

of all values, became so real and concrete that it became as perceptible as beauty.” – Heschel. Then it vanished! Paint VANISH!

Kitaj leaves us with a new critical category and the bare bones of system of thought that may engage its potentials. The most teasing possibilities may reside in his meditations around the negating prefix ‘un-’: ‘Reading about Pilpul [. . .] at least in its hairsplitting sense, reminds me of those beautifully unfinished Mondrians – the ghost lines which undecided the intervals! . . . Undecided Intervals in Jewish painting!’ The ‘inactivity’ of ‘Unfinishing’ circulates through the aphorisms: ‘never stop studying, and painting what Cézanne called ‘studies’ and ‘researches’. UNFINISH, in the studio of an old isolate, beyond Art if possible, toward UNFINISHED life’. Kitaj’s deep identification with Kafka’s Josef K, a fellow Diasporist obstructed by incomprehensible laws and prejudices, is also a gesture of resistance, the refusal of the determination of the quest and an opting, instead, for ‘A JEWISH HERMIT ART, freed up in old age . . . [which] attracts me like a painter-moth to light’. His Diasporism is ultimately forged in the conjunction of experience and praxis, painting and reading, in the act of commentary as well as the creative act: as he wryly notes late in this remarkable book, ‘Commentary about art. How Jewish can you get?’

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TITIAN REMADE REPETITION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF EARLY MODERN ITALIAN ART

MARIA H LOH

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Padovanino who? In the first instance, this could well be the reaction to Loh’s excursion into seventeenth-century Venetian painting, focusing on Titian’s self-styled heir and successor Alessandro Varotari, called Il Padovanino (1588–1649). Hailed by contemporaries as one of the great Venetian painters of the Seicento, Padovanino’s critical fortune has since suffered a severe setback while Titian, his artistic ‘father’, has not only



stayed the course of time but has become one of the great masters of the ‘canon’. Far from offering a monographic treatment of the artist, Loh’s study engages at the critical juncture between the perceptions of seventeenth-century contemporaries and twenty-first-century art historians of Padovanino’s relative artistic significance, with both sets of critics foregrounding a divergent set of values as well as demonstrating different theoretical approaches and models. For the author, the key issue to be examined concerns the relative value attached to notions of originality, and, by implication, repetition and imitation. While Padovanino was considered an ‘original’ artist, his critical fortune established him in the mainstream of Venetian Seicento painting; once he was perceived as Titian’s ‘imitator’, his reputation suffered. The latter opinion continues to prevail today: ‘imitators, rather than being seen as instrumental in the construction of artistic identity, are usually discredited for a lack of originality’ and Loh focuses on a selection of Padovanino’s paintings to put this notion to the test. She considers Padovanino’s critical reception in terms of ‘the constructedness of historical identities and of history itself’ and suggests instead that:

Padovanino’s motivation to produce artworks is positioned in relation to his perception of Titian’s motivation toward a similar end in which desire directed the artist toward the generation of new interests in, new connections between, and new possibilities with, old forms’.

Titian, ‘Venus and Adonis’ (c 1555–60). Los Angeles, J Paul Getty Museum. From *Titian Remade: Repetition and the Transformation of Early Modern Italian Art* by Maria H Loh.

In other words, imitation, repetition and reprisal of artistic motifs – in the seventeenth century, anyway – should not be discussed in terms of artistic ‘plagiarism’ but placed within a discourse of an eclectic imitation of carefully selected motifs that combine to surprise and delight the viewer in an original way. Hence, Padovanino’s cultivation of an artistic persona as ‘an other Titian’ does not establish him as an imitator, but transforms him into the true successor of the great sixteenth-century master, Titian’s legitimate artistic heir working in original and innovative ways, reprising elements of Titian’s work to carry them to new and unexpected ends. All this is with the support of the knowing and informed viewer, who himself relishes the familiarity and yet novelty of the artwork.

This hypothesis is first put to the test through a close comparison between Padovanino’s *Sleeping Venus* from c 1625 (in a private collection) with the more canonical precedents by Titian in Dresden and Florence. The significance of this encounter finds an expression in the design of the book’s cover, where both Titian’s Urbino Venus and Padovanino’s eponymous goddess confront the viewer on the front, while Giorgione/Titian’s Dresden Venus graces the back. Loh suggests that a repetitive visual encounter with key motifs represents a positive

aesthetic experience for the connoisseur in that an

explicit paragone between past and present authors produces a certain type of pleasure for the informed reader familiar with the tradition that is being called forth and troped for new ends.

Repetition of motifs is thus valuable in itself because repetition is perceived to be such by viewer and artist alike and intended as homage and dialogue between past and present artists; 'imitation [thus] provided the means by which an artist could improve upon the model and advance the development of art'. Such imitation had to be an eclectic appropriation of current and currently valid artistic motifs but the more imitated a model, the more it became 'canonical' as an example of 'the cultural heritage of the immediate and recent past (rather than the ancient and distant past)'. All of which leads back to Padovanino's careful reworking of aspects of Titian's art, both in mythological paintings and portraits.

With *Titian Remade*, Loh offers the reader a challenging book that demands close attention to both the carefully selected range of artworks under the spotlight and the densely argued text. While the study can hardly be described as accessible to the non-expert, it nevertheless makes a heartfelt plea for a fresh look at the seemingly repetitive and 'degenerate' art of masters in need of a discursive and theoretical model for consideration that permits 'repetition' as a valuable criterion.

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DYNAMIC SPLENDOR: THE WALL MOSAICS IN THE CATHEDRAL OF EUFRASIUS AT POREČ

ANN TERRY AND HENRY MAGUIRE

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The sixth-century mosaics in the cathedral at Poreč, Roman Paren-tium, on Croatia's Istrian peninsula, have not yet taken their rightful place in the history of Byzantine mosaic-making, in part because of the area's troubled history, but also because of the long shadow cast on their authenticity by a controversial restoration in the late nine-

teenth century. The discovery in Vienna of the record of this restoration, and calmer times in Croatia, has enabled Ann Terry and Henry Maguire to undertake this definitive study. After regular preliminary reports (*Hortus Artium Medievalium* 1998, 2000 and 2001), they now offer a comprehensive textual and photographic account of the mosaics, set in the twin contexts of sixth-century Byzantine political theology and nineteenth-century European anti-quearian aesthetics.

Eufra-sius, bishop of Poreč for at least 11 years, lavishly decorated his episcopal basilica in sculpture, *opus sectile* and stucco, as well as mosaic. The work on sculpture and *opus sectile* has already been published; Terry and Maguire now concentrate on the internal mosaic scheme: the main apse and triumphal arch, and the fragmentary remains in the north and south apses.

Pre-restoration drawings and photographs having proved of limited use in establishing the exact extent of the restoration, definitive evidence had to come from a close examination of the mosaics themselves. Detailed photographs take the reader as close as possible to the experience of actually being on the scaffolding, as we learn to recognise the work of Vatican restorer Pietro Borna: regular tesserae, set in straighter lines in pinky, instead of grey-white, mortar. The authors comment sagely, 'there is rarely a simple verdict of guilty or innocent, the truth usually lies somewhere in between', but they go a long way to restore Borna's reputation as a serious craftsman, unlike Giovanni Moro who fifty years before had left such a trail of destruction in Venice at San Marco and Torcello. By 1890 the climate of opinion on restoration, under pressure from critics such as Ruskin, had swung in favour of retaining the original fabric; nevertheless Borna was still anxious that the completed work would have a seamless aesthetic appeal. This chapter constitutes an interesting case study in a debate which is still far from settled today.

There is no internal evidence for the mosaics' date, but the authors find many convincing comparanda with the much better-known mosaics at Ravenna, particularly with San Vitale, Sant' Apollinare in Classe and the Justinianic phase of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, which suggest a date for Poreč of c 540–56. Although there are some interesting visual links, for instance between the figure of Sarah in the Hospitality of Abraham at San Vitale and a similar

figure-in-the-doorway in the Visitation at Poreč, this is perhaps the least satisfactory section of the book – the Ravenna material is mostly illustrated in black and white, which often prevents the reader from seeing the point for themselves, while the authors offer few suggestions on how these different influences, in overall schema, composition or technique, may have been transmitted across the Adriatic.

Much more exciting is the step-by-step discussion of how the mosaics were made. Building on Irina Andreescu-Treadgold's work at San Marco, Terry and Maguire confirm that Poreč was also decorated by two teams, each starting in the centre of the apse and working outward, but equipped with different quantities of materials, so that, for example, in the north apse the mosaicist working on the right side had more access to blue and green glass tesserae for the floral *rincaux* than his counterpart on the left. Another fascinating revelation here is the extent of the influence wielded by the client: the portrait of bishop Eufra-sius on the left of the apse has more expensive opalescent tesserae, and more of them, than the central Christ Child himself.

In seeking to understand the iconography of the mosaics, Terry and Maguire adopt a multi-layered approach. In the generation after Eufra-sius, the Istrian church quarrelled with Rome over the 'Three Chapters' controversy, an attempt to oppose Nestorianism that the Istrians interpreted as an attack on orthodoxy. Terry and Maguire largely accept the argument that a certain Eufra-sius, accused of the most lurid crimes in a letter of 559 from Pope Pelagius I, may be the bishop of Poreč: this allows them to read references to the Istrian schism into tiny details of the mosaic design. They are clear, though, that concentration on the local does not limit the mosaics' transcendental meaning, a meditation on the divine and human natures of God. They even suggest an improvement on Borna's work: the visibly-pregnant Virgin in the Visitation would, they suggest, be better offset by a bearded Christ on the triumphal arch rather than Borna's youthful figure, lifted straight from San Vitale.

Although Eufra-sius and his companions on the left of the apse are named, the saints on the right are, and always were, anonymous. Reflecting on this anomaly leads the authors into a thought-provoking digression on the use of anonymity in Byzantine art. Referencing the mosaics of Saint