Scholarly Publishing in the Context of Digital Art History

Murtha Baca and Emily Pugh
Getty Research Institute
ARLIS/NA + VRA 2016
Lessons learned about digital publications and...

1. Production
2. Readers and usage
3. Building on what we already know
1. PRODUCTION

- Can require large amount of resources: time, money, staffing
- Start small and scale up: it’s going to take more time than you think
- Requires a team of people, including new roles:
  PRODUCTION COORDINATOR / project manager
  USER EXPERIENCE (UX) DESIGNER
2. READERS AND USAGE

• Consider your audience: who are you writing or publishing for?

• Think about practices of consumption:
  JUMPING AROUND in the text, MARK UP and NOTETAKING, PRINTING

• Where will your readers find your publication?

• Don’t forget assessment
3. BUILDING ON WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW

- Don’t throw out everything you know about print publication; it’s OK to innovate incrementally
- Apply existing standards of quality, assessment, production
- Think about what you like or dislike about current models
- Think about digital publication in conjunction with (not instead of) print publication
Mellini’s Inventory in Verse, 1681

With notes and essays by Martha Baca, Francesca Cappelletti, Helen Glanville, and Nuria Rodríguez Ortaza

Published by the Getty Research Institute
Provenance of
Nuria Rodriguez Ortega

The poetic inventory by Pietro Mellini dated 1681 is difficult to understand if we consider it as a single item preserved in the Getty Research Institute's Special Collections, where it seems to be an isolated fragment disconnected from its historical and cultural context. The question arises: How did this manuscript, separated from other related documents, end up in Los Angeles?

There is no reason to doubt that the poem was composed in the Mellini household in Rome, from where it was destined to travel to Madrid. The similarity between the handwriting in the poem dated 1681 and the traditional inventory dated 1680 (currently preserved in the Serlupi Crescenzi archive in Rome) suggests that the two texts may have been written by the same copyist or professional scribe, probably hired by Pietro Mellini (figs. 1, 2).^2

Fig. 1. Example of the handwriting found in the traditional inventory of 1680 in the Serlupi Crescenzi archive. From Scritture diverse dello Casa Mellini (1674-1690), X, fos. 164–165. Rome, Archivio Serlupi Crescenzi
The Manuscript, and the Poem

Murtha Baca

The 1681 Mellini manuscript held in Special Collections at the Getty Research Institute consists of twelve folios of handwritten text on laid paper,1 in folios folded together in four gatherings of three uncut leaves each to form a sort of pamphlet. The pages in the first section of the manuscript measure 7 ¾ by 10 ¼ inches. The second section of pages is slightly larger at 7 ¾ by 10 ½ inches. A half sheet forms the front “cover” of the manuscript.2 The folios are bound with S-twisted silk or linen cord, some original and some evidently added later. A number of the folios have a watermark3 with an anchor topped by a star; others have a watermark of a star with a globe (figs. 1, 2). The writing is in iron gall ink,4 which was used prevalently during Pietro Mellini’s time. The ink in the first section of the manuscript appears darker and the strokes are thinner, whereas the ink in the second section is browner and the strokes are thicker; the two sections are explicitly indicated as having been written in February and April of 1681, respectively.

4. Iron gall ink is made by binding carbon particles in the extract of gall (an abnormal growth on oak trees); when applied to paper, iron gall ink darkens through oxidation.

See all footnotes >
Più d'un Pastor nelle campagne spasso
Guidar la gregge, et a far prende inteso
Il Cacciatore in più d'un logo apparsso

Il Gobbo de Caracci, il qual s'è rosso
D'ogn'altro a pan in colorir famoso
Ma che in tingere paesi al sommo a accesso

Un di questi formò vago e frondoso
Ove di Ninfe un situo in giro unite
Muoverono al balli il pie nel suolo herboldo,

E avvenne, che dell'inteso anche s'addite
Quattro teste in due tele esprimo in modo
Che son dipinte, e sembrano scolpite.

**SCHOLAR NOTE**

The "sculptural" value of the pictorial image—that is, its ability to represent three-dimensional volume and to give the feeling of sculptural relief—is one of the topics used in the artistic literature of the time. This is one of the critical categories present in the account that frames Pietro's aesthetic thought under the theory of Art imitating Nature—in other words, the ability of the art of painting to depict natural objects as if they were "real." See also the note on the last stanza.
There is also a drawing by the same artist
In which the episode of Angelica appears.
This was a gift as gracious as the donor himself.

A painting offered in perfect style
By Caravaggio, a Roman Charity
Equal to the clear sound of his fame.

SCHOLAR NOTE
I would suggest "his resounding fame" (understanding "chiaro" as in the sound of a trumpet). —Helen Glavich

Another possibility would be "his clarion fame." —Martha Baca

With equal flair this unique Artist used his brush
To paint two rustic portraits
Of a wrinkled Old Woman and an Old Man.

The old woman shows a pestle and mortar besprinkled
With a mixture she has made, and the

Anco in disegno dal medesimo espressio
L'esposto caso appar, e fu già dono
Gentil non men del donatore istesso.

S'offre dipinta in alti perfetto, e buono
Dal Caravaggio una Picta Romana,
Che di sua fama aggiuglia il chiaro suono,
Non e' da questa imperfettion lontana
Una tela magior, che in quel che' scople
Di mai far meglio ogni speranza è vana.

Mostra chi'l prezzo a constrastar s'adope
D'adorarli melior un Venditore
Chi'l tergo di pelliccia ammanta, e copre,
Della gente ch'ha intorno altri l'odore,
Altro il sapor ne gusta, a questo, e quello
Di quanti ne' comprò sborsa il valore;

Con egual vanto adoperò il pennello
In due vetrinetti Autor si raro
Dilia Vecchia grinzute, e un Buffoncello

Questa aspersione un pistello mostra, e un mortaro
Della salsa composta, e quel ridente
Si stringe un fiasco al sen del cor più caro.

Nell'atrio di Pilato al fuoco ardente
Pietro scoperto dall'Anchialo al dito
A cui seguire il suo Maestro e il mesto

Fig. 7 al naturale sino al ginocchio in tela di p. 1.5 di larg. e 4.4 di alt.

Fig. 8 al naturale sino al ginocchio in tela di p. 1.5 di larg. e 4.4 di alt.

Fig. 9 al naturale sino alla cintura in ovato da festa
Fig. 10 al naturale quasi intere, in tela di p. 1.6 di larg.
Bibliography

Bibliographic entries are tagged with thematic categories developed by the project team.


- Paintings and Painters


- Literary Galleries


- Collecting


- Ekphrasis / Ut pictura poesis


Available free online: [http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bbs10940880.html](http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bbs10940880.html)

- Mellini Family and Collection

Amayden, Theodoro. *La storia delle famiglie romane di Teodoro Amayden*. Con note ed aggiunte del
This publication of the Getty Research Institute is a result of an active collaboration between the GRI and two institutional partners:

Nuria Rodríguez Ortega, professor and chair of the art history department at the University of Málaga and the co-principal investigator on this project, who discovered the 1681 Mellini manuscript in the GRI’s Special Collections, and together with Murtha Baca, head of the GRI’s digital art history program, proposed the idea of a digital critical facsimile edition.

The Seaver Institute provided generous partnership grants to the GRI in 2014 and 2015. These grants supported development and advancement of the Getty Scholars’ Workspace, the online environment in which the research for this publication was conducted.

Publication Information
The URL for this publication is: http://hdl.handle.net/10020/mellini

To cite this publication, use the following format:

The ISBN for Pietro Mellini’s Inventory In Verse, 1681 is 978-1-60606-161-9.
1. **Pietro Mellini’s inventory in verse, 1631: a digital facsimile with translation and commentary**
   - By: Pietro Mellini, Martha Baca, Nuria Rodriguez Ortega
   - Publisher: Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
   - Database: WorldCat

2. **'Un pictura poesis': Pietro Mellini’s "Relazione delle pitture magnifiche di Casa Melini" (1681).**
   - By: Nuria Rodriguez Ortega, Martha Baca
   - Article
   - Publisher: Getty Research Journal, 2009, 161-168

3. **New scenarios for analysis and critical editions of art-historical texts: the collaborative experience of the "Digital Mellini" project**
   - By: Martha Baca, Nuria Rodriguez Ortega
   - Article
   - Publisher: Nuova d’arte, 8 Ser., 2012, 387-398

4. **Digital Mellini: Project Update and Observations on Translating Historical Texts**
   - By: Martha Baca
   - Article
   - Publisher: Getty Research Journal, 14 (2012), 153-160
Pietro Mellini's inventory in verse, 1681: a digital facsimile with translation and commentary

Author: Pietro Mellini; Martha Baca; Nuria Rodríguez Ortega; Getty Research Institute.
Publisher: Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015.
Database: WorldCat

Summary: This handwritten inventory of paintings in the Casa Mellini, Rome, was written by Pietro Mellini in February 1681 to his brother, Cardinal Savo Mellini, nuncio in Spain, and composed in the form of a poem in terza rima. Ninety-five paintings are listed, with measurements. Artists mentioned include Caravaggio, Raphael, and Bronzino.

Rating: ★★★★★ (not yet rated) 0 with reviews - Be the first.
Subjects: Mellini, Pietro, -- approximately 1651-1694 -- Relazione di molte pitture eccellenti scritta a mons, ilirmo Millini nuntio di Spagna a Madrid.
Mellini, Pietro, -- approximately 1651-1694 -- Criticism and interpretation.
Mellini, Pietro, -- approximately 1651-1694 -- Art collections.

More like this: Similar Items
Pietro Mellini’s Inventory in Verse, 1681 (2015)
Usage statistics to October 2015

1,045 visits
5,450 page views
17 countries