

Giovanni Battista Adriani and the drafting of the second edition of the *Vite*: the unpublished manuscript of the *Lettera a Messer Giorgio Vasari* in the Archivio Borromeo (Stresa, Italy)

Eliana Carrara

The writing of the second edition of the *Vite*, published in Florence by Giunti in 1568, was a crucial time for discussions and fruitful exchanges of ideas between Vasari and his closest friends and collaborators.¹ Vasari was well aware of that, and patently recognized his debt in the case of Giovanni Battista Adriani. The short treatise on the artists of antiquity (this is the content of the *Lettera a Messer Giorgio Vasari*, which is dated September 8, 1567)² was, in fact, clearly printed with the name of its editor, and was inserted in haste by Giunti at the beginning of the second volume of the *Terza parte* of Vasari's biographies, together with Vasari's letter addressed *Agli artefici del disegno* (*To the craftsmen in design*), and not where it has been intended, which is immediately after the *Teoriche* (*Introduction to the three arts of drawings*): *Architecture, Painting and Sculpture*), at the beginning of the first of the three volumes of the *Vite*.³

I will quote the sixteenth-century texts according to the following criteria: *u* is distinct from *v*, *j* is transcribed with *i*; accents, apostrophes and punctuation marks are used according to the custom of today, as is the division of words and the use of capital letters; all abbreviations have been withdrawn without giving any account, only when an abbreviated reading is not certain, the total will appear in parentheses. All my amendments or additions will be placed between square brackets. All translations are mine, unless otherwise stated. I'm very grateful to Dr. Alessandro Pisoni, keeper of the Archivio Borromeo in Isola Bella (Stresa, Italy) for his helpful suggestions. Many thanks also to Bob Learmonth for reviewing my original text and to Richard Woodfield for his valuable advice and assistance.

¹ *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori scritte da M. Giorgio Vasari pittore et architetto aretino, di nuovo dal medesimo riviste et ampliate* [...], 3 vols, in Firenze, appresso i Giunti, 1568. For a recent overview of the 1568 edition see Eliana Carrara, 'Giorgio Vasari', in the exhibition catalogue, Claudia Conforti, Francesca Funis, and Francesca de Luca, eds, *Vasari, gli Uffizi e il Duca*, Firenze: Giunti, 2011, 386-87 (entry 'XV.16').

² See Liana De Girolami Cheney, *Giorgio Vasari's teachers. Sacred & profane art*, New York: Peter Long, 2007, 111. For the collaboration of Vincenzio Borghini and Giovanni Battista Adriani with Vasari see also Robert Williams, *Art, theory, and culture in Sixteenth-century Italy. From techne to metatechne*, Cambridge: University Press, 1997, 30-33.

³ Giorgio Vasari, *Le opere*, Gaetano Milanese, ed, 9 vols, Firenze: Sansoni, 1878-1885, I, 15-90; Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi, eds, 6 vols, Firenze: Sansoni (from 1976 onward SPES), 1966-1987 (henceforth cited as: Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, followed by volume number), I, 177-227. For an account of Adriani's text and its collocation in the editions of Vasari's *Vite* see Paola Barocchi, 'Lettera di G.B. Adriani a G. Vasari', In: Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I (*Commento*), 232-35.

Adriani's work⁴ was conceived to fill the space, temporal and historio-critical, left empty by Vasari in the edition of *Vite* published in 1550 (Florence, Torrentino), which starts from the Middle Ages and ends with the artists who were his contemporaries.⁵ Because he treats the arts of antiquity, Adriani's main source is, of course, Pliny, as Vasari confirms in the letter *Agli artefici del disegno* (*To the craftsmen in design*), just mentioned above: 'And to the end that this work may prove to be in every way complete, and that there may be no need to seek anything outside its pages, I have added a great part of the works of the most celebrated craftsmen of antiquity, both Greek and of other nations, whose memory has been preserved down to our own day by Pliny and other writers, without whose pens they would have been buried, like many others, in eternal oblivion'.⁶

The *Lettera a Messer Giorgio Vasari*, previously known only through the printed text in the *Vite*,⁷ consists of forty pages full of erudite references (Herodotus, Varro and Pomponius Atticus are mentioned among others), where citations are rare, but the whole essay is rich in information taken from various sources and not only from Pliny.

The Florentine scholar, Adriani, also cleverly reformulated information taken from Pliny's *Naturalis historia*. Whereas the Roman historian distributes the discussion of the fine arts across books XXXIV-XXXVI, dealing, respectively, with metals, clays and stones, and then dedicated to metal carving, painting and sculpture in marble, Adriani organizes his treatise in a very different way, detaching himself from any homage to the ancient model (whilst he was also well aware of Greek sources, from Strabo to Plutarch, from Pausanias to Lucian, and of many

⁴ On the work's contents see Paola Barocchi, 'Indice analitico del commento alla lettera dell'Adriani', In: Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I (*Commento*), 386-415, and Eliana Carrara, 'Pliny and the Art of the Ancients and the Moderns. Reading the *Naturalis Historia* (Books XXXIV-XXXVI) in Florence in the Sixteenth Century (the Anonymous Magliabechiano to Vasari's *Lives*)', In: *De l'autorité à la référence. Les repères textuels à la Renaissance. Actes de la journée d'études organisée dans le cadre du congrès annuel de la Renaissance Society of America (2010)*, Isabelle Diu and Raphaële Mouren, eds, in print. For an intellectual profile of Adriani (1511-1579) see Simone Albonico, 'Giovanni Battista Adriani. Nota introduttiva', In: *Storici e politici fiorentini del Cinquecento, I, Storici e politici fiorentini del Cinquecento*, Angelo Baiocchi and Simone Albonico, eds, Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi, 1994, 907-917; see also Elena Fasano Guarini, 'Committenza del principe e storiografia pubblica: Benedetto Varchi e Giovanni Battista Adriani', In: *La pratica della storia in Toscana: continuità e mutamenti tra la fine del '400 e la fine del '700*, Elena Fasano Guarini and Franco Angiolini, eds, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2009, 91-8; Elena Fasano Guarini, *Repubbliche e principi. Istituzioni e pratiche di potere nella Toscana granducale del '500-'600*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2010, 268-79.

⁵ For a recent overview of the 1550 edition see Eliana Carrara, 'Giorgio Vasari', In: *Vasari, gli Uffizi e il Duca*, 384 (entry 'XV.14').

⁶ See Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the painters, sculptors and architects*, Translation by Gaston du C. de Vere. With an introduction and notes by David Ekserdjian, 2 vols, New York: Knopf, 1996, II, p. 188. 'E perché questa opera venga del tutto perfetta né s'abbia a cercare fuori cosa alcuna, ci ho aggiunto gran parte delle opere de' più celebrati artefici antichi, così greci come d'altre nazioni, la memoria de' quali da Plinio e da altri scrittori è stata fino a' tempi nostri conservata, che senza la penna loro sarebbono, come molte altre, sepolte in sempiterna oblivione'; Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 176 (the spacing of the characters is mine).

⁷ *Le Vite de' più eccellenti*, III, fols a1 recto-e4 verso.

Latin writers, in particular Cicero (*Orationes in Verrem, De inventione*), Vitruvius and Valerius Maximus).⁸

In fact, he opens his analysis of the origins of art by considering the oldest, that is painting, underlining the high esteem it enjoyed in ancient Greece, as it was only to be practiced by free men (p. 189). This should be carefully noted at a moment when the amateur practice of art was becoming increasingly popular, especially painting, as is evidenced in a treatise written, not coincidentally, by Alessandro Allori, another of the young men in Vasari's vast workshop.⁹

After the catalogue of Greek painters (pp. 189-202), including the mention of several women (p. 202), the Romans are also remembered (pp. 202-204). After that, the Florentine scholar considers 'plastic' (pp. 204-206), that is the art of modelling with clay, and then examines sculptures in bronze and other metals. Considerable space is dedicated to big names in the art of casting, from Polykleitos to Lysippus, not forgetting of course Phidias and Praxiteles (pp. 206-216). These sculptors' names reappear shortly after, when Adriani addresses the birth and development of stone sculpture (pp. 216-224), giving his attention to large colossal statues and establishing a comparison between the Greek and Roman worlds, and between the figurative types of the two great ancient cultures (pp. 224-226). The conclusions (p. 227) follow a very brief overview of the goldsmith's art, the very minute and refined art of modelling tableware (pp. 226-227), which is connected to miniature works of sculpture in marble (p. 223), which, in turn, introduces conversely the above mentioned monumental stone sculpture.

The sophisticated interplay of parts refers also to the structure of the *Teoriche*. If Vasari begins his writing starting from architecture, sculpture and then finally approaches painting, and as a painter it is this art that has the last word,¹⁰ Adriani seems to harmonize everything and closes the circle of the narrative with a path which, like Pliny, his source, not only excludes architecture, considered most commonplace and utilitarian, but relies entirely on great monumental marble sculpture, both sacred and profane; the basic model, incidentally, for contemporary celebrations of the Medici princes.¹¹

It is, therefore, a text that has many points of interest and should deserve a closer examination than it has received so far, in order to address the discussion, necessarily thoughtful and far-reaching, about the numerous sources consulted by

⁸ See Paola Barocchi, 'Indice analitico del commento alla lettera dell'Adriani', In: Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I (*Commento*), 386-415. The text of the *Lettera* is easily accessible in Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 176-227, from which I shall quote by simply referring to the page.

⁹ See Alessandro Allori, *Ragionamento delle regole del disegno*, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, ms. Palatino E. B. 16. 4: the first draft dates to 1565; see Eliana Carrara, 'La nascita dell'Accademia del Disegno di Firenze: il ruolo di Borghini, Torelli e Vasari', In: *Les académies dans l'Europe humaniste. Idéaux et pratiques*, Marc Deramaix, Perrine Galand-Hallyn, Ginette Vagenheim and Jean Vignes, eds, Genève 2008, 141-42, with references to previous bibliography.

¹⁰ See Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 31-172; and Eliana Carrara, 'Doni, Vasari, Borghini e la tecnica del mosaico', In: *Fra lo "spedale" e il principe. Vincenzio Borghini. Filologia e invenzione nella Firenze di Cosimo I*, Gustavo Bertoli and Riccardo Drusi, eds, Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2005, 83-4.

¹¹ See the overview presented by Dietrich Erben, 'Die Reiterdenkmäler der Medici in Florenz und ihre politische Bedeutung', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XL, 1996, 287-361.

the historian of the Medici and their consolidation into a dense synthesis, documenting knowledge of the fine arts of Antiquity in the second half of the sixteenth century in Florence.

A newly discovered manuscript, almost complete, facilitates a more thorough exegesis of the *Lettera* (Fig. 1).¹² In the course of a wider survey of Vasari's manuscripts,¹³ I was able to retrieve a copy of the work that I think was written by Adriani's own hand, with significant autograph corrections and interventions.

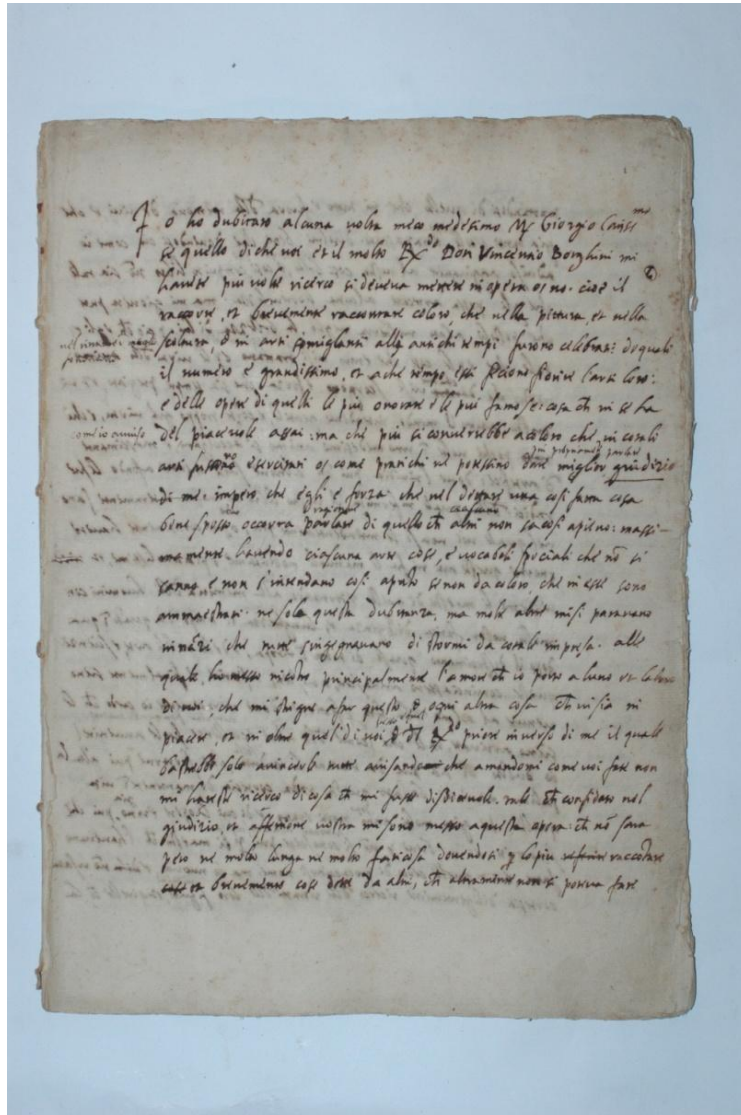


Figure 1 Giovanni Battista Adriani, *The manuscript of Lettera a messer Giorgio Vasari*, Isola Bella, Archivio Borromeo, ms. AD, LM, Adriani, G. B., f. 1r (photo by Archivio Borromeo, with permission).

¹² See Eliana Carrara, 'Giovanni Battista Adriani e la stesura della seconda edizione delle *Vite*: il manoscritto inedito della *Lettera a messer Giorgio Vasari*', in print (Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore).

¹³ See Eliana Carrara, 'Giorgio Vasari', In: *Autografi dei letterati italiani. Il Cinquecento, I*, Matteo Motolese, Paolo Procaccioli and Emilio Russo, eds., with paleographic revision by Antonio Ciaralli, Roma: Salerno, 2009, 359-372. My thanks, again and wholeheartedly, to Emilio Russo and Antonio Ciaralli for their helpful suggestions.

I am convinced by comparing the handwriting in letters signed by the learned Florentine man, both when young – like a letter to Piero Vettori of 17 January 1543,¹⁴ and when old – the text is dated September 14, 1574 and this time is addressed to Vincenzio Borghini - (Figs. 2-3).¹⁵

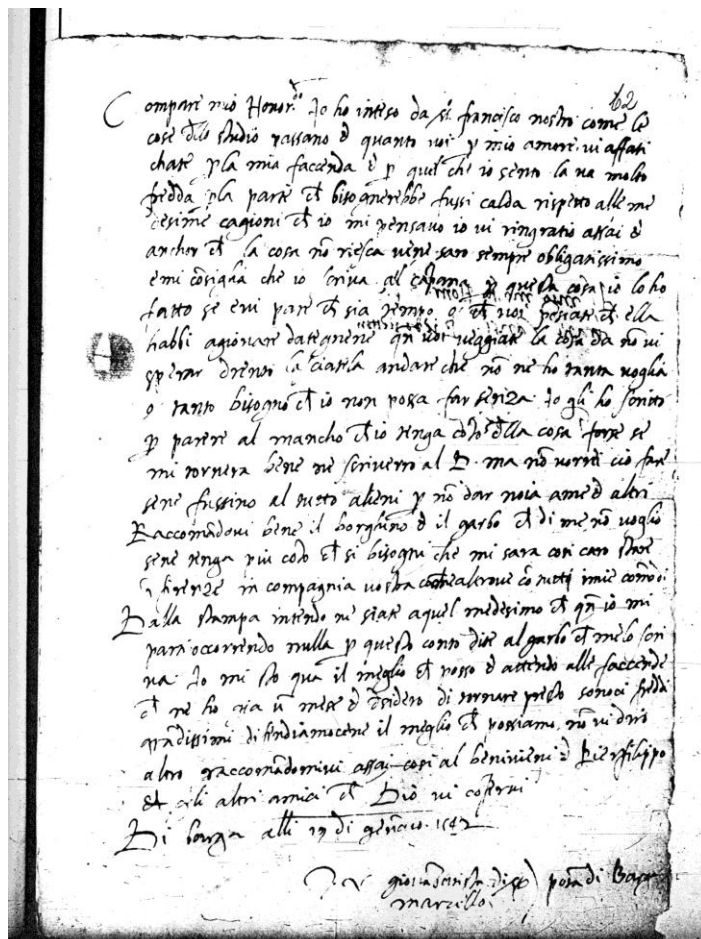


Figure 2 Giovanni Battista, *Letter to Piero Vettori*, London, British Library, ms. Additional 10268, f. 62r (photo by BL, with permission).

¹⁴ London, British Library, ms. Additional 10268, f. 62r: see Donato Giannotti, *Lettere a Piero Vettori*, Roberto Ridolfi and Cecil Roth, eds, Firenze: Vallecchi, 1932, 170. The document (unpublished as far as my knowledge) is reported and illustrated in Carrara, *Giovanni Battista Adriani*. Another letter of young Adriani to Vettori, sent 'di Firenze il primo di giugno 1537' (from Florence, June 1th, 1537), is kept in London, British Library, ms. Additional 10273, f. 305r-v: see Salvatore Lo Re, *Politica e cultura nella Firenze cosimiana. Studi su Benedetto Varchi*, Manziana (Rm): Vecchiarelli, 2008, 175-76.

¹⁵ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (henceforth cited as: BNCF), ms. Magliabechiano XXV 551, f. 160r-v: the letter, unedited, is mentioned in: Vincenzio Borghini, *Filologia e invenzione nella Firenze di Cosimo I*, Gino Belloni and Riccardo Drusi, eds, Firenze: Olschki, 2002, 27 (entry '2.4.' by Eliana Carrara); see also Vincenzio Borghini, *Carteggio 1541-1580. Censimento*, Daniela Francalanci and Franca Pellegrini, eds., Firenze: Accademia della Crusca, 1993, 176 nr. 1519; and also other autograph letters addressed by Adriani to Borghini are mentioned: 31 nrr. 241-242, 38 nr. 300, 165 nr. 1337, 182 nr. 1570, 184 nr. 1592, 189 nrr. 1634 and 1637.

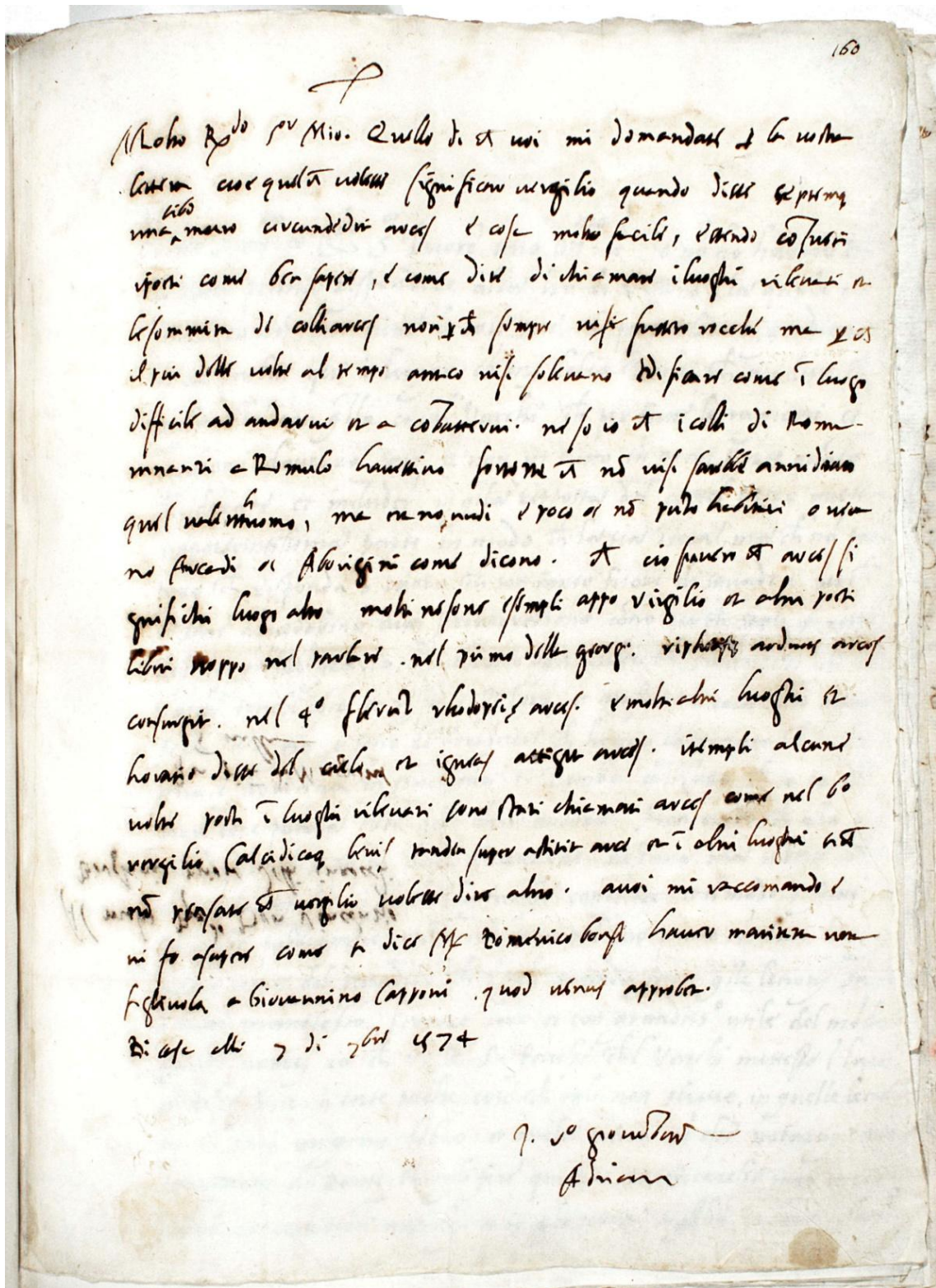


Figure 3 Giovanni Battista Adriani, Letter to Vincenzo Borghini, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Magliabechiano XXV 551, f. 160r (photo by BNCF, with permission).

No less persuasive is then the comparison with the draft of the sonnet *La ben faconda, e più verace storia* accompanied by the signature in full of its author 'Giovanbatista Adriani Marcellino' (Fig. 4).¹⁶ Just as good is the comparison with the final version contained in the manuscript Palatino 1154 (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale) of the *Oratio Iohannis Baptistae Adrianii habita Florentiae in sacris funeribus Caroli Quinti*, printed by Lorenzo Torrentino in 1558 (and again in 1562) (Fig. 5).¹⁷

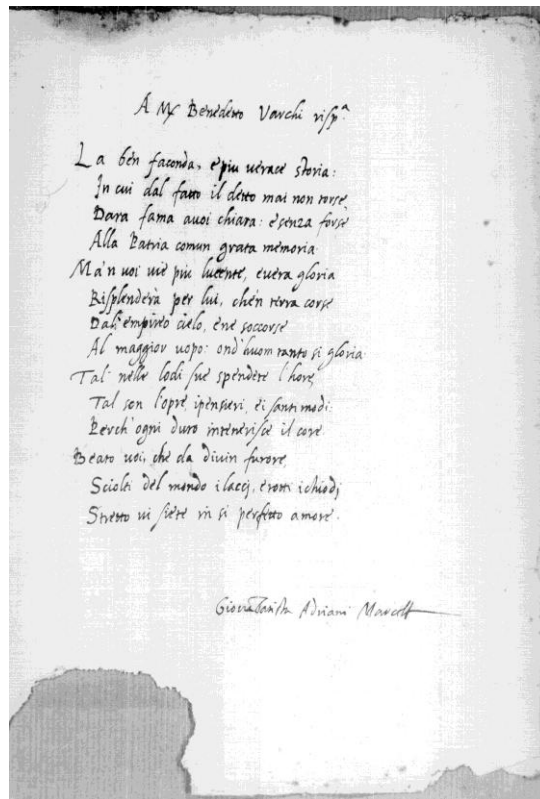


Figure 4 G. B. Adriani, *La ben faconda, e più verace storia*, sonnet to Benedetto Varchi, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Banco Rari 63, f. 17r (photo by BNCF, with permission).

¹⁶ BNCF, ms. Banco Rari 63, f. 17r; the poem is published in *Sonetti spirituali di M. Benedetto Varchi. Con alcune risposte, et proposte di diversi eccellentissimi ingegni*, in Firenze: nella stamperia de' Giunti, 1573, 125. For the surname 'Marcellino' used to indicate the direct descent of Giovanni Battista by Marcello Virgilio Adriani (1464-1521), Chancellor of the Florentine Republic and learned scholar, see Giorgio Bartoli, *Lettere a Lorenzo Giacomini*, Anna Siekiera, ed, Firenze: Accademia della Crusca, 1997, 291.

¹⁷ BNCF, ms. Palatino 1154, ff. 4r-9v; the manuscript contains, in addition to the rough draft of the work (ff. 1r-3v), other *Orazioni e Lezioni Accademiche* of the Florentine historian: see Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, *Indici e Cataloghi. IV. I Manoscritti Palatini della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze. Vol. III, Fasc. 4*, Anna Saitta Revignas, ed, Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1955, 298-300. The funeral oration, held by Adriani on December 9, 1558, should have been originally pronounced by Benedetto Varchi: see Maria Fubini Leuzzi, 'L'oratoria funeraria nel Cinquecento. Le composizioni di Benedetto Varchi nei loro aspetti culturali e politici', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, CXVIII, 2006, 384 (and, with the title *Le orazioni funebri di Benedetto Varchi nella loro cornice storica, politica e letteraria*, also in *Benedetto Varchi (1503-1565). Atti del Convegno* (Firenze 2003), Vanni Bramanti, ed, Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2007, 219-20).

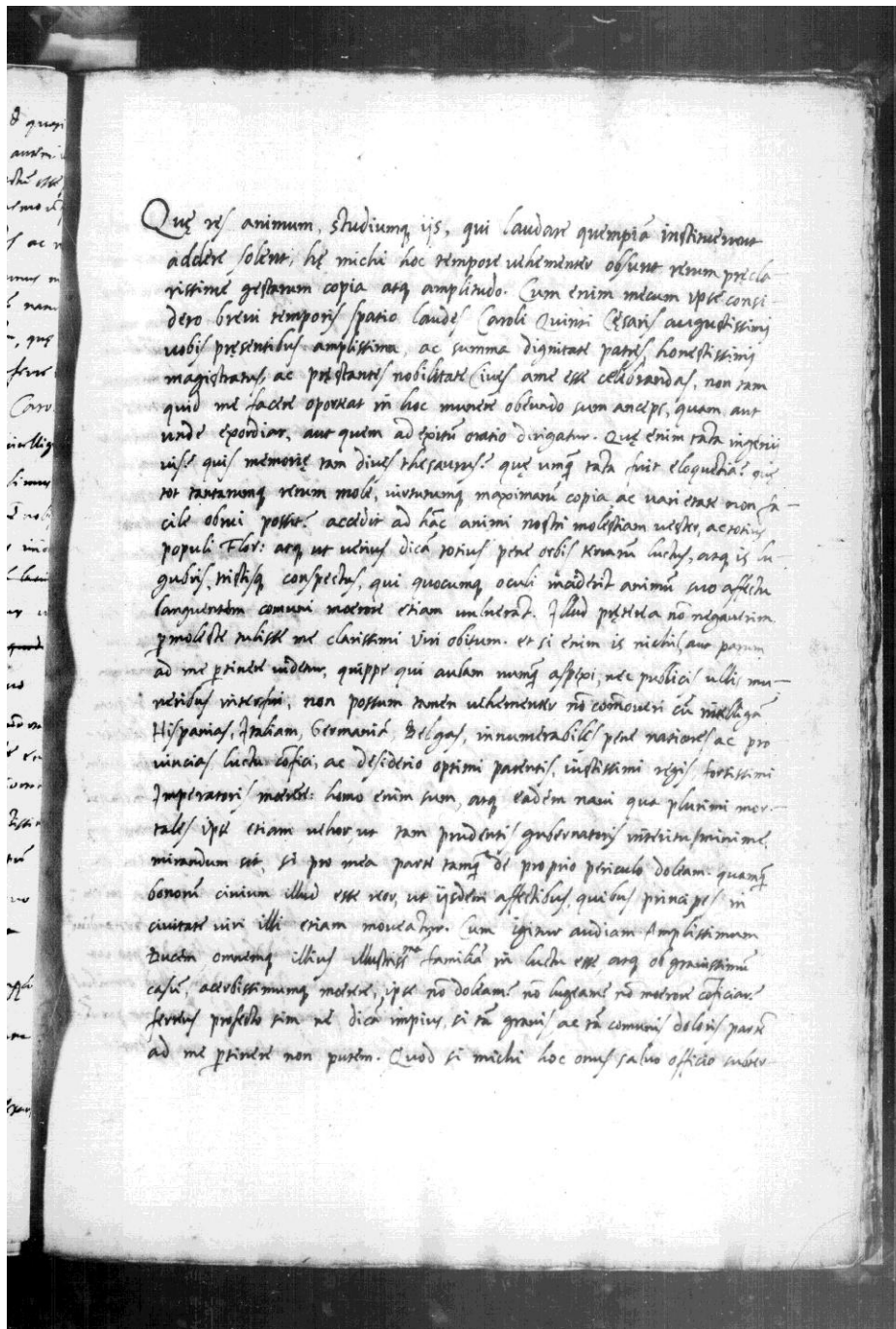


Figure 5 Giovanni Battista Adriani, *Oratio Iohannis Baptistae Adrianii habita Florentiae in sacris funeribus Caroli Quinti, incipit*, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Palatino 1154, f. 4r (photo by BNCf, with permission).

And a further confirmation comes from the autograph signature by Adriani on May 23th 1566, in his role as 'censor' of the Accademia Fiorentina, to ratify the

readmission of Agnolo Bronzino into that illustrious literary institution for poetic merit (Fig. 6).¹⁸

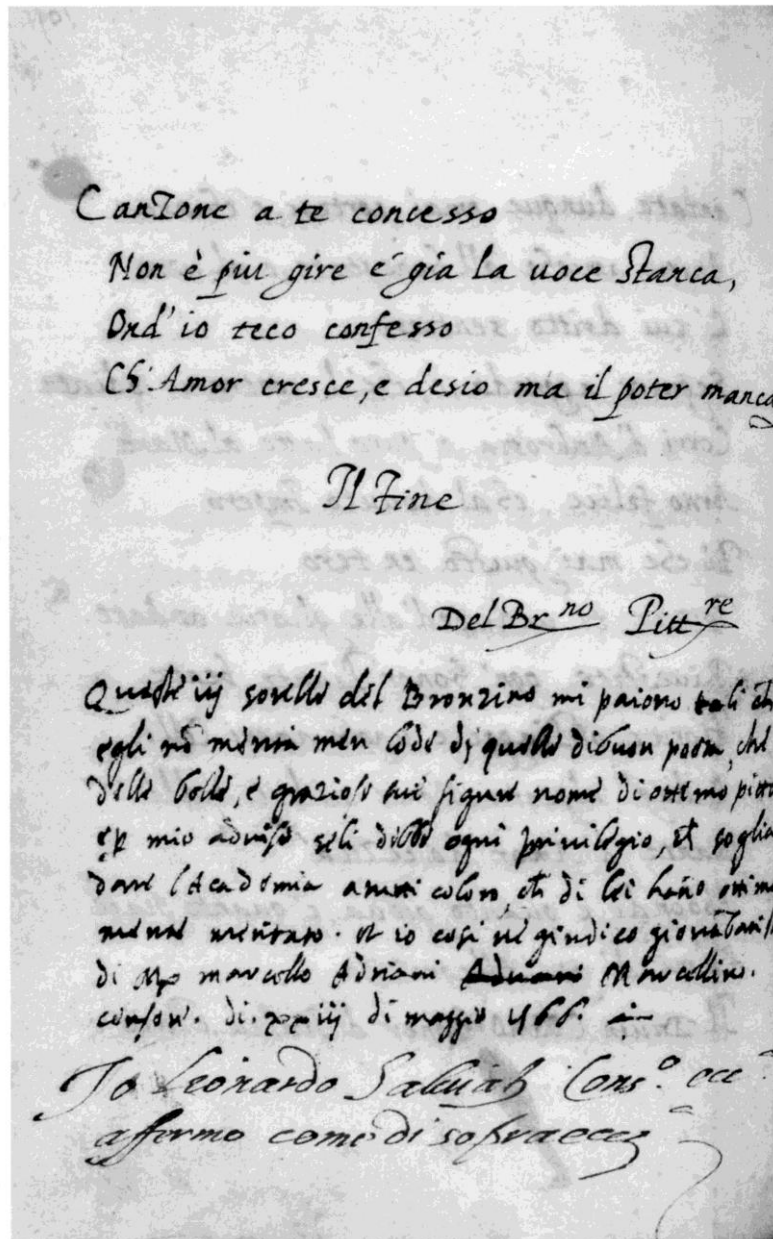


Figure 6 Giovanni Battista Adriani and Leonardo Salviati, *Autograph signing*, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. II IX 10 (*Delle rime del Bronzino pittore libro primo*), f. 109v (photo taken from: *Bronzino. Pittore e poeta alla corte dei Medici*, Carlo Falciani and Antonio Natali, eds, Firenze: Mandragora, 2010, 178, fig. 67).

¹⁸The document present at f. 109v of the ms. II IX 10 of the BNCF (*Delle rime del Bronzino pittore libro primo*), is edited by Giuliano Tanturli, 'Formazione d'un codice e d'un canzoniere: «Delle rime del Bronzino pittore libro primo»', *Studi di filologia italiana*, LXII, 2004, 196-197 footnote 9, and illustrated in Massimiliano Rossi, '«... quella naturalità e fiorentinità (per dir così)». Bronzino: lingua, carne e pittura', In: *Bronzino. Pittore e poeta alla corte dei Medici*, Carlo Falciani and Antonio Natali, eds, Firenze: Mandragora, 2010, 178 fig. 67.

The manuscript is now divided into two fragments consisting of respectively 18 and 20 folios, bringing the top, right, a later numbering in pen and continuous from 1 to 40, with one gap between f. 18v (white as its *recto*) and f. 21r.¹⁹

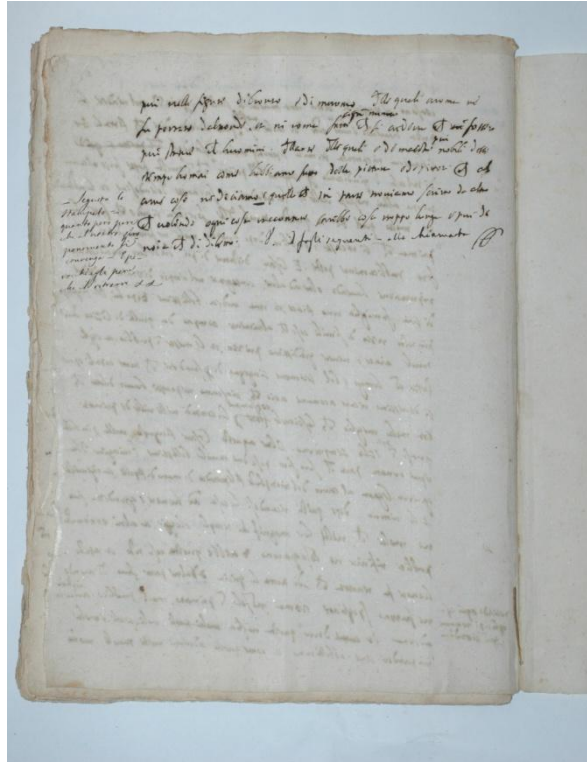


Figure 7 Giovanni Battista Adriani, *The manuscript of Lettera a messer Giorgio Vasari*, Isola Bella, Archivio Borromeo, ms. AD, LM, *Adriani, G. B.*, f. 17v (photo by Archivio Borromeo, with permission).

The text, which has the same form as the printed letter,²⁰ without discontinuity or large changes comes to f. 17v (Fig. 7), when it stops abruptly after a

¹⁹ The manuscript is kept in the Archivio Borromeo, Isola Bella, Stresa (Italy), with the shelfmark AD, LM, *Adriani, G. B.* (henceforth cited as: *Adriani, ABIB*, followed by folio number). The folios have the following measurements: mm. 300 x 215. These watermarks are recognizable: Briquet 6085 at ff. 1-16; Briquet 5377 at ff. 17-18; Briquet 7387 at ff. 21-40. As Dr Alessandro Pisoni, keeper of the Archivio, confirms to me that the ms. was acquired by Count Giberto VI Borromeo (1815-1885), the refined bibliophile: see Carlo Alessandro Pisoni, “À céleberrime bibliophile conte Gilberto Borroméo ...”, In: *Capolavori da scoprire. La collezione Borromeo*, Mauro Natale and Andrea Di Lorenzo, eds, Milano: Skira, 2006, 221-231, ‘Giberto V’, as quoted in Eliana Carrara, ‘Alcune lettere inedite di Giorgio Vasari’, *L’Ellisse*, V, 2010, 69 footnote 30, is therefore not correct.

²⁰ *Adriani, ABIB*, f. 1r: ‘Io ho dubitato alcuna volta meco medesimo messer Giorgio carissimo se quello di che voi et il molto reverendo don Vincenzio Borghini mi havete più volte ricerco si doveva mettere in opera o no, cioè il raccorre et brevemente raccontare coloro che nella pittura et nella scultura, et in arti simiglianti alli antichi tempi furono celebrati, de’ quali il numero è grandissimo, et a che tempo essi feciono fiorire l’arti loro, e delle opere di quelli le più onorate e le più famose, cosa che in sé ha del piacevole assai, ma che più si converrebbe a coloro che in cotali arti fussero [as replacement of ‘fusseno’] esercitati o come pratici ne potessero più propriamente parlare [‘più ... parlare’ in interline instead of ‘dare miglior giudizio di me’ crossed out]’. See Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, p. 179.

few lines, with the narrative that has as its subject the looting of art works made by the Romans in the conquered territories, leaving blank the rest of the folio.²¹

At f. 21r the draft begins with a list of the works of a Greek painter,²² whose name is not testified because of the gap above-described, and the text follows continuously up to f. 23r, when a couple of lines clearly crossed out are a sign of a decided intervention by the author, also attested to by a very visible reference mark in the left margin (Fig. 8).²³ The narrative, in fact, picks up where it left off at f. 17v, with a partial rewriting, in order to reach, except for forms of greeting and farewell seen in Giunti's edition, the end of the printed text.²⁴

²¹ Adriani, ABIB, f. 17v: '[...] figure di bronzo e di marmo, delle quali a Roma ne fu portato dal mondo, et in Roma sì gran numero, che si credeva che vi fossero più statue che huomini; dell'arte delle quali e de' maestri più nobili d'esse è tempo homai, come habbiamo fatto delle pitture e de' pittori, che alcune cose ne diciamo, quello che intanto troviamo scritto da altro, che volendo ogni cosa raccontare sarebbe cosa troppo lunga, e più di noia che di diletto'. See Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 204 (lines 22-7). On this folio there are two later notations and by an other hand than Adriani; on the same line, where Adriani's text ends, is noted: 'Vedi fogli seguenti alla chiamata [a conspicuous reference mark follows]'; in the left margin, a nineteenth-century hand (which I have not been able to identify until now) writes: 'Seguita lo stampato: "quanto però pare che al nostro proponimento si convenga. E perocché egli pare che il ritrarre etc. etc."'

²² Adriani, ABIB, f. 21r: '[...] un che si soffiava il naso, et il medesimo dipinse Oreste che uccideva la madre et Egisto adultero, et in più tavole la guerra troiana, la quale era in Roma, nella loggia di Filippo, et una Cassandra nel tempio della Concordia». See Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 201 (lines 29-32). In the printed text the noun 'Teodoro' is mentioned, as in the *Selva* of Vincenzio Borghini, while the modern editions read 'Theorus' instead: see Pline l'Ancien, *Histoire naturelle. Livre XXXV*, Jean-Michel Croisille, ed, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1985, chapter 144; Eliana Carrara, 'Vasari e Borghini sul ritratto. Gli appunti pliniani della Selva di notizie (ms. K 783.16 del Kunsthistorisches Institut di Firenze)', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 44, 2000, 256 and footnote 135.

²³ Adriani, ABIB, f. 23r: 'E come questo advenne nelle cose dipinte, così e molto più nelle [follows crossed out: 'figure di bro'] statue di bronzo e di marmo, delle quali a Roma ne fu portato d'altronde, et ve ne fu [ve ne fu' in interline instead of 'quivi' crossed out] fatto sì gran numero, che si teneva per certo [per certo' written in interline] che vi fusse più statue che huomini; delle arte delle quali e de' maestri più nobili d'esse è tempo homai, come habbiamo fatto de' pittori e delle pitture, così anco alcune cose ne diciamo [the above mentioned crossed out lines follow], e quanto pare che si convenga al nostro proponimento'. See Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, 204 (lines 21-7). See also above footnote 21.

²⁴ Adriani, ABIB, f. 40r-v: 'Havevano le greche statue et le romane differenza infra di loro assai chiara, che le greche per lo più erano secondo l'usanza delle palestre igniude, dove i giovani alla lotta et ad [ad' written in interline] altri giuochi si esercitavano igniudi, che in quelli ponevano il sommo honore. Le romane si facevano coperte o d'armadura [corrected in interline above 'arme'] o di toga, habito [proprium' crossed out follows] spezialmente romano, il quale honore, come noi dicemo poco fa [f. 40v] dava primieramente il comune; poi, cominciando l'ambitione a crescere, fu dato anco da privati e da comuni forestieri a questo e quel cittadino, o per beneficio ricevuto da lui o per haverlo amico, e massimamente lo facevano i minori amici ai più potenti, di maniera che in brieve spazio le piazze, i templi [i templi' replaced in interline above 'le chiese' crossed out] e le loggie ne furono tutte ripiene'. See Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 225-226 (lines 1-10). Adriani's source is Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, Book XXXIV, Chapters 17-18.

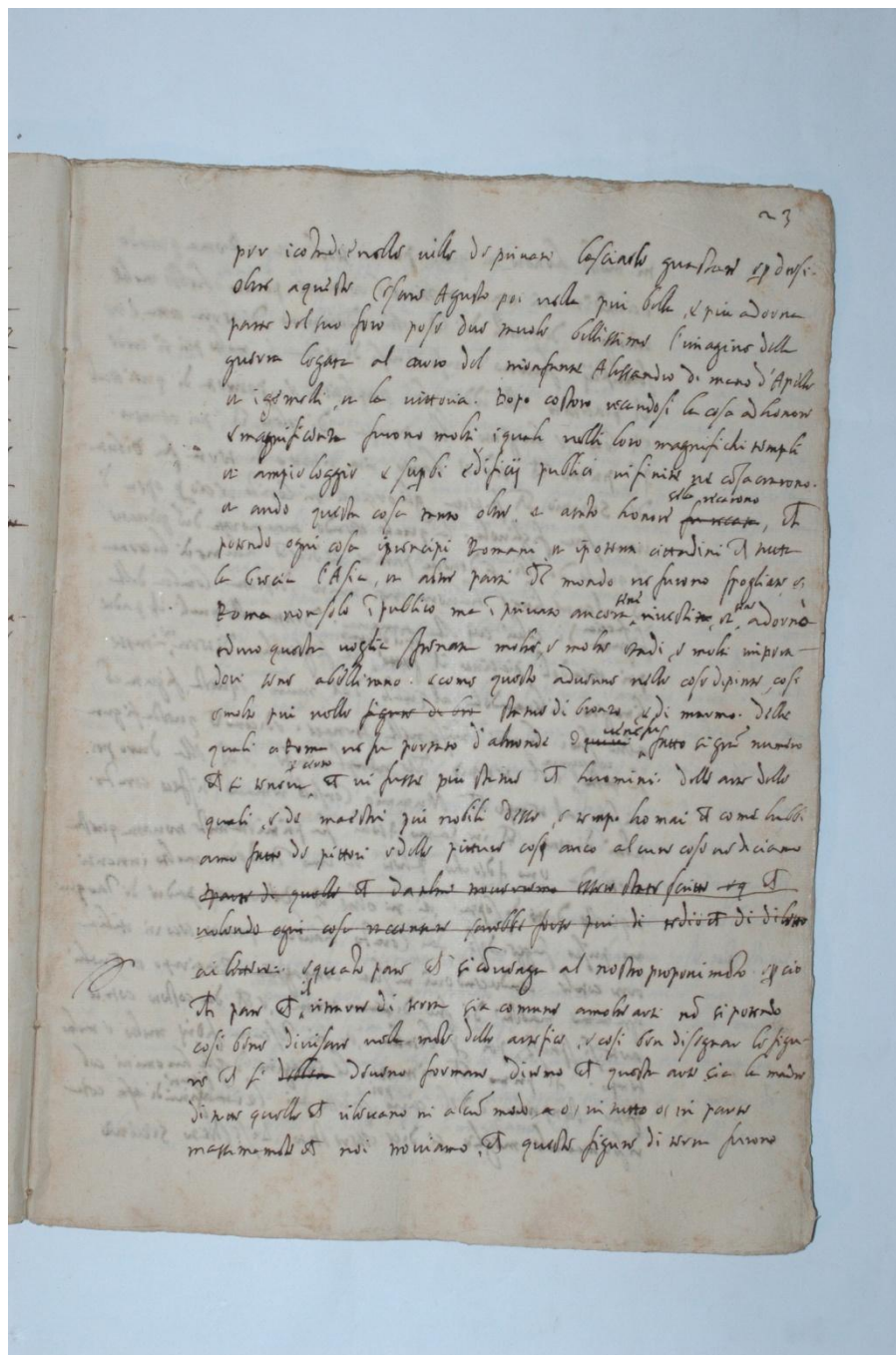


Figure 8 Giovanni Battista Adriani, *The manuscript of Lettera a messer Giorgio Vasari, Isola Bella, Archivio Borromeo, ms. AD, LM, Adriani, G. B., f. 23r* (photo by Archivio Borromeo, with permission).

That the folios of the Archivio Borromeo constitute the first draft of Adriani's *Lettera* is confirmed by the state of the incomplete sketch of some parts, where precise references to years of activity of one or more artists are lacking or of the accomplishment of a work, generically remembered with the mention of the ancient Olympics then in progress, on the basis of the Plinian text.²⁵

²⁵ Adriani, ABIB, f. 33r: 'Dicesi [located on the left margin, with a reference mark, to replace 'e si dice' crossed out in the body of the text] che i primi maestri di questa arte di cui ci sia memoria

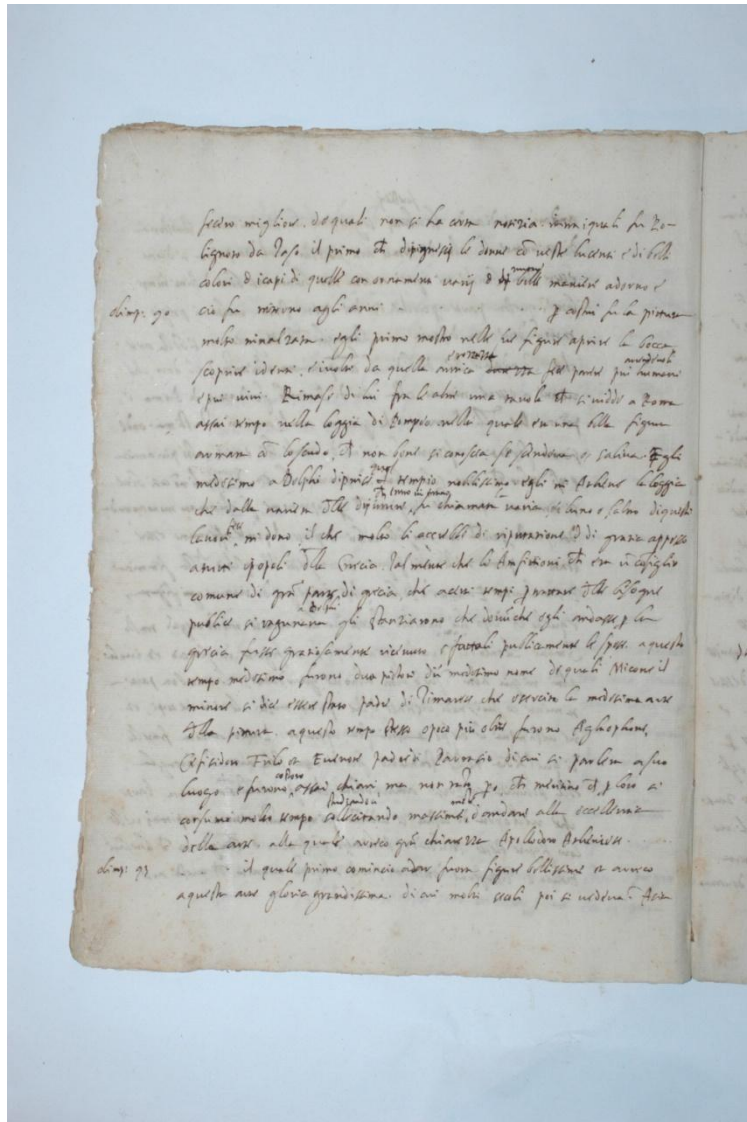


Figure 9 Giovanni Battista Adriani, *The manuscript of Lettera a messer Giorgio Vasari*, Isola Bella, Archivio Borromeo, ms. AD, LM, Adriani, G. B., f. 5v (photo by Archivio Borromeo, with permission).

A clear demonstration is present at f. 5v (Fig. 9), where the name is quoted of 'Polignotus of Thasus, the first to paint women with clothes of bright and beautiful colours, and adorn their heads with various ornaments and of the new fashions, and this was around the years Thanks to him, painting rose in importance. He first

furono Dipeno e Scilo, che nacquero nell'isola di Creti al tempo che i Persi regnavano, che secondo il corso degli anni de' Greci viene a essere intorno a l'olimpiade cinquantesima inanzi alla fondazione di Roma anni [...]. See Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 216-217 (lines 39-40 and 1-3), where the date is now completed: 'intorno alla olimpiade cinquantesima, cioè dopo alla fondazione di Roma anni 137'. The corresponding passage is to be found in the book XXXVI, chapter 9 of Pliny's *Naturalis historia*. And see also f. 36v, that is to be compared with Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 221 (lines 16-17) and with Chapter 30 of Book XXXVI of Pliny's *Naturalis historia*.

made his figures open their mouth, and show teeth, and made the faces look more alive and more gentle than the old coarseness.²⁶

The passage in question was integrated and corrected as follows in the Giunti edition: 'Polignotus of Thasus, the first one who painted women with clothes of bright and beautiful colours, and adorned their heads with various ornaments and of the new fashions, and this was around 330 years after Rome was built. Thanks to him, painting rose in importance. He first made his figures open their mouth, and show teeth, and made the faces look more alive and more gentle than the old coarseness'.²⁷

Along with this passage from the *Lettera*, which echoes Pliny exactly,²⁸ one can mention another point in the same folio of the manuscript, where Adriani recalls the 'excellence of the art [i.e. painting], to which the Athenian Apollodorus brought much clarity... [on the left margin 'Olimp. 93'], who first began to create beautiful figures in this art and obtained very great glory'.²⁹ Also in this case, the time reference, inserted in the manuscript's margin according to the Olympic cronology, is transformed in the 1568 edition in a dating *ab Urbe condita*: 'around the year 345 after Rome was built'.³⁰

An example of a broader integration made by the Florentine historian into his draft is demonstrated by the narration of Myron's celebrated activity 'for that beautiful heifer that he made of bronze, which was much praised in famous verses. He also painted a dog of great beauty and a man who threw the discus into the air, and a satyr who appeared to be surprised by the bagpipe's sound [...].'³¹ A long

²⁶ Adriani, ABIB, f. 5v: 'Polignoto da Taso, il primo che dipingessi le donne con veste lucenti e di belli colori, ed i capi di quelle con ornamenti varii e di nuove ['di' replaces a two-syllable word beginning with vowel (reason why Adriani uses the conjunction copulative 'ed', here amended in 'e'), while 'nuove' replaces in interline 'belle'] maniere adornò; e ciò fu intorno agli anni ... [on the left margin 'Olimp. 90']. Per costui fu la pittura molto innalzata. Egli primo mostrò nelle sue figure aprire la bocca, scoprire i denti, e i volti da quella antica rozzezza ['rozzezza' in interline (preceded by 'e', here expunged) to replace 'durezza' crossed out] fece parere più arrendevoli ['arrendevoli' in interline to replace 'humani'] e più vivi.

²⁷ I quote directly to be more faithful to the sixteenth-century text from *Delle Vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori et architettori scritte da M. Giorgio Vasari pittore et architetto aretino. Secondo et ultimo volume della terza parte* [...]. *Et con una Descrizione degl'artefici antichi, greci et latini, et delle più notabili memorie di quella età* [...], in Firenze, appresso i Giunti, 1568, f. a3v: 'Polignoto da Taso, il primo che dipinse le donne con veste lucenti e di begli colori, et i capi di quelle con ornamenti varii e di nuove maniere adornò; e ciò fu intorno a gli anni 330 dopo Roma edificata: per costui fu la pittura molto inalzata. Egli primo nelle figure humane mostrò aprir la bocca, scoprire i denti, et i volti da quella antica rozzezza fece parere più arrendevoli e più vivi'. See Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 185 (lines 11-17).

²⁸ See Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, XXXV, 58.

²⁹ Adriani, ABIB, f. 5v: 'eccellenza della arte, alla quale arrecò gran chiarezza Apollodoro atheniese ..., il quale primo cominciò a dar fuori figure bellissime et arrecò a questa arte gloria grandissima'.

³⁰ *Delle Vite*, f. a3v: 'intorno a l'anno 345 da Roma edificata'; see Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 185 (lines 36-39); the source is Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, XXXV, 60.

³¹ Adriani, ABIB, f. 26v: 'per quella bella giovenca che egli fece ['che egli fece' inserted in the interline] di bronzo, la quale fu in versi lodati molto commendata. Fece anco un cane di meravigliosa bellezza et uno che scagliava in aria il disco, et un satiro il quale pareva che stupisse al suono della sampogna. See *Delle Vite*, f. d1r: '[...] per quella bella giovenca che egli formò di bronzo,

annotation appears on the left margin, taken from Cicero's *Verrines* (2.4.93), which was not accepted in the Giunti edition: 'At Agrigento in Sicily there was an Apollo, that had written on its thigh with letters inlaid in silver the name of its maker, a statue that was stolen by Verres' (Fig. 10).³²

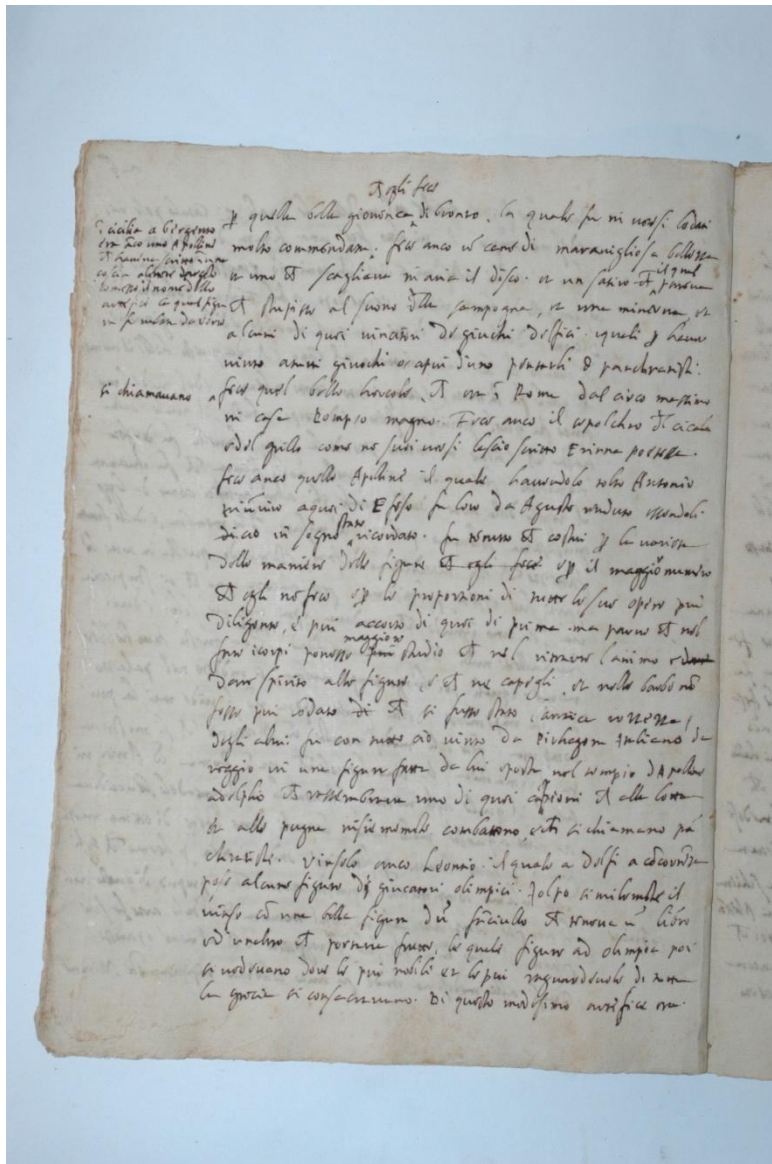


Figure 10 Giovanni Battista Adriani, *The manuscript of Lettera a messer Giorgio Vasari*, Isola Bella, Archivio Borromeo, ms. AD, LM, Adriani, G. B., f. 26v (photo by Archivio Borromeo, with permission).

la quale fu in versi lodati molto commendata. Fece anco un cane di meravigliosa bellezza, et uno giovane che scagliava in aria il disco, et un satiro, il quale pareva che stupisse al suono della sampogna [...]; Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 208 (lines 27-31); the source is again Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, XXXV, 57.

³² Adriani, ABIB, f. 26v: 'In Cicilia a Gergento era anco uno Apolline che haveva scritto in una coscia a lettere d'argento comesso il nome dello artefice, la qual figura fu rubata da Verre'.

At f. 39r, still on the left margin, a note is present that was then inserted in the text of the edition that appeared in 1568³³ relating to the dispersal of ancient statues in the Byzantine period: '[...] in the time of the emperor Zeno in a very large fire, which destroyed the finest and the best part of Constantinople, many [i.e. statues] were ruined, among which was that beautiful Aphrodite of Cnidus by Praxiteles, of which we made mention above, and that wonderful Jupiter by Phidias, which was at Olympia, and many other noble statues in marble and bronze' (Fig. 11 at end of text).³⁴

At f. 39v (Fig. 12 at end of text)³⁵ we find a broad range of corrections related to the passage where the presence is mentioned, already in Republican Rome, of statues in honour of outstanding personalities: 'Also Hermodorus had a statue in his

³³ Adriani, ABIB, f. 39r: '[...] al tempo di Zenone imperatore per un grandissimo incendio, che [~~'gran'~~ crossed out follows] disfece la più bella e la miglior parte di Costantinopoli, molte ne [~~'molte ne'~~ inserted in interline] furono guaste, fra le quali fu [a letter crossed out follows] quella bella Venere Gnidia di Prassitele, di cui di sopra facemo menzione, e quel Giove miracoloso di Fidia che era ad Olimpia [~~'e quel Giove miracoloso di Fidia che era ad Olimpia'~~ inserted in margin], e molte altre nobili di marmo e di bronzo'; see *Delle Vite*, f. e3r: '[...] al tempo di Zenone imperatore per un grandissimo incendio, il quale disfece la più bella e la miglior parte di Costantinopoli, molte [*that is* statues] ne furono guaste, infra le quali fu quella bella Venere da Gnido di Prassitele, di cui di sopra facemo menzione, e quel meraviglioso Giove Olimpico fatto per mano di Fidia, e molte altre nobili di marmo e di bronzo'; see Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 224 (lines 18-23). The Phidian sculpture probably was lost in the fire that, in 475, destroyed the Lauseion in Constantinople, where it had been brought along with other classical works: see Robin Cormack, *Icons*, London: The British Museum Press, 2007, 27. For the collection of antiquities set up in his palace by Lausus, a rich eunuch and 'praepositus sacri cubiculi' (in charge of the sacred bedroom) see: Cyril Mango, Michael Vickers and Eric D. Francis, 'The palace of Lausus at Constantinople and its collection of ancient statues, *Journal of the History of Collections*, IV/1, 1992, 93-95.

³⁴ According to information provided by Frey (see *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori scritte da M. Giorgio Vasari*, Karl Frey, ed, München: Müller, 1911, 312 footnote 262), the source is to be found in Georgius Cedrenus' *Σύνοψις ἱστορίων*, printed in Basel in 1566 in a bilingual version (Greek and Latin), with rich indexes and chronological tables: *Georgii Cedreni Annales, sive Historiae ab exordio mundi ad Isacium Comnenum [...]*, Basileae, per Ioan. Oporinum et Episcopios fratres, 1566, 265 lines 12-13, and 288-289 (lines 57-60 and 3-9). About the author, who lived in Constantinople in the late eleventh and early twelfth century, see Riccardo Maisano, 'Note su Giorgio Cedreno e la tradizione storiografica bizantina', *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi*, III, 1983, 227-248; for the Basel edition see Agostino Pertusi, *Bisanzio e i Turchi nella cultura del Rinascimento e del Barocco. Tre saggi*, Carlo Maria Mazzucchi, ed, Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2004, 55-56.

³⁵ Adriani, ABIB, f. 39v: 'Hebbevela [~~'la'~~ inserted in interline] ancora [~~'ra'~~ inserted in interline. 'La statua' crossed out follows] quello Hermodoro savio da Efeso, il quale, a quei X cittadini romani che compilavano le romane [~~'romane'~~ inserted in interline to replace 'leggi' crossed out], le greche leggi interpretava. E quello Oratio Coclite, il qual solo sopra il ponte haveva l'impeto de' Toscani sostenuto. Vedevansene inoltre molte altre antiche poste dal popolo o dal Senato ai lor cittadini, e massimamente a coloro i quali, essendo ambasciatori, erano stati da' nimici uccisi, come alcuni che da [~~'Fidenati'~~ crossed out follows. Adriani's correction seems to originate from having compared the narration of Pliny's, *Naturalis historia*, XXXIV, 23-24, which is the entire passage's source, with Livy's *History of Rome*, IV, 17, where Lars Tolumnius, King of the Veientes, is quoted] il re de' [~~'d'~~ crossed out follows] Veienti, a Fidene [~~'Il re ... Fidene'~~ inserted in the left margin, with reference mark in the text], furono uccisi, et altri da Teusa, regina di Schiavonia, e quello Ottavio che, rinchiudendo il re Antiocho in breve cerchio fattoli intorno nella polvere con una verga, e che domandava spazio, costrinse a risolversi avanti che quindi uscisse, il quale, essendo poi dagli inimici ucciso, meritò per questo conto d'havere in ringhiera una statua'.

honour, the wise man of Ephesus, who translated the Greek laws to the ten Roman citizens who were writing the Roman ones. And also the Horatius Cocles, who alone on the bridge [i.e. Pons Sublicius] had resisted the attack of the Etruscans. There were also many other ancient statues erected by the people or by the Senate to their citizens, and especially to those who, being ambassadors, were killed by enemies, like some who were killed by the king of Veientes, in Fidenae, and others by Teusa,³⁶ Queen of Slavonia, and the Octavius who, having locked King Antiochus in a tight circle made around him in the dust with a stick, while he was asking for space, forced him to make his choice before he could come out, who, being then killed by the enemy, deserved for this reason to have a statue on the Rostra'.³⁷

As evidenced by a note of a nineteenth-century hand,³⁸ the second part of the passage (from 'come alcuni' to 'una statua') is not present in the Giunti edition, which thus gives no account of the names mentioned by Adriani among 'ambasciatori [...] da' nimici uccisi'.³⁹

Every exegesis of the *Letter* should in the future, I think, start from this manuscript, which testifies to corrections and variations made by Adriani himself, and certifies to the collaboration with Vasari.

Documenting the drafting of the *Lettera*, with changes, variations and additions made by Adriani to his own text, as well as the editorial curation which took place in the Giunti workshop,⁴⁰ is also a useful way to approach, with proper respect, the large corpus of the *Vite*. It is important to examine, without prejudice and preconception, Vasari's extraordinary work, and his personal involvement as a writer⁴¹ to create one of the masterpieces of Italian Renaissance literature.

³⁶ Already Ermolaus Barbaro (1454-1493), based on Polibio (2, 4, 7; 2, 6, 4 ff.; 2, 8, 4 ff.; 2, 9, 1; 2, 11, 4 ff.; 2, 12, 3) had doubts ('non Teusam' about the name transmitted by the manuscripts of *Naturalis historia*, corrected in 'Teuta' in modern editions: see *Hermolai Barbari castigationes Plinianaee et in Pomponium Melam*, Giovanni Pozzi, ed, 4 vols, Patavii: in aedibus Antenoreis, 1973-1979, III, 1090; Pline l'Ancien, *Histoire naturelle. Livre XXXIV*, Henry Le Bonniec and Hubert Gallet de Santerre, eds, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1953, 116.

³⁷ For the presence of statues on the *Rostra* of the Roman Forum and in the *Comitium* see Markus Sehlmeier, *Stadtrömische Ehrenstatuen der republikanischen Zeit. Historizität und Kontext von Symbolen nobilitären Standesbewusstseins*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999, 63-88 and 103-109.

³⁸ On the left margin, pointed out by a 'manicula' (a reference mark in the shape of a little hand): 'Tutto questo luogo fra le due linee verticali manca nello stampato'.

³⁹ See *Delle Vite*, f. e3v; Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, I, 225 (lines 13-19).

⁴⁰ Roland Le Mollé, *Georges Vasari et le vocabulaire de la critique d'art dans les "Vite"*, Grenoble: Ellug 1988, 209-235 emphasizes the importance of the corrections made to the Vasari's text in the Giunti's typography. On the editorial work see Paolo Trovato, *L'ordine dei tipografi. Lettori, stampatori, correttori tra Quattro e Cinquecento*, Roma: Bulzoni, 1998, 175-195; Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy. The editor and the vernacular text, 1470-1600*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 127-139 and 155-181 for what concerns the sixteenth-century Florence.

⁴¹ Faced with the thesis, dear to some Anglo-Saxon scholars (see Thomas Frangenberg, 'Bartoli, Giambullari and the prefaces to Vasari's *Lives* (1550)', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, LXV, 2002, 244-258; Charles Hope, 'The Lives of the Trecento Artists in Vasari's First Edition', In: *Le Vite del Vasari. Genesi, topoi, ricezione. Die Vite Vasaris. Entstehung, Topoi, Rezeption*, Katja Burzer, Charles Davis, Sabine Feser, and Alessandro Nova, eds, Venezia: Marsilio, 2010, 33 and footnote 1, with reference to previous bibliography), of Vasari non-author (or author only formally) of the

There is, in conclusion, a more and more urgent need for a study devoted to Vasari's language, after the research undertaken by Nencioni,⁴² and not continued by the most recent historiography, although certainly there are — and indeed new ones emerge — autograph documents of the painter of the Medici court.⁴³

Vite, I fully agree with the objections raised by Mario Pozzi, Enrico Mattioda, *Giorgio Vasari storico e critico*, Firenze: Olschki, 2006, 22 and footnote 45; Floriana Conte, *Cronache vasariane per il XXI secolo: rotte di inchiesta*, Torino: Lexis 2010, 10-15; Piero Scapecchi, 'Chi scrisse le *Vite* del Vasari. Riflessioni sulla *editio princeps* del 1550', *Letteratura & Arte*, 9, 2011, 153-159, to reaffirm what I have already stated in Eliana Carrara, 'Spigolature vasariane. Per un riesame delle "Vite" e della loro fortuna nella Roma di primo Seicento', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, in press. Are still valid the cautious comments made by Gianfranco Folena, *Il linguaggio del caos. Studi sul plurilinguismo rinascimentale*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1991, 261 footnote 10, about the letters written by Titian: 'Tiziano si è certo servito di varie consulenze letterarie, e quelle dell' Aretino e del Verdizzotti sono a tratti evidenti: ma tutte le lettere da lui firmate vanno considerate "autentiche", seppure in parte o *in toto* frutto di una mediazione letteraria [...]'.
⁴² Giovanni Nencioni, 'Premesse all'analisi stilistica del Vasari', *Lingua nostra*, XV/2, 1954, 33-40.

And see also, and even further back in time, the 'Parte seconda. Esame stilistico dell'opera vasariana' of the still useful monograph by Ugo Scoti-Bertinelli, *Giorgio Vasari scrittore*, Pisa: Lischi, 1905, 155-223. Vasari, in the Torrentino edition (1550), had made a profession of humility, but also of conscious pride in his own expressive capacity, in the 'Conclusione della opera a gli artefici et a' lettori' ('Work's final observations addressed to craftsmen and to readers'): '[...] io ho scritto come pittore, e nella lingua che io parlo, senza altrimenti considerare se ella si è fiorentina o toscana, e se molti vocaboli delle nostre arti, seminati per tutta l'opera, possono usarsi sicuramente, tirandomi a servirmi di loro il bisogno di essere inteso da' miei artefici più che la voglia di esser lodato. Molto meno ho curato ancora l'ordine comune della ortografia, senza cercare altrimenti se la Z è da più che il T, o se si puote scriver senza H, perché; rimessomene da principio in persona giudiziosa e degna di onore, come a cosa amata da me e che mi ama singularmente, le diedi in cura tutta questa opera, con libertà e piena et intera di guidarla a suo piacimento, pur che i sensi non si alterassino et il contenuto delle parole, ancora che forse male intessuto, non si mutasse'; see Vasari-Bettarini/Barocchi, VI, 412. As noted by Pozzi, Mattioda, *Giorgio Vasari*, 5 footnote 12, the passage (from 'tuscan' onward) has this version only in the first edition of the *Vite*, then it changes radically in that of 1568 (where even the mention of the 'judicious person and worthy of honour' vanishes, who is to be identified, in my opinion, with Borghini: see Carrara, *Spigolature*); see Vasari, *Lives of the painters*, II, 1065-1067. The value and originality of Vasari's language was also well recognized by Michael Baxandall, 'Doing justice to Vasari', *Times Literary Supplement*, 1980, February 1, 111: '1550 was a benign moment for the biggest critical catch of all, but it was Vasari who made it' and by Philip Sohm, 'Ordering history with style: Giorgio Vasari on the art of history', in: *Antiquity and its interpreters*, Alina Payne, Ann Kuttner and Rebekah Smick, eds, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 46-49. An important work on this topic by Paola Barocchi is in the course of completion.

⁴³ Carrara, *Alcune lettere inedite*.

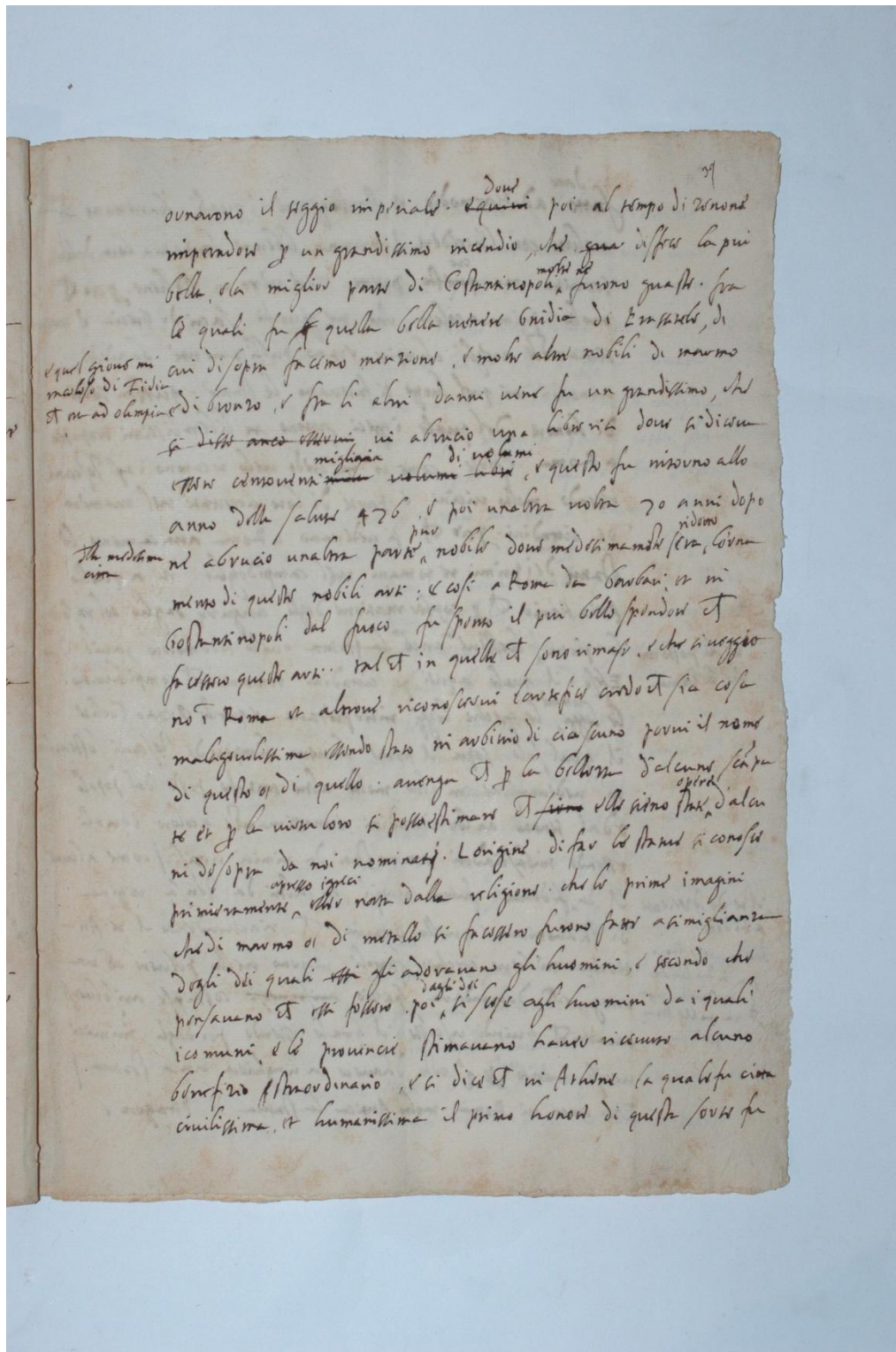


Figure 11 Giovanni Battista Adriani, *The manuscript of Lettera a messer Giorgio Vasari*, Isola Bella, Archivio Borromeo, ms. AD, LM, Adriani, G. B., f. 39r (photo by Archivio Borromeo, with permission).

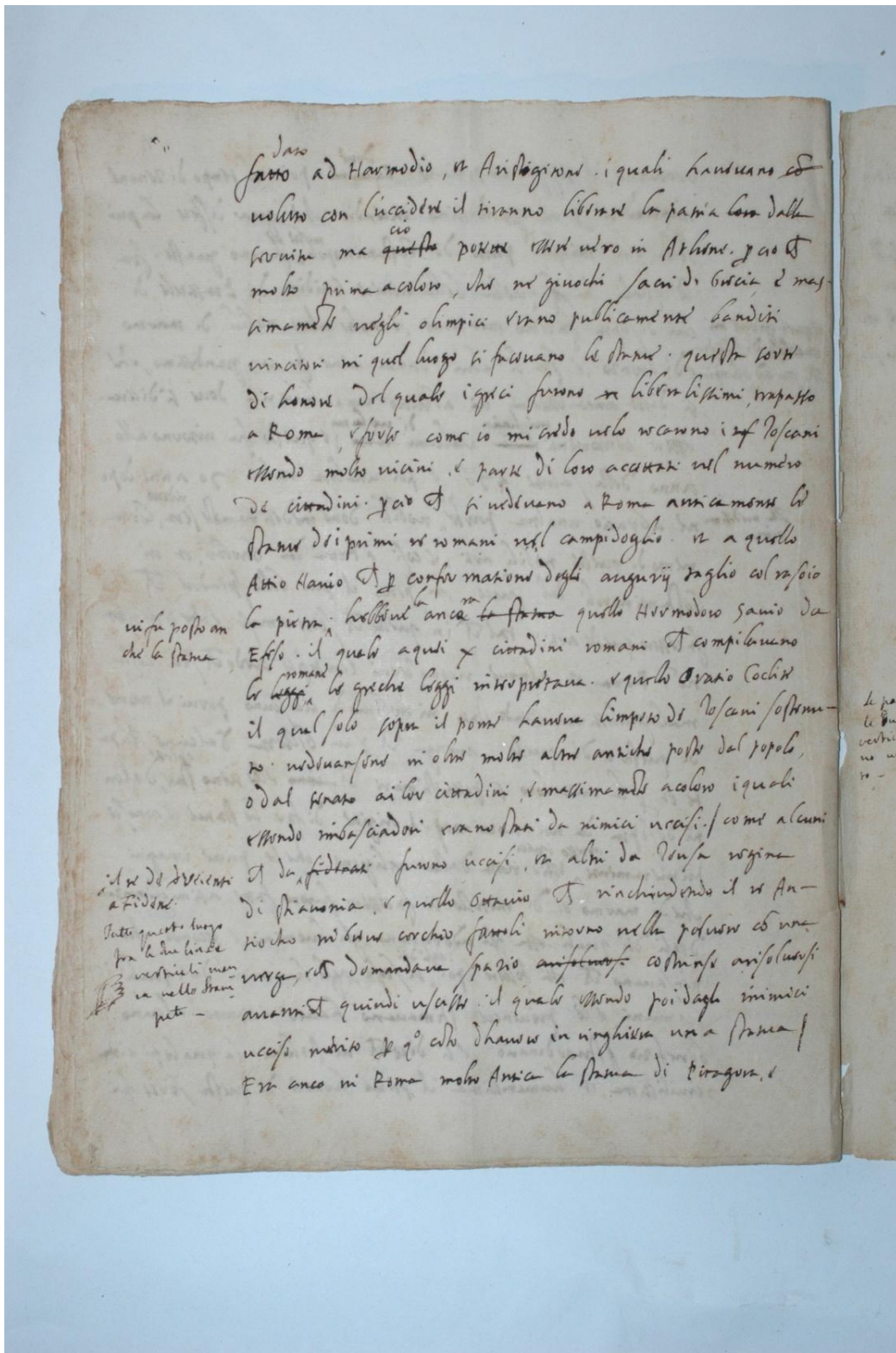


Figure 12 Giovanni Battista Adriani, *The manuscript of Lettera a messer Giorgio Vasari*, Isola Bella, Archivio Borromeo, ms. AD, LM, Adriani, G. B., f. 39v (photo by Archivio Borromeo, with permission).

Eliaana Carrara Giovanni Battista Adriani and the drafting of the second
edition of the *Vite*

In 1984 **Eliaana Carrara** was admitted to the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy of the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, where she obtained a PhD in the History of Art Criticism (Supervisor Paola Barocchi). In 1998 she received a scholarship from the National Research Council (sector “Science and Technology of Cultural Heritage”) to study abroad at the Warburg Institute in London. From 1 February 2005 she is a researcher in the History of Art Criticism. She is now working on Vasari’s texts and his cultural *milieu* in the Medici court: Eliaana Carrara, ‘Pliny and the Art of the Ancients and the Moderns. Reading the *Naturalis Historia* (Books XXXIV-XXXVI) in Florence in the Sixteenth Century (the Anonimo Magliabechiano to Vasari’s Lives)’, in: *De l’autorité à la référence. Les repères textuels à la Renaissance*, Isabelle Diu and Raphaële Mouren, eds, in print).

Eliaana Carrara
Researcher in Storia della critica d’arte
(History of Art Criticism)
Università degli Studi del Molise
Facoltà di Scienze Umane e Sociali
Via Mazzini 8
86170 Isernia
Italy

eliana.carrara@unimol.it