bellori, *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 84. For the conception of love in the *Stanze* see also Jane Tylus, "Epic Endless Deferral: Vernacular Masculinities in the Florence of Lorenzo de' Medici," in *The Poetics of Masculinity in Early Modern Italy and Spain*, ed. Gerry Milligan and Jane Tylus (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2010).

**The Exchange of Objects**

As I noted earlier, prior to *Rinaldo and Armida*, Annibale depicted *Hercules and Iole* on the ceiling of the Farnese Gallery (Figure 1). In this painting, he portrayed Hercules trading his traditional attributes, the warrior's club and the lion's fur, for Iole's gown, which he is wearing wrapped around his hips. Hercules is holding a rounded tambourine in front of Iole's face, and as she stares at this object, he is gazing into her eyes. The mythological hero appears effeminate and submissive, wearing women's clothes and handling women's accessories, whereas Iole is in possession of his weapons, her tiny arm laid across his broad shoulders in a patronizing gesture of authority.

Annibale's biographer, Giovan Pietro Bellori (1613–1696), indicated that Annibale painted *Hercules and Iole* with Tasso's poem in mind: "In this fable Annibale followed the description by Tasso, who in his very poem showed himself to be an admirable sculptor, and he made Cupid there gazing at Hercules from a loggia and laughing, pointing with his hand to the powerful hero, feminized and vanquished."[17] Charles Dempsey noted that Bellori's comment was based on Tasso's description of the relief:[18]

> Here they saw Hercules, hero of the war,
> gossiping with the servant ladies, spinning;
> he who had harrowed hell and borne the stars
> now turns his loom. Love looked upon him, grinning,
> while weakling Iole fulfilled the farce,
> lugging his homicidal weapons, pinning
> upon her girlish frame a lion's skin-
> too rough to clothe her tender members in! (*canto* XVI:3)

However, there is no reference in this *stanza* to the tambourine that Annibale placed in Hercules' hand. Neither is there such a reference in other sources of this tale, such as Ovid's *Heroides* (IX:73–134), the *Fasti* (II:303–358), and Poliziano's *Stanze* (I:14). In these versions, Hercules is portrayed either working the loom or turning Omphale's spindle.

The spindle also appears in the group sculpture, *Hercules and Omphale* (Figure 3), one of the antique pieces in the Farnese collection. According to Clare Robertson, Annibale might have based the portrayal of Iole on this

17. Bellori, *The Lives of the Modern Painters,* 89.

18. Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci,* 68; Charles Dempsey, "*Et nos cedamus amori: Observations on the Farnese Gallery*," *Art Bulletin* 50, no. 4 (1968): 363–374, 369.

visual source,[19] but the sculpture shows Hercules trading attributes with the queen, as he is holding her spindle and she is in possession of his club.

Despite the many visual and textual sources that include the spindle, in *Hercules and Iole*, Annibale deliberately chose to replace the traditional attribute with a rounded tambourine. This exchange of objects does not interfere with the conception of an effeminized hero performing women's chores in the queen's chambers. Yet the tambourine resembles Rinaldo's mirror, not only in its shape and gloss, but also in the particular way in which Hercules is holding it in front of Iole's face (Figure 1). This exchange of glances involving Hercules, Iole, and the tambourine was clearly borrowed from Tasso's description of Rinaldo and Armida with the mirror:

> … she sees herself in the mirror, while he spies
> himself in the calm reflection of her eyes. (XVI:20)

The exchange of objects makes it clear that before Annibale rendered his *Rinaldo and Armida*, he understood the connection that Tasso framed between Hercules and Rinaldo. Based on this understanding Annibale exchanged the objects in *Hercules and Iole*, providing a solid base for his later interpretation of an effeminate Rinaldo as a warrior who, like Hercules, was temporarily tamed by love.

19. Robertson, *The Invention*, 161. For *Hercules and Omphale*, see the illustration in *Le Palais Farnèse* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1981), II, pl. 340a. For the *Farnese Hercules*, see Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), under catalogue no. 46, 229–232.

**Figure 3.** *Hercules and Omphale (1st century CE copy of a work from the 1st century BC), Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples.*

As Careri noted, Annibale's *Rinaldo and Armida* was the first depiction of an effeminate Rinaldo in the visual arts. Prior to that painting, the couple had been depicted in the illustrated edition of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* from 1590 by Bernardo Castello (Figure 4), which was engraved by Agostino Carracci in the same year,[20] and in a painting by Ludovico Carracci from 1593 (Figure 5), but neither of those portrayals highlights Rinaldo's femininity. In Castello's version, Rinaldo is leaning against Armida's lap, but he is not performing any services for her, as she is holding the mirror. Rinaldo seems relaxed in her company but definitely not tamed or domesticated by love. In Ludovico's painting Rinaldo is holding the mirror, but he retains his armor and his sword, which allows him to hold on to his masculinity.

20. Daniel M. Unger, "The Yearning for the Holy Land: Agucchi's Program for Erminia and the Shepherds," *Word & Image,* 24, no. 4 (2008): 367– 377, 374.

In Annibale's painting, Rinaldo's feminization accords with Tasso's idea of the hero. Rinaldo's femininity is suggested in the description of his gestures and in the passive state in which Carlo and Ubaldo find him – a deserter who had forgotten himself in the company of his lover:

> If you'd looked on
> just as you heard him heave a deep, deep sigh
> you would have thought, "His pilgrim soul has gone
> and fled to hers." So the two hidden knights
> gazed upon all these amorous delights. (XVI:19)

**Figure 4.** *Bernardo Castello, Rinaldo and Armida, Illustration in Gerusalemme Liberata 1590*

**Figure 5.** *Ludovico Carracci, Rinaldo and Armida (1593), Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte*

There is also a hint of the hero's femininity in the *stanza* in which a love-stricken Rinaldo assists Armida in her morning rituals by holding her mirror:

> From the lover's side there hung a crystal glass,
> shining and smooth – strange thing for him to wear.
> He rose, and held it out between his hands,
> in the rites of Love the chosen minister. (XVI:20)

Although Rinaldo's gestures of servitude and domestication were clearly understood by Carlo and Ubaldo (as well as by the readers), his feminization was not yet admitted by Rinaldo himself. It is only when he faces his rescuers (while Armida is away) that Rinaldo is able to see his own reflection in Ubaldo's shield, an artifact that was given to them by the Wise Man of Ascalon to overcome Armida's charms (XV:1). For Rinaldo it seems to be the

moment of truth: he suddenly realizes what love has done to him and finally faces up to his shameful state:

> He turned his glance upon the brilliant shield
> and saw himself for what he was, how tressed
> with dainty touches, reeking of perfume,
> his hair in curls and tassels on his vest,
> his dangling sword effeminate at his side,
> prettified – not to mention all the rest,
> for it's a dandy ornament he bore,
> not a ferocious instrument of war! (XVI:30)

This last *stanza* endorses Annibale's portrayal of Rinaldo's femininity and shows that his interpretation of Tasso's epic hero was grounded in the poem. However, it is the conception of reversed love from the tale of Hercules and Omphale that provides the source for Rinaldo's feminization.

## The Exchange of Masculine and Feminine Roles

Rinaldo's femininity in *canto* XVI is consistent with an ancient conception of love in which the traditional passive and active roles between women and men are exchanged, a conception that, as noted earlier, is embodied in the myth of Hercules and Omphale. This tale from antiquity was introduced to Renaissance literature by Tasso's senior, the poet Angelo Poliziano, in his *Stanze*, the first epic poem written in the vernacular and left unfinished in 1478. In the poem an effeminate Hercules, once "accustomed to the ponderous club, now turns a spindle" as a servant girl and wears women's clothes in the company of an authoritative Omphale (I:115). The couple is portrayed among other love scenes engraved on Venus' garden doors, which Vulcan had crafted for their marriage. By addressing this scene, the poet revived the moral values of this reversed love and welcomed them into the poetry of the Renaissance. His narrative was picked up by Tasso and re-engraved on a different set of doors.

Hercules and Omphale's scene from the *Stanze* (I:14) seems to be Tasso's source for the relief and an example for Rinaldo and Armida's love scene in *canto* XVI, since it depicts the moral values of a powerful love that can neutralize a hero by reversing the norms of conventional love. In the ancient myth the reversed roles of Hercules and Omphale lead to a shift in authority that weakens the hero. This element was essential to Poliziano as well as to Tasso, and they both turned to the Hercules myth to emphasize the hazardous consequences of this love.

In the *Stanze*, Poliziano used the tale of Hercules and Omphale to emphasize the power of love, which can castrate and domesticate even the most powerful of heroes. He portrayed his epic hero, Julio (based on the image of Giuliano de Medici), acting between love and war, a description that can easily fit the profile of any epic hero on the playground of Mars and Venus. Poliziano's hero is a hunter who lives a free life in nature and either ignores or mocks the idea of love (I:8–24). While hunting he comes upon the beautiful nymph Simonetta (based on the image of Simonetta Cattaneo-Vespucci) and falls in love. This encounter changes Julio's nature, leaving him as vulnerable as the prey he used to hunt (I:25–57).

In his introduction to the *Stanze*, David Quint traces the formation of the epic hero and stresses that as the poem progresses Julio advances from adolescence to manhood. Once in love, he has to prove himself in battle (the tournament). His image evolves into that of Mars, whereas that of Simonetta settles into that of Venus – the two forces that drive the structure of the epic poem.[21] Quint addresses the love of antiquity represented by Hercules and Omphale and seeks the purpose of this tale in Poliziano's plot. He notes that the example of a "transvestite Hercules" in the service of his lover "would confirm Julio's worst fears of subjugation, and present an ironic version of the conjugation of Mars and Venus."[22] I suggest that Julio's fears of subjugation, raised by Poliziano as a major risk that awaits the epic hero, were borrowed by Tasso and became Rinaldo's own fears as he faced his effeminate image in Ubaldo's shield.

Apart from Annibale's understanding of Tasso's poem, it is possible that he was also acquainted with the effeminized Hercules, from Poliziano's *Stanze*. According to Robert Baldwin, many of the love scenes depicted on the ceiling of the Farnese Gallery were taken from a section of the *Stanze* (I: 97–119) that Poliziano borrowed from Claudian's *Epithalamium*.[23] Among them *Hercules and Iole*, in which Hercules with his tambourine was depicted "like a Greek flute girl," and an authoritative Omphale was portrayed "securing Hercules beneath her left thigh and appropriating his phallic club."[24]

Before painting *Rinaldo and Armida*, Annibale depicted the characteristics of the reversed love in the four *quadri riportati minori* on the ceiling of the Farnese Gallery, which include *Diana and Endymion*, *Venus and Anchises*, *Jupiter*

---

21. Poliziano, *The Stanze of Angelo Poliziano*, xv–xx.

22. On an effeminate Hercules; Ibid., xxi; see also, Tylus, "Epic Endless Deferral: Vernacular," 79–80.

23. Among the images: *The Marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne*, *Polyphemus Innamorato*, *Europa and the Bull*, *Hercules and Iole*, and *Jupiter and Ganymede*, Robert Baldwin, "Annibale Carracci and the Farnese Ceiling" (1997); 2–21, 3–4 in www.socialhistoryofart.com/essaysbyperiod.htm (Feb 2, 2015).

24. Baldwin, "Annibale Carracci and the Farnese Ceiling," 3.

*and Juno*, as well as *Hercules and Iole*. These four paintings appear to be the visual models that Annibale later used for his *Rinaldo and Armida*, since each of these compositions consists of two large figures exhibiting intimate gestures of love, where the men are either neutralized by the women or performing chores on their behalf. The successful unveiling of the Farnese Gallery ceiling announced in an *avviso*, a public notice, dated June 2, 1601,[25] as well as its acceptance by the viewers, can explain why Annibale chose to rely on these four paintings to achieve the same kind of success for his *Rinaldo and Armida*.[26]

A comparison between *Rinaldo and Armida* and the four *quadri riportati minori* shows that Annibale used the characteristic features of these four paintings to address the reversed love in *Rinaldo and Armida*. The similarities between *Diana and Endymion* (Figure 6) and *Rinaldo and Armida* demonstrate that the painter relied on the composition of the former to position the figures of Rinaldo and Armida in his painting. In *Diana and Endymion* the young shepherd is resting in Diana's arms; he has surrendered to eternal sleep in the wake of the forbidden love affair with the chaste goddess. The heavy limbs of the sleeping Endymion, leaning on a vigilant Diana, remind us of the relaxed posture of the dreamy Rinaldo, reclining on an authoritative Armida, who is supporting him from behind (Figure 2). In *Diana and Endymion*, there is also a pair of cupids, which play the same role as Carlo and Ubaldo: like them, they are hidden in the bushes, while silently observing the couple. Both sets of spectators seem to be puzzled: one by the passivity of Endymion, overwhelmed by a woman, and the other by Rinaldo's numbness, blinded by Armida's love.

25. Roberto Zapperi, "Per la datazione degli affreschi della Galleria Farnese," in *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome: Moyen âge, temps modernes*, XCIII, 1981, 821–822; see also Silvia Ginzburg Carignani, *Annibale Carracci a Roma* (Rome: Donzelli Editore, 2000), 112–115, 135–150.

26 . On Annibale's commissions that followed the unveiling, see Clare Robertson, "Late Annibale and His Workshop: Invention, Imitation and Patronage," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 54, no. 2 (2010–2012), 267–268.

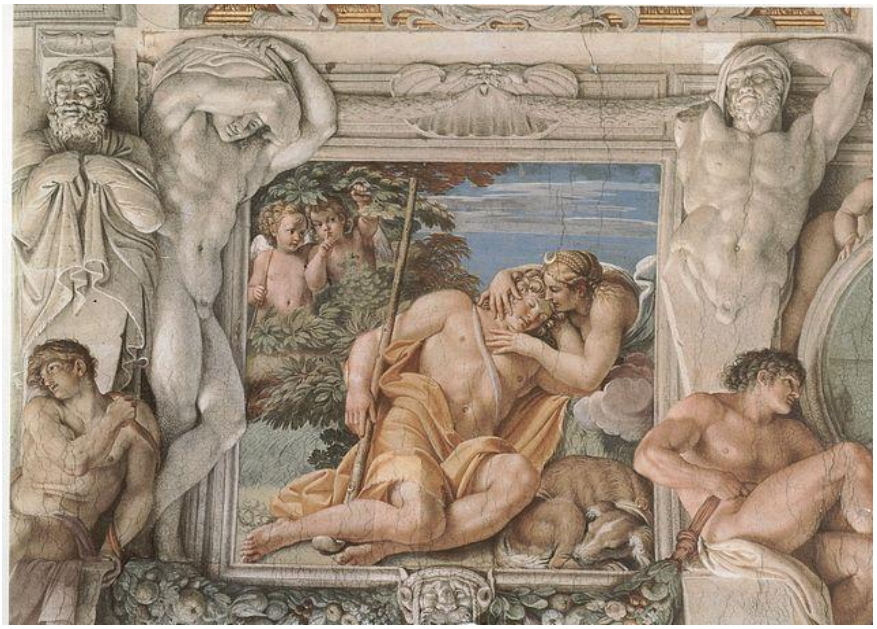

**Figure 6.** *Annibale Carracci, Diana and Endymion (1597–1601), Farnese Gallery, Rome*

In *Rinaldo and Armida*, Rinaldo is fascinated by Armida's enchanted belt, which he holds with both hands (Figure 2). He is so charmed by this object that he carelessly abandons his sword and surrenders his power to the advantage of his lover. This idea was first depicted in Annibale's *Jupiter and Juno*, where Jupiter, seeing Juno, puts aside his traditional weapon – the lightning bolt. Dempsey notes that in the Farnese painting Juno is wearing Venus' seductive belt under her bare breasts (Figure 7). Referring to the *Iliad* (XIV:197ff), he points out that the goddess had borrowed the belt "that steals the wits even of the wise" from Venus in order to keep Jupiter away from the Trojan War, in which they take opposing sides.[27] It seems that Juno's belt serves the same purpose as Armida's, which, according to Tasso, "she wears always, even when she lies nude" (XVI:24). Tasso described the power of seduction imprinted on that belt:

> The tender coyness and the calm rebuffs,
> the precious, charming warfare, and the sweet
> moments of peace; the little smiles, the tears,
> the broken sighs, soft kisses, all completed
> this belt, for they were melted down in one,
> then fused over a torch with gentle heat. (XVI:25)

27. Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci*, 74.

**Figure 7.** *Annibale Carracci, Jupiter and Juno (1597–1601), Farnese Gallery, Rome*

This seductive object is definitely a great source of power. In both of Annibale's paintings it seems to be shaped as a Roman *strophium*, a breast band that can be worn under the breasts (as in the depiction of Juno) or around them, over or under the gown.[28] In *Rinaldo and Armida*, Armida's breasts are bare, but are partly hidden behind Rinaldo, which implies that the band that Rinaldo is holding (tied at one end to the enchanted mirror), is the cloth that had previously covered her breasts. Annibale's painting clearly suggests that this erotic object is being used to distract the warrior, to distance him from the Christian troops who are fighting the infidels in the Holy Land.

The representation of Rinaldo's servitude, as he is assisting Armida with her accessories, was previously depicted in *Venus and Anchises* (Figure 8), which is another one of the *quadri reportati minori*. In this painting the Trojan hero is assisting the goddess by removing her sandal. This task seems to be the last in a series of many others, as Venus' gown and jewelry are carefully piled

28. Liza Cleland, Glenys Davies, and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, *Greek and Roman Dress from A to Z* (London: Routledge, 2007), 183; see also John R. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art 100 B.C.–A.D. 250* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1998), 34, 73.

up on the chair next to the servile hero. To highlight Anchises' servility, Annibale painted Hercules' lion fur on the floor between Anchises' feet, emphasizing that in this Anchises resembles Hercules, as the latter preforms women's tasks in Omphale's chambers.[29] This characterization of Hercules and Anchises serving their lovers as simple maids was captured by Annibale and borrowed for his Rinaldo, thus adding the epic hero to a line of "shameful" heroes domesticated by love.

**Figure 8.** *Annibale Carracci, Venus and Anchises (1597–1601), Farnese Gallery, Rome*

Contrasting *Rinaldo and Armida* with Annibale's four *quadri riportati minori* indicates that Tasso's conception of love was not alien to the painter when he rendered *Rinaldo and Armida.* Annibale established Rinaldo's femininity based on gestures of servitude, passivity, submission, and fascination clearly apparent in those four paintings, thus relating to the same conception of love used by Tasso in *canto* XVI.

In conclusion, in *Rinaldo and Armida*, Annibale portrayed Rinaldo's femininity by interpreting Rinaldo as Hercules in Tasso's relief. This comparison was based on the ancient myth of Hercules and Omphale, used by the poets of the Renaissance to address an ancient conception of love and to warn their heroes against the harmful effects of this love.

Apart from *Hercules and Iole*, Annibale also used the three other *quadri riportati minori* as visual models for the conception of love represented in

29. On Anchises and Hercules, see Dempsey, "Et Nos Cedamus Amori," 368.

*Rinaldo and Armida*. These paintings supplied the characteristic features of men and women reversing the traditional roles in the game of love, previously portrayed in the Farnese Gallery.

However, above all, it was the exchange of attributes – the spindle for the tambourine in *Hercules and Iole* – that laid the groundwork for the first representation of an effeminized Rinaldo in the visual arts. The exchange illuminates Annibale's invention, his freedom of interpretation, achieved by drawing between poetry and mythology, both of which evoke a similar conception of love.

## Bibliography

Bal, Mieke. "The Laughing Mice: Or: On Focalization," *Poetics Today* 2, no. 2 (1981): 202–210.

Baldwin, Robert. "Annibale Carracci and the Farnese Ceiling" (1997), 2–21 in www.socialhistoryofart.com/essaysbyperiod.htm (Feb 2, 2015)

Bellori, Giovan Pietro. *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects*. Translated by Alice Sedgwick Wohl. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Careri, Giovanni. *La fabbrica degli affetti: La Gerusalemme liberata dai Carracci a Tiepolo* (*The factory affections: Jerusalem Delivered by Carracci and Tiepolo*). Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2010.

Clarke, R. John. *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art 100 B.C.–A.D. 250*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998.

Cleland, Liza, Glenys, Davies, and Llewellyn-Jones, Lloyd. *Greek and Roman Dress from A to Z*. London: Routledge, 2007.

Dempsey, Charles. *Annibale Carracci: The Farnese Gallery Rome*. New York: George Braziller, 1995.

___. "'*Et nos cedamus amori*': Observations on the Farnese Gallery," *Art Bulletin* 50, no. 4 (1968): 363–374.

Dover, Kenneth James. *Greek Homosexuality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Giardini, Claudio. *La scuola dei Carracci, I seguaci di Annibale e Agostino* (*The school of the Carracci, Annibale and Agostino's followers*), Edited by Emilio Negro and Massimo Pirondini. Modena: Artioli Editore, 1995.

Ginzburg Carignani, Silvia. *Annibale Carracci a Roma* (*Annibale Carracci in Rome*). Rome: Donzelli Editore, 2000.

Haskell, Francis, and Penny, Nicholas. *Taste and the Antique*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

Le Palais Farnese 1981. *Le Palais Farnèse* (*Palazzo Farnese*). Rome: École française de Rome, 1981.

Lee, Rensselaer W. "Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting," *Art Bulletin* 22 no. 4 (1940): 197–269.

___. *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967.

Mahon, Denis. *Studies in the Seicento Art and Theory*. London: The Warburg Institute, University of *London*, 1947.

Malvasia, Carlo Cesare. *Felsina Pittrice: Vite de' pittori Bolognesi* (*Felsina Painter: Screw de' painters Bolognesi*), Edited by Giampietro Zanotti (Bologna: Tipografia Guidi all'Ancora, 1841).

Ovid. *Heroides and Amores*. Translated by Grant Showerman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914.

___. *The Fasti, Tristia, Pontic Epistles, Ibis, and Halieuticon of Ovid*. Translated by Henry T. Riley. London: George Bell and Sons, 1878.

Plato. *Symposium*. Translated with introduction and notes by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Cambridge, UK and Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989.

Poliziano, Angelo. *The Stanze of Angelo Poliziano* (*The rooms of Angelo Poliziano*). Translated by David L. Quint. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993.

Posner, Donald. "Antonio Maria Panico and Annibale Carracci," *Art Bulletin* 52, no. 2 (1970): 181–183.

Puglisi, Catherine R. *Francesco Albani*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1999.

Robertson, Clare. *The Invention of Annibale Carracci*. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2008.

___. "Late Annibale and His Workshop: Invention, Imitation and Patronage," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 54, no. 2 (2010–2012): 267–294.

Summerscale, Anne. *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci*. *University Park, PA:* The *Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.*

Tasso, Torquato. *Jerusalem Delivered: Gerusalemme liberata*, Edited and translated by Anthony M. Esolen. Baltimore, London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Tylus, Jane. "Epic Endless Deferral: Vernacular Masculinities in the Florence of Lorenzo de'Medici," in *The Poetics of Masculinity in Early Modern Italy and Spain*, edited by Gerry Milligan and Jane Tylus. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2010.

Unger, Daniel M. "The Yearning for the Holy Land: Agucchi's Program for Erminia and the Shepherds," *Word & Image* 24, no. 4 (2008): 367– 377.

Unglaub, Jonathan. *Poussin and the Poetics of Painting, Pictorial Narrative and the Legacy of Tasso*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Wittkower, Rudolf. *The Drawings of the Carracci in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle*. London: Phaidon Press, 1952.

Zapperi, Roberto. "Per la datazione degli affreschi della Galleria Farnese (For the dating of the frescoes of the Farnese Gallery)," in *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome: Moyen âge, temps modernes* (*Mixtures of the French School of Rome, Middle Ages, Modern Times*), XCIII (1981), 821–822.