



**FOR 2305**  
Diskursivierungen von Neuem

Freie Universität  Berlin

Working Paper No. 16

Eva Struhal

Navigating seventeenth-century Venetian Art History:  
Language, Place, and Alchemy in Marco Boschini's  
“La Carta del Navegar Pitoresco”

Diskursivierungen von Neuem

Tradition und Novation in Texten des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit



RUHR  
UNIVERSITÄT  
BOCHUM

**RUB**



Universität  
Zürich <sup>UZH</sup>

**hhu** Heinrich Heine  
Universität  
Düsseldorf

**DFG**



## Working Papers der DFG-Forschergruppe 2305: Diskursivierungen von Neuem. Tradition und Novation in Texten und Bildern des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit

Die Working Papers werden herausgegeben von der an der Freien Universität Berlin, der Ruhr-Universität Bochum, der Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf und der Universität Zürich angesiedelten Forschungsgruppe FOR 2305 und sind auf deren Webseite sowie dem Dokumentenserver der Freien Universität Berlin kostenfrei abrufbar:

[www.for2305.fu-berlin.de](http://www.for2305.fu-berlin.de)

<https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/handle/fub188/17742>

Die Veröffentlichung erfolgt nach Begutachtung durch den Sprecher der FOR und gegebenenfalls auch durch Teilprojektleiter\*innen. Mit Zusendung des Typoskripts überträgt die Autorin / der Autor der Forschungsgruppe ein nichtexklusives Nutzungsrecht zur dauerhaften Hinterlegung des Dokuments auf der Webseite der FOR 2305. Die Wahrung von Sperrfristen sowie von Urheber- und Verwertungsrechten Dritter obliegt den Autor\*innen.

Die Veröffentlichung eines Beitrags als Preprint in den Working Papers ist kein Ausschlussgrund für eine anschließende Publikation in einem anderen Format. Das Urheberrecht verbleibt grundsätzlich bei den Autor\*innen.

Zitationsangabe für diesen Beitrag:

Struhal, Eva: Navigating seventeenth-century Venetian Art History: Language, Place, and Alchemy in Marco Boschini's "La Carta del Navegar Pitoresco", *Working Papers der FOR 2305 Diskursivierungen von Neuem*, No. 16/2021, Freie Universität Berlin.

DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/refubium-31884>

<https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/handle/fub188/31884>

ISBN 978-3-96110-383-6

Working Paper (FOR 2305 Diskursivierungen von Neuem) ISSN 2510-0777

Diese Publikation wurde gefördert von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

FOR 2305 Diskursivierungen von Neuem  
Geschäftsstelle  
Freie Universität Berlin  
Habelschwerdter Allee 45  
D-14195 Berlin  
Tel: +49-(0)30-838 50455

mail: [sabine.greiner@fu-berlin.de](mailto:sabine.greiner@fu-berlin.de)

**DFG** Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft

## Navigating seventeenth-century Venetian Art History: Language, Place, and Alchemy in Marco Boschini's "La Carta del Navegar Pitoresco"

This article analyzes the distinct literary and art historical decisions made by Marco Boschini (1602–1681) in his *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco* (Venice, 1660) in the cultural context of two of Venice's eminent literary academies (the Accademia Delfica and the Accademia de' Incogniti), to which he belonged.<sup>1</sup> Boschini – a painter, engraver, cartographer and producer of glass pearls – embodied the quintessentially hybrid intellectual culture associated with literary academies in seventeenth century Italy. This culture influenced his art theoretical decisions such as writing the *Carta* in the Venetian vernacular and associating it with disciplines such as literature and alchemy. The *Carta* therefore serves as a critical vehicle for investigating the role of literary academies as hybrid intellectual contexts and the nature of their influence on early modern intellectual culture.

### Literary academies and a culture of *acutezza*

Dedicated to the honing of encyclopedic erudition of the predominantly male citizen, literary academies focused on perfecting linguistic and rhetorical knowledge, history, literature, as well as natural philosophy.<sup>2</sup> In focusing on intellectual pursuits, these academies served as spaces that facilitated communication across socially segregated classes by uniting aristocrats and bourgeois (*cittadini*) toward collectively accumulating knowledge that was considered essential for a citizen. The training imparted in these literary academies enhanced rhetorical as well as intellectual skills and facilitated a lively exchange between intellectuals of different stripes, including artists, scientists, and poets. These complex spaces also served as important centers for the formation of “modern” knowledge with hybrid roots. Therefore, literary academies are acknowledged to serve as “trading zones” of knowledge or “heterotopic spaces”, which fostered a “culture of curiosity”.<sup>3</sup>

Literary academies promoted a culture of *acutezza* – an early modern term for acute, rational, and metaphorical thinking that aims at an insightful analysis of objects and an intuitive association between conceptually separated ideas.<sup>4</sup> A rhetorical category deriving from antiquity, *acutezza* became a central theme of several seventeenth-century rhetorical treatises.<sup>5</sup> *Acutezza* also functioned as a fundamental impulse for the cross-pollination between ideas deriving from different disciplines. It was upheld as an intellectual virtue – even a gift – of *curiosi* across all disciplines: one could read, write, or

---

\*This paper was originally written as a response-paper for the conference “Multitemporalitäten, Heterochronien, novantiquitates” held on April 4–5, 2019 in Berlin. I am grateful to Valeska von Rosen for her invitation to comment on her research project on the Venetian art theorist Marco Boschini (1602–1681). In doing so, she introduced me to the fascinating research of the DFG-Forschungsgruppe FOR 2305 *Diskursivierungen von Neuem*. About the general aims of this research group see HUSS 2016. This article appears in slightly modified form also in: *Storia della Critica d'Arte: Annuario della S.I.S.C.A.* (2021) 199–219.

<sup>1</sup> See MERLING 1992; AIKEMA 2013.

<sup>2</sup> A fundamental analysis of the phenomenon of literary academies in Italy is still QUONDAM 1982. For more recent studies see EVERSON/REIDY/SAMPSON 2016; TESTA 2015.

<sup>3</sup> For the term “trading zone” see: GALISON 1997; LONG 2015: 840–847. For the term “heterotopic space” see: FOUCAULT 1986: 22–27. For the term “culture of curiosity” see BENEDICT 2001; EVANS/MARR 2006.

<sup>4</sup> BATTISTINI 1992: c. 88–100; LOH 2004.

<sup>5</sup> For the seventeenth-century concepts of *acutezza*: PEREGRINI 1639; TESAURO 1669.



produce art with the help of *acutezza*.<sup>6</sup> This semantic complexity and virtuosity of *acutezza* turn it into a sign of unique intelligence, an inventive mode of thinking combining courtly ambitions for entertaining conversation as well as an epistemic search for finding truth hidden underneath the plainly visible but confusing phenomena.<sup>7</sup> To inventively associate “the distant object with the close by one” is a powerful motor in the creation of an interdisciplinary culture.<sup>8</sup> Such an exercise of thinking across disciplinary lines, across categorical and spatial divisions, was essential for seventeenth-century intellectuals across the board, who were guided in this endeavor in their search for the truth.<sup>9</sup> Even astronomical inventions could be analyzed according to the contemporary criteria of *acutezza* associating a distant object (the black blotches on the moon) with earthly experiences (such as gauging distance through the practice of *Disegno*), Galileo proved that the moon was mountainous.<sup>10</sup> The culture of *acutezza* fostered by literary academies engendered an intellectual method of intentional crossing over of disciplines.

Burke has recently presented processes of knowledge hybridization as the most powerful cultural agents of the early modern period.<sup>11</sup> Burke’s concept of hybridization is both temporally and psychologically fluid – alternating between denoting a playful combination of sources, a search for truth, a move towards assimilation of dominant cultural trends as well as reactions against them. Boschini’s *Carta* is an exemplary case study in reconstructing basic parameters of this culture of intentional hybridization deriving from literary academies by investigating trans-disciplinary exchanges in cultural contexts such as literary academies.

### The *questione della lingua* and Boschini’s criticism of Giorgio Vasari

As is well known, the *Carta*’s truly innovative art theoretical feature is that it is written in the Venetian dialect, whose vernacular turns it into an embodiment of the ideal of linguistic *naturalizza*.<sup>12</sup> Boschini’s *Carta* is a powerful repudiation of restrictive linguistic ideals promoted by the Florentine Accademia della Crusca in their dictionary, the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, which appeared in two editions in 1612 and 1623. In addition to its art theoretical contributions, the *Carta* can be contextualized within a broader body of Venetian vernacular literature that was strongly stimulated by the activities of local literary academies and the linguistic debate of the *questione della lingua*, highlighting the significant impact of contemporary literary academies on Boschini’s writing.<sup>13</sup> On the title page of his *Carta* Boschini self-identifies as an *Academico Delfico* (fig. 1), a member of the Accademia Delfica; he

---

<sup>6</sup> LOH 2004: 477–504; STRUHAL 2012: 105–127.

<sup>7</sup> See also the recent book, MARR/GARROD/MARCAIDA/OOSTERHOFF 2018.

<sup>8</sup> TESAURO 1663: 474.

<sup>9</sup> BASILE 1987.

<sup>10</sup> BREDEKAMP 2007; PANOFKY 1954.

<sup>11</sup> BURKE 2015. For the discussion of the concept of hybridity, see also NELTING/CAPPARELLI/DI SANTO 2019.

<sup>12</sup> For the question of Boschini’s choice of language and its impact on the formation of his art theoretical vocabulary as well as his artistic theory see the still fundamental SOHM 1992: 99–100; 112–115; MERLING 1992: 124–143. From a literary perspective see DRUSI 2014: 79–91. For the general cultural context of dialect poetry in Venice see CORTELAZZO 1983: 363–379.

<sup>13</sup> For Boschini’s anti-cruscanism see also MIGLIORINI 1958: 450. MERLING mitigates this view that he calls “nationalist”, anti-Florentine element by emphasizing an “aristocratic practice” focusing on local tradition MERLING 1992: 135.



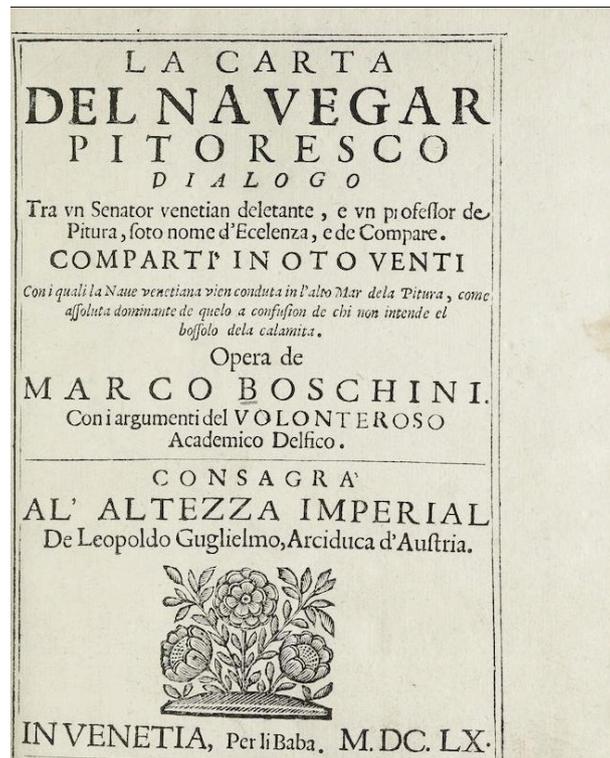


Fig. 1: Titlepage of *La Carta del Navegar Pitoresco*, Venice 1660.

also moved in the social context of the Accademia degli Incogniti, the most prestigious of seventeenth century Venetian literary academies.<sup>14</sup>

The *questione della lingua* is a deeply entrenched cultural phenomenon in seventeenth-century discussions about the legitimacy of contemporary vernacular.<sup>15</sup> Italian centers during the sixteenth century already debated differing avenues leading to a unified Italian language, the linguistic debate of the seventeenth century was reignited by the appearance of the first edition of the *Vocabolario della Crusca* in 1612.<sup>16</sup> In the dictionary's introduction the Florentine academicians clearly stated that the only pure Italian is the Tuscan language. They further restricted legitimate vocabulary and literary style to the precedent of Tuscan *Trecento* writers: Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, and Giovanni Villani.<sup>17</sup> The *Crusca* therefore proposed an archaizing approach to language, suggesting that the only pathway for writers to achieve an elegant literary language was the imitation of *Trecento* authors. It highlighted that any dialect or spoken vernacular employed as literary language only contributed to the general corruption and decadence into which the Italian language had fallen since the fourteenth century.

Not surprisingly, the dictionary's introduction provoked fierce opposition from non-Florentine writers. Within Boschini's cultural context such resistance becomes apparent from the small treatise *L'Anticrusca*, written by the Paduan Paolo Beni and published in 1612.<sup>18</sup> Beni treated the *Trecento*

<sup>14</sup> MERLING 1992: 124-143. The Accademia degli Incogniti and its founder Gian Francesco Loredan are better-known than the Accademia Delfica. For the Incogniti see MIATO 1998. On the Accademia Delfica see MAYLENDER, 1926-1930, vol. 2: 156-157.

<sup>15</sup> VITALE 1967: 70-77; MIGLIORINI 1987: 407-414.

<sup>16</sup> *Vocabolario* 1612.

<sup>17</sup> *Vocabolario*, "A' Lettori," s.p.

<sup>18</sup> BENI 1612. Beni, who was from Padua criticizes in particular the *Vocabolario della Crusca's* definition of the writings of Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca and Giovanni Vilani, hence, by authors who were active between 1300 and

authors (Boccaccio, for example) as uncultivated and crude, while he considered contemporary Italian (also spoken vernacular) as elegant and regulated. He undermined the *Crusca's* Tuscan linguistic authority by presenting a long list of Boccaccio's stylistic and grammatical errors. Beni further made the point that contemporary writers are in command of a more elegant and subtle Italian than *Trecento* writers ever were, thereby underscoring that the *Crusca's* focus on authors of the past had taken on the additional character of a conflict between the ancients and moderns.<sup>19</sup> Since Beni was close to the circle of Gian Francesco Loredano (1607-1661), an aristocrat, poet, and admirer of Giambattista Marino's poetry, who in 1630 founded this the Accademia de' Incogniti, it's likely that the ideas promoted in the *Anticrusca* informed linguistic attitudes at the Accademia degli Incogniti and established parameters for a local Venetian literary culture. These debates therefore presumably had an impact on Boschini.

However, by 1660 – the year of the *Carta's* publication –, opposition to contemporary vocabulary began gradually to erode even within the Accademia della Crusca due to a combination of factors including pressure from the rest of Italy and a realization that *Trecento* language lacked the capacity to express the technological and craft-related advancements in the intervening period. In the third edition of the *Vocabolario della Crusca*, which was planned contemporaneously with the release of Boschini's *Carta* but published only in 1691 the academy finally expanded the language pool to include contemporary linguistic usage.<sup>20</sup> This change was advocated by Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici, whose research into the professional terminology of Florentine crafts provided the cultural background for Filippo Baldinucci's monumental *Vocabolario Toscano dell'Arte del Disegno* (Florence, 1681) – the first Italian dictionary of artistic terminology.<sup>21</sup>

Boschini may therefore have drawn on a slightly outdated image of the Accademia della Crusca. However, the Crusca's adamant stance about linguistic ideas must have become legendary throughout other Italian regions, as legendary as the Florentine-friendly bias evident from Vasari's *Vite*.

For example, Boschini in *Vento V*, jokingly compares the strict rules of Accademia della Crusca with the firm, unflinching connoisseurship of Paolo del Sera, the Medici's art agent in Venice:

Del nobile Signor Paulo del Sera,  
 Che da tuti i Pittori chexxe in tera  
 El vien stima' per degno, virtuoso,  
 Se puol ben dir che in forma pitoresca  
 Lu sia la dota Crusca de Fiorenza.  
 Che quando a un Quadro le ghe dà credenza,  
 contra la so opinion nissun no tresca.  
 (BOSCHINI 1966:431)

Comparing Paolo del Sera's capabilities of artistic connoisseurship to the linguistic decisions of the Accademia della Crusca highlights that Boschini's artistic and linguistic ideals can be enfolded into each other, one can be looked at through the lens of the other. Thus, for Boschini, the Accademia della Crusca not only stood for her clear-cut linguistic decisions, but also for a rigid and adamant style of decision making: one that lacks any humor and is profoundly authoritarian.

---

1400 as the only pure Italian. Beni stresses that contemporary Italian is more sophisticated than the Italian of the Trecento. VITALE 1967: 70–71.

<sup>19</sup> On Beni and the “insurezzioni anticruscanti” see VITALE 1967: 70–77; MIGLIORINI 1987: 410–414.

<sup>20</sup> PARODI 1979: 21–36.

<sup>21</sup> STRUHAL 2017: 213–228.



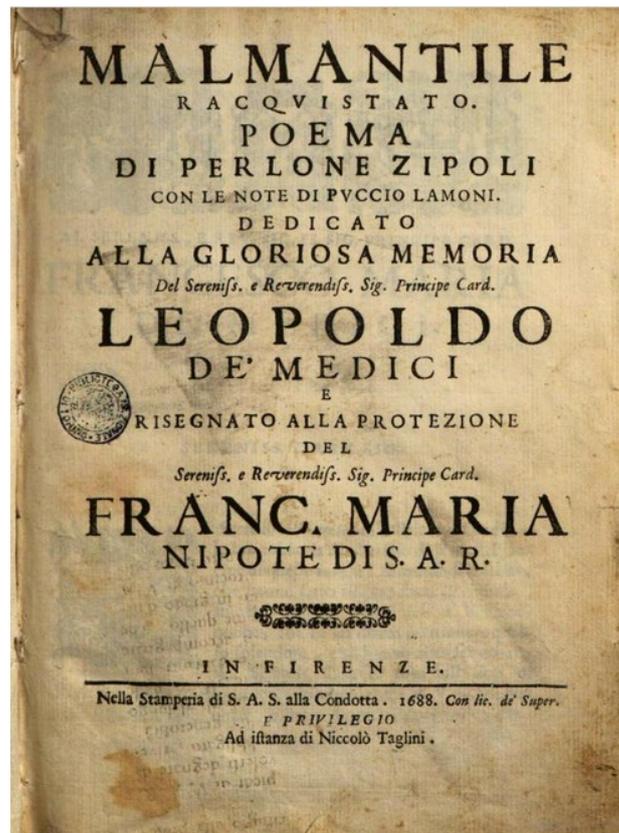


Fig. 2: Title Page of the 1688-edition of *Il Malmantile Racquistato* by Lorenzo Lippi.

In Florence, the conflict between the linguistic policies of the Crusca and other literary academies such as the Accademia degli Apatisti brought forth a literary creation very comparable to Boschini's *Carta* in its introduction of a large number of Florentine proverbs: Lorenzo Lippi's mock-epic *Il Malmantile Racquistato* (fig. 2).<sup>22</sup> Also, like Boschini's *Carta*, Lippi's *Malmantile* was the sophisticated result of a highly intellectual, shared interest in the local spoken vernacular among members of the Accademia degli Apatisti. It is possible that like Lippi's *Malmantile*, Boschini's dialogue was read aloud in an academic setting and therefore performed local art history in the domain of language. The idea that Boschini's *Carta* is a simple mirror of the Venetian spoken vernacular should therefore be taken with a grain of salt.

As promoters of knowledge on local history, literary academies served a central cultural and civic purpose. The academies' hybrid culture of curiosity was a powerful motor of multi-temporality because it "performed" the past, thus inserting the past into the present. Florentine academies, for example, often focused on the study of local (Tuscan and Florentine) language, history, and literature, in addition to science. It is against this contemporary background of the literary polemics fought out between early modern literary or linguistic academies that we should also consider Boschini's famous polemical opposition against Giorgio Vasari and the latter's art theoretical system.

But how does the *Carta* connect to the culture promoted by literary academies that Boschini frequented? Boschini signed the *Carta's* title page as "Volontoroso Accademico Delfico", indicating

<sup>22</sup> STRUHAL 2007; CABANI 2010: 197–230.

his affiliation with the Accademia de' Delfici. This academy was also known as Accademia Delfica or Accademia Gussoni, its members met initially in the home of the patrician Marco Bembo and then in the Palazzo Gussoni.<sup>23</sup> The academy's emblem, a tripod with the motto: "Hinc oracula," suggests that this literary gathering was deeply involved in the academic fashion of literary riddles and *concettismo*.<sup>24</sup> According to Mauro P. Calcagno, this academy was also one of the central cultural contexts for Venetian opera *librettisti*, who were active during the second part of the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> We know little about the activities of the Accademia de' Delfici, but Calcagno suggests that the Venetian vernacular, particularly spoken vernacular, was among the Delfici's central interests.<sup>26</sup> In a reference to Stefano Guazzo's *La civil conversazione* (1574), Calcagno highlights the affective power of the "native tongue" and the "viva voce" on its listeners and suggests that the Accademia de' Delfici was developing a culture around the epistemic quality of human voice and orality. This aspect of the Delfici's interests reverberates strongly with Boschini's choice of writing his *Carta* in the language of the spoken Venetian vernacular.

Such a focus of elevating Venetian vernacular into a literary language also became apparent from one of Boschini's fellows at the Accademia de' Delfici, Dario Varotari's (active after 1660), *Il Vespaio Stuzzicato. Satire Veneziane* (Venice, 1671) (fig. 3). Varotari, one of the Delfici's prominent *librettisti*,

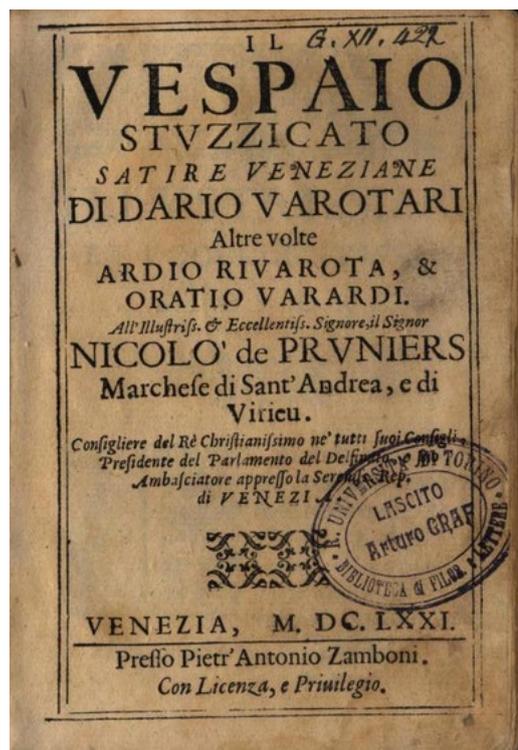


Fig. 3: Title Page of Dario Varotari's *Il Vespaio Stuzzicato*, Venice 1671.

<sup>23</sup> We know relatively little about this fascinating academy, which more recently has mostly been studied through the lens of its popularity with Venetian opera *librettisti*. MAYLENDER, 1926–1930, vol. 2: 156–157.

<sup>24</sup> BATTAGLIA 1826: 45. On riddles and *Accademie* see still PRAZ 1939.

<sup>25</sup> CALCAGNO 2000: 14–18.

<sup>26</sup> For a more comprehensive list of members of this Accademia who were librettists see GLIXON/GLIXON 2006: 112 n. 24. CALCAGNO 2000: 15.

articulated his rationale for writing in his “lingua naturale”<sup>27</sup>. He wrote in the vernacular as a display of his literary genius and for the entertainment of his readers, not for facilitating the task of writing.<sup>28</sup> Varotari underscored that merging the familiar and natural vernacular with erudite contents is one of the most intense challenges for a writer.

Like Guazzo, he highlights the increased affective efficacy of the “natural language.” These parallels with Boschini’s *Carta* demonstrate that his literary creation was immersed into a vibrant culture of vernacularity associated with Venetian literary academies. Varotari’s introduction highlights the conviction also apparent from Boschini’s text that writing in Venetian dialect is an art that skillfully conceals its art. This point is illustrated in Boschini’s sophisticated weaving of Venetian proverbs into the dialogue between the “Eccellenza” and the “Compare” (a “professore della pittura” connoisseur of painting, who serves as a literary auto-portrait of Boschini). Like Varotari, Boschini argues that writing the dialogue in his native Venetian enhances its linguistic efficacy and is also an expression of his openness and honesty about his Venetian origin. In his introduction, Boschini protests against expectations to write his treatise in the ‘Tuscan language’ thus:

Mi, che son venezian in Venezia, e che parlo de Pitori veneziani, ho da andarme a stravestir? Guarda il Cielo, che chi puol parlar col capelo in man, se’l vogia tirar sui ochi. No no, saldi pur per i pali: che questi xe i veri trozi dele nostre lagune. (BOSCHINI 1966: 8)

He amplifies the idea of linguistic *naturalness* through an image evoking the natural surroundings typical for Venice: its lagoon and watery passageways marked by poles. Boschini was convinced of the powerful synergy between the “place” of Venice, its language, and its art. The choice to write his *Carta* in the Venetian vernacular is also connected to the linguistic politics of the Venetian Accademia degli Incogniti, whose members Boschini befriended.<sup>29</sup>

Boschini’s criticism of Vasari has generally been considered as the most important structural framework for his art theoretical concepts and, sometimes, even as the direct stimulus behind his decision to write the *Carta* in Venetian dialect.<sup>30</sup> It is evident that Vasari’s negative judgment of Venetian painters served as background for Boschini’s eulogy of the “maniera Veneziana.” Among the growing number of seventeenth-century art theorists criticizing Vasari, the Venetian seems to be unique in merging artistic and linguistic conflicts.<sup>31</sup> Rather than merely a response to Vasari, I propose that the primary lens to interpret Boschini’s criticism of Vasari should be the exacerbation of differences in linguistic philosophies between Venice and Florence caused by the *Vocabolario della Crusca*.

That Boschini associated Vasari with “words” – with linguistic sterility – in opposition to the visual “language” and “reasoning” of Venetian paintings themselves, becomes evident from *Vento I*:

Caro signor Vasari habiè a memoria  
Che i Venetiani con le so piture,  
Senza tanti volume, o diciture  
Per el Mondo hà sonà trombe de gloria.  
L’opera da per si parla e rasona;  
(BOSCHINI 1966: 66–67)

---

<sup>27</sup> VAROTARI 1671: “Al Lettore”.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> On Boschini and the Accademia degli Incogniti, see MERLING 1992: 41–45; AIKEMA 2014.

<sup>30</sup> SOHM 1992: 98–100.

<sup>31</sup> By the seventeenth century many other Italian centers besides Venice were opposed to Vasari’s art theoretical system. For the Bolognese Cesare Malvasia see DEMPSEY 2000; CROPPER 2013: 97–105.



Boschini opposes Vasari's dry, rhetorical, bookish description of art ("volume, o diciture") in opposition to the works produced by Venetian artists, works that speak and reason through their own means ("l'opera da per si parla e rasona"). Venetian artworks do not need to be accompanied by "volume, o diciture." They are endowed with the potential to "argue" and pave their way towards international triumph.<sup>32</sup> Boschini's art not only "speaks" but "reasons" and is able to initiate and engage in logical arguments.

That art pursues its own mode of reasoning echoes another legendary Baroque school of painting – the Bolognese tradition under Annibale Caracci (1560–1609). This school, instrumental in the artistic innovation after the decline of art during Mannerism, opposed dry theory and reasoned practice as Count Cesare Malvasia illustrated through the discussion between the brothers Annibale Agostino Carracci on the occasion of a debate about the artistic merits of the antique statue of Laocoon. While Agostino "was discoursing about the deep knowledge exhibited by sculptors in antiquity," Annibale, "who hated idle talk, said nothing as if he did not recognize such qualities." Instead, Annibale drew the statue from memory on the wall in order to prove that he knew how to value it and then said: "We other painters have to do our talking with our hands."<sup>33</sup>

Boschini compares Vasari's adamant and stubborn denial of the marvelous qualities of Venetian art with the intolerant Accademia della Crusca, as formulation of an adamant judgment that condemns anything contradicting their own (linguistic) preferences. Boschini's ancients were not situated in antiquity, he identified them with "foreign" Florentines, who were hostile to the local Venetian dialect as well as to the city's artistic language, above all with Vasari and his focus on dry rhetoric.

### The fictionalization of history: writing art theory in the epic form

Opera historians have long pointed out another remarkable cultural difference between Florence and Venice: the development of seventeenth-century opera.<sup>34</sup> As Ellen Rosand highlights, during the 1640s Venetian opera served as a formative space for deliberating the rules and artistic forms to be associated with this genre concerning the extent to which to reconstruct antique forms of drama or to include aspects of contemporary society. These oppositions took place within the Accademia degli Incogniti, Boschini's immediate cultural setting.<sup>35</sup> This Accademia was most distinguished by being the intellectual home to a number of opera *librettisti* in Venice during the 1640s.<sup>36</sup> A central Venetian contention in opera was that the *librettisti* strove to unite their esteem for the antique, often tragic plots, with their modern tastes.<sup>37</sup> As Rosand demonstrates, the reformulation of the operatic genre into the Venetian "drama per musica" was based on conclusions drawn from Aristotle's poetics. In particular, she demonstrates their goal of emulation and novel transformation of antique models.

---

<sup>32</sup> This focus on the demonstration of art's power through artistic practice echoes the famous anecdote involving Annibale Carracci and his brother Agostino, when explaining or demonstrating each in their own way the excellence of the Laocoon see SUMMERSCALE 2000: 285–286.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> ROSAND 1991: 37–40. She underscores that Venetian opera distinguished itself fundamentally from the Florentine origins of this genre, because it responded to Venice's sociopolitical structure.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.: 38.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.: 39.



In particular, the Incogniti discussed the application of Aristotelian poetic rules regarding unities of time, place, and action to the operatic plot.<sup>38</sup> They also addressed the larger issue of genre: the distinction between tragedy, comedy, and the epic. Although Aristotle formulated his poetic rules originally only for the genre of tragedy, a number of late Renaissance commentators such as Lodovico Castelvetro attempted to adapt them for other literary genres, such as the epic.<sup>39</sup> For the *librettisti* it was difficult to unite the theoretical and the practical aspects, but one could summarize the debate as one that focused in particular on the mode of how to dramatize a plot in opera in order to be palatable and verosimilar for a modern audience.<sup>40</sup>

A very similar generic hybridity also lies at the foundation of Boschini's *Carta*. While on the surface Boschini's *Carta* is a dialogue, Franco Bernabei has highlighted that Boschini's discourse on painting takes place in the form of the epic.<sup>41</sup> In fact, Boschini posits his *Carta* demonstratively in the tradition of the epic. Already at the beginning of *Vento I*, Boschini establishes the intertextual relationship of the *Carta* with epic literary conventions:

Sia qual se sia vasselo d'alto bordo,  
 Che l'onde salse in mar voglia solcar,  
 Se un bon Poeta no'l sa navegar  
 L'anderà a l'orza come fa un balordo.  
 (BOSCHINI 1966: 19)

Although Boschini clearly operates with the humoral opposition of literary motifs deriving from the elevated, heroic style (“Che l'onde salse in mar voglia solcar ...”) and lowly proverbs (“Andar a l'orza come fa un balordo”), other aspects of the *Carta*, such as the heroization of painters operate within the canon of the epic.<sup>42</sup> In many aspects, Boschini's *Carta* imitates the literary strategies of the burlesque travesty of the epic genre, the mock-epic, and adapts epic language and narrative strategies for art historical purposes. One example is Boschini's representation of Venetian painters in the disguise of heroic warriors. The fact that we are dealing with literature in the “second degree” has to be taken as the basis from which to evaluate Boschini's art theoretical statements.<sup>43</sup> Genette characterizes the mock-epic as “burlesque travesty” that rewrites a noble text by preserving its “action,” frequently translating it into the “here” and “now,” naturalizing the temporally removed action of the epic. Genette describes the process of transforming the epic into a burlesque travesty as aiming at contextualizing the lofty heroic action into a more familiar, contemporary setting.<sup>44</sup> Within Boschini's academic context, the genre of mock epic was popular as becomes evident from Giovan Francesco Loredan's *L'Illide Giocosa*, published in 1653, a few years earlier than the *Carta*.<sup>45</sup> Also Loredan's *Illide* represents the elevated ancient plot

per introdurre il ridicolo (...) a bello studio ha incontrate le voci del Volgo, e gl'idiotismi per conseguire quel gioco, che, senza l'empio, e l'osceno, sembra impossibile nella coruttione del nostro Secolo.  
 (LOREDANO 1662: 6-7)

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.: 45.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.: 46.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.: 40–51.

<sup>41</sup> BERNABEI 1983: 549–574, 570.

<sup>42</sup> BOÉRIO 1829: 391: “Andà a l'orza: *locus. Fam.* L'ondeggiare di chi non può sostenersi in piedi per ubbriachezza.”

<sup>43</sup> GENETTE 1992.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.: 56.

<sup>45</sup> LOREDANO 1662.



Boschini's humoristic travesty of the epic genre through a mixture of literary styles stands in an interesting relationship to the *Carta's* other clear reference to the epic genre: its eulogistic romanticized portrayal of Venetian painters, such as Tintoretto. Focusing on Boschini's notion of painterly *bravura*, Nicola Suthor has highlighted the combination between warfare and painting "di primo forte colpo."<sup>46</sup> A central figure for this combination of martial heroism, courage, and the practice of painting is Jacopo Robusti called Jacopo Tintoretto (ca. 1518/1519–1594). Tintoretto is termed "furibondo," "forte e strepitoso." Boschini associates him with Mars, whose heroic characteristics find expression in a determined style ("el bravo far"), that surpasses many other painters in sophistication, in "mirabile dottrina."<sup>47</sup> Suthor underscores that the idea of *bravura* transgresses the mere subject of battle painting and is associated with the courage of artists, who Boschini terms "gran Guerrieri" and "valorosi Capitani," and the fight for the cultural acceptance of Venetian style associated with Venice.<sup>48</sup> *Bravura* is acknowledged through the emphatic reactions to paintings by Boschini and portrays Tintoretto as a *paladin* fighting for a new style.<sup>49</sup> Boschini's representation of artists as *paladini* aligns with the heroic, epic dimension of the *Carta*, which spills over into the author's "here" and "now" like a Baroque illusionistic ceiling decoration. By choosing the epic as a subtext for his heroic battle of Venetian artists to be recognized on the international scene of art theory, Boschini also poignantly predicts the cultural outcome of the artistic culture war he portrays. In "Epic and Empire," David Quint posits that political meaning was associated with the epic form as such.<sup>50</sup> Quint describes as predominant form of the epic in the Western tradition the "epic of winners" or "epics of the imperial victors".<sup>51</sup> Contextualized within such symbolical generic associations with the epic, Boschini's *Carta* turns into the account of artist knights fighting for the artistic triumph of the "Imperante nostra maniera veneziana."<sup>52</sup> The epic, therefore, is not detached from the present, but on the contrary impacts the present as a "history-as-triumph."<sup>53</sup> Studying the specific literary genre of the "épopées d'actualité", contemporary events portrayed in the form of the epic, Dimitri Garnarczyk reminds us that the epic has a commemorative function of historical facts not through objective truth but "à travers le pouvoir heuristique de la fiction, qui agit comme un révélateur de possibles."<sup>54</sup> The main poetic quality of the epic is the marvelous that in the "épopée d'actualité" has as its goal to endow reality with a poetic dimension. Boschini constantly evokes the marvelous: by superimposing the figure of military heroes onto artists; by the Eccellenza's and the Compare's as well as historical painters' enthusiastic reactions to Venetian paintings. Daniel Madelénat's profound analysis of the epic structure demonstrates that Boschini's *Carta* also in several further essential aspects reverberates with this essential literary genre. In fact, the epic is an essential precondition to better also understand the *Carta's* art historical dimension.<sup>55</sup> One basic affinity between the epic and Boschini's *Carta* is the fiction of the contents being the result of oral narrative, after all "l'oralité est la forme originaire de

<sup>46</sup> SUTHOR 2010: 41.

<sup>47</sup> BOSCHINI 1966: 62.

<sup>48</sup> SUTHOR 2010: 60.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.: 74–75.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> QUINT 1993: 8.

<sup>52</sup> That the epic genre was also during the seventeenth century associated with the victorious ending of its plot is highlighted for example, NIESELY 1639: 10–38. For the formulation "imperante nostra maniera" see BOSCHINI 1966: 10.

<sup>53</sup> QUINT 1993: 33.

<sup>54</sup> GARNCARZYK 2018.

<sup>55</sup> MADELÉNAT 1986.

presentation de l'épopée.”<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Boschini's choice of the epic as a metatextual dimension for his *Carta* takes up the sophisticated and complex play between history and myth and between time and atemporality, which in the epic according to Madélnat only solidify in the person of the narrator, “performing” the historically distant contents of the epic.<sup>57</sup> Such a conceptual focus on the present as well as the past simultaneously recalls the basic poetic structure of the *Carta* as a dialogue between the Eccellenza and the Compare performing in an exemplary way possible reactions of beholders to works of art. A further proof for the circumstance that Boschini's *Carta* was read as a form of epic is also Sebastiano Mazzoni's *La Pittura Guerriera* (Venice, 1675), generally understood as an answer to Boschini's *Carta*.<sup>58</sup>

### Boschini's concept of “place”

A recent article by Valeska von Rosen foregrounds the fact that Vasari and Boschini pursue two fundamentally different approaches towards art history: Vasari associates artistic progress with the chronological advancement of time; Boschini shifts the representation of art history from that of temporal progress to one of spatial exploration.<sup>59</sup> According to von Rosen, Boschini transforms art history from a depersonalized narrative (Vasari) to that of subjective experience of art by the reader through the dialogue's two protagonists, the “Eccellenza” and the “Professore dell'arte.”<sup>60</sup> Von Rosen concludes that, for Boschini, space is a heuristic category, an invitation for active exploration in search for immediate knowledge of the city's art that both protagonists traverse to visit.

Although it is clear that in his art historical narrative Tintoretto and Titian are presented as heroes, his *Carta* is an a-chronological eulogy of Venetian painters from Giovanni Bellini to contemporary artists. Von Rosen suggests, Venetian painters therefore escape the linear historical process from old to new that Vasari's historical system established: the slow improvement of the *maniera* from Giotto to Michelangelo. By looking at painterly creation not through the lens of history but through the lens of a meta-temporal eulogy in the epic genre, Boschini fundamentally eschews a historical vision of art, which informed Vasari's description of the art historical development from the first to the third “età.” In fact, Boschini intentionally destabilizes any common chronology between Vasari's chronological system of the *maniera moderna* and Venetian painting by stating that Giovanni Bellini's work was of the same quality as Raphael's, thereby clearly eschewing the idea that history brings artistic progress.<sup>61</sup>

Complementing von Rosen's reading, I will now investigate the term “place,” the specific place of Venice, which Boschini endows with agency, considering it an active force in the formation of the Venetian culture. Both, the Venetian *maniera* and its vernacular stand in an indissoluble relation with the place of its creation – Venice, its air, its light, and its beauty. Venice brings out the best in artists, as Boschini specifies. For this powerful connection between the city's specific nature, its artists, and its particular manner, Boschini employs alchemical metaphors. He describes the connection as that of alchemical transmutation which purifies artists into “copela”, a term that was translated by Pallucchini in her commentary to the *Carta* as the “philosopher's stone”.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid: 24–26.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid: 23–39.

<sup>58</sup> MAZZONI 2008.

<sup>59</sup> VON ROSEN 2021: im Druck.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> In his *Carta* Boschini compares “Zambelin” to Raphael: See BOSCHINI 1966: 48: “Zambelin per el manco è un Rafael, / Per l'idee, per le forme, e diligentia.”

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.: 27.

Boschini portrays this powerful nature of the Venetian context as a subterranean force that has been there in the past, present, and will remain so in the future:

Qua ghe xe la minera, el fonte e 'l fiume,  
Che produse, ha prodotto, o produrà  
Coi peneli la istessa verità;  
(BOSCHINI 1966: 28)

The natural language of Venetian art is therefore a constant stream that ties together old and new, past and present in a ceaseless continuum. It is the connection between the city, its history and its natural circumstances that lie at the foundation of Boschini's conceptualization of Venice's artistic excellence.

As has been recognized by researchers on Boschini, the specific *place* of Venice plays an essential role in his *Carta del Navegar Pittoresco*. Merling highlights that Boschini's *Carta* transforms Venice into a *galleria*, in his *Minere* he considers Venice an *index* (I would argue, *archive*) of Venetian paintings.<sup>63</sup> Like the title of the *Carta* that evokes the idea of mapping, these metamorphoses transform Venice's real space into a representational one.

Based on Edward Casey's study *The Fate of Place*, which traces a broad portrait of this category from antiquity to our times, I suggest that Boschini was thinking of the city of Venice not through the lens of physical space, but through a category endowed with the characteristics of Aristotelian place or *topos*, which oscillated between the concept of real physical place and a mnemotechnical, mental placement of an object.<sup>64</sup> Casey highlights that, for Aristotle, *place* is a central, indispensable category for "being in the world." "Where something is" constitutes a basic metaphysical category that impacts every perishable, sublunar substance (including the earth as a whole). Everything existing is place-bound, having its own "proper place". It is precisely because of its indispensable role within the physical world that place "takes precedence of all other things". In particular, it assumes priority over the infinite, the void, and even more so over the category of time.<sup>65</sup> One of the characteristics Casey highlights about Aristotle's discourse of *place* is the importance of "emplacement": "For everyone supposes that things are somewhere, because what is not is nowhere".<sup>66</sup> Since Aristotle's time, the category of *place* declined. For example, during the early modern period (physical) space replaced *place* curtailing the dominance of *place* over *space*. Particularly during the scientific revolution, the category of *place* got subsumed under categories compatible with *space* and *time*, which were better aligned with early modern natural philosophical concerns.<sup>67</sup> *Place* therefore slowly disappeared as a category essential to being.

That Boschini thought about physical space as *place* is first suggested by the predominance of the *spatial* ordering mechanism over the temporal. His adherence to a concept of place embedded into Aristotelian theories, even at the moment of the cultural establishment of the New Science is not altogether surprising.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> MERLING 1992: 98–102.

<sup>64</sup> RAPP 2010; CASEY 1997.

<sup>65</sup> CASEY 1997: 51–52; see ARISTOTLE, *Physics*, 208b35; ARISTOTLE 1957: 280–28.

<sup>66</sup> CASEY 1997: 51.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*: IX–XVI.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*: 139.

The Accademia degli Incogniti was close to the eminent Paduan professor of natural philosophy, Cesare Cremonini (ca. 1550–1631), one of the most prominent Aristotelians, a contemporary of Galilei.<sup>69</sup> Another parallel between Boschini’s and Aristotle’s concepts of *place* is that they both associate it metaphorically with a vessel, similar to Boschini’s association of Venice or painting as a ship (“la Nave Veneziana,” “la nave pitoresca”) with which the Venetian painters navigate the “High Sea of painting” (“l’alto Mar de la Pitura”).<sup>70</sup> It is this metaphor of the vessel that can be associated with the dominant historical concept in Boschini’s *Carta*, that of contemporaneity of different historical layers within the same spatial “vessel”. Casey clarifies that the metaphor of the vessel characterizes place’s containing quality.<sup>71</sup>

### Boschini and alchemy: place as *vaso filosofico*

Although he frequently talks about Venetian sites, Boschini rarely employs common spatial vocabulary such as *spazio* or *luogo* but frequently labels spaces as *vaso* (vessel or container).<sup>72</sup> A cultural domain where the term *vaso* is frequently employed, denoting a place but also the dynamic transformations of the substances placed within it, is alchemy. Boschini’s interest in alchemy has already been mentioned by Merling and highlighted for select vocabulary employed in the *Carta* by Pallucchini in her commentary.<sup>73</sup> However, I propose that beyond mere interest and appropriation of alchemical terminology, alchemy was an overarching and essential component of Boschini’s worldview and that he adopted this terminology to coin an art theoretical vocabulary that expresses the “language” and “reasoning” of artworks as well as the transformation they create, or their effect, on the beholder. Boschini uses alchemical vocabulary to describe not just the efficacy of art, but also its elevated, sublime qualities.

Despite mentioning in his introduction that art theory is distinct from bodies of knowledge such as philosophy, astrology, alchemy, or necromancy, alchemy seems to structure his art theoretical thinking profoundly.<sup>74</sup> For example, in *Vento I*, Boschini lists prominent Venetian painters, among them Titian, Bassano, Palma Vecchio and Tintoretto as being philosopher’s stones: “tuti de cima, e tuti de copela”.<sup>75</sup> Given his professional background as a merchant of glass pearls it is probable that Boschini was familiar with the art of alchemy: glass production and mining were industrial applications of alchemy.<sup>76</sup>

Despite its prominence in the *Carta*, this aspect of Boschini’s treatise has been limited to sporadic mentions and has not received focused scholarly attention. One notable exception is Berit Wagner’s

---

<sup>69</sup> On the importance of Cesare Cremonini for the context of the Accademia degli Incogniti see: MERLING 1992: 167; ROSAND 1991: 38-39; 131. For Cremonini’s Aristotelianism see SCHMITT 1980; KUHN 1996. For his biography see JAUMANN 2004.

<sup>70</sup> CASEY 1997: 53; ARISTOTLE, *Physics* 212a, 28–29; ARISTOTLE 1957: 314–315.

<sup>71</sup> CASEY 1997: 70.

<sup>72</sup> Boschini employs the term “loco” (*luogo*). Boschini appears to employ ‘loco’ as generic spatial term that lacks the concrete identity of “place,” see BOSCHINI 1966: 170. There Boschini talks about the benefits of looking at works of art in person: “Ma no bisogna far bullae da sghero: / Ma sopra loco andar con la persona, / Che molto più de quel, che se rasona / Se vede in ato pratico se è vero.”

<sup>73</sup> MERLING 1992: 62–64; 82. In her introduction, Anna Pallucchini employs the term “alchemy” in respect to colors, particularly Titian’s: BOSCHINI 1966: XXXVII, IL.

<sup>74</sup> BOSCHINI 1966: 8. Pallucchini translates “copela” as: “purissimi come l’oro del saggio”, *ibid.*: 27.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*: 27

<sup>76</sup> See for example DUPRÉ 2014: 84–113.

recent analysis of Titian's late style as seen through the lens of the *Carta*.<sup>77</sup> While Wagner focuses on the possibility that Titian's late style itself was steeped in alchemical practice Boschini's *Carta* is the main source for this reading of the artist's practice. That Boschini's alchemical approach towards culture transcends his reflections on Titian becomes evident from the fact that he adopts similar metaphors of containment and emplacement as preconditions for the active, energetic qualities of place not merely the passive, static ones.

Understanding Boschini's use of alchemical terms is central to understanding his concept of painting as well as his view of the dynamics and development of Venetian culture. In the *Carta*, the term *vaso*, typically used for *containers* of all kinds and is applied to geographical or architectural spaces as well as artistic personalities (as containers of virtues). The examples below demonstrate the multifarious uses of this term. In *Vento II*, the Eccellenza and the art connoisseur visit the Scuola di San Rocco in order to admire Tintoretto's masterpieces. Boschini describes the Scuola and its painting

O Albergo de mestitia, e de Virtù,  
 Doue alberga l'empio dela vita!  
 Virtù d'un Dio inefabile, e infinita,  
 Che patir, e morir volse per nù!

Questo dela Teorica xè'l fonte:  
 Questo xè'l vaso, dove la Pitura  
 Tien l'estrato cordial; la mana pura:  
 Quà el Tentoreto hà la corona in fronte.

Quà ghè l'agilità, la limpidezza:  
 Quà l'anima invisibile respande:  
 La Perfetion con la Virtù pretende  
 Che quà sia la più rara esquisitezza.

(BOSCHINI 1966: 141.)

Tintoretto is represented through a christological lens, as an "alter-Deo". He is a divine creator of life. Tintoretto is the origin of art theory; the Scuola di San Rocco is the *vaso*, the container, where painting has its soul ("dove la Pitura tien l'estrato cordial; la vera mana").

The words "vaso" and "estratto" lead us to the true framework that is the foundation of Boschini's art theoretical system: alchemy. Both terms take in a central role in the language and theorization of early modern alchemy. "Estratto" (extract) is a synonym for "essence," defined by Roberts Gareth as follows: "Essence: extract, tincture, indispensable quality, extract obtained by distillation, a fine extract continuing the nature and perfection of the substance from which it is derived."<sup>78</sup> That Boschini indeed conceived of Tintoretto's art as an essence – as the product of the alchemical process of distillation and purification, a perfection of the *nature* of art – is also suggested by the fact that he considers Tintoretto's art as the "source of theory." Tintoretto's painting is furthermore termed "estrato cordiale," restorative essence, again pointing towards its resurrective, renovative qualities. The Scuola di San Rocco, therefore, is considered as the *vaso* (the vessel) of painting.

Given the general alchemical metaphors in this passage, I propose that we associate Boschini's concept of *vaso* with the alchemical vessel, the *vaso filosofico*.

Alchemical treatises such as *Aurora thesaurusque philosophorum*, an introduction into alchemy attributed to Paracelsus, consider the *vas philosophorum* as an essential element for the success of

<sup>77</sup> WAGNER 2019: 225–258.

<sup>78</sup> ROBERTS 1994: 108; TESTI 1980: 78–80.

any “philosophical operation.” Such essential capabilities attributed to this term within the corpus of alchemical literature can be inferred from Paracelsus’ ideas on the *philosophical vessel*, which hosts the dynamic developments of nature and matter.<sup>79</sup> The author explains that the vessel’s material and form are key ingredients for the success of the alchemical operation: if it is too small, it will be torn apart by the violent action of the matter it contains and explode; if it is too large and the heat would not have any effect on the matter, and the alchemical transformation will not take place as planned.

The association of alchemical reaction with the effect of art works on the spectator facilitates Boschini’s assimilation of the *vaso filosofico* with his animated sense of space as place. Similar to the conception of Venice that provides the nourishing *substratum* for its arts and artists and brings out the best in them, the *vas philosophorum* is the location in which “Nature herself fulfills all the operations.”<sup>80</sup>

Boschini uses the term *vaso* as an essential descriptor of culture in general, applying it not only to places but also to people in order to praise the *qualities* of individual artists. His description of Jacopo Bassano’s altarpiece *Baptism of Santa Lucilla* in the Chiesa delle Grazie (fig. 4) highlights the



Fig. 4: Jacopo Bassano, Saint Valentine baptizing Saint Lucilla, 1575, Museo civico di Bassano del Grappa.

<sup>79</sup> PARACELSUS 1577: 48–51.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.: 46.

sophisticated artistic theory – such as Bassano’s apt application of perspective rules – that imbues this painting.

Perchè la verità ghe ne fà fede,  
E la rason ne rapresenta el caso,  
Che’l Basan giera un prezioso vaso  
De singular virtù, come se vede.

(BOSCHINI 1966: 299)

Jacopo Bassano is presented as the container (*vaso*) of perfect art theory and sophistication in his representation of the background architectonic perspective. The metaphor of the alchemical reaction in the *vaso* describes Jacopo Bassano’s artistic practice as powerful synthesis of all his artistic knowledge within his works of art.

The central importance of the philosophical vessel is its function of being home to a series of essential alchemical transformative processes such as distillation, purification, and sublimation. Roberts defines sublimation as: “conversion of solid to vapour, followed by condensation of the vapour in solid form upon a cool surface” and underscores that sublimation was a process of nobilitation.<sup>81</sup> Such an overarching employment of the term suggests its centrality in Boschini’s concept of artistic production where the idea of a *vessel with agency* plays an essential role. Boschini applies the term *vasoto* the art of painting in general (the vessel of painting), the particular place of Venice, architectonic contexts (Scuola di San Rocco) and individual painters.

Early modern alchemists considered alchemy as an art that closely imitated nature but perfected it in the process.<sup>82</sup> Alchemy therefore served as a perfect simile for the art of painting. Generally, Boschini conceived of nature as a vital force, but as an imperfect creator of forms.<sup>83</sup> For Paracelsus, nature was incapable of creating perfect forms and alchemy constituted improvement over nature.<sup>84</sup> Throughout the early modern period, art and alchemy were therefore considered as sister-arts and alchemy was instrumental for relating the various arts to nature.<sup>85</sup> If art finds its parallel in alchemical processes, painterly creation should be studied not only through the lens of history but also through the lens of the meta-temporal force of nature.

### Conclusion: literary academies as motors for modernity

Peter Burke’s conceptualizes ‘hybridization’ as the most powerful cultural agent of the early modern period, as playful combination of sources, as search for truth, and as move towards the assimilation of dominant cultural trends as well as reactions against them. He also distinguishes between intentional and unintentional processes of hybridization, between their subversion of the status-quo and assimilation as “revivalist” or “reactive” hybridization.<sup>86</sup>

Many of the *hybrids* that Boschini creates are rooted in his membership and intellectual socialization within academic contexts such as the Accademia degli Incogniti and the Accademia Delfica. While the literary culture and Venetian academies of the seventeenth-century has often been

---

<sup>81</sup> ROBERTS 1994: 113.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*: 54.

<sup>83</sup> This attitude towards nature becomes apparent in Boschini’s condemnation of the *naturalisti* see BOSCHINI 1966: XXI; XXXIII–XXXIV. See also ROSEN 2001.

<sup>84</sup> MORAN 2006: 70–72.

<sup>85</sup> NEWMAN 2004: XIII–XIV.

<sup>86</sup> BURKE 2015: 4.

interpreted through the lens of *libertinage*, associating their modernity with subversiveness and transgression, the general scholarship on literary academies had to grapple with their image as old-fashioned, untimely “rhetorical,” absolutist Baroque organizations. In line with the first aspect, alchemical knowledge promoted by literary academies is still frequently branded as libertine counterculture.<sup>87</sup> Such profound disparities in the evaluation of these essential organizations for early modern intellectual culture has contributed to a distorted image of literary academies, instead of fleshing out the essential role played by these organizations in forging an early modern “mainstream,” yet elitist intellectual culture.

Boschini’s *Carta* could be taken as exemplary in the complicated reevaluation of the cultural importance of early modern literary academies. Rather than creating a counterculture against accepted Venetian norms, its modernity lies in continuing a prolonged historical process, which in no way establishes a counter-identity to the generally accepted Venetian norms of the seventeenth century. After tracing the formation of hybrid knowledge in Boschini’s *Carta*, we could ask ourselves, whether the translation of knowledge from one discipline into the other constitutes “modernity” in Boschini’s world. In a singular hybridization of art theoretical discourse, indebted to the culture of the literary academies he belonged to, Boschini conflated art theoretical, alchemical, and literary epistemic systems to arrive at a mode of charting a so far little-explored aesthetic phenomenon: the effect art has on the spectator as well as the reason for its strong effect.

---

<sup>87</sup> See for example AIKEMA 2014; MULSOW 2006.

## Bibliography

### Monographs/Edited volumes:

- ARISTOTLE: *Physics*, vol. I: books 1–4, trans. by P. H. WICKSTEED, F. M. CORNFORD (Loeb Classical Library 228), Cambridge, MA 1957.
- BASILE, Bruno: *L'Invenzione del Vero: Studi sulla Letteratura Scientifica da Galilei ad Algarotti*, Rome 1987.
- BATTAGLIA, Michele: *Delle accademie veneziane: dissertazione storica*, Venice 1826.
- BATTISTINI, Andrea: "Acutezza", in: Gerd ÜDING (ed.): *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. 1, Tübingen 1992, c. 88–100.
- BENEDICT, Barbara M.: *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry*, Chicago 2001.
- BENI, Paolo: *L'Anticrusca ovvero Il Paragone dell' Italiana Lingua nel qualsi mostra chiaramente che l' antica sia inculta e rozza: e la moderna regolata e gentile*, Padua 1612.
- BOÉRIO, Giuseppe: *Dizionario del Dialettto Veneziano*, Venice 1829
- BOSCHINI, Marco: *La Carta del Navegar Pitoresco. Edizione Critica con la "Breve Introduzione" premessa alle "Ricche Minere della Pittura Veneziana"*, ed. by Anna PALLUCCHINI, Venice/Rome 1966.
- BOUTIER, Jean/MARIN, Brigitte/ ROMANO, Antonella (eds.): *Naples, Rome, Florence: Une Histoire Comparée des milieux intellectuels (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)*, Rome 2005.
- BREDEKAMP, Horst: *Galilei, der Künstler. Der Mond. Die Sonne. Die Hand*, Berlin 2007.
- BURKE, Peter: *Hybrid Renaissance: Culture, Language, Architecture*, Budapest/New York 2015.
- CALCAGNO, Mauro P: *Staging Musical Discourses in Seventeenth-Century Venice: Francesco Cavalli's Eliogabalo (1667)*, UMI Dissertations (Umi Number 9991129), Ann Arbor, MI 2000.
- CASEY, Edward: *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1997.
- DEMPSEY, Charles: *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style* (The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies 16), Cadmo 2000.
- EVANS, R. J. W./MARR, Alexander (eds.): *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, Aldershot 2006.
- EVERSON, Jane E./REIDY, Denis V./SAMPSON, Lisa: *The Italian Academies, 1525-1700: Networks of Culture, Innovation and Dissent*, Abingdon 2016.
- GALISON, Peter: *Image & Logic: A Material Culture of Microphysics*, Chicago 1997.
- ROBERTS, Gareth: *The Mirror of Alchemy: Alchemical Ideas and Images in Manuscripts and Books from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*, Toronto 1994.
- GENETTE, Gérard: *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. by Channa NEWMAN, Claude DOUBINSKY, Lincoln/London 1992.
- GLIXON, Beth L./GLIXON, Jonathan E.: *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth-Century*, Venice/Oxford 2006.
- JAUMANN, Herbert: *Bio-biographisches Repertorium: Handbuch Gelehrtenkultur der Frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 1, Berlin 2004.
- KUHN, Heinrich C.: *Venetischer Aristotelismus im Ende der aristotelischen Welt: Aspekte der Welt und des Denkens des Cesare Cremonini (1550-1631)*, Frankfurt a. Main/Berlin/Bern/New York/Paris/Wien 1996.
- LOREDANO, Gio: *Francesco: L' Iliade Giocosa*, Venice 1662.
- MADÉLÉNAT, Daniel: *L'épopée*, Paris 1986.
- MARR, Alexander/GARROD, Raphaële/MARCAIDA, José R./OOSTERHOFF, Richard J. (eds.): *Logodaedalus: Word stories of Ingenuity in Early Modern Europe*, Pittsburgh 2018.
- MAYLENDER, Michele: *Storia delle Accademie d'Italia*, 8 vols, Bologna 1926–1930.

- MAZZONI, Sebastiano: *La Pittura Guerriera ed altri versi sull' arte: Introduzione di Massimiliano Rossi con un saggio di Marco Leone*, Venice 2008.
- MERLING, Mitchell: *Marco Boschini's "La carta del navegar pitoresco": Art theory and virtuoso culture in seventeenth-century Venice*, UMI Dissertations (Umi number: 9308853), Ann Arbor 1992.
- MIATO, Monica: *L'Accademia degli Incogniti di Giovan Francesco Loredan Venezia (1630-1661)*, Florence 1998.
- MIGLIORINI, Bruno: *Storia della Lingua Italiana*, Florence 1987.
- MORAN, Bruce T.: *Distilling Knowledge: Alchemy, Chemistry, and the Scientific Revolution*, Cambridge, MASS 2006.
- NEWMAN, William R.: *Promethean Ambitions: Alchemy and the Quest to Perfect Nature*, Chicago 2004.
- NIESELY, Benedetto: *Proginnasmi poetici*, vol. 5, Florence 1639.
- PANOFSKY, Erwin: *Galileo as a Critic of the Arts*, The Hague 1954.
- PARACELSUS: *Aurora thesaurusque philosophorum, Theophrasti Paracelsi, Germani Philosophi, & Medici cunctis omnibus accuratissimi*, Basel 1577.
- PEREGRINI, Matteo: *Delle acutezze che altrimenti spiriti, vivezze, e concetti, volgarmente si appellano*, Genoa/Bologna 1639.
- PRAZ, Mario: *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery* (Studies of the Warburg Institute, vol. 3), London 1939.
- QUINT, David: *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*, Princeton 1993.
- ROSAND, Ellen: *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford 1991.
- SOHM, Philip: *Pittoresco: Marco Boschini, his Critics, and their Critiques of Painterly Brushwork in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Italy*, Cambridge 1994.
- STRUHAL, Eva: *"La Semplice Imitazione del Naturale": Lorenzo Lippi's Poetics of Naturalism in Seventeenth-Century Florence*, UMI Dissertations (UMI number: 3262515), Ann Arbor 2007.
- SUMMERSCALE, Anne: *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci: Commentary and Translation*, Pennsylvania 2000.
- SUTHOR, Nicola: *Bravura: Virtuosität und Mutwilligkeit in der Malerei der Frühen Neuzeit*, Munich 2010.
- TESAURO, Emanuele: *Il Cannocchiale Aristotelico*, Venice 1663.
- TESTA, Simone: *Italian Academies and their Networks, 1525-1700: From Local to Global*, London 2015.
- TESTI, Gino: *Dizionario di alchimia e di chimica antiquaria*, Rome 1980.
- ÜDING, Gerd (ed.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. 1, Tübingen 1996.
- VAROTARI, Dario: *Il Vespaio Stuzzicato: Satire Veneziane*, Venice 1671.
- VITALE, Maurizio: *La Questione delta Lingua* (Storia Della Critica, vol. 3), ed. by Giuseppe PETRONIO, Palermo 1964.
- Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, Venice 1612.
- VON ROSEN, Valeska: *Mimesis und Selbstbezüglichkeit in Werken Tizians: Studien zum venezianischen Maleridiskurs*, Emsdetten 2001.

### Journal Articles:

- FOUCAULT, Michel: "Of other Spaces", in: *Diacritics* 16/1 (1986) 22–27.
- LOH, Maria H.: "New and Improved: Repetition as Originality in Italian Baroque Practice and Theory", in: *The Art Bulletin* 86/3 (2004) 477–504.
- LONG, Pamela O.: "Trading Zones in Early Modern Europe", in: *Isis* 106/4 (2015) 840–847.
- MULSOW, Martin: "Für eine Kulturgeschichte der Wahrheit: Pietro della Vecchia und die Accademia degli Incogniti", in: *Mitteilungen des SFB* 573 1 (2006) 9–20.

### Articles in edited volumes:

- AIKEMA, Bernard: "Valori incerti, saperi precari: Vicende seicentesche fra Marco Boschini, Pietro della Vecchia e il loro entourage", in: Enrico Maria DEL POZZOLO (ed.): *Marco Boschini: L'epopea della pittura veneziana nell' Europa barocca* (Festina Lente. Indagini d'Arte e cultura, misc. 3), Treviso 2013, 165–175.
- BERNABEI, Franco: "Cultura artistica e critica d'arte: Marco Boschini", in: Girolamo ARNALDI/Manlio PASTORE STOCCHI (eds.): *Dalla Controriforma alla Fine della Repubblica: Il Seicento* (Storia della Cultura Veneta, 4/1), Vicenza 1983, 549–574.
- CABANI, Maria Cristina: "Testo e commento nel 'Malmantile racquistato'", in: Elena FUMAGALLI/Alessandro NOVA/Massimiliano ROSSI (eds.): *Firenze milleseicentoquaranta*, Venice 2010, 197–230.
- CORTELAZZO, Manlio: "Uso, Vitalità e Espansione del Dialetto", in: Girolamo ARNALDI/Manlio PASTORE STOCCHI (eds.): *Dalla Controriforma alla Fine della Repubblica: Il Seicento* (Storia della Cultura Veneta, 4/1), Vicenza 1983, 363–379.
- CROPPER, Elizabeth: "Malvasia and Vasari: Emilian and Tuscan Histories of Art", in: Gian Maria ANSELMINI/Angela DE BENEDICTIS/Nicholas TERPSTRA (eds.): *Bologna: Cultural Crossroads from the Medieval to the Baroque: Recent Anglo-American Scholarship*, Bologna 2013, 97–105.
- DRUSI, Riccardo: "La tradizione letteraria in veneziano nella Carta del navigar pitoresco. Alcune osservazioni", in: Enrico Maria DAL POZZOLO (ed.): *Marco Boschini: L'epopea della pittura veneziana nell' Europa barocca* (Festina lente. Indagini d'arte e cultura, Miscellanea 3), Treviso 2014, 79–91.
- DUPRÉ, Sven: "Making Materials. The Arts of Fire", in: Sven DUPRÉ/Dedo von KERSENBRÖCK-KROSIGK (eds.): *Art and Alchemy: The Mystery of Transformation* (exh. cat., Stiftung Museum Kunstpalast), Düsseldorf/Munich 2014, 84–113.
- PARODI, Severina: "L'uso di i professioni nel Vocabolario della Crusca", in: Miriam FILETI MAZZA (ed.): *Convegno Nazionale sui Lessici Tecnici delle Arti e dei Mestieri*, Cortona 1979, 21–36.
- QUONDAM, Amedeo: "L'Accademia", in: *Il letterato e le istituzioni* (Letteratura italiana, volume I), Turin 1982, 823–898.
- STRUHAL, Eva: "Reading with Acutezza: Lorenzo Lippi's Literary Culture", in: Michael THIMANN (ed.): *The Artist as Reader: Libraries, Books and Archives. On Education and Non-Education of Early Modern Artists* (Intersections. Yearbook for Early Modern Studies 13), Leiden 2012, 105–127.
- STRUHAL, Eva: "Documenting the language of artistic practice: Filippo Baldinucci's Vocabolario Toscano dell' Arte del Disegno", in: Michèle-Caroline HECK (ed.): *Lexicographie artistique: formes, usages et enjeux dans l'Europe moderne*, Montpellier 2017, 213–228.
- VON ROSEN, Valeska: "Räumlichkeit versus Linearität. Marco Boschini und die ,Ordnung der Dinge', oder: Wie man beim Gondelfahren über Kunstwerke schreibt", in: Klaus W. HEMPFER/Valeska VON ROSEN (eds.): *Multiple Epochisierungen. Literatur und Bildende Kunst 1500–1800*, Stuttgart 2021, im Druck.
- WAGNER, Berit: "Material und alchemistische Metamorphose: Tizians Tod des Aktaion als gemalte Kunsttheorie," in: Julia A. SCHMIT-FUNKE (ed.): *Materielle Kultur und Konsum in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Köln 2019, 225–258.

### Online resources:

- CAPARELLI, Maria Debora/Federico DI SANTO/David NELTING, "Tassos 'Dritte Räume'. Ein Dialog über 'Hybridisierung' als Schlüsselbegriff für die Beschreibung von Theorie und Praxis epischen Dichtens bei Torquato Tasso", *Working Papers der FOR 2305 Diskursivierungen von Neuem*, No. 14/2019, 2. überarbeitete Version 2020, Freie Universität Berlin. URL: <https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/handle/fub188/25413> (last accessed 3 November 2021).



- GARNCARZYK, Dimitri: “Des bardes pressés, ou de l’urgence d’écrire au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle des ‘épopées d’actualité’”, in: Claudine LE BLANC/Jean-Pierre MARTIN (eds.): *Les Temps épiques: Structuration, modes d’expression et fonction de la temporalité dans l’épopée*, Publications numériques du REARE, 15 novembre 2018, URL: <http://publis-shs.univ-rouen.fr/reare/index.php?id=254>, (last accessed 8 June 2021).
- HUSS, Bernhard: “Diskursivierungen von Neuem: Fragestellungen und Arbeitsvorhaben einer neuen Forschergruppe”, *Working Papers der FOR 2305 Diskursivierungen von Neuem*, No. 1/2016, Freie Universität Berlin. URL: [https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/fub188/18445/Working-Paper-No\\_-1-Druckfassung-20-Seiten.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/fub188/18445/Working-Paper-No_-1-Druckfassung-20-Seiten.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y), (last accessed 8 June 2021).
- RAPP, Christof, “Aristotle’s Rhetoric”, in: Edward N. ZALTA (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2010 Edition). URL: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/>, (last accessed 8 June 2021).

## About the author

**Eva Struhal**'s research is profoundly interdisciplinary, focusing on exchanges between art, literature, and natural philosophy in seventeenth-century Italy (for example, E. STRUHAL (ed.), "Who can read the Book of Nature? Early Modern Artists and Scientists in Dialogue," *Nuncius* 3 (2017)). She is currently completing a book entitled: *The Art of Nature: The Cultural Impact of the New Science in seventeenth-century Florence*.

Another focus of her research to which the present article belongs is seventeenth-century Italian art theory concentrating on a broad reevaluation of the Florentine art theorist, Filippo Baldinucci. Works associated with this interest are E. FUMAGALLI, M. ROSSI, E. STRUHAL (eds.), *Per Filippo Baldinucci. Storiografia e collezionismo a Firenze nel secondo Seicento*, Florence 2020; "Filippo Baldinucci's Autopsies: First-hand experience and art theory in Baroque Florence", in: Elisabeth OY-MARRA/Irina SCHMIEDEL (eds.): *Zeigen – Überzeugen – Beweisen. Methoden der Wissensproduktion in Kunstliteratur, Kennerschaft und Sammlungspraxis der Frühen Neuzeit*, Merzhausen 2020, 89–110; and "Filippo Baldinucci's novità: The 'Notizie de' Professori del Disegno' and Giorgio Vasari's 'Vite'", in: Alessandro NOVA/Fabian JONIETZ (eds.): *The Paradigm of Vasari. Reception, Criticism, Perspectives*, Venice 2016, 193–203.

Eva Struhal completed a PhD dissertation in art history at Johns Hopkins University in 2007 on *La semplice Imitazione del Naturale: Lorenzo Lippi and the Seicento Fiorentino*. Since 2015 she has been Associate Professor for Renaissance and Baroque Art History at Université Laval in Quebec City.



**FOR 2305**  
Diskursivierungen von Neuem

Freie Universität  Berlin

Working Paper (FOR 2305 Diskursivierungen von Neuem) ISSN 2510-0777  
Herausgeber: Prof. Dr. Bernhard Huss  
Editorische Betreuung: Sabine Greiner

Diese Publikation wurde gefördert von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

FOR 2305 Diskursivierungen von Neuem  
Geschäftsstelle  
Freie Universität Berlin  
Habelschwerdter Allee 45  
D-14195 Berlin

**RUHR**  
**UNIVERSITÄT**  
**BOCHUM**

**RUB**



**Universität**  
**Zürich** UZH

**hhu** Heinrich Heine  
Universität  
Düsseldorf **DFG**