Bernard Berenson's Cinquecentine: Inspirations from the Sixteenth-Century Accademia Fiorentina

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> If there be such an unimaginable thing as survival, may my spirit haunt this library, and enjoy it physically as I can no longer.[1] (Bernard Berenson)

WHAT THE BERENSON LIBRARY, part of the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies in Florence, is known for today represents only a portion of Bernard Berenson's reading interests.[2] It respects precisely neither Berenson's business activities as an art dealer for Italian Renaissance objects nor his scholarly work on Renaissance paintings, which shaped but a small part of it. The book collection also does not exactly mirror Berenson's original plan to open a cultural center for the arts and humanities, an idea that was then altered. When Harvard University instituted a Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, the library had to be stocked to fill in gaps or to create sections ad hoc that were totally nonexistent (such as the music section). Berenson's original library did have, on the one hand, a focus on Italian Renaissance painting; on the other hand, it also attempted to be a universal library of the humanities, going far beyond the Renaissance. This means that the collection was not limited to Italy or to a certain period but incor-

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1. Bernard Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight: From the Diaries of 1947–1958* ed. Nicky Mariano and Iris Origo (London, 1963), 504 (November 10, 1957).

2. On the modern history of the library after Bernard Berenson's death, see Martin Faigel, "Berenson Library (Biblioteca Berenson)," *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* 2 (1969): 335–43; Michael Rocke, "The Biblioteca Berenson at Villa I Tatti," *Art Libraries Journal* 33 (2008): 5–9.

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porated international humanities, which only really excluded science and music, as Berenson himself described: "What treasures in every field of art. Scarcely anything missing that really counts, from the whole world. . . . Photos and magnificent reproductions of not only Italian and Greek and Roman art, but of every province of Antiquity, or Far Eastern, or Indian, or pre-Columbian American. They give me the only real satisfaction that my so-long and so-varied past can still offer me, and I cannot help."[3] Describing Berenson in his reading interests as a palpable omnivore, with a mind easily caught and stimulated, probably best explains this vast collection, spanning America and Africa to the Far East, with Europe as its focus. Looking through the old account books of library acquisitions gives an idea of the efforts that were made to retrieve this diverse body of literature.

Looking at Berenson's rare book collection offers a completely different picture, however. Given his interests in Italian Gothic and Renaissance painting, one would expect to find some illustrated manuscripts and a variety of incunables. Both categories must have been easy to possess for an art dealer who obtained precious manuscripts and paper rolls from many parts of the world, Persia and China included. Yet there is hardly any such thing: despite the fact that Berenson was very knowledgeable about medieval manuscripts and illustrations,[4] no illuminated manuscripts are to be found, and his incunables amount to only three, where even the usually richly illustrated Dante commentary by Cristoforo Landino was acquired in one of the few editions without woodcuts.[5] The picture is different for his Cinquecentine collection. It reflects a separate interest of Berenson's, concentrated in an area otherwise not very obvious. This collection seems to represent an attempt to re-create the library of a sixteenth-century Florentine member of an academy, with respect to the size, topics, and languages present, although Berenson declared that he never bought "a book for its rarity from a collector's point of view."[6] If Berenson may be described as an art collector, as testified by his marvelous col-

3. Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight*, 503–4 (November 10, 1957). In the last years before his death, Berenson made quite frequent remarks in his diary about the library and often called it the only real satisfaction of his life.

4. See Nicky Mariano's narration on how Berenson impressed the librarian at Aschaffenburg with his knowledge of medieval manuscripts. Nicky Mariano, *Forty Years with Berenson* (New York, 1966), 53–54; see also 92–93 about another occasion Berenson spent in libraries to study manuscripts.

5. Cristoforo Landino, *Comento sopra la Divina commedia* (Venice, 1484); Leon Battista Alberti, *De re aedificatoria* (Florence, 1485); Aeneas Piccolomini, *Epistolae familiares* (Nuremberg, 1496). However, Berenson bought a modern edition containing the woodcuts of three different fifteenth-century editions of Landino's commentary: *Figure quattrocentesche della Divina commedia: Tratte dalle edizioni di Firenze, per Nicholo di Lorenzo della Magna, 1481; Brescia, per Boninum de Boninis di Raguxi, 1487; Venezia, per Bernardino Benali & Matthio da Parma, 1491* (Turin, 1911).

6. Bernard Berenson, *Sketch for a Self-Portrait* (London, 1949), 137.

lection of Tuscan painting and oriental sculpture, then he certainly may also figure among important rare book collectors. In this field, however, his major focus was on titles published in Italy. Compared to the main part of the library, Berenson's collection of Cinquecentine is less expansive than one may expect. The Berenson Library today possesses a total of 218 books from the sixteenth century, of which 105 date from Berenson's time, plus fifteen Cinquecentine that are now lost.[7] This makes a total of 120 Cinquecentine that Berenson held in his collection. Out of these thirty-four are considered rare books with only up to ten exemplars known in worldwide library catalogs, with the majority, exactly eighteen, being much rarer, with up to five copies known. Therefore, 28 percent of Berenson's Cinquecentine are rare examples, and 15 percent are close to being unique copies, judging from surviving exemplars.[8]

Berenson started his Cinquecentine collection with a clear choice that he would maintain for the rest of his life: he nearly exclusively bought early printed books that would be dear to a "studioso," a person who presumably read most of these texts. He was not a book collector in the classical sense, someone who would buy manuscripts or illuminated books that were nice to look at. That these would have been available, and also in great quantity, is testified by the plenitude of archival records for imported books from England, Germany, and France. As the records in the Soprintendenza per le Esportazioni ed Importazioni in Florence show, for the first two decades of the twentieth century, for example, the Libreria Antiquaria editor Leo S. Olschki imported a variety of books of hours, bibles, psalters, illuminated manuscripts, and some classical and patristic texts, most of them manuscripts and very few published. The so-called Libreria Voynich, situated in London, sent illuminated manuscripts, books of hours, psalters, bibles, and classical texts to its Florentine seat. And other smaller active booksellers buying books from England, Germany, and France show that this must have been standard. Most of these purchases were manuscripts, either religious texts or richly illuminated bibles or books of hours from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century and produced mainly in Italy, although some also came from France. The taste for late medieval and Renaissance art was certainly growing in Italy, since other art objects, such as panel paintings, furniture, and carpets, also date from these centuries. Very few printed books figure in the records because even rare and early printed books were not yet considered valuable objects and therefore probably did

7. Some early printed books were given away right after Berenson's death.

8. To briefly mention the seventeenth-century books today in the library, a smaller percentage dates back to Berenson's time, while the majority probably came through bequests. The seventeenth-century books from Berenson's time also concentrate on publications from Italy in Italian.

not need to be documented. Moreover, the price was often much the same as that of modern editions.

Berenson studied medieval and Renaissance manuscripts the same way he studied paintings: in front of the original and with photos he took home and added to his vast photo collection. He actually possessed several hundred photographs of illuminated manuscripts of the eleventh to the fifteenth century but hardly any reproductions from a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century printed book.[9] Incunables are not well represented even among the reproductions, for several reasons. In terms of illustrations, the often more splendidly decorated manuscript offered better material for questions of attribution or for comparisons with paintings. The fifteenth century had less to offer in terms of art theory and art criticism, what Berenson would really be interested in (as we will see). These circumstances did not mean that Berenson was not informed about fifteenth-century print illustrations, such as woodcuts. His work on Renaissance painters focused on their entire oeuvre, panel paintings, cassone paintings, and woodcuts included, as can be seen in his essay on "Alunno di Domenico" (Bartolommeo di Giovanni), one of the most important woodcut illustrators in Florence at the end of the fifteenth century.[10] But we do not know where Berenson studied these objects—presumably in other libraries (see n. 3).

9. Among the works Berenson studied in reproductions, there figure among the medieval Italian and Eastern manuscripts works such as an eleventh-century *Vita Sancti Benedicti* from the Vatican Library, a twelfth-century Beneventan Chronicon S. Sophiae (Vatican Library), the twelfth-century Bible from Todi (Vatican Library), the eleventh-century psalter of Farfa (Vatican Library), a Russian eleventh-century psalter (museum in Cividale), an Armenian Evangeliar from the thirteenth century (Walters Art Museum in Baltimore), an Emilian Bible around 1300 (Walters Art Museum in Baltimore), and miniatures from a thirteenth-century Bible (Biblioteca Comunale in Catania), which he listed under Cavallini's followers (as noted on the photographs). From the fourteenth and fifteenth century, he studied, for example a fifteenth-century text by Pope Pius II with typical Florentine vegetative boards and initials, several fourteenth-century choral books from Bologna, a fifteenth-century manuscript of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (Biblioteca Queriniana in Brescia), a late fifteenth-century richly illuminated manuscript by the Florentine miniaturist Attavante (Duomo di Chieti), a fifteenth-century choral book from the cathedral in Chiusi with illuminated initials (attributed on the photograph to a miniaturist and Domenico di Bartolo), and a fifteenth-century illuminated manuscript attributed to a Ferrarese painter close to Lorenzo Costa on the back (Cleveland Museum of Art).

10. Bernard Berenson, "Alunno di Domenico," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 1 (1903): 6–20, see 18–20 (I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing me to this article). Berenson's research on Italian illuminated manuscripts and woodcuts went into his *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters: Classified, Criticised and Studied as Documents in the History and Appreciation of Tuscan Art, with a Copious Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols. (London, 1903) but also resulted in more specific studies, such as "Un antiphonaire avec miniatures par Lippo Vanni," *La Gazette des beaux-arts* 9 (1924): 257–85, "Due illustratori italiani dello Speculum Humanae Salvationis," *Bollettino d'arte* 5 (1926): 1–64, *Speculum humanæ salvationis Being a Reproduction of an Italian Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, described and prefaced by M. R. James, with a discussion of the school and date by Bernard Berenson (Oxford, 1926), and *Italian Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library: Descriptive Survey of the Principal Illuminated Manuscripts of the Sixth to Sixteenth Centuries, with a Selection of Im-*

ACQUISITION RECORDS FOR EARLY PRINTED BOOKS

As early as 1898, Berenson started to acquire rare Cinquecentine, even before he moved to I Tatti and established his personal library there. The first documented book he acquired was Pietro Aretino's *Ragionamento del divino Pietro Aretino nel quale si parla del gioco con moralita piacevole*, part of his four *Ragionamenti*, dedicated to courtly life and games, written in his usual satirical and detached manner. This was one of the few books Berenson collected from outside Italy; it was printed in London, at the press of Giovanni Andrea del Melograno in 1589 (1st ed. Venice, 1534).[11] Although Berenson himself traveled to London on a regular basis, he purchased this book in Florence through B. Seeber at an auction (Asta Franchi) shortly before the end of the year (for 1,515 lire). The *Ragionamento* was most likely acquired together with another book by Aretino, his *Quattro commedie del divino Pietro Aretino* (*Cioé Il marescalco, La cortigiana, La talanta, L'hipocrito*), also published in London in 1588 and also acquired through Seeber for the same amount of 1,515 lire (or possibly the price was for both books together).[12] Most likely *Le cose meravigliose dell'alma città di Roma* (Rome, 1589) was also acquired from Seeber for 325 lire on the same occasion.[13] In the following year, 1899, Berenson acquired probably another three Cinquecentine, all from the rare book dealer Enrico Tozzi in Siena: Antonio Campi, *Cremona fedelissima città* (Cremona, 1585),[14] Lodovico Dolce, *Dialogo della pittura* (Venice, 1557),[15] and Dante Alighieri, *Dante con l'esposizione di Christoforo Landino, et di Alessandro Vellutello* (Venice, 1564).[16] These first purchases of early printed books were not very rare exemplars or particularly costly, and they fall into the period when Berenson was still short of money and looking for a way to make his living. The next secure purchase dates

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portant Letters and Documents, catalog compiled by Meta Harrsen and George K. Boyce, with an introduction by Bernard Berenson (New York, 1953).

11. Bernard and Mary Berenson, Papers, 1880–2002, Biblioteca Berenson, Villa I Tatti—the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, book collection: inventories of books (hereafter BMBP-BC), Book invoices 1898: B. Seeber, Firenze, 27.12.1898, "Aretino, Ragionamento, L. 1515" (from vendor catalog of rare books, Asta Franchi Cat. 144). Acquisition number 15.197 in Inventory of books, vol. 1 (nos. 1–18.500, p. 411), no date/wrong publication date (1588).

12. BMBP-BC, Book invoices 1898: B. Seeber, Firenze, 27.12.1898, "Aretino, Quattro comedie, L. 1515" (from vendor catalog of rare books, Asta Franchi Cat. 144). Acquisition number 15.197 in Inventory of books, vol. 1 (nos. 1–18.500, p. 411), no date.

13. BMBP-BC, Book invoices 1898: B. Seeber, Firenze, 27.12.1898: "Le cose meravigliose di Roma, L. 325" (from vendor catalog of rare books, Asta Franchi Cat. 144). This book is lost today.

14. BMBP-BC, Book invoices 1899: purchased from Enrico Tozzi, Siena, 10.4.1899, "Guida di Cremona, 1/2 tela verdastra, 1.25).

15. BMBP-BC, Book invoices 1899: purchased from Enrico Tozzi, Siena, 10.4.1899, for 1.25 lire. Acquisition number 1297 in Inventory of books, vol. 1 (nos. 1–18.500, p. 36), no date.

16. BMBP-BC, Book invoices 1899: purchased through Enrico Torrini, Siena, 10.4.1899, "3 vol. in pergamena all'antica 7.50" for 37.50 lire.

only fifteen years later. In 1915 he bought a standard edition, which was evidently most useful for his work: Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (Florence, 1568) in original leather binding.[17]

Around 1920, Berenson seems to have started to look for rare editions or famous printers. He also began acquiring rare books from England. His first book from Grafton & Co. in London might have been Suetonius, *In hoc volumine haec continentur* (*C. Suetonij Tranquilli XII Caesares. Sexti Aurelis Victoris à d. Caesare Augusto usque ad Theodosium excerpta. Eutropij De gestis Romanorum Lib. X. Pauli Diaconi libri VIII ad Eutropij historiam additi*) (Venice, 1516), which survived in about twenty copies.[18] In the same year he bought from unknown sources Leonardo Bruni's *Libro de la Guerra de Ghotti* (Venice, 1528), which survived in probably ten copies.[19] In 1921 he bought from Davis & Orioli in Italy a very rare edition of Peter Damian, *Vita del padre S. Romualdo abate fondatore del sacro eremo & ordine di Camaldoli, e riformatore della vita eremitica* (Florence, 1586), in original parchment binding, which survived in only five other copies.[20] In 1924 he received from Grafton & Co. in London a very rare copy of Bonaventure, *Meditationi devotissime di santo Bonaventura Cardinale fondate sopra la passione nel nostro signore Jesu Cristo* (Venice, 1537), in original parchment binding, which is now the only copy available in Italy with probably only one other surviving exemplar elsewhere.[21] Most likely during the same year, he acquired through Thomas Thorp in London a rare edition of Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda hec aurea* (1559), which is now lost.[22] Two more extremely rare copies of Voragine date to 1924, also from Italy and acquired through Davis & Orioli: *Legendario delli sancti, vulgare et historiato* (Venice, 1504), with only two other known copies existing,[23] and another *Legenda aurea* from 1559.[24]

17. BMBP-BC, Acquisition book April 1915: "Giorgio Vasari, Le Vite dei più celebri pittori, purchase" (Acquisition book January 1914–July 1925, p. 12, April 1915). Acquisition number 21.850 in Acquisition book (nos. 18.501–33.387, p. 93), no date. In general there are very few imports during the First World War.

18. BMBP-BC, Paid Book bills, England 1920: Grafton, London, 13.10.1920: "Aldine, Suetonius £ 3.0.0." Acquisition number 15.292 in Inventory of books, vol. 1 (nos. 1–18.500, p. 414), no date.

19. BMBP-BC, Acquisition book (1914–25): p. 76, October 1920, purchase.

20. BMBP-BC, Paid book bills, Italy 1921: Davis & Orioli, 27.7.1921: "Vita Padre Romualdo, L. 60." Acquisition number 19.436 in Acquisition book (nos. 18.501–33.387, p. 28), no date. Acquisition book (1914–25): p. 111, October 1921, purchase.

21. BMBP-BC, Library Bills, England 1924: Grafton & Co "Bonaventura, 1537, £2.10.0." Acquisition number 9871 in Inventory of books, vol. 1 (nos. 1–18.500, p. 267), no date.

22. BMBP-BC, Book bills, England 1924: Thomas Thorp, London, "Voragine £215." Acquisition book: June 1924: "Jacopo de Voragine, Legenda aurea (latin . . . 1559), L 2/15/."

23. BMBP-BC, Acquisition book (1914–25): p. 208, April 1924, purchase: 500 lire, Davis & Orioli.

24. BMBP-BC, Acquisition book: June 1924: "Jacopo de Voragine, Legenda aurea (latin . . . 1559), L 2/15/." Acquisition book (1914–25): p. 215, June 1924, purchase: lire 2/15.

In 1926 another book arrived from Grafton in London: Romano Alberti, *Trattato della nobiltà della pittura* (Rome, 1585), in original parchment binding.[25] In 1927 we find the first documented acquisition of a rare book written by Anton Francesco Doni, who would become one of Berenson's favorite authors. This was his *La libraria del Doni Fiorentino* (Venice, 1580) (fig. 1).[26] In 1928 he received from John Grant in Edinburgh Orazio Torsellino's *Horatii Tursellini Romani e Societate Iesu Lauretanae historiae libri quinque* (Rome, 1597),[27] and from Marks & Co. in London Michele Marullo Tarcaniota's *Michaelis Tarchaniotae Marulli Constantinopolitani Epigrammata & Hymni* (Paris).[28]

In these years Berenson also developed his second bibliophilic interest, which turned out to be the opposite of the first: the collection of richly illuminated Asian manuscripts. At the end of the 1911, we have the first documented acquisition for an illuminated Asian manuscript, which Berenson bought in Paris.[29] Then in November of the following year, Berenson personally imported a Japanese book from Paris, together with five Japanese miniatures,[30] and in summer 1913 another Arabic manuscript (possibly together with an Asian stone sculpture figuring an animal).[31] In these same years, the book dealer G. Egidi was also a frequent buyer of oriental manuscripts in Paris, and Berenson might well have taken some of his too. Indeed, in October 1913, Egidi acquired two Qu'ran manuscripts (sixth/seventh century and ninth/tenth century) from Paris for Berenson, both richly illuminated and with a leather binding (one, at least, is now considered a fake).[32] In later years Berenson would get his Asian manuscripts through Harrassowitz in Ger-

25. BMBP-BC, Paid book bills 1926: Grafton, London: "Zuccaro, Trattato della nobilta, 1585, £1.1.0" (book dealer mixed up Zuccari with Alberti, both dealing with the Accademia del Disegno in Florence). Acquisition number 11 in Inventory of books, vol. 1 (nos. 1–18.500, p. 1), no date. Acquisition book (1925–27), p. 10, purchase, lire I/1.

26. BMBP-BC, Acquisition number 816 in Inventory of books, vol. 1 (nos. 1–18.500, p. 23), no date.

27. BMBP-BC, Paid book bills 1928: UK, John Grant, Edinburgh, 7.3.1928: "Tursellinus Horatius, £8.6." Acquisition number 9690 in Inventory of books, vol. 1 (nos. 1–18.500, p. 262), no date.

28. BMBP-BC, Paid book bills 1928: UK, Marks & Co, London, 1.6.1928: "Marullus, £18." Acquisition number 12.062 in Inventory of books, vol. 1 (nos. 1–18.500, p. 326), no date. Around 1930 no book imports were made, neither for Berenson nor for the Florentine book dealers.

29. Florence, Archive of the Soprintendenza per Esportazioni ed Importazioni (hereafter SEI). Import note for 1.12.1911.

30. Florence, SEI, import note for 21.11.1912.

31. Florence, SEI, import note for 23.9.1913.

32. Florence, SEI, import note for 17.10.1913. Already one year earlier Berenson had received through Egidi some leaf folios with oriental miniatures: the first had Sanskrit letters on it, showing a man, an eagle, a golden vase, and a weapon; the other had a fountain, a bird, and a man (Florence, SEI, import note for 6.2.1912).

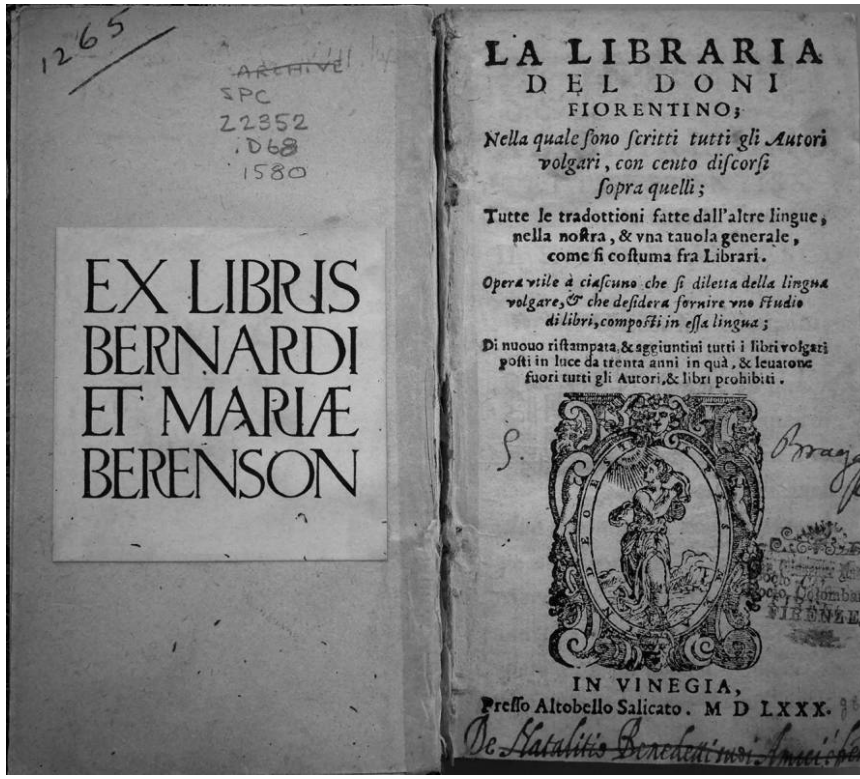

Figure 1. Anton Francesco Doni, *La libraria del Doni Fiorentino* (Venice, 1580). (Villa I Tatti, Berenson Library, Berenson's copy.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

many and then in the 1940s again through Paris, from Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.[33]

THE DISPOSITION OF BERENSON'S CINQUECENTO RARE BOOK COLLECTION—THE COLLECTION OF A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ACADEMICIAN

Berenson's cinquecento collection shows clear and rather astonishing areas of preferences, in comparison to Berenson's overall interests evident in the rest of his li-

33. See acquisition notes in the BMBP-BC. For more on the Asian collection and manuscripts, see Michael Rocke, "Una sorta di sogno d'estasi: Bernard Berenson, l'Oriente e il patrimonio orientale di Villa I Tatti," in *Firenze, il Giappone e l'Asia orientale*, ed. Adriana Boscaro and Maurizio Bossi (Florence, 2001), 367–84; Mario Casari, "Berenson and Islamic Culture: 'Thought and Temperament,'" 173–206; and Carl Strehlke, "Berenson and Asian Art," 207–30, both in *Bernard Berenson: Formation and Heritage*, ed. Joseph Connors and Louis A. Waldman (Florence, 2014).

brary. A Florentine humanist library of the sixteenth century would not have been considerably different: out of the approximately 120 titles there are about thirty-five on Renaissance literature, twenty-five on medieval and Renaissance history, twelve on art history, and fifteen each on antiquity and medieval theology.[34] What is even more telling is the fact that most of the literature titles and at least half of the art history titles are written by members of Florentine or Roman literary academies: Benedetto Varchi, Paolo Giovio, Anton Francesco Doni, Raffaello Borghini, Alessandro Lamo, Romano Alberti, and Luigi Alamanni. All of these writers had written important works on the visual arts, assisted in the intellectual education of artists, or taken part in establishing artists' academies. They helped to shape the theoretical grounds of the visual arts by defining the categories of painting, sculpture, and architecture, which were necessary to elevate them to a science that was worthy of an academy. This focus also illuminates the smaller number of books in the art history section that were written by artists themselves. First are the two classical authors Vitruvius and Serlio; then three sixteenth-century academicians, Vasari, Cellini, and Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo; the architect Andrea Palladio; and one foreign and highly influential author Albrecht Dürer. Other important authors associated with academies are represented as well, such as Pietro Aretino, Lodovico Dolce, and Girolamo Ruscelli. Those texts with connections to the Accademia Fiorentina amount to more than 25 percent of the cinquecento holdings. Given the interest of the Accademia Fiorentina, sustained by Cosimo I, in promulgating knowledge of all sciences in the vernacular, it is hardly surprising to see that among Berenson's Cinquecentine there are one hundred titles in the vernacular, seventeen in Latin, and three in French.

It was precisely the sixteenth century that shaped this rare book collection. Works by the three *corone*, Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch, or from the fifteenth century are far outnumbered by literature connected to the Florentine academies. Rather than purchasing texts by Dante and Petrarch themselves, Berenson bought commentaries on them, many of which played an important role in the academies of the sixteenth century.[35] He possessed no early printed editions of Boccaccio at all. There is little on patristics and philosophy, although this area constituted a substantial part of Berenson's modern library. And yet Berenson had a vivid interest in

34. Among the titles of Roman antiquities and history figures are, e.g., Lucio Fauno, *De antiquitatibus Urbis Romae ab antiquis novisque auctoribus exceptis* (Venice, 1549); Lucio Mauro, *Le antichità della città di Roma* (Venice, 1558); Livy, *Dechades* (Lione, 1511), and *Le deche* (Venice, 1562); and Flavio Biondo, *Roma triumphans* (Basel, 1531).

35. For example, *Dante con l'espressione di Christoforo Landino, et di Alessandro Vellutello* (Florence, 1590); *Il Petrarca con l'espositione d'Alessandro Vellutello* (Venice, 1560).

Platonic philosophy, as he himself said: he feared that he ran "the risk to be taken for a Greek philologist or for a Platonic metaphysician."[36] He did, however, possess fundamental theological works from the Middle Ages, which would have been found in every substantial Renaissance library, like the *Meditations* by Bonaventure, *Specchio di Croce* by Domenico Cavalca, *Scala Paradisi* by Climacus, Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons* and *Meditations*, and Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, completed by a few saints' lives. Anyone interested in theological questions in the Renaissance was expected to have read these texts. The only important field missing in Berenson's Renaissance library collection is Aristotle and his medieval commentators. Crucial for those who frequented universities, such works would have had less importance for academy members.

As for the publishers of Berenson's Cinquecentine, they represent in most cases what would have been available in Florence already in the sixteenth century. Almost all books were published in Italy, with the exception of four French books and one Italian book from London. The most frequent publishers are well-known names from Florence and Venice: Torrentino and Giunti from Florence and Giunti, Francesco Sansovino, Gabriel Giolito, and Paolo Manuzio from Venice.

FAVORITE CINQUECENTO AUTHORS

As noted, Berenson's favorite authors of those Cinquecentine books come out of the Accademia Fiorentina. In first place is Anton Francesco Doni (1513–74): Berenson possessed eleven books by Doni from the sixteenth century, together with three from the seventeenth century. This means Berenson owned close to all of Doni's writings and all of his important works in a first edition.[37] Berenson purchased another six modern editions. Doni was a Florentine of humble origins, a son of a scissor maker, who was briefly a Servite at Santissima Annunziata before embarking on a period of travel; he also spent time as a lay cleric, finally marrying and starting a family. More constant was his interest in literature, and he was a member of the Venetian Accademia Pellegrina and the Accademia Fiorentina. His love for publishing not only his own literary works but those of his fellow *accademici* led him to open printing shops in Florence and Venice, which were both short-lived. More stable was his collaboration with the printers Giolito and Marcolini in Venice.[38] Among his friends were writers such as Pietro Aretino and artists such as Baccio Bandinelli and Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli (to whom he dedicated

36. Bernard Berenson, *One Year's Reading for Fun (1942)* (New York, 1960), xiii.

37. Among the few missing titles are *Dialoghi di musica* (1544) and *Pitture* (1564).

38. On Doni's printer collaborations, see, e.g., Sonia Maffei, *Pitture del Doni, academico pellegrino* (Naples, 2004), 11–12. Examples from Doni's printer shop are Thomas More, *La republica nuovamente*

his second book, *Il disegno*).[39] He also advised artists on issues related to humanism and helped with concrete recommendations on iconography. But most significantly, he was important for defining the characteristics and differences between painting and sculpture. Doni published two books on the visual arts: *Disegno del Doni* (Venice, 1549) (fig. 2) and *Pitture del Doni Academico Pellegrino* (Padua, 1564). His *Disegno* was written two years after Varchi had held the famous *Lezzioni* in Florence, and it highlights crucial points that Varchi would publish a year after Doni's book was printed. Doni likewise declares *disegno* the most important foundation for both sculpture and painting.[40]

Doni's bibliophilic interest led him to publish two volumes on his idea of an ideal library, where he listed about one hundred authors' names and their most significant titles (as chosen by himself), completed with some explanations on their importance. The idea of a recommended book list was not new; it actually goes back to late antiquity and early Christianity and was already pursued by St. Jerome. In the Renaissance we find book lists by Pope Nicholas V, Angelo Decembrio, and Angelo Poliziano, but Doni was the first to concentrate exclusively on vernacular literature.[41] Berenson possessed three sixteenth-century copies of Doni's book list (*La libraria di Doni*, 1550–51). Although one might therefore think that Berenson was deeply impressed by this author's list, it did not lead him in his own choice of early printed books. There are but a few titles that overlap. It is nevertheless interesting to read Doni's explanations that he gives along with his lists. He recommends a life of learning and possibly gaining universal knowledge—exactly what Berenson would strive for all his life.[42] In the foreword of the first edition, Doni explains that this list should serve everyone interested in knowing which printed books existed in the vernacular.[43] More pointedly, in the second edition he states that he has created a library list with authors he has read and wants to make public, since many of these titles were little known and hard to find, and some of them were not yet printed. He knew in which hidden and private libraries these rare books were to be found and would readily help with advice.[44] Although Berenson

ritrovata, del governo dell'isola Eutopia, trans. Ortensio Landi (Venice, 1548); Seneca, *L'epistole di Seneca, ridotte nella lingua toscana per il Doni* (Venice, 1549).

39. See, e.g., Giovanna Romei, "Anton Francesco Doni," in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome, 1992), 41:158–67.

40. Anton Francesco Doni, *Disegno del Doni* (Venice, 1549), 6v, 7r–v.

41. See my summary on library book lists in Angela Dressen, *The Library of the Badia Fiesolana: Intellectual History and Education under the Medici (1462–1494)* (Florence, 2013), 31–34.

42. Anton Francesco Doni, *La libraria del Doni* (Venice, 1552), 8.

43. Ibid., 11.

44. Anton Francesco Doni, *La seconda libraria del Doni* (Venice, 1555), 10–11.

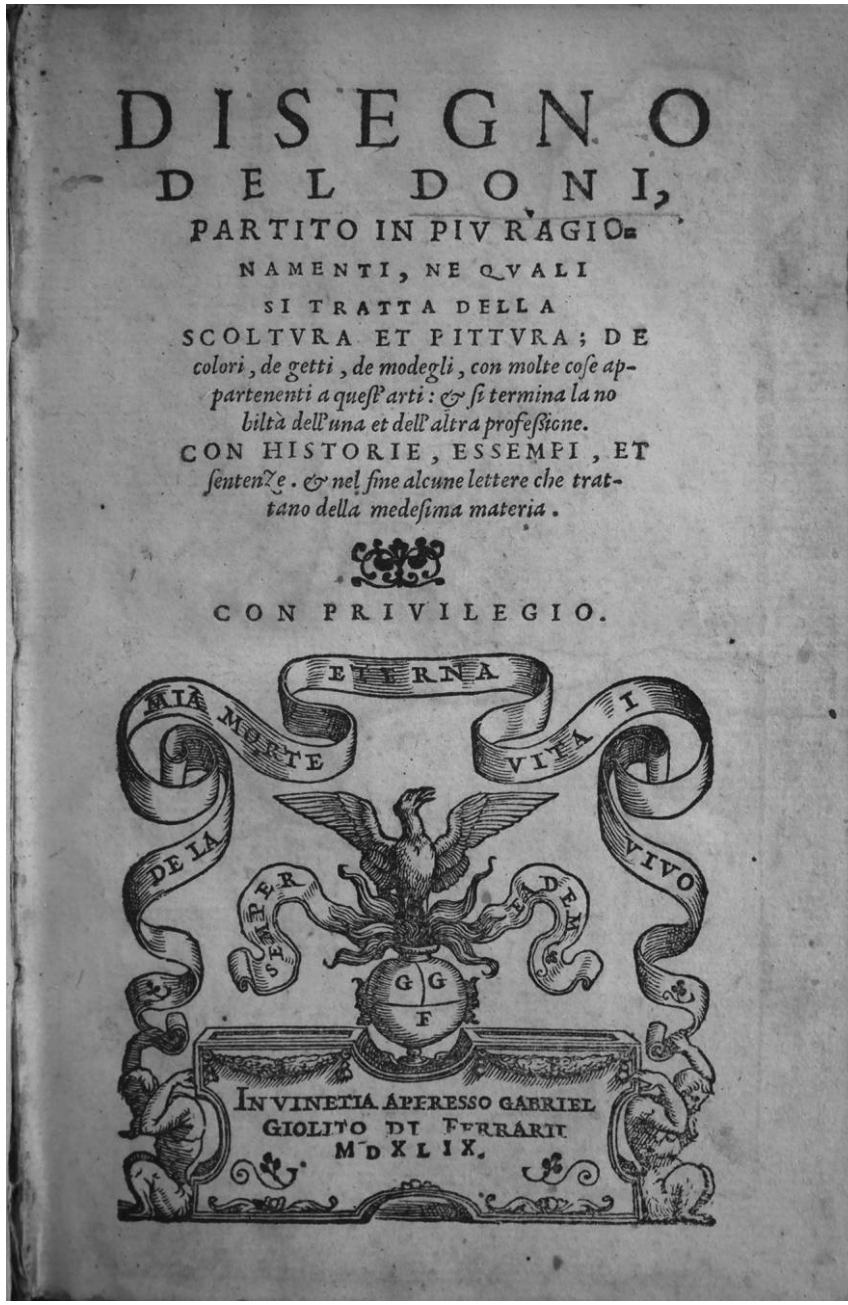

Figure 2. Anton Francesco Doni, *Disegno del Doni* (Venice, 1549). (Villa I Tatti, Berenson Library, Berenson's copy.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

did not attempt to build his library based on Doni's recommendations, he was influenced by what Doni was proposing.

Berenson also possessed Doni's translation of Pliny the Younger's *Epistles* (*Epistole di G. Plinio, tradotte per L. Dolce* [Venice, 1548]), with a description of country life and his family villa, another interest Berenson shared with Doni.[45] While Doni's works topped the list of Berenson's cinquecento holdings, Berenson's interest in him was especially strong in the late 1920s and 1930s, when Berenson acquired three sixteenth-century copies of Doni's book list (*La Libraria di Doni*, 1550–51; bought in 1927, 1930, and 1936) and the *Disegno del Doni* (1930). It seems possible that Berenson's interest in Doni and his book list was connected with his friendship with Benedetto Croce, which was also particularly lively in the 1930s. These two bibliophiles might have compared library holdings and book lists in their shared literary fervor while they were both following Doni's advice of life-long learning toward universal knowledge.[46] Their long-standing friendship over three decades was a mutual source of intellectual energy and collaboration. They shared many interests, including, as Croce claimed in his autobiography, a desire for "perpetual education, and knowledge as the unity of knowing and learning."[47] In this they both aligned themselves with several ideas from Doni regarding well-considered library acquisitions and the search for perpetual knowledge.

Doni's book on drawings (along with that of Varchi, which Berenson also possessed, although we do not have an acquisition date) left a direct impact on Berenson's work. Although he had started working on Florentine drawings in 1903 (after he had acquired Dolce's *Dialogo della pittura* in 1899), he became interested in drawings again in the 1930s, leading to several articles and books as well as a new edition of his Florentine drawing studies (*Disegni inediti di "Tommaso"* [Florence, 1932], *I disegni di Alunno di Benozzo* [Rome, 1932], *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters* [Chicago, 1938]). In all his publications, Berenson confirmed drawing as a principal means for evaluating style and method.

45. There was also another edition of Pliny's *Epistles* in Berenson's sixteenth-century library (*Epistole di G. Plinio: Di M. Franc. Petrarca, del S. Pico della Mirandola* [Venice, 1548]); however, he did not possess the Pliny translation by another of his favorite authors, Paolo Giovio.

46. Certainly Croce's description of his library could have been made by Berenson as well: Croce praised his own library as being full of rare books and some texts so rare that it would have been difficult to find them in other libraries. Croce intended his library to be a supplement to the public library of Naples and opened the door to every researcher who had a need. Guerriera Guerrieri, "Benedetto Croce e le biblioteche italiane," *Accademie e biblioteche d'Italia* 20 (1952): 313–17, see 314.

47. He continues: "To know and to have lost the power of learning, to be educated and to be unable still to improve one's education, is to bring one's life to a standstill, and the right name for that is not life but death." Benedetto Croce, *An Autobiography*, trans. Robin George Collingwood (Oxford, 1927), 77.

Paolo Giovio (1483–1552) is second in frequency among Berenson's cinquecento authors in early printed editions. Born of noble origins, he led an active life as bishop, historian, professor of moral philosophy, and, most important of all, one of the first museologists and art critics.[48] The reason for Berenson's attention may well lie in Giovio's interests in art, art criticism, and private museums, as well as his way of life in an atmosphere of rural leisure. As a museologist he created one of the first private museums in Italy in his Villa at Lake Como, where he installed a portrait gallery. Some of these portraits and descriptions were published later as a reflection on the literary tradition of *Uomini illustri*. His artist portraits and biographies may have inspired Vasari to write his *Lives*. Price Zimmermann described Giovio's lifestyle as follows: "the cultivation of philosophy and letters in an atmosphere of rural leisure, the celebration of peaceful country delights over wearisome urban turmoil, and the reluctant acknowledgment of the tension between the charms of country retreats and the compelling vitality of urban centers. Retiring to the country, Giovio imagined himself in the company of Cicero in his villa at Tusculum, Aulus Gellius in the villa of Herodes Atticus, Silius Italicus in one of his Neapolitan villas, and Pliny in his retreat at Laurentium, but he also identified himself with Landino in the monastery of Camaldoli and Politian in the Medici villa at Fiesole, suggesting that he credited the Quattrocento humanists with having recaptured the manner of life of the ancients."[49] This lifestyle combined with a remarkable private museum and writings on art appears to be a predecessor of Berenson's own way of life.

Giovio not only wrote about famous people's lives; his museum established in Como in 1536 was also filled with portraits of famous men, executed by famous painters, and these portraits often had a short biography attached to the picture. The portrait gallery of almost 150 famous men of political, social, or intellectual importance followed the tradition of *viris illustribus*. They were either ordered di-

48. On Paolo Giovio's life, see Alden Gragg, *An Italian Portrait Gallery* (Boston, 1935), 15–18; T. C. Price Zimmermann, "Paolo Giovio and the Evolution of Renaissance Art Criticism," in *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance: Essays in Honour of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Manchester, 1976), 406–24, and *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Princeton, NJ, 1995); Paolo Giovio, *Notable Men and Women of Our Time*, ed. and trans. Kenneth Gouwens (Cambridge, MA, 2013), xi–xiii.

49. Zimmermann, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian*, 5. One may also compare their self-imposed home confinement during the years of war, for Giovio during the Sack of Rome, for Berenson during 1942. Zimmermann describes Giovio's year of enclosure: "How significant classical values became for Giovio was evident from his later confession that in the dark hours of the sack of Rome he was able to attain more peace of mind from Cicero's Tusculan Disputations than from sacred Scripture" (ibid., 5). Berenson's *One Year's Reading* reassembles all the literature he read during the war, among which many classics are to be found.

rectly from famous or less well-known painters or, when that was not possible, copied from other paintings or statues and busts. His artists included Mantegna, Dosso, Titian, and Bronzino. Many of these portraits—now dispersed around the world—were used later on as models for the woodcut portraits in his books. Giovio wrote a description of his museum for Ottavio Farnese (who could not come to visit it) in which Giovio said his museum was enlivened by Apollo and the nine muses. Minerva watched over the museum with the statues and the annex library.[50] The portraits were arranged in four groups: the first group consisted of those who had passed away, most from antiquity; the second was of people who were still alive and famous; the third group included people who left great art works; and the fourth consisted of popes, kings, and other public figures of exemplary behavior.[51] The idea of a library with an annex museum showing some portraits and figures was an idea that Berenson must have appreciated.

Berenson possessed eighteen titles by Giovio published between 1547 and 1560, which comprised six works, of which four were early translations into the vernacular. Half of Berenson's books on Giovio dealt with the *viris illustribus* tradition, a favorite topic of Giovio's, which was connected to Giovio's portrait gallery in his museum. Giovio's *Vitae illustrum virorum*, of which Berenson possessed the Basil 1578 edition, became Giovio's most important work.[52] Additionally, Berenson possessed the second edition of Giovi's *Le iscrittioni poste sotto le vere imagini de gli huomini famosi in lettere* (Venice, 1558) (fig. 3), bought in 1941, and the *Elogia virorum literis illustrium* (Basle, 1577). Another four modern editions of Giovio were also in Berenson's possession.

Probably most important for Berenson was Giovio's engagement as an early art critic. After Giovio arrived in Rome in 1512, he immediately made contact with the pope and his artists, Michelangelo and Raphael, working in the Apostolic palace in the Sistina and the Stanze.[53] Giovio had encountered Leonardo before in Pavia,

50. Paolo Giovio, *Le iscrittioni poste sotto le vere imagini degli huomini famosi in lettere* (Venice, 1558), fols. A4r–A5v.

51. Gragg, *Italian Portrait Gallery*, 22–29; Zimmermann, "Paolo Giovio and the Evolution," 408; Barbara Agosti, *Paolo Giovio: Uno storico lombardo nella cultura artistica del Cinquecento* (Florence, 2008), 38–39.

52. Giovio, *Le iscrittioni poste*; Paolo Giovio, *Elogia virorum literis illustrium* (Basel, 1577), and *Vitae illustrum virorum* (Basel, 1578). The other three books were likewise connected to history and illustrious men: Paolo Giovio, *La vita di Alfonso da Este duca di Ferrara* (Florence, 1553) (original in Latin, published in Florence in 1550), *Gli elogi vite brevemente scritte d'huomini illustri di guerra, antichi e moderni* (Florence, 1554) (original in Latin, Florence, 1551), and *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* (Venice, 1556) (original in the vernacular, Rome, 1555). Berenson had no first editions by Giovio.

53. Zimmermann, "Paolo Giovio and the Evolution," 408.

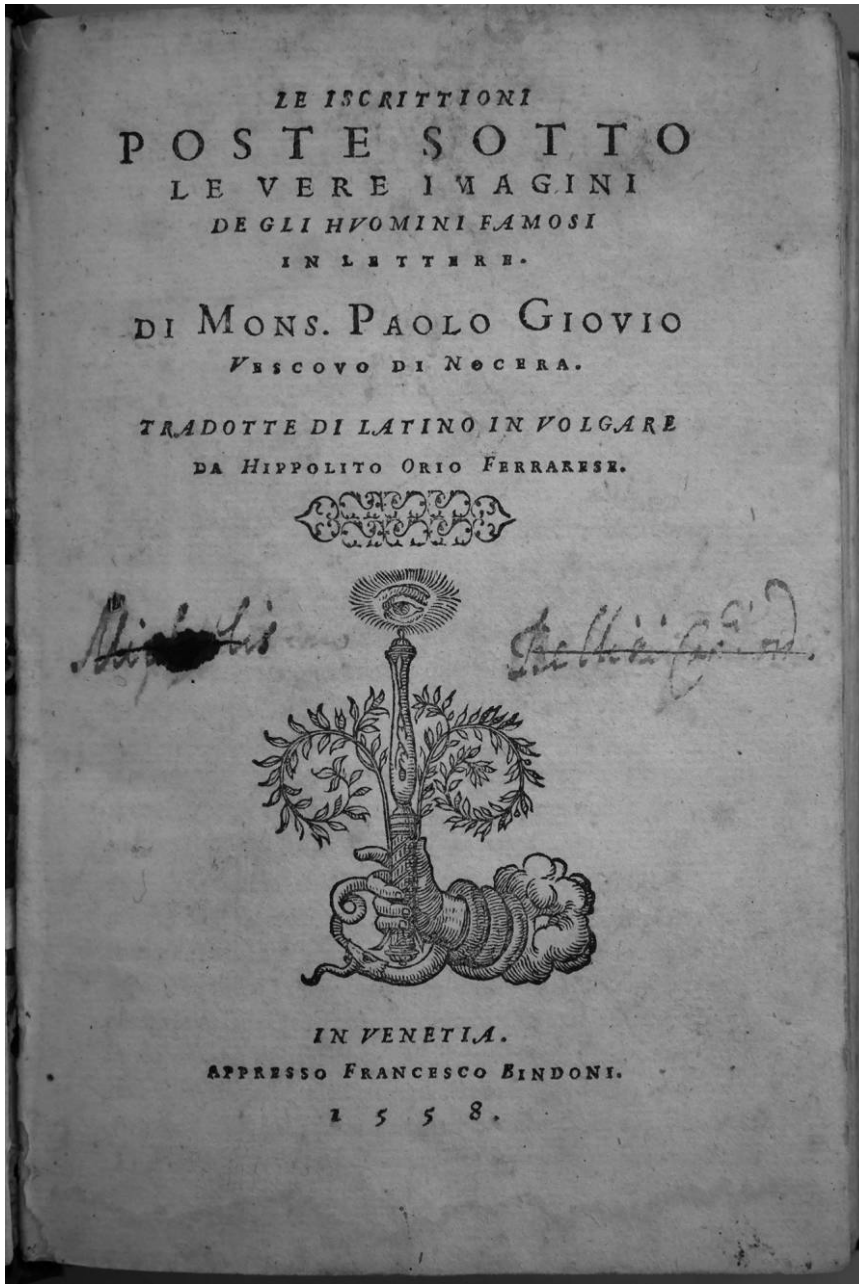
LE ISCRITTIONI
POSTE SOTTO
LE VERE IMAGINI
DE GLI HVOMINI FAMOSI
IN LETTERE.
DI MONS. PAOLO GIOVIO
VESCOVO DI NOCERA.
TRADOTTE DI LATINO IN VOLGARE
DA HIPPOLITO ORIO FERRARESE.
IN VENETIA.
APPRESSO FRANCESCO BINDONI.
1 5 5 8.

Figure 3. Paolo Giovio, *Le iscrittioni poste sotto le vere imagini de gli huomini famosi in lettere* (Venice, 1558). (Villa I Tatti, Berenson Library, Berenson's copy.) Color version available as an online enhancement.

when he was doing anatomical drawings and dissections. Before helping Vasari to compose the standard version of the artists' lives, Giovio himself wrote brief biographies of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael. Giovio stressed Leonardo's philosophical and intellectual capacities, while for Michelangelo Giovio concentrated on aesthetics.[54] Giovio praised Titian's color "ductus" and his figure-surrounding lines.[55] The way Giovio expressed himself about art shows him as an art connoisseur and art critic.[56] This must certainly have impressed Berenson, who had similar critical interests in aesthetics and style and who embarked on comparable topics. For Giovio, as for Berenson, the characteristics of personal style needed to be pointed out, as did the differences between schools and regions, as Giovio writes: "As we look at a famous painting, we immediately recognize the brush and the hand of the artist, as the most characteristic peculiarities naturally accompany the most gifted talents."[57] Aesthetic qualities and artistic talent were also topics

54. Ibid., 415; see also, for the question of the date of the three lives and for bibliography, 422–23 n. 50.

55. See on this Agosti, *Paolo Giovio*, 85. There are plenty of moments where Giovio compared styles between the artists: "The images of Michelangelo have deeper shadows and remarkable recesses, so that when they are more brightly illuminated these stand out more prominently. In Sebastiano del Piombo's superb portrayals of human faces we discern sweetly fluid strokes concealed in the most charming colors. In Titian, the rich shapes of things, distinguished by austere little lines and exquisite obliques, receive honor. The Dossi brothers' paintings—severe, vigorous, involved, and shaded with smoky colors—give extraordinary pleasure; even if quite clearly portraying the same thing, yet they are both different and distinctive in appearance. Still they all, each one in his own manner as inspiration and judgment have led him, are esteemed highly for the excellence of their work. By this illustration I'm readily persuaded that the reins should be slackened for the exceptionally talented who burn with a zeal for eloquence. Even if they are not able to imitate perfectly the heavenly style of the ancients, at least according to a certain personal choice and their very own nature they will attain some passable and not unattractive kind of eloquence. But as to the question of whether foreign writers have correctly acquired this level of eloquence, I leave that to be weighed not on the scales of popular opinion, but in the final judgment of experts. It is more noble to draw even an unremarkable style from one's own vein of natural talent than to be shameless enough to assemble a patchwork of borrowed passages with laborious and worthless effort, or to put on a pitiful display of well-turned phrases appropriated from Cicero with laughable clumsiness" (Giovio, *Notable Men and Women*, 325–27).

56. See on this, Agosti, *Paolo Giovio*, 85.

57. "Cosi come, a guardare un quadro famoso, riconosciamo subito il pennello e la mano dell'artista: infatti alcuni nei peculiari necessariamente, per una consegna determinata dalla natura, accompagnano le supreme virtù. Le figure di Michelangelo hanno ombre molto profonde e scorci meravigliosi, in modo che quanto più sono illuminate, tanto più spiccano e risaltano. Nei volti umani, che Sebastiano rappresenta superbamente, vediamo tratti dolci e leggieri velati con suoavissimi colori; in Tiziano sono celebri i ricchi aspetti della realtà contrassegnati da minuti tratti scuri e le ricercate obliquità. Il Dosso si compiace straordinariamente di immagini dure, vivace, sinuose, velate di colori fumosi, e benché tutto ciò sia vario e dissimile nel rendere con sicura efficacia la stessa realtà e forma, tutte le sue immagini riscuotono, sia pur in modi diversi a seconda dell'indole e del gusto di chi giudica, la più alta lode di eminente bravura." Giovio, *Dialogus*, quoted in Paola Barocchi, *Scritti d'arte del Cinquecento*, 3 vols. (Milan, 1971–73), 1:22–23; see also Agosti, *Paolo Giovio*, 84–85.

in which Giovio was interested, as is apparent in this assessment of Michelangelo: "he so successfully produced the light itself, by means of expressive shadows, that with the real nature of bodies thus represented, even ingenious artisans marveled at things that were flat as if they had been solid."[58] Art criticism and art connoisseurship developed during the first half of the sixteenth century, practiced mainly by writers rather than by artists themselves. As Zimmermann noted, without "a developed critical vocabulary and well-articulated critical standards, Renaissance artists and critics were unable to give expression to concerns. . . . In the lack of a well-developed corpus of ancient models for aesthetic theory and critical practice, Renaissance theorists and critics, in order to comprehend more systematically the nature of the visual arts, began linking them to the sciences on the one hand or to literature on the other."[59] Berenson might have felt similarly. Coming originally from the study of literature himself, he had a comparably fresh and increasingly eloquent view of art. He found his own way of describing art, categorizing it, and rendering it in his own aesthetic theory. He also invented new categories, like tactile values, movements, and spatial compositions.[60]

Lodovico Dolce (1508/10–1568), a contemporary of Giovio's, also attracted Berenson's attention as an art connoisseur and critic. A Venetian humanist, editor, and prolific translator into the vernacular, Dolce described himself as a critic of painting—surely influenced by discussions initiated in literary academies and by Vasari's *Lives*. Dolce felt himself more capable of judgment than most of the painters who had attempted this activity; convinced that his method was more precise than theirs, he claimed that artists had not learned to express themselves, not having received a literary education.[61] In 1557 he wrote his *Dialogo della pittura*, where he laid theoretical foundations for the discussion, then much in vogue, on nature as the basis of painting. A letter of two years later compared Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titian on stylistic grounds. Although Dolce recognized Michelangelo as a supreme artist, albeit more in sculpture than in painting, he gave precedence to Raphael, followed by Titian. Dolce did not appreciate Michelangelo's *disegno* (*terribilità del disegno*) or his representation of figures in general and his nudes in particular; he found him lacking in invention and repetitive. Raphael instead was the real imitator of nature, with gracious and delicate figures, always in propor-

58. Translated quote from Zimmermann, "Paolo Giovio and the Evolution," 416 (*Michaelis Angeli vita*); Italian quotation in Barocchi, *Scritti d'arte*, 1:10–11.

59. Zimmermann, "Paolo Giovio and the Evolution," 406–7, see also 419.

60. On Berenson's appreciation of tactile values, see, e.g., his description of Michelangelo: Bernard Berenson, *I pittori italiani del Rinascimento* (Milan, 1936), 98–101.

61. On writers' capacity for judgment, see Barocchi, *Scritti d'arte*, 1:790–91.

tion, who also had a special ability to render topics visually. His figures were well studied and decorous and placed within an ideal color scheme. Likewise, his powerful *inventio* led him to create scenes that appeared to be real. Only Titian was similar with his *disegno* and color scheme and lifelike figures.[62]

As a connoisseur and critique of style with a keen eye for different schools and influences, Dolce was of great interest to Berenson, who possessed some of Dolce's major works: *Dialogo della pittura* (Venice, 1557), *Epistole di G. Plinio, tradotte per L. Dolce* (Venice, 1548), and *I quattro libri delle osservazioni di m. Lodovico Dolce* (Venice, 1579). Berenson had been greatly interested in the topic of nature from early on in his studies. Already in 1891 he wrote, "The Renaissance studied the antique so as to get nearer to nature, to have eyes trained, and made ready for the appreciation of nature."[63] Not surprisingly, Dolce's *Dialogo della pittura* figured among Berenson's first acquisitions of rare books in 1899, when he had only recently started his career. This book was to have a major influence on Berenson in his understanding of his role as a literary art critic and connoisseur and in his ideas about defining styles and painting schools and the value of *disegno*. It certainly influenced *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (London, 1901–16).

Like Doni, Benedetto Varchi (1503–65) was active in the Accademia Fiorentina. Given his interest in the theoretical foundations of art, he was an influential figure for the opening of the first art academy, the Accademia del Disegno. He was one of the first who pushed artists to express themselves about the values of their artistic categories (painting and sculpture) and the significance of drawing as an underlying foundation for all three artistic directions. Varchi presented these topics both in a public lecture in 1547 and in a publication dating two years later, called *Lezzioni*. Berenson possessed a later but very rare edition of these *Lezzioni—Lezzioni di M. Benedetto Varchi, accademico fiorentino* (Florence, 1590)—and also the original Giunti edition (*Orazione funerale* [Florence, 1564]) of Varchi's funeral orations for Michelangelo, to whom he had assigned a leading role in his discourse on art theory. Varchi and the Accademia del Disegno had determined that drawing was fundamental for artistic development and expression. Berenson would be influenced by this idea, publishing in 1903 in London *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters: Classified, Criticised and Studied as Documents in the History and Appreciation of Tuscan Art*, where he argues for the importance of establishing drawings as key documents in the study of art history.

62. Letter printed in ibid., 1:781–91.
63. Quoted in Hanna Kiel, *The Bernard Berenson Treasury* (New York, 1962), 64.

Of course, the most influential art critic of the cinquecento was not missing in Berenson's rare book collection. Although he held only two volumes from the cinquecento on Giorgio Vasari, one of the most important figures in the early Florentine art academy, they were the most significant to Berenson. Berenson owned the Giunti edition from 1568 of the *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, which was the second edition of the *Lives*, reworked and enlarged with the help of Vincenzio Borghini under the influence of the Accademia del Disegno five years before.[64] This book was acquired by Berenson in 1915.[65] Although we do not know for sure, it is very likely that on the same occasion Berenson bought the extremely rare appendix to the *Lives*, the *Ritratti de' più eccellenti pittori scultori et architetti* (Florence, 1568) of which today only three copies are known. This book produces only the artists' portraits, a kind of sample book for further use. The two editions of the *Lives* (1550, 1568) were considerably different. The first edition was published under the influence of academic discussions on the value of the visual and the importance of drawing, while the second edition is a reflection on the opening of the Accademia del Disegno and the question of education and teaching. Vasari gave more emphasis to the artists' work and approach, pointing to the modernity of manner and artistic skills. The second edition also gave more importance to historical developments.[66]

As much as Berenson was interested in—and like Vasari influenced by—other Florentine critics writing on art, his authoritative source remained Vasari, as Berenson made clear: "Vasari is still the unrivalled critic of Italian art, and, regarded as literature, he was one of the great prose-writers of Italy, and the last important product of the novelistic tendency in Tuscan genius."[67] At the same time, he did not hesitate to criticize Vasari for failings in his connoisseurship and his attribu-

64. It seems very likely that Berenson also owned the first Tolentino edition of the *Lives*, but there are no acquisition records left to prove this. The Accademia del Disegno had an ambivalent purpose. Barzman, e.g., argues that it "functioned as an extension of the disciplinary power of the emergent modern state": Karen-edis Barzman, *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State: The Discipline of Disegno* (Cambridge, 2000), 9.

65. BMBP-BC, Acquisition book April 1915: "Giorgio Vasari, Le Vite dei piu celebri pittori, purchase" (Acquisition book January 1914–July 1925, p. 12).

66. On the differences between the two editions, see, e.g., Betty Burroughs, *Vasari's Lives of the Artists* (New York, 1949), xii–xiii; David Ekserdjian, *Giorgio Vasari: Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects* (New York, 1996), xv–xlix; Marco Ruffini, *Art without an Author: Vasari's Lives and Michelangelo's Death* (New York, 2011), 1–10, 76–103. In Ruffini's book there is also a summary of research on the attributions of the various prefaces, which might not have been written by Vasari himself, and on the alterations in the editing process.

67. Bernard Berenson, *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (London, 1901), 12.

tions: "Vasari is the only straw to which we can cling; but unfortunately the drawings labelled by him that can still be identified are few, and, besides, his attributions prove reliable only in the case of his own contemporaries and their recent predecessors."[68]

THE FLORENTINE ACADEMY AS AN INSPIRATION FOR A HUMANISTIC RESEARCH CENTER?

Berenson's library was ultimately an instrument for his work and leisure. "My library contains nearly everything, although not everything that my lust for knowledge requires. It is rare that I cannot lay hands on a publication referred to in whatever volume I happen to be reading. For fifty years and more I have been gathering books for the time when I should have leisure."[69] But Berenson was also proud to have personally chosen every single book in his collection, making his library a telling sign of his personality.[70] Doni's lists of library acquisitions may have helped to shape Berenson's ideas about his collecting and valuing of books. Shortly before his death, Berenson was proud to have created a library that he claimed was more useful to researchers than any of the major European libraries, the British Library included. And he thought of his library as the only accomplishment of his life that completely satisfied him.[71] It is obvious that within this collection Berenson's rare book section did not primarily serve his interest as an art dealer of Italian paintings from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. In this he actually distinguished between his work in the art trade and other interests. The absence of any significant Italian manuscript and his collection of only three incunables underline the distance between his work as an art connoisseur and consultant and his work as a humanist intellectual. Instead he assembled a rare book collection that would easily compete with that of a sixteenth-century member of the Florentine literary academy interested in the visual arts. He also realized this idea architectonically by setting up a neo-Renaissance library (figs. 4 and 5).

Berenson's book collection as well as his professional life were highly influenced by authors such as Doni, Giovio, and Dolce, intellectuals who had received a liter-

68. Bernard Berenson, *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1938), 1:xi. Berenson also stated that "he [Vasari] was an indifferent connoisseur and a poor historian, but a great appreciator—the greatest that Italian art ever found—and a zestful anecdote-monger" (ibid., 1:17).

69. Berenson, *Sketch for a Self-Portrait*, 137. Berenson owned one sixteenth-century edition by Michelangelo, now lost, the existence of which we know of through the recommendation by Ernst Steinmann.

70. Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight*, 383 (April 26, 1955), 437 (June 7, 1956).

71. Ibid., 437 (June 7, 1956); see also 455 (October 31, 1956).

Figure 4. Berenson reading room, ca. 1911. (Villa I Tatti, Berenson Library, photo archive.)

ary education but who also worked as art critics, built private museums, and helped artists to shape their field while making theoretical judgments and stylistic comparisons. This is what Berenson himself did, developing into an art connoisseur who acknowledged the fundamental value of drawing and compiled groundbreaking overviews of the Italian schools of art. His Renaissance predecessors served his personal and professional development as inspirational role models.

Like his Renaissance Florentine role models, Berenson regarded art and literature as a necessary combination for the study of Renaissance art. It is therefore not surprising that when he started to think in the 1920s about sponsoring the creation of a research center in his Villa after his death, he envisioned it as a center for humanistic studies that would not be limited to the Renaissance. He saw it as being focused on the study of literary and philosophical approaches to art.[72] This idea is reflected in his rare book acquisition policy in these years, which aimed to encom-

72. Kathryn Brush is currently studying the history of Berenson's conception of his research center.

Figure 5. So-called new library, ca. 1915. (Villa I Tatti, Berenson Library, photo archive.)

pass every topic, with special regard to literature. Probably inspired by the multidisciplinary interests of the Accademia Fiorentina, and reinforced by his own multiple interests, Berenson created a library, especially reflected in his Cinquecentine selection, that provided a multilayered foundation on which to study the visual arts,

supported by the literary and historical disciplines. He called this future library that he would leave for posterity a "cultural center for all arts and humanities."[73]

Berenson's approach to books fluctuated between his love for them and his recognition of their necessity. He saw them in many different ways: as fetishes, as something to care for, and occasionally also as dead objects.[74] But more than the single object it was the knowledge they contained, the tactile opportunity to gain more wisdom, that attracted Berenson. Berenson's approach to books and knowledge was ultimately driven by curiosity and the desire for learning. With all of the precious books he acquired, whether rare old books or modern luxury editions, he was interested above all in the content itself and less in its shape, age, or rarity. He once declared about "the library I am preparing" that he was looking for rare content, as he put it, a "text not easily to be had in other books."[75] The literature Berenson needed was ultimately mostly available in the original sixteenth-century editions (which is even true today), particularly in the publications of the academy members, whom he must have regarded as past allies and who provided him with like-minded intellectual stimulation. Although the only cinquecento author he mentioned frequently in his own works was Vasari, the others from his Cinquecentine collection had a decisive impact on his scholarly work, which is evident from the early years of his activity onward. They inspired and shaped his ideas about art criticism, *disegno*, questions of style and schools in art, private museums, universal knowledge, and the building of libraries.

73. "Who will be the proprietor? Will they leave Nicky free to carry out my wishes, to make of I Tatti a cultural centre for all arts and humanities? Or as I fear reduce it to a research centre for 'more and more about less and less'? For all of which reasons I can't afford to die" (Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight*, 507 [December 20, 1957]).

74. "I feel the most tender sympathy for any book, and want to treat it as if it were conscious, and could suffer. I pity the dead book—and how many even in my library already are dead. . . . I sometimes wonder how I came to have such feelings towards books, as if they had some life or were fetishes" (ibid., 267–68 [July 9, 1952]).

75. "In the library I am preparing for students of art history and human culture, any book is worthwhile (no matter how rubbish in other respects) if it has even one illustration not to be found elsewhere, one text not easily to be had in other books. When such a reproduction of a work of art or text becomes accessible in serious books, the rubbishy, the mediocre ones should be got rid of" (ibid.).