

VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE, 1300-1700

Edited by Babette Bohn and Raffaella Morselli

# Reframing Seventeenth-Century Bolognese Art

## Archival Discoveries

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

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## VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE, 1300–1700

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Cover illustration: Guido Reni, *Portrait of Cardinal Bernardino Spada*, Rome, Galleria Spada, c. 1630–31.

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Lay-out: Newgen/Konvertus

ISBN 978 94 6298 633 6

E-ISBN 978 90 4853 755 6

DOI 10.5117/9789462986336

NUR 685

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# Abbreviations

b.	busta
c.	carta
fol.	foglio
fasc.	fascicolo
prot.	protocollo
AAFo	Archivio Albicini di Forlì
AR	Biblioteca comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna
ASBo	Archivio di Stato di Bologna
	AFC      Archivio Fantuzzi Ceretoli
ASFi	Archivio di Stato di Firenze
	CA      Carteggio d'Artisti
	GM      Guardaroba Medicea
	MM      Miscellanea Medicea
	MP      Mediceo del Principato
	P      Scrittoio delle Regie Possessioni
ASMn	Archivio di Stato di Mantova
	AG      Archivio Gonzaga
	AN      Archivio Notarile



# 1. Introduction

*Babette Bohn and Raffaella Morselli*

## Abstract

This chapter provides an overview of the important archival research that scholars have done in studying Bolognese art of the seventeenth century. Beginning with Malvasia and Masini during the Seicento, the essay traces key developments in archival research to the present day. Touching on the discoveries and uses of such varied documents as letters, birth and death records, wills, contracts, inventories, and biographies that remained in manuscript, the essay elucidates the central role that archival discoveries have played in the evolution of scholarly studies devoted to Bolognese art of the seventeenth century.

**Keywords:** Masini, Malvasia, Oretti, Crespi, Gualandi, Giordani

This book of essays had its inception in 2016, when we organized a series of three panels at the annual conference of the Renaissance Society of America. Devoted to 'Bolognese Art in the Archives', our three RSA panels investigated various types of archival research that were devoted to the study of Bolognese art, beginning in the late sixteenth century with the Carracci but primarily focusing on the art of the Seicento. This is a rich subject in Bolognese art historiography that has flourished conspicuously during the past two decades, particularly in light of the extensive work on Bolognese inventories that has emerged since 1997. In addition, modern scholars who work on Bolognese art have dealt productively with other types of archival materials, such as artistic contracts, baptismal records, dowries, wills, letters, and many others. But the reliance on various types of documents and primary sources for the study of Bolognese art history is not new. This methodology has a long history, one that reaches back long before the twenty-first century. Probably due in large part to Bologna's academic character, as the site of the oldest university in Europe, many Bolognese writers who were concerned with the art and the history of their native city were characterized by a scrupulous attention to archival resources from at least the seventeenth century. In this short introduction, we will consider some of the principal exponents of this rich tradition, concluding with an overview of the

chapters in this volume and some comments about how the research presented here contributes to this singularly Bolognese tradition.

Although Bolognese art historiography begins earlier, with such sixteenth-century writers as Pietro Lamo,<sup>1</sup> our considerations in this introduction commence with the Seicento, focusing on two important writers whose contributions to Bolognese art history were notable for their reliance on documents and other primary sources. Antonio di Paolo Masini (1599–1691) was a Bolognese silk merchant who did not enjoy the benefits of a classical education comparable to that of some of his more learned compatriots discussed in this essay. But although he had not pursued such a course of studies, he became deeply interested in the history, religion, and culture of his native city, acquiring a profound knowledge particularly of sacred and historical texts. Masini published several books on religion that also include considerations of art, beginning in 1640, with *La Guida spirituale [...] per visitare le chiese di Bologna* (*The spiritual guide [...] for visiting the churches of Bologna*).<sup>2</sup> But his most influential publication and the one most deeply engaged with Bolognese art was his *Bologna perlustrata* (*Bologna investigated*), first published in 1650 and then in a second, expanded edition of 1666. This book is a religious calendar, guidebook, and devotional itinerary of Bologna that lists the churches in the city and provides substantial information on art and especially on local Bolognese artists and their works. Importantly, the book also includes an index listing the artists active in Bologna, differentiating between foreigners and *bolognesi*. In his research for the *Bologna perlustrata*, Masini read the published works of Ghirardacci, Alidosi, Montalbani, and others. But he also consulted many and varied documents, as he explicitly states in the introduction to the book: ‘All this was taken from both printed histories and manuscripts by many good authors, from public and private archives, from chronicles, annals, the libraries of monasteries and religious figures, from patents, briefs, copyright privileges, financial instruments, and other authentic writings, and from many other old and faithful manuscripts of Bologna and other cities.’<sup>3</sup> This assertion of his archive-based research methods is distinctly reminiscent of a similar allegation in the introduction to Ghirardacci’s famous history of Bologna, in 1596.<sup>4</sup> All later writers on Masini, beginning with his first biographer, Giovanni Fantuzzi, have recognized

1 Lamo, 1844 [1560]. Among the other important early Bolognese writers on art not considered here is Francesco Cavazzoni, who, like Lamo, was also a painter. Both these writers are discussed by Buscaroli, 1936. See also Perini, 1981.

2 Fantuzzi provides a full list of the writer’s publications (1965 [1781], V, 356–58).

3 Masini, 1666, no pag.: ‘Il tutto è cavato da Historie stampate, e manoscritte da moltissimi altri buoni Autori, da pubblici, e privati Archivij, da Croniche, Annali, e Librarie de’ Monasterij, e Religioni, da Patenti, Brevi, Privilegi, Instrummenti, & altre autentiche scritture, e da molti altri antichi, e fedeli manoscritti di Bologna, e d’altre Città’.

4 Ghirardacci, 2005 [1596], I, no pag.: ‘leggendo no solamente le Tavole pubbliche della Biblioteca Vaticana, & le autentiche scritture di molti Archivi, & di persone particolari, & in specie le scritture dell’Archivio publico di detta Città’.

this reliance on documents. According to Adriana Arfelli, the most important modern scholar to examine Masini's publications, his writings reflect a sound knowledge of sacred and historical literature, but a more uneven understanding of art and culture.<sup>5</sup> Even so, his information on Bolognese artists is invaluable, particularly since many of the documents he read and transcribed are no longer traceable. Until 1678, when Malvasia published his *Felsina pittrice*, Masini's *Bologna perlustrata* provided the only comprehensive compendium of Bolognese artists. And even after Malvasia's publication, in 1690, when Masini was over 90, he created an addendum to his own work: the *Aggiunta*. Probably due to the author's death on 4 February 1691, shortly after the completion of his manuscript, this latter publication is rare, incomplete, and was never widely distributed by the publisher, the 'eredi di Vittorio Benacci' ('heirs of Vittorio Benacci').<sup>6</sup> The *Aggiunta* (*Addition*), which was published in 1957 by Arfelli, provides a wealth of new information on Bolognese artists, expanding on the information already collected by Malvasia, even though unlike Malvasia, Masini was not writing biographies per se and usually ignores such fundamental information as details on artistic training. Nevertheless, Masini's *Aggiunta* added new material on prominent artists such as Francesco Albani, Domenico Maria Canuti, Bartolomeo Cesi, Giuseppe Maria Crespi, and Marcantonio Franceschini, and also supplied the first recorded information on specific works by less well-known women painters, such as Anna Teresa Messieri, Angela Cantelli Cavazza, Maria Oriana Galli Bibiena, Camilla Lauteri, and Lucrezia Scarfaglia. In most of the latter instances, Masini's lists of their works provided the basis for eighteenth-century artistic biographers such as Luigi Crespi and Marcello Oretti, who expanded on his lists of works only occasionally. And sometimes, as in the case of Camilla Lauteri, the paintings described by Masini were subsequently rediscovered by modern scholars in the original locations that the writer had indicated.<sup>7</sup>

The limited space of this essay does not allow for full consideration of the most important and most thoroughly studied Bolognese writer on art, Carlo Cesare Malvasia (1616–1693). The learned Malvasia was an amateur painter, accomplished poet, antiquarian, and lawyer who taught law at the university. One admiring early biographer listed his remarkably diverse accomplishments: 'Attentive to humanistic letters, philosophy, astronomy, chemistry, theology, laws, history, criticism, antiquarianism, architecture, music, painting, military arts [...]'.<sup>8</sup> His first publication on art, in 1652, discussed Giovanni Andrea Sirani's *Supper in the House of the Pharisee*, painted that year for the church of San Girolamo della Certosa. Two later publications,

5 Arfelli, 1957, 189–90. Arfelli provides a few examples of Masini's artistic misunderstandings on 193, n. 18.

6 Four copies (two in each location) are housed in the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio and the Belle Arte e Storia S. Giorgio in Poggiale, both in Bologna.

7 Buitoni, 2011.

8 Fantuzzi, 1965 [1781], V, 149: 'Attese alle Lettere umane, alla Filosofia, all'Astronomia, alla Chimica, Teologia, alle Leggi, alla Storia, alla Critica, all'Antiquaria, all'Architettura, alla Musica, alla Pittura, all'Arte militare [...]'.  
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Malvasia's two-volume *Felsina pittrice: vite de' pittori bolognesi* of 1678 and *Le pitture di Bologna* of 1686, constitute our most invaluable sources from the Seicento on Bolognese art and artists. In the *Felsina pittrice*, whose expected publication was first announced by Masini in 1666,<sup>9</sup> Malvasia promulgates his commitment to unwavering accuracy based on primary sources at the outset. He declares:

... I write nothing that is not based on the most secure and true foundations. Either I have seen something and actually experienced it myself, or it has been reported to me by the very person who witnessed it, or by his family or servant. Either it derives from the most faithful reports, manuscripts, and unimpeachable memoirs, such as those by Francia, Lamberti, Baldi, Cavazzoni, and others, or it stems from the infinite number of letters I have collected, not to mention the many others I have seen.<sup>10</sup>

This statement unequivocally articulates the writer's dedication to accuracy, founded on his reliance on primary sources and on his firsthand experience of the art discussed. Sometimes, this scrupulous reliance on documents is clearly corroborated in Malvasia's unpublished notes (or *Scritti originali*), which contain transcriptions of baptismal records for many painters, transcriptions from original letters, or writings by other authors, although some of the most interesting documents, such as Guido Reni's account book, are unfortunately not preserved there.<sup>11</sup> For Elizabeth Cropper, Malvasia's method suggests a type of memoir, based on living history.<sup>12</sup> For Anne Summerscale, the writer's frequent and highly original reliance on quotations authenticates and embellishes his narratives and reflects a deliberate departure from rhetorical conventions.<sup>13</sup>

Malvasia's publications have been the subject of considerable scholarship, particularly during the past forty years, by such distinguished scholars as Elizabeth Cropper, Charles Dempsey, Lorenzo Pericolo, and Giovanna Perini, among others.<sup>14</sup> Perini's pioneering work, protesting unwarranted attacks on Malvasia's reliability, memorably praises 'Malvasia's long, meticulous quest for original documents (none of which has as yet been proved false)'.<sup>15</sup> His biographies of Bolognese artists are remarkable for their attention to and extended quotations from letters, other documents authored

9 Masini announces Malvasia's forthcoming biography of the painter Elisabetta Sirani (1666, 620).

10 1678, no pag.: 'non iscrivo cosa, che non sia appoggiata a fondamenti per lo più sicuri, e veri. O l'aurò veduto io medesimo, e praticato di fatto; ò sarà relazione dello stesso, al quale avvenne ciò che si racconta, ò di suo parente, ò domestico; ò cavata da fedelissime relazioni, manoscritti, e memorie irrefragabili, come da quelle del Francia, del Lamberti, del Baldi, del Cavazzoni, e simili; ò da infinità di lettere, che hò posto assieme, senza le tant'altre vedute.' Translation from Malvasia, 2012, I, 183.

11 Arfelli, in Malvasia, 1961, xxxii–xxxix.

12 Cropper in Malvasia, 2012, I, 35.

13 Summerscale, 2000, 58–61.

14 For a summary of some important modern writers who address this issue, see Malvasia, 2012, 270, n. 16.

15 Perini, 1988, 284. Schlosser, 1977, 530, among others, questioned the reliability of Malvasia's documentary references.

by the artists or their family members, and verbatim selections from other pertinent biographies. This reliance on primary sources and documents, verbatim quotations, and meticulous attention to historical detail created a pattern that his Bolognese successors endeavored to follow, albeit not always with equal success. Many of Malvasia's most important documentary sources came directly from Bolognese artists. To cite two among many examples: Shortly before Francesco Albani's death in 1660, he gave Malvasia his papers, including some of the letters that are discussed by Raffaella Morselli in Chapter 2 of this volume. And after Elisabetta Sirani's death in 1665, her father, Malvasia's friend Giovanni Andrea Sirani, gave the biographer Elisabetta's own list of her paintings produced between 1655 and 1665.

Malvasia's Bolognese successors during the eighteenth century attempted to follow their great predecessor's example with close attention to primary sources and documents. The eighteenth century in Bologna saw an explosion of this type of scholarship, and we cannot deal with all of the many examples in this short essay.<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting two important writer-researchers during this period who were not, strictly speaking, art historians, but whose many volumes of unpublished manuscripts have provided crucial resources for art historical studies. The first is Count Baldassare Antonio Maria Carrati (1735–1812), who never published a book, but wrote more than fifty volumes of manuscripts, all conserved today in the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio in Bologna. Among his many archival contributions, Carrati investigated baptismal, marriage, and death records from the mid-seventeenth through the late eighteenth century, recording dates and other details in scores of volumes that are impressive for their reliability. The quantity and quality of information Carrati provides on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bolognese artists is in some respects unmatched by any other writer, and he was recognized for his contributions by the Bolognese Accademia Clementina, which elected him an honorary member in 1767.<sup>17</sup> A second prolific historian who studied and collected documents on Bolognese families and individuals was Lodovico Montefani Caprara (1709–1785), who wrote the eighty-four-volume *Delle famiglie bolognesi*, now preserved in the manuscript collection of Bologna's University library. Montefani Caprara, like Carrati, is an invaluable source for Bolognese art historians, although his work is less frequently utilized by modern scholars.

For the most part, the eighteenth-century Bolognese writers on art who succeeded Malvasia were inspired by his example, but they were uneven and failed to live up to the quality of their great sixteenth-century predecessor, although they collected a good deal of information on the Bolognese artists who had lived too late to receive Malvasia's

16 One important eighteenth-century Bolognese writer who is not discussed here is Pellegrino Antonio Orlandi; see Orlandi 1704, 1714.

17 Boni, 2004, II, fasc. 147, fol. 78.

attention. Giovanni Pietro Zanotti (1674–1765), who has been called ‘a fervent and convinced follower of Malvasia’ (‘un malvasiano fervente e convinto’),<sup>18</sup> although some of his later writings were critical of his great predecessor, was a painter and writer. Zanotti, a founding member and long-time secretary of Bologna’s Accademia Clementina, wrote a history of that institution in 1739 that included lengthy biographies of the academy’s members through that date. The son of a Bolognese man and French woman, Zanotti was born in Paris and came to Bologna at the age of 10, studying painting with Lorenzo Pasinelli. Zanotti’s *Storia dell’Accademia Clementina* provides important biographical information on contemporary artists who were members of the Academy during its first few decades, a somewhat limited sample, but he rarely refers to documents and offers few original ideas.<sup>19</sup>

Two other art historical writers during the eighteenth century in Bologna were Luigi Crespi (1708–1779) and Marcello Oretti (1714–1787), both interesting but problematic figures. Crespi is best known for writing a third volume to Malvasia’s *Felsina pittrice*, published in 1769, and for his study of the paintings in San Girolamo della Certosa, Bologna, published in 1772. Like Zanotti, Crespi was a painter; he was the son of the famous Giuseppe Maria Crespi. In his preface addressed to the reader, at the outset of his *Felsina pittrice* volume, Crespi expresses his desire to continue Malvasia’s great project, acknowledging Zanotti’s book but noting its limitation to the members of the Accademia Clementina.<sup>20</sup> Crespi also announces here his intention to include a consideration of sculptors and architects, professions that Malvasia had not explicitly considered in his book on Bolognese painting. But this goal was never realized. As the writer acknowledges in his preface, his work grew out of his correspondence with the learned Florentine, Giovanni Bottari. Crespi also provided a book of letters on art for Bottari’s series of volumes on the subject.<sup>21</sup>

Crespi’s critical reception as a writer was decidedly mixed. Although he was admitted to other academies in Venice and Parma, and even to the prestigious Accademia del Disegno in Florence, he was never admitted to Bologna’s Accademia Clementina, which was also strongly critical of his *Felsina pittrice* volume. The Academy’s secretary, the sculptor Domenico Piò, disparaged Crespi’s book as an ‘emporium of cruelties and sillinesses’ (‘emporio delle malignità e delle scioccaggini’).<sup>22</sup> Crespi’s ambitious biographical compendium includes some 450 biographical notices, many of them founded on documents and other primary sources. But in none of his books is his information always reliable, and some of his mistakes even raise questions about his fundamental archival acumen. One telling error, in his book on the Certosa, involves his comments on Elisabetta Sirani. Crespi misreads a key

18 Perini, 1981, 235–36, which provides a discussion of Zanotti’s critical relationship to Malvasia.

19 Useful sources on Zanotti include his autobiography (1739, III, 143–56) and Roli, 1977.

20 Crespi, 1769, xii–xiii.

21 Crespi, 1773, v–vi.

22 Archivio dell’Accademia Clementina, c. 273, cited in Perini Folesani, 2017, 47, n. 79.

document concerning Sirani's first major public commission in Bologna, her *Baptism* for the church of San Girolamo della Certosa. Crespi was the first writer to note this document, which records a payment of 1,000 lire to the artist in 1657. The biographer deserves some credit for uncovering this important document, but he mistakenly thought that the painting was commissioned by Carlo Vannotti, who was actually the notary for the agreement, not the patron. The large painting, commissioned on the 28 February 1657, was to be completed within two years.<sup>23</sup> Giovanna Perini Folesani, who has published extensively and authoritatively on Luigi Crespi as both writer and painter, criticizes Crespi's *Felsina pittrice* for insufficient research, poor editing, omissions, imprecisions, a lack of homogeneous criteria, and personal prejudices.<sup>24</sup> Although Crespi's contributions to the study of Bolognese art were certainly important, his example shows that attention to primary sources and documents does not always guarantee accuracy.

Crespi's contemporary Marcello Oretti is also a complicated figure in Bolognese art historiography. He was a more prolific writer than any of his predecessors, but not a single one of his sixty manuscript volumes was ever published. Like Malvasia, Oretti came from an ancient, noble Bolognese family that produced many senators and magistrates. And like Carrati, he was elected an honorary member of the Accademia Clementina. He was well educated and well traveled, maintained an extensive correspondence with many scholars, collectors, and artists, was himself an amateur artist who received some training from Ludovico Mattioli and Donato Creti, and assembled a substantial art collection of his own. And Oretti avidly collected and consulted documents, including the wills of quite a few important Bolognese artists, such as Guercino, Guido Reni, Angelo Michele Colonna, Giovan Gioseffo dal Sole, Domenico Maria Canuti, and Alessandro Algardi. Some of Oretti's correspondence with Bolognese artists is still conserved today in the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio in Bologna.<sup>25</sup>

Oretti's sixty manuscripts, all housed today in the Archiginnasio, include many important resources for the study of Bolognese art. The most significant among them is his *Notizie*, a thirteen-volume biographical compendium that focuses primarily although not exclusively on Bolognese artists. Also very useful are his two catalogues of the artworks in the noble and more ordinary private collections in the city; and his two-volume examination of Bolognese churches and the works they contained. All these manuscripts, and many others, provide a vast quantity of information on more than 2,000, primarily Bolognese painters, sculptors, architects, printmakers, and

23 Libro P, c. 133; Crespi, 1772, 20. Sirani's patron was presumably the prior of the Certosa, Daniele Granchi, as suggested by Bohn, 2004a, 212–13 and 232, n. 31. This document was transcribed and published by De Töth, 1934, I, 33.

24 Perini Folesani, 2017, 37–39.

25 For Oretti's biography, see Giordani, 1835; Perini, 1979, 1983; and her entry in the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*.

embroiderers. His catalogues of Bolognese private collections record many works, particularly paintings, that are not mentioned by any other writers. And in his *Notizie*, Oretti includes detailed information on both well-known Bolognese artists, such as Guido Reni and the Carracci, and others who are less well studied. His information on women artists quantitatively surpasses the attention of any other early modern Italian writer to this subject, including discussions of a remarkable sixty-four, primarily Bolognese, female painters, sculptors, printmakers, and embroiderers. Oretti's attention to the women artists of his native city built on Masini's pioneering discoveries, although he also sometimes added new works to Masini's lists. And we would know nothing about eight Bolognese women artists were it not for Oretti's accounts, confirming his active original research, some of which is documented in his correspondence. But Oretti's manuscripts are unedited, and sometimes he even contradicts himself within the same painter's biography: Rosalba Bolognini Laurenti, for example, is described as dying at both age 52 and age 55;<sup>26</sup> Elena Maria Panzacchi died at age 79 and elsewhere at age 69;<sup>27</sup> Antonia Pinelli Bertusio died on 25 July 1644 but elsewhere on 10 May 1644;<sup>28</sup> and Flaminia Triva is characterized as both the daughter and the sister of Antonio Triva.<sup>29</sup> These inconsistencies are perplexing, since Oretti directly consulted the death records in the archives of Bolognese churches; in fact, one of his other manuscripts is dedicated exclusively to recording these specific archival findings.<sup>30</sup> But apparently, notwithstanding the numerous original contributions of his research, he did not check his work assiduously and failed to edit out these (and many other) factual inconsistencies and inaccuracies. Thus, as with Luigi Crespi, the contributions of Marcello Oretti are a mixture of useful new findings and unreliable allegations. The works of both these writers illustrate the unfortunate truth that archival research alone is no guarantee of accuracy.

The passion for collecting written documents, begun in the mid-seventeenth century with Masini and Malvasia and continued by Crespi and Oretti, continued into the following decades, a period during which the Barbieri-Gennari archive, one of the most important private collections of documents on art, was sold. In 1772, Filippo Hercolani (1736–1810) purchased Guercino's account ledger from the Gennari family, Guercino's relatives. In 1808, having realized how important it was, both for information on Guercino and for identifying Guercino's paintings, Hercolani decided to have the ledger transcribed. He entrusted the task to his art consultant, the painter Alessandro Calvi (1740–1815), who integrated the transcription with an original *Life of Guercino*.<sup>31</sup> Filippo Hercolani had also acquired many other significant documents,

26 Oretti, *Notizie*, B.130, fol. 272r.

27 Ibid., B.128, fol. 298r.

28 Ibid., B.124, fols. 127Ar–29Ar.

29 Ibid., B.128, fol. 156r.

30 Oretti, *Raccolta di Memorie delle morti*, B.98r.

31 Calvi, 1808; Ghelfi, Chapter 6 of this volume.

including the preparatory notes made by Carlo Cesare Malvasia for his *Felsina pittrice* and the monumental series of sixty autograph manuscripts by Marcello Oretti,<sup>32</sup> Luigi Crespi's notes for the third volume of the *Felsina pittrice*, the autograph version of the *Storia dell'Accademia Clementina* by Giampietro Zanotti, and Pellegrino Antonio Orlandi's *Abecedario pittorico* (The pictorial alphabet).<sup>33</sup> Hercolani also possessed an impressive collection of about 8,000 letters, most of them by famous Bolognese figures from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>34</sup> The sources indicate that the Hercolani princes, besides cultivating their interest in the visual arts, also took extremely good care of their family archive and had a very rich library, which included manuscripts and printed works of great value, especially for the history of local art.<sup>35</sup> For Filippo di Marcantonio, whom Luigi Crespi called 'more than all the rest a literary scholar and researcher', collecting was virtually a necessity.<sup>36</sup> Filippo expanded the gallery, library, and archive, which included works crucial to the art history of Bologna. When Filippo died in 1810, the family fortunes began to decline rapidly, and the precious collection began to be sold off, beginning in 1837. In 1872, it was fortunately purchased for the most part by the city of Bologna.

The nineteenth century is, in general, the century during which the most important bodies of letters and documents of various types were printed, publications that remain fundamental to art historical scholarship today. In these collections, Bologna, with its famous painters, is central. A crucial role was played by the Bolognese painter Michelangelo Gualandi (1793–1860). In his *Memorie originali italiane risguardanti le Belle Arti* (Original Italian memoirs regarding the fine arts), printed in six volumes in Bologna during 1840–45, Gualandi assembled a large number of documents on Italian artists, most of them Bolognese: wills, letters, contracts, inventories, reports, surveys, and birth and death certificates. These documents provided the basis for the modern philological reconstruction of entire registers of painters. It is no coincidence that in 1839, Gualandi also dedicated a book to Guercino, following one by Jacopo Alessandro Calvi, and anticipating the 1861 book by Gaetano Atti.<sup>37</sup> More than ten years after the *Memorie*, Gualandi published a *Nuova raccolta di lettere antiche [...] in aggiunta a quelle date in luce da Mons. Bottari e dal Ticozzi* (New collection of ancient letters [...] in addition to those brought to light by Mons. Bottari and by Ticozzi), printed in Bologna in 1856.<sup>38</sup> This publication added more than 200 letters to the collection referenced in the title. It anticipated the compendium by Campori and the much more systematic one by Antonino Bertolotti, who dedicated one of his

32 Perini, 1979; Fanti, 1982.

33 Orlandi, 1763.

34 *Collezione di codici manoscritti*; Manfron, 2001, 75.

35 Ghelfi, forthcoming. She is currently studying the archives of Hercolani family in Bologna.

36 *Descrizione di molti quadri*, fol. 1r.

37 Atti, 1861.

38 Gualandi, 1844–56.

most famous publications to Bolognese painters.<sup>39</sup> To this long series of documentary investigations, it is worth adding a text that collected a type of document that had been previously neglected, a gesture that bears witness to a new attitude towards documentary studies: Campori's *Raccolta di cataloghi ed inventari inediti* (Collection of unpublished catalogs and inventories), printed in Modena in 1870. Campori focused primarily on the Estense court but also included many references to the Bolognese art scene.

Analogously, Antonio Bolognini-Amorini, Gualandi, and Giuseppe Guidicini each contributed to the creation of a new form of art historical studies based on a perspective that was more positivist than Malvasia's approach, although the latter was already oriented in that direction.<sup>40</sup> Guidicini's work, along with Oretti's, remains, even today, a necessary starting point for any study of noble residences and collections, the more so, because with the new century, many of these collections were divided up and dispersed.

The nineteenth century is also the period during which the first monographic studies on Guido Reni were published.<sup>41</sup> This was the century of Gaetano Giordani (1800–1873), the first curator of the Pinacoteca di Bologna, or Pontificia Accademia di Belle Arti, as it was called between 1822 and 1859. In 1826, Giordani published the first systematic catalogue of the paintings that had come to the Pinacoteca from the Zambeccari legacy and as a result of the Napoleonic suppressions. Along with bibliographical texts, he wrote many art historical essays, mostly devoted to Bologna and the surrounding areas. Among his many documentary studies, it is worth mentioning the first study of Bolognese woman painters.<sup>42</sup> Giordani accurately examined the existing bibliography, verifying some information in person, and also elaborated some original ideas that are still central to our understanding of Bolognese art.

Giordani's most difficult undertaking was the editing of the *Felsina pittrice* by Carlo Cesare Malvasia. Between 1841 and 1844, this seminal work was republished in installments, a rather common practice at the time for works of this size. The new edition was not an updated version of Malvasia's text, but nevertheless differed profoundly from the first edition. Giordani integrated the notes that Giampietro Zanotti had written in the early decades of the 1700s for his own, personal copy and added others whose authors are not always easily recognizable. The editors of the second edition felt the need in some situations (without making it evident) to correct Malvasia's wording (Perini Folesani has conducted extensive research on these issues), normalizing it and deleting or amending some expressions in Bolognese

39 Gualandi 1844–56; Campori, 1866; Bertolotti, 1886.

40 Bolognini-Amorini, 1841–43, and Guidicini, 1868–73.

41 'Guido Reni, o il Guido, 1821, and Bolognini-Amorini, 1839.

42 Giordani, 1832.

‘dialect’. In short, the 1841–44 edition is certainly not a critical edition and cannot be understood as providing an entirely satisfactory basis for the study of Malvasia’s text.<sup>43</sup> In 1967, the publisher Forni decided to republish a facsimile of the 1841–44 edition. Notwithstanding all the critical limitations of an edition prepared by multiple hands, the quality of this version reflected the philological debate of the first half of the nineteenth century. The edition also offers information on the collections and locations of artworks in that period, providing a very useful support for modern historiographical research.

The studies by Francesco Malaguzzi Valeri (1867–1928), who became director of the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna in 1914 – published between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century – inaugurated a new phase in the evolution of Bolognese art history.<sup>44</sup> In his publications and their successors, the discovery of documents became fundamental to the identifications of paintings, fresco cycles, chapels, and altarpieces. In this period, which lasted up to the 1990s, sources were catalogued and documents were used to date works. In this first phase, the goal was to begin putting together catalogs, aggregations of works, based on chronological and stylistic affinities. Important studies of this type were published by Hans Tietze on Annibale Carracci’s Farnese Gallery in 1906, by Max von Boehn on Guido Reni in 1910, by Hermann Voss on Domenichino in 1913 and on Reni in 1923, and by Walter Friedländer on Ludovico Carracci in 1926. Then we arrive at the seminal *Momenti di pittura bolognese* (Moments in Bolognese painting) by Roberto Longhi (1935),<sup>45</sup> which epitomizes this documentary emphasis, paving the way for the critical reconstruction of the history of the entire Bolognese school in the decades to come. It is beyond the scope of the present essay to list all the books, essays, and exhibitions dedicated to this great period of seventeenth-century Bolognese art. We may note, however, that documentary research is now used as a fundamental support for catalogs of artists’ works. Two publications in particular stand out: the monograph on Alessandro Tiarini,<sup>46</sup> which includes an important, chronologically ordered transcription of pertinent documents, and the studies by Artioli and Monducci of the painters Bonone, Guercino, and Spada, which were integrated into the catalogs of exhibitions.<sup>47</sup>

After Longhi, during the late twentieth century, there followed a generation of Italian scholars such as Andrea Emiliani, Lea Marzocchi, Adriana Arfelli, and Giovanna Perini, who made some very important archival data accessible. One example is Arfelli’s partial study of the *Scritti originali* (original notes) by Malvasia for the *Felsina pittrice*, including the handwritten files that the author used to write the work.

43 See Girotto, 2012, 59–60.

44 Malaguzzi Valeri, 1895.

45 Longhi, 1935.

46 Benati, 2001.

47 Artioli and Monducci, 1982.



Malvasia's working notes are very important to the study of Bolognese art. Preserved by Count Filippo Hercolani, they are now housed at the Archiginnasio library. Rediscovered in 1961 by Arfelli, who published some sections that related to painters who had been excluded from the *Felsina pittrice* because they were still living in 1678, when the first edition was published, these notes were subsequently partially published by Lea Marzocchi, in 1983. The notes tell us a good deal about Malvasia and his working methods, his scrupulous dedication to personally examining the works, his attention to primary sources, and his skill in determining authorship, details that were often not included in the published *Felsina pittrice*.

Meanwhile, portions of Malvasia's *Felsina pittrice* began to be translated into English. In 1980, Catherine and Robert Enggass translated the *Life of Guido Reni*. In 2000, Anne Summerscale translated and annotated Malvasia's lives of the Carracci. At present, an ambitious project coordinated by Elizabeth Cropper and Lorenzo Pericolo is in progress, meant to produce the first translated, critical edition ever of the entire *Felsina pittrice*, including the original Italian text alongside the translation, as well as a transcription of Malvasia's notes and a full scholarly apparatus.<sup>48</sup>

Along with the studies of individual painters, which include detailed and careful documentary research, and the scholarship on Malvasia, during the second half of the twentieth century, documentary research followed various methodological directions. These can be summarized as follows: sources and historiography; examinations of patrons and collectors; correspondence; and investigation of art economics and the art market. In each of these categories, we find monographic studies and essays on the history of Bolognese art.

One stellar example of this type of research is the critical edition of Guercino's account ledger, published in 1997, which in the words of Denis Mahon is 'a document of crucial importance for our understanding of Guercino's work and is also unique for the light it sheds on the modalities of economic organization of a seventeenth-century atelier'.<sup>49</sup> The edition offers an accurate, modern, annotated transcription of the precious manuscript. It had already been published in 1808 and 1841, in editions that included a few minor errors and failed to convey the complexity of the text, in which the handwriting and the organization change, depending upon the writer (there were at least three: Paolo Antonio Barbieri, Guercino, and Benedetto Gennari). The philological transcription of the register was integrated with a double apparatus of notes that enables scholars to compare it with the nineteenth-century editions and offers the fundamental bibliography for each work described.<sup>50</sup> All scholars of Guercino must necessarily rely on this edition. The painter's catalog is entirely correlated in the notes to his account ledger, which thereby becomes the main instrument

48 For example, the first volume was published in 2012.

49 Mahon, 1997, 13.

50 Ghelfi, 1997.

for reconstructing his career. Studies of Guercino have also focused on his market and clientele. Olivier Bonfait's investigation of Guercino's clients and the progression of his payments is one example. Another is Richard Spear's 1994 study, which analyzes the painter's financial situation in light of the prices for his works.<sup>51</sup> These two important publications paved the way for further studies by Spear himself and by Raffaella Morselli, on the Bolognese painting milieu of the seventeenth century.<sup>52</sup>

The question of artists' account ledgers is central for Bologna, because there are some surviving seventeenth-century examples of great interest for the economic and social history of art. These documents contribute precious information that elucidates both the personalities of the artists and their relationships with clients. In addition to the above-mentioned example on Guercino, another very interesting document is the painter Marcantonio Franceschini's account ledger, in which the first entry is dated 1684 and the last one 1739. Guido Zucchini in 1942 had begun to study this important document, just purchased by the Archiginnasio of Bologna, but it has been fully studied only in recent times.<sup>53</sup> Thanks to the rediscovery of the 'memorie di casa' or house journal, it became easier to understand the differences between the latter and the ledger, and how they complement one another. There are two other examples, transcribed by Malvasia in the *Felsina pittrice*: the lists of works by Bartolomeo Cesi and by Elisabetta Sirani from 1655 to 1665, both included in their respective biographies.

Another trend in Bolognese art historical scholarship that has been very fruitful during the last two decades is research on the history of collecting. A systematic investigation of legal inventories written after the deaths of numerous Bolognese collectors during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been carried out by Morselli and Bonfait.<sup>54</sup> These studies shed light on the dynamics of purchasing paintings and on collectors, negotiations, and the creation of drawing collections, involving painters and experts with the same background: the painters' guild.

The seven essays in this volume shed light on some important aspects of Bolognese seventeenth-century art, through systematic documentary studies. They explore many of the possible routes outlined above and employ all available sources. The central objective is not simply to present specific lucky discoveries, but rather to work on documents from a wide-ranging historical perspective, relating artists to their works, their clients, their collectors, and their native city, without neglecting any of the sources in which this information is found. The character of the specific essays differs, but the varied subjects are addressed from perspectives that have many points in common and are always based on archival documentation.

51 Bonfait, 1990; Spear, 1994.

52 Spear, 1997; Morselli, 2010.

53 Zucchini, 1942; Miller and Chiodini, 2014; Ghelfi, 2017.

54 The most important results of this research may be found in Morselli, 1997, 1998; and Bonfait, 2000.

In Barbara Ghelfi's chapter on Bolognese painters in the private collections of the Romagna region, the collections of the Marchesi Albicini of Forlì are examined through an analysis of their correspondence. The private Albicini archive contains rich and diversified seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documentation on the relations between the family and Bolognese painters and on the Albicini collection of art objects. The correspondence between the Albicini and their correspondents in Bologna from 1629 to 1682 is full of references to paintings for the Albicini private chapel and family palace. There is also some interesting correspondence between the family and the painters Francesco Albani, Guido Cagnacci, Carlo Cignani, and Cesare Pronti. This documentation, partly unpublished, elucidates the artists' working methods and the pricing system employed in seventeenth-century Bologna, including payment notes and contracts underwritten by painters. The author also discusses two inventories that describe the state of the collection at the beginning and end of the eighteenth century. These provide important insights into the development of the collection and the paintings acquired in the course of the century.

Raffaella Morselli's chapter also employs correspondence, in this case as a crucial source for understanding the long-standing relationship between Francesco Albani and the city of Rome. Albani had resided in Rome for a long time and considered it an important center of art and culture. His correspondence, including more than 200 letters, was lost for centuries. The present publication examines thirty-five letters, some of them cited by Malvasia, others unpublished or only partly published. The letters written by Albani to his students Domenico Maria Canuti and Girolamo Bonini between 1637 and 1659 describe Rome during this period, the golden years of the Bolognese painters in Rome belonging to the circle of Annibale Carracci. They also provide important information for the art history of Bologna.

Joyce de Vries discusses the art collection of the noble Bolognese Fantuzzi family, examining inventories and sketches indicating the precise positions and values of artworks. In particular, she considers a very rare diagram that represents the Fantuzzi collection in the palace of San Domenico, arranged according to the inventory of 1748. The only other known examples of such diagrams in Bologna are those of Boschi and Aldrovandi. The inventory and diagram are studied jointly in order to be fully understood. The diagram describes 378 paintings, drawings, and engravings, which were thoughtfully arranged on the walls of the palace. The collection was principally composed of works by Bolognese school artists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was also described by Marcello Oretti, who particularly praised Elisabetta Sirani's famous painting of the Beato Marco Fantuzzi.

The interpretation of an inventory is never straightforward and always depends on the perspective and the goals. In this sense, Babette Bohn's chapter is methodologically very important. In her search for information on Bolognese women artists,

Bohn examines an enormous number of Bolognese inventories from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some already known and others newly discovered. She traces the appreciation of forty-four Bolognese women artists who were active during the seventeenth century, considerably more than are recorded in any other Italian city. In addition to the better known Elisabetta Sirani and Lavinia Fontana, she reconstructs the history of more obscure women painters mentioned by Malvasia and Masini, whose limited information on these artists was sometimes compromised or confused by later writers. Focusing in particular on Ginevra Cantofoli and Lucrezia Scarfaglia, Bohn explains the piecemeal character of existing evidence for their artistic careers, combining the study of archives and documents with a careful examination of the early writers.

Roberta Piccinelli's chapter focuses on the collection of Bolognese art assembled by the last three Gonzaga Nevers dukes in seventeenth-century Mantua. Based on new documentary research, Piccinelli explores the status, salaries, and paintings of such leading Bolognese artists as Domenico Maria Canuti and Agostino Mitelli, commenting on the Mantuan fondness for Bolognese quadratura painting and illustrating how Bolognese artists contributed significantly to the decoration of villas and palaces in Mantua and the surrounding area.

Elena Fumagalli's chapter examines the Medici's strong interest in collecting Bolognese paintings, investigating the necessary dialogue between different types of documents, including inventories, letters, and payment records. Several inventories of the residences of both the Medici grand dukes and of the cadet members of the family, written at different times, are carefully considered in this analysis. The comparison between these different accounts is crucial for verifying the presence of the works throughout the seventeenth century and for obtaining new details of their descriptions. Further important information comes from the private correspondence of the Medici, especially with their correspondents in Bologna, and from the annotations of specific payments contained in financial documents.

In conclusion, the studies carried out for the present publication demonstrate how modern, archive-based research methods can produce entirely original results. The insights into Bolognese art that are offered here build on the great traditions of Bolognese scholarship while also demonstrating the continuing vitality of the discipline.

## About the authors

**Babette Bohn**, Professor of Art History at Texas Christian University, has published widely particularly on Bolognese art, including books on Guido Reni, Ludovico Carracci, and Federico Barocci. Her current book project is entitled *Women Artists, Their Patrons, and Their Publics in Early Modern Bologna*.

**Raffaella Morselli** is Professor of Art History at Teramo University. She has also published extensively on Bologna, including books on seventeenth-century collecting of Reni, Albani, and Cantarini and the social history of artists. Her current book project is *Bologna distretto delle arti: la società artistica felsinea nel XVII secolo*.