

Marietta Cambareri - *Allan Marquand e lo studio dei Della Robbia in America*

Una ricostruzione delle tappe che legarono la vita di Allan Marquand all'arte robbiana, attraverso le principali pubblicazioni dello studioso.

L'esordio dell'interesse di Allan Marquand (1853-1924) per l'arte dei Della Robbia – un interesse che lo accompagnerà per tutta la vita – avviene con un articolo, pubblicato nel 1891, riguardante un altare con un'Adorazione della Vergine che suo padre, Henry G. Marquand, aveva donato al Metropolitan Museum of Art e per il quale Allan propone un cambio di attribuzione, da Luca ad Andrea Della Robbia.

Invitato dall'Università di Princeton a tenere dei corsi di storia dell'arte e di archeologia e a dirigerne l'Historical Museum, A. Marquand dimostra un approccio scrupolosamente scientifico a tali materie, probabilmente influenzato dai suoi precedenti studi nel campo della logica. In questo si trova in sintonia con le idee del fondatore del Museo, Henry Cowper Prime, per il quale il collezionismo deve incentrarsi su oggetti che possano essere significativi per la ricerca storica. Nel contempo, le sue attività accademiche vengono intervallate con viaggi di ricerca e collezionismo in Europa, come quello di cui dà un resoconto nell'articolo "*Hunting Della Robbia Monuments in Italy*" (*American Journal of Archaeology*, 1893).

La prima monografia su temi robbiani, *Della Robbias in America* (1912), si pone come strumento per orientare i collezionisti statunitensi e inaugura una serie di *catalogues raisonnés*, ispirati all'esempio di Wilhelm von Bode, che si distinguono per chiarezza espositiva, rigore nella classificazione e nell'attribuzione e ampiezza del corredo fotografico. Con il volume *Luca della Robbia* (1914), inizia la proficua collaborazione con Rufus G. Mather, la cui passione per le ricerche d'archivio diventa fondamentale per la terza monografia, *Robbia Heraldry* (1919). Anche in questo caso, il lavoro di Marquand si propone di fornire dati quanto più precisi possibile, basandosi su prove documentali, circa l'identificazione araldica degli stemmi e l'attribuzione e datazione delle opere. La bibliografia di Marquand viene completata da *Giovanni della Robbia* (1920), *Benedetto and Santi Buglioni* (1921), *Andrea della Robbia and his Atelier* (1922) e *The Brothers of Giovanni della Robbia* (pubblicato postumo nel 1928).

Proprio per il senso di esaustività ispirato dalle opere di Marquand, la sua eredità non viene presto raccolta: occorre arrivare al 1980, con la monografia *Luca della Robbia* di John Pope-Hennessy, e addirittura ai primi anni Novanta, con le opere di Giancarlo Gentilini, per riscontrare un rinnovato interesse per lo studio, la raccolta e l'esposizione delle sculture robbiane e, più in generale, delle terrecotte invetriate.

Andrea Guerrieri - *Della Robbia and Buglioni: Two families of "terracotta sculptors" in the Tuscan Renaissance*

The life, work and stylistic features of the sculptors who, in their respective family ateliers, cultivated the art of glazed terracotta, in Florence and elsewhere, during the Renaissance.

Luca Della Robbia, the dynasty founder, was the one who conceived the new technique of glazed terracotta, which proved to be extremely fit for the needs of long-lasting brightness and vividness in decorative elements.

Andrea, after an initial collaboration with his uncle Luca in the churches of Santa Croce and Orsanmichele, became more and more specialized in the production of great glazed coats of arms, founding an increasing autonomy in his work and style. At Luca's death, he continued the activity of the family workshop in *via Guelfa*, together with some of his sons.

Among these, Giovanni turned Della Robbia's art into a real industry, distinguishing himself as a sculptor by his Leonardo-inspired landscapes and by his joining the 16<sup>th</sup>-century classicistic standards.

Among Giovanni's brothers, Luca and Girolamo were the most active in the family atelier. Luca Bartolomeo said "il Giovane" probably collaborated to the realization of some great polychrome glazed altar-pieces, with oil-painted faces, and he was certainly the author of the two monumental Bartolini Salimbeni coats of arms, revealing his extraordinary ability in heraldic reliefs. Girolamo was trained in his father's workshop but, as soon as he reached a certain artistic autonomy, he moved to France, where he worked also for king Francis I. He was a great interpreter of the early European mannerism, giving international renown to Della Robbia's art.

Two other brothers of Giovanni, less known but also devoted to glazed terracotta, were Marco and Francesco, both Dominican friars. They promoted the concentration of glazed earthenware in the Marche, by initiating local workers into this kind of production in two kilns they themselves had set up.

Andrea Della Robbia's atelier might have been the place where Benedetto Buglioni started his training. What is sure is that, from the 1580s, he opened a workshop of his own, able to cope, as readily and more cheaply than Della Robbia's, with the several demands of glazed building decorations in Florence and elsewhere in Central Italy.

Training himself alongside Benedetto, his relative Santi Buglioni, after Giovanni Della Robbia's death, remained the undisputed keeper of Della Robbia 'secret' art in Florence. Characterized by a certain virtuoso technique, by solemnity of forms, refinement of details and graceful attitudes of the figures, he eventually carried out the long Florentine and Renaissance tradition of glazed terracotta.

#### Renzo Dionigi – *The glazed terracotta technique*

Definition, products, typologies, raw materials and making processes of ceramics, with particular reference to the techniques improved in Della Robbia family atelier.

Ceramics is the art and technique of making different items - as to composition, features and use - by employing several raw materials that range, according to some Renaissance treatises, from "river land" to "quarry land". These materials were firstly prepared through a purification process,

adding a certain amount of water to the dry clay so as to make the various components better amalgamated.

When the paste became plastic enough, the next step was hand modeling, or moulding, by compressing it in some plaster casts and leaving it there for a while. Alternatively, the items could be shaped by the means of a “potter’s wheel” using, in this case, a thicker mixture so as not to let them warp during the following handlings. As Leon Battista Alberti - like the ancient treatisers - pointed out, clay modeling, marked by the adding and removing of material, is distinguished from sculpture, where the stone figure is made out only by removing the “surplus” from a block of marble. The clay was put on a table and modeled by finger pressing and by tools of various kinds. The modeling could also be carried out through a mould, especially if the item dimensions were big and its form complex. In this case, the different parts were made separately, by severing the work and emptying it inside. This technique was particularly worked out by Della Robbia, and this certainly was the reason why their artistic output met with an extraordinary success and a widespread circulation, by sea and land, all over Europe.

Once the modeling had been finished, the surface of the sculpture was variedly given the finishing touches, then the pieces were dried and baked. The largest-sized works were reassembled and then coated, by a brush, with usually many-colored enamels.

Enamel glazing made it necessary a second baking. Although Vasari attributed the “patent” to Luca Della Robbia, this technique was already known in Italy through the influence of Islamic pottery. In any case, the peculiar glazing Luca employed, with an enamel rich in tin, enabled Della Robbia’s works – the most characteristic examples of which undoubtedly are coats of arms and heraldic medallions, often placed under lobby vaults or on the façades of public palaces - to maintain the vividness of their colors – and, therefore, to keep their celebratory function alive - for a long time. More generally, it can be said that the technique of glazed terracotta Luca and his successors proposed, with its white figures standing out from sky-blue backgrounds and with the indelible and beautifully appropriate polychromy of flower-and-fruit garlands, provided architectural decoration with a visibility the other sculptures lacked.

### *Andrea Guerrieri – The coats of arms of public palaces in Tuscany*

Origin, meaning and production of heraldic coats of arms in Tuscany, and in Florence in particular, since their first spreading in the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century remake.

The rulers’ use of leaving their coat of arms in the city where they had carried out their public functions dates back to the early period of the medieval communes, when the *podestà*, at the end of their office, were bound to made the ruled commune a present of, almost always, an arm, which was decorated with their family insignia. This use of arms, or, alternatively, of shields, or their image, became more and more widespread during the Middle Ages, involving private citizens too.

Coats of arms symbolized, for cities and institutions, an identification and, at the same time, a possession mark, a proud assertion of autonomy. Consequently, between the early decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the 1770s, numberless coats of arms, still evident today, began to appear on the façades and in the lobbies of public palaces all over Tuscany, sometimes carved in stone or marble, sometimes modeled in glazed terracotta. The

making of glazed terracotta coats of arms, actually, became a sort of visual emblem distinguishing the supremacy of Florence towards its countryside territories. Expensive but lasting, the glazed terracotta coats of arms were favored by those members of Florentine families who held ruling offices by profession, since a certain continuity in use allowed to split the prototype costs, thus improving the quality.

Initially simple-shaped, then surrounded by flower-and-fruit vegetal garlands and angel heads, the glazed terracotta coats of arms were made in innumerable specimens by the two Florence family ateliers of Della Robbia and Buglioni, engaging their respective masters themselves. In Della Robbia's shop, the making of heraldic coats of arms - from the starting production by Luca and Andrea, characterized by *mandorla*-shaped and cambered shields - increased with Andrea's son, Giovanni, from the 1470s on. Then Giovanni's younger brothers, Luca "il Giovane" and Girolamo, renewed the style of coat-of-arms production according to the canons of a more mature classicism. Since the 1480s, also the competing Buglioni's atelier began to devote itself to the making of coats of arms, from the simplest, where shields are within rectangular frames, to more lavish and elaborate types, such as the very successful vegetal-garland ones. The varied typologies of the coats of arms made in the two Florentine workshops offered an interesting set of samples to those *podestà* and other rulers going to buy arms for the centers where they had held their office.

After the extinction of the two Florence atelier, at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there was in Tuscany an attempt at continuing the terracotta coat-of-arms production at the pottery factory of Montelupo, which reached a great trade expansion along the Atlantic mercantile routes. Finally, the making of glazed terracotta coats of arms had a revival in the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the production of Ginori and Cantagalli factories, though within a new historical and political context and therefore with different purposes.

The Tuscan palace heraldry can give a lively account of history. A cataloguing of it, as it has been hoped for on several occasions and at different times, could help and improve the knowledge of a historical and artistic heritage unfamiliar to most people as yet.

Carlo Tibaldeschi – *An Introduction to heraldry*

An excursus on the concept of heraldry, its historical evolution and spread through the centuries, from its birth in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century to its development in the 13<sup>th</sup> and expansion during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, with particular reference to the origin of signs and to the role of jousts and heralds. As to modern and contemporary times, the treatise and legislation trends are examined: the gap the French Revolution and Napoleonic period produced against tradition, the retrieval during the Restoration and, as regards 20<sup>th</sup>-century Italy, the influence of fascism on public heraldry and the provisions of the republican Constitution, with their relevant juridical implications.

Up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of heraldry was often spoilt by a warped, though deeply rooted, interpretation, the same that, for example, in 1790 France

brought to the abolition of coats of arms and to an iconoclastic rage against them. This attitude, however, is not totally unjustified if you think that the many treatisers writing between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries almost always came to heraldry through nobiliary research, paying more attention to the celebration of their client's family and social deeds than to historical truth. In early 20<sup>th</sup> century, G. di Crollanza censured this practice as misrepresenting heraldry features, starting the process that now rightfully place this subject within the history of culture, sensibility and art.

From a strictly evolutionary point of view, those signs always meant by man to mark ownership of things and to give emphasis to persons have progressively structured and developed according to their own criteria. The first representations appeared on the standards that distinguished the diverse military formations and on the seals employed for personal identification and therefore supplied with countermarks. The emblem assumed by the knight and placed on his standard and shield was often reproduced on his surcoat too and sometimes on his headpiece and that is why the heraldic escutcheon was generically named "coat of arms" or "arms". In time, the figure of the shield became more and more evident also on the seals.

An important role as breeding ground and influencing element for budding heraldry was played by jousts and, while their machinery grew more and more complex, by heralds, who had a coordinating and organizing function in this practice.

In the period ranging from the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, medieval heraldry knew its most speedy development and its utmost liveliness, widely asserting itself in society. What was at first a habit bounded to great dynasty members and feudatories, very soon spread itself among all the knights and then extended to civil and religious communities and, finally, during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, to bourgeois and craftsmen. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century heraldry reached a structural completeness, including esthetical canons codifying the proportions and patterns of the figures in coats of arms, which lost their original simplicity and became definitively hereditary.

If until the 15<sup>th</sup> century nothing distinguished in a definite way the "noble" from the "not noble" arms, since everybody was allowed to enrich his coat of arms, just for decoration's sake, with crowns or other signs of nobility, since the 16<sup>th</sup> century the first hints of heraldic law began to be outlined, with some differentiation according to places and times. The case of France is typical: there, in 1535 Francis I started to limit some rights concerning coats of arms to noblemen only, whereas in the following century Louis XIV's reign suddenly teemed with coats of arms some of his officers invented and conferred, for mere fiscal purposes, on citizens of any social status. In the Savoy duchy, in 1579 Emmanuel Philibert expressly prohibited anybody unable to demonstrate an ancient or Savoy-conferred title of nobility from having a coat of arms.

In the meantime, heraldry grew more and more stable till it fossilized in prescribed patterns, often altering its original liveliness. While for the most part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century several treatises cloaked heraldry with a twisting initiatory aura, at the end of the century the French Revolution opened a momentous gap by abolishing coats of arms, together

with nobility, feudalism and ecclesiastic appointments. Traditional emblems were replaced by a new revolutionary, rather coarse and muddled, set, made of such items as Phrygian caps, lances and scales of justice. After the faltering of the initial revolution boost, Napoleon tried to establish a further new heraldry: a rather cold and boringly repetitive attempt that was easily dismissed after Waterloo. The Restoration re-established traditional heraldry everywhere, bringing it back to the ways and styles of the less remote past, that is to a fossilized iconography following the artful and sometimes odd canons fixed by the heraldists of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In Italy, after the Unification Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy recognized all the heraldic rights and titles of nobility the new subjects had acquired by earlier and different legislations, while within the Catholic Church heraldic customs had remained almost unaltered for centuries, allowing all the ecclesiastic and monastic institutions to bear coats of arms without any particular protocol constraint.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fascism did not influence much the newly granted gentility heraldry, whereas it greatly affected public heraldry, by compelling communes and colonies to add the *capo littorio* (lictorian head) to their coats of arms. Following the adoption of the Constitution of the Italian Republic, the Consulta Araldica (Heraldic Council) had to be dissolved and today some functions on heraldic matters are performed by the Heraldic Office within the Office of the Prime Minister.

The right to a figurative mark with a function of personal identification is thoroughly equivalent to the right to a name, that is a right to personal identity. Nowadays, the modern outlook of heraldry is universally accepted as an irremissible way to study and understand the social mentality and its history. It would be desirable that, also in Italy, the competent bodies should undertake the task to protect personal and gentility heraldry, in order not only to eliminate abuses but also to give back a historical context to a past that still is a thriving and steady root of personal and national individuality.

### Carlo Tibaldeschi – *Coats of arms*

The essay is organised into two sections: the reading of coats of arms, with terminological specifications concerning the various denominations of heraldic insignia, and the peculiarities of Della Robbia output.

Heraldry expresses itself through a specific language, with an exclusive set of nouns, adjectives, verbs and phrases, with the addition of some words from modern language, which heraldry uses according to its own criteria. From a technical point of view, a coat of arms has two main elements: the first consists of everything that is framed within a shield, the second includes all the figures outside the escutcheon, according to the bearer's rank, social characteristics, role, or personal taste: such as crests, crowns, coronets, mantles, supporters etc.

The "heraldic style" is a special way of portraying reality, peculiar to coats of arms, the graphic typology of which is characterised by a "field", that is the space defined by the

shape of the shield, taken up by “ordinaries” (geometrical figures) and “charges” (a wide variety of stylised animate or inanimate objects, to be found around man in the tangible world). In order to make the reading easier, the surface of an escutcheon is ideally divided into sectors named “points”; the blazoning, or description of a coat of arms, is done as if a shield were actually being held by its owner, placed in front of the observer: thus what is placed on the observer’s left (“sinister”) is considered to be on the right (“dexter”) and vice versa. One of the fundamental elements in heraldry, perhaps the most attractive one, is “tincture”, organized in a well-determined and optically marked out choice of colours.

On this basis, blazoning follows some precise rules, governing vocabulary and word order, even though the heraldist, by drawing on his personal qualifications, has a certain leeway in elaborating an original style.

From a strictly technical and heraldic point of view, the escutcheons produced in Della Robbia’s workshop are characterized by the diversity and variety of their shapes and sometimes by the sublime refinement of the emblems upon them.

Even though heraldic emblems do not necessarily imply the presence of an escutcheon, a classification of the types of shield or escutcheon in Della Robbia’s work can be attempted. Among the most frequent is the “oval” form - used by Luca Della Robbia from the 1450s and the only one employed in the *terrecotte* of his Florentine workshop between 1470 and 1490 - the “kite-shaped escutcheon” and the “heater-shaped escutcheon”.

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Claudia Storti – *Short notes on capitani, podestà and vicari in the evolution of the territorial system of the Florentine dominion.*

A survey of the history and features of the most frequently mentioned offices in the cartouches of Della Robbia coats of arms, that is *capitano*, *podestà* and *vicario*, terms that during the communal age had designated the holders of executive and judicial functions, but that were kept also during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the autonomy of the communes had already been lost or greatly reduced.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the qualification of *capitano* (captain) was given to the highest magistrate in those communes that had adopted a “popular” representative system, in both Northern and Central Italy. In Florence, in particular, the word was used at the same time in the phrase *capitano del popolo* (captain of the people) and in the more generic meaning of political, military and police leader. The term *capitanato*, instead, appeared in Florence towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and, in the meaning of the district ruled by this position, only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Likewise, also the word *commissario* (commissioner) has to be attributed to a later administrative reorganization.

In the Florentine provisions of 1332, the office of *capitano* was replaced by that of *podestà* in some areas. One of the peculiarities of this leading figure was his being a foreigner

where he held the office, so as to safeguard fairness of judgement and impartiality in the most politically relevant decisions, including, in some cases, those concerning penal jurisdiction for the most serious crimes.

In some critical territories, the *vicari* (vicars) were instituted as a more incisive form of control over public order and loyalty of the dominion. These magistrates, above *podestà* in rank, exercised all the criminal jurisdictional powers of the highest authorities in Florence, within a district that was formed by numerous communes or leagues.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries – the time of Florence's tormented and inconstant institutional transformation from seigniorship to republic and then duchy – there were no major changes in its territorial organization as a whole. On all the dominion, yet, the dominant city imposed its own officials, who replaced all the locally appointed leaders. In single actual cases and situations, these representatives of the dominant control, in their different offices of *vicari*, *podestà*, *capitani* and *commissari*, had undoubtedly to mediate between orders of the central government and patronage connections.

As far as choreography and political propaganda are concerned, in the dominion centers the dominant city's coat of arms used to be displayed together with those of the citizens who had resided there as *rettori* (rectors), *vicari*, *capitani* and *podestà*; these coats of arms thus symbolized both the continuity of a tie between commune and family and a statement of the house's power and prestige.

#### Renzo Dionigi – *Guilds of arts and crafts in Florence*

Institution and functions of guilds, with special regard to the organization and role of guilds in Florence, and to the connections of Della Robbia family with them.

The guilds of arts and crafts were associations created in many European and Italian towns, as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with the primary aim of regulating and safeguarding the exclusive carrying on of the activities of craftsmen, merchants and, in general, workers practicing the same profession or job, seeing as a potential danger everyone who was practicing a trade without being a guild member. In Italy, for example, it was the building workers who were often organized in unions or in fraternities, with names varying from one region to another. The origin of these forms of aggregation is very remote, dating back to the ancient Greek cities and the Roman organization of *collegia*. Afterwards, the corporative regime spread almost everywhere in Europe, though with different times and modes.

In Florence, the *Arti*, lay associations aiming to trade defense, became actual guilds of arts and crafts between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is hard to establish with precision the institution date of every single Florentine guild: the first about which we have information is the *Arte del Calimala*, existing as early as 1150. The quantity of guilds in Florence eventually varied: the *Cronica Fiorentina* by Dino Compagni tells us that in 1300 they were greatly increasing in number and according to Niccolò Machiavelli from 1266 to the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century they were twenty-one. A complete enumeration and a



concise, yet exhaustive, description of the Arti, including their division into seven Arti Maggiori and fourteen Arti Minori, comes from Gregorio Dati, who, in his *Istoria di Firenze*, gives some details about the city from 1348 until 1406.

Admittance to the guilds was controlled by definite regulations. Each of the Arti was ruled according to its statutes, which had the force of law, and might pass judgement (held unappealable in the Arti Maggiori's case) in controversies among its members. Commercial causes among merchants of different guilds were instead examined and judged by the Tribunale di Mercatanzia, an institution created in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The guild system established a political and social hierarchy, with a *popolo grasso* (wealthy bourgeoisie) at the top, representing the Arti Maggiori, and, subordinately, the *popolo minuto* (lower middle class), representing the Arti Minori. The involvement of the Arti Maggiori in Florence's political life was usually important and the rise of guilds was connected to the mercantile world's claiming of an active political role in communal government, in consideration of its major role as a promoter and supporter of the city's development.

Della Robbia too joined the Arti. Luca became a member of the Arte dei Maestri di Pietra e Legname (Guild of the Stonemasons and Woodcarvers) as a sculptor in 1432. Andrea enrolled himself in the same guild, as a carver. Giovanni, instead, was a member of the Arte dei Medici e Speciali (Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries). In addition to their being members of the Florentine Arti, Della Robbia produced some works for them, the most well-known of which are the four medallions outside Orsanmichele, a lodge built for the corn market, later transformed into a church of the Arti.