

# Soft and Translucent: Illusionistic Qualities of Marble in the Work of Antonio Corradini

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*Among Venetian sculptors of the second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century Antonio Corradini stands out as an artist who was trying to highlight his sculptural abilities through the constant emulation of and competition with older masters. Among different artistic problems he confronted himself with were the natural characteristics of marble as hard, opaque, and white material, and he managed to establish himself on international level with so-called *donne velate*, female figures with their heads covered with veils.*

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Stone, particularly marble, is a hard and opaque material. It has been precisely these elementary natural characteristics, along with the rather warm, ivory-like whiteness of the best Carrara marble, *marmo statuario*, that sculptors have often tried to challenge. One of the earliest known examples of such an endeavour is mentioned by Pliny the Elder, who notes that Cephisodotus, a sculptor of the latter part of the 4th century BC and son of the even more celebrated Praxiteles, was famous for a marble group in Pergamon. This group, called *Symplegma*, likely depicting two wrestlers, was highly praised for its fingers, which seemed to genuinely sink into real flesh rather than into marble.<sup>1</sup> Cephisodotus must have been but one of many sculptors of the classical world trying to defy the properties of stone, as we can deduce from the so called *Mozia Charioteer* (fig. 1), with its translucent drapery and fingers that sink

into the figure's own hip. With its dating to the first half of the 5th century BC, it is therefore even older than the *Symplegma* of Cephisodotus.<sup>2</sup>

When, in his early twenties, young Gianlorenzo Bernini was working on his marble groups for Cardinal Scipione Borghese, this was one of the many difficult tasks (*difficolti*) he set himself in order to showcase his technical abilities as well as his artistic genius. In *The Rape of Proserpina*, the powerful fingers of Pluto sink deeply into the soft flesh of the young woman who is fighting unsuccessfully to escape the God of the Underworld. Bernini's powerful invention was not only a sensual evocation of Pliny's text; it also underscored his Florentine tradition, and even showed him competing successfully with another famous predecessor, Giambologna and his *Rape of the Sabine Women*, not only in composition as a whole, but also in this little detail.<sup>3</sup> Still, neither



Bernini nor Giambologna could claim to be the first sculptors to achieve the virtuosity of Cephisodotus, since the tradition of such “softening” of the stone extends significantly further back in time and was, for example, also known in Central Europe around 1400, as the Krumauer Madonna clearly shows, with Virgin Mary’s fingers pressing into the body of the Christ Child.<sup>4</sup>

Among Venetian sculptors of the second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century, this, as well as other themes from early modern artistic theory, were but rarely studied. Even though the questioning of the materiality of marble was present in contemporary art criticism, it seems that up to the early 18th century only a few of the most talented sculptors actually tried to tackle this problem in their work. Marco Boschini, in his *Carta del navegar pittoresco* of 1660, praised the sculpture of Alessandro Algardi, arguing that his statues are “made of flesh, and not of marble; or if they are marble, it is made flesh.”<sup>5</sup> The most important 17th century Venetian sculptor, Giusto Le Court, of Flemish origins and unsurprisingly nicknamed by contemporaries as “Bernini Adriatico,” was also able to fashion the surface of marble naturalistically. In his *Madonna della Salute* from the 1670s, the soft skin of the Christ Child again yields to the grasp of Virgin Mary’s fingers.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Filippo Parodi, who had direct experience with the Roman workshop of Bernini, had an important influence on the generation of sculptors active around 1700, like Giuseppe Torretti and Giovanni Bonazza, especially in his abil-

ity to diversify the surface of marble, which became one of the usual sculptural devices among Bernini’s contemporaries and successors.<sup>7</sup>

Among the first generation of 18th century Venetian sculptors, Antonio Corradini (1688–1752) stands out as an artist who was trying to highlight his sculptural abilities through the constant emulation of and competition with older masters. In his seminal 1958 book on Baroque art and architecture in Italy, Rudolf Wittkower points out that Corradini’s “style is precious, harking back not to antiquity but to Alessandro Vittoria – it is, in other words, a sentimental revival of the Venetian brand of Late Mannerism. Corradini’s neo-Cinquecentismo even led him back to Sansovino [...], but he combined this archaism with typically post-Beminesque virtuosity of marble treatment.”<sup>8</sup>

Corradini’s early training is not directly documented, but it must have been within the workshop of Antonio Tarsia, who later became his father-in-law.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, in 1709 he was, at least briefly, working with Giovanni Bonazza in Padua, where – had he not done so before – he was able to carefully study Parodi’s work in Sant’Antonio and Santa Giustina, as well as several works of Giovanni Bonazza, including his altarpiece of the Virgin Mary in Santa Maria dei Servi, where marble is transformed into soft plant-like forms, while some of his other marble statues possess a nearly wax-like quality and seem to be made of some soft material rather than hard stone.<sup>10</sup> Though the early years of Corradini’s career are rather obscure, his rise to local prominence and international glory was quick, nearly meteoric, and by the end of the next decade, by the time he turned 31 in 1719, he was already regarded as an authority on discussing sculpture and was receiving public commissions from the Senate as well as private and church commissions from Venice, Terraferma, and abroad.<sup>11</sup> At the time, he was arguably the first Venetian sculptor of the early 18th century to emulate the works of the Venetian Cinquecento, placing the sculptors in step with contemporary trends in painting and architecture. Furthermore, he was credited by his contemporaries with establishing the *Collegio dei scultori*, which was seen as the decisive step towards the formation of the Venetian academy of arts.<sup>12</sup>

Following the series of Corradini’s important works from 1716 onwards, most of them demonstrate his attention to composition and detail, including those that question the materiality of marble. This is widely demonstrated by the response to Corradini’s work, and by the works themselves. In 1728, one of the foremost Venetian collectors of his day, Zaccaria Sagredo, was visited by the famous French philosopher Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu. In his travel notes, immediately

Sl. 1.  
Mozia Charioteer.  
Mozia, Museo  
Giuseppe Whitaker  
(photo: Matej  
Klemenčič)

Sl. 2.  
Antonio Corradini,  
Adonis. New York,  
Metropolitan Museum  
of Art



following his words of admiration for the Sagredo palace and omitting other important works of art in the collection, Montesquieu singled out Corradini's statue of Adonis (fig. 2) and praised it as "one of the most beautiful things that you could see." He added that one "would swear that the marble is made of flesh."<sup>13</sup> The present condition of the marble makes

it rather difficult to understand the use of this classical *topos*. Only a careful examination of the statue, now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, still reveals the remains of the fine gradations of different polish, partially restored to the marble by the recent restoration after decades of exposure to the weather.<sup>14</sup> Still, it seems not at all unlikely that Zaccaria Sagredo, himself a connoisseur of the arts, would have pointed out the statue of Adonis to the learned visitor in 1728, using the classical *topos* to praise it. This would also be in keeping with Corradini's own understanding of the importance of self-promotion and the promotion of sculpture and arts in general.<sup>15</sup>

Sl. 3.  
Antonio Corradini,  
Nessus and  
Deianeira. Dresden,  
Grosser Garten  
(photo: Matej  
Klemenčič)



Like Bernini in his early masterpieces, Corradini, as early as 1716, also emulated the works of Giambologna in his two marble groups Nessus and Deianeira (fig. 3) and Eurytion and Hippodameia, now in Grosser Garten in Dresden. His other groups, made partly in Venice around 1716 and later bought for the gardens of Frederick Augustus I as well as those commissioned directly for Dresden in the 1720s, addressed the great tradition of complex group compositions of the 16th and 17th centuries less directly, but still rather obviously. In some of these groups, Corradini also challenged the hardness of marble, as for example, with the fingers of Nessus pressed into the thigh of Deianeira, or with the gruesome detail of Apollo flaying the skin of Marsyas (figs. 4-5).<sup>16</sup> This attention to the modelling of surface is also evident in other works, including those for Venetian churches, wherever it was iconographically appropriate. Two foremost examples are the Virgin Mary of



the Rosary for the church of Eremita (fig. 6) and the Saint Ambrose of Milan in San Stae (fig. 7).<sup>17</sup>

Still, his most famous invention concerned the question of transparency, or rather, translucency of marble. Soft and thin see-through garments



were already depicted over bodies in Greek and Roman statues. Besides the already mentioned Mozia Charioteer, there are several other statues, many of which would have been known to the Early Modern sculptors. The famous Flora Farnese is dressed in thin “wet” drapery which reveals more of the body beneath than it conceals.<sup>18</sup> This type of drapery became one of the ways to show the sculptor’s virtuosity in the 16th century, and in the Venetian territory, it was Jacopo Sansovino who stood above the rest for it.<sup>19</sup> Following in his footsteps, the young Antonio Corradini presented a statue that brought him instant international recognition. This episode is narrated in a letter, written on Christmas Day, 1717, by Antonio Balestra, a famous Venetian painter. He reports to the Florentine art historian and collector Francesco Maria Niccolo Gabburri on the young Venetian sculptor who has made a statue of Faith with a veiled face, “a work that has astonished the whole city,” since Corradini has managed “to make of marble what appears to be a transparent veil, as well as a most graceful figure, well dressed and well designed.”<sup>20</sup> The statue alluded to is now recognized as the representation of Faith finished by Corradini at the end of 1717 for the monument of the wealthy Manin family in the Cathedral of Udine.<sup>21</sup>

As Balestra suggests, one of the keys to Corradini’s success was the sheer fascination of the public with the masterful translucent rendering of the marble surface. Furthermore, at least for the learned public, the invention was a true novelty. Even though they knew Corradini’s classical and 16th century prototypes for the marble drapery rendered as a soft and thin translucent veil, they also recognised that they had never seen anything similar before. The novelty was a veiled face, as later emphasized by Filippo Venuti, a Tuscan archaeologist and encyclopaedist, in August 1752: “neither do the ancient texts mention any marble statue with a veiled face, nor has any similar miraculous marble been found

Sl. 4.  
Antonio Corradini,  
Apollo flaying the  
skin of Marsyas.  
London, Victoria  
and Albert Museum

Sl. 5.  
Antonio Corradini,  
Apollo flaying the  
skin of Marsyas  
(detail). London,  
Victoria and Albert  
Museum (photo:  
Matej Klemenčič)

Sl. 6.  
Antonio Corradini,  
Virgin Mary of the  
Rosary. Venice,  
Church of the  
Eremita (photo:  
Matej Klemenčič)

Sl. 7.  
Položaj kamenoloma  
Antonio Corradini,  
Saint Ambrose of  
Milan. Venice, San  
Stae (photo: Matej  
Klemenčič)



among those unearthed up to now.” He was reporting on the statue of the veiled Modesty, inaugurated in the Cappella Sansevero in Naples on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July of that year, noting how the statue “elegantly and naturally covered with a veil” deceived even the most cautious onlookers.<sup>22</sup> This observation, repeated several times in later 18th century, was also part of the display of the statue in the chapel, perhaps planned initially, but installed only after the death of the sculptor on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August 1752.<sup>23</sup> The eulogy of Filippo Venuti therefore seems to be part of the strategy of self-promotion of the sculptor and patron alike. As in the case of Montesquieu, we could assume that Venuti was only repeating what he had heard in Naples, evidently at the time when Corradini was still alive.

After 1717, female figures with veiled faces became a signature piece for Corradini who used the motif for busts, statues, and groups. Venetian nobility and European courts from Madrid to Sankt Petersburg longed to have a copy or two of the so-called *Donna Velata* in their collection.<sup>24</sup> Among the most interesting variants is the one found in the Louvre

today (fig. 8); even though its provenance before 1976 is unknown, it is now believed that it can be identified with the one mentioned in the Manfrin collection in the 19th century and in the Sagredo Collection before that.<sup>25</sup>

In his palace on Canal Grande, Zaccaria Sagredo owned three statues by Corradini: the above-mentioned Adonis, his companion piece Venus, and a veiled statue of Religion. The last should be dated not only before 1728, when Adonis is mentioned by Montesquieu, but most likely not much later than the first veiled figure of 1717. If the Louvre statue is indeed Sagredo’s Religion, this important provenance would explain why this one is the most elaborate of all his veiled statues. Corradini not only explored the possibilities but also challenged the difficulties of marble with the finest details of drapery and the veil over the face of the figure. In the lower part of the drapery, Venetian connoisseurs could easily recognise a citation from one of the most visible statues from the so-called *Statuario pubblico* in the Biblioteca Marciana, the public collection of classical sculpture, established by a donation of the Grimani family at the end of the 16th century (fig. 9). Not only did Corradini anticipate other colleagues with his interest in Cinquecento sculpture by emulating Sansovino and his contemporaries, he also demonstrated his interest in *Statuario Pubblico* some two decades before the publication of its catalogue by the two Anton Maria Zanettis which sparked a revival of interest in this important collection.<sup>26</sup>

Owners of his works, the connoisseurs connected to them, and Antonio Corradini himself were all willing to explain and stress the important elements of his work to the public. Corradini’s own interest in the history of sculpture is exemplified by a 1725 report that he wrote for the Venetian Senate on the condition and restoration of statues on the Arco Foscari, the entrance of the Palazzo Ducale, built and decorated in the second half of the 15th century. Most pertinent to our discussion is his emphasis on the need for a sculptor-restorer to understand and imitate the *antica maniera* of the sculptures requiring restoration, and to respect the individuality of each masterwork shaped by its provenance and originating period.<sup>27</sup>

Antonio Corradini was a complex artist who carefully created his own personal style by studying and emulating classical and Early Modern sculpture. He was also aware of the importance of self-promotion which included public presentations of his most successful works before sending them away from Venice, as well as his personal engagement in the process of creating the *Collegio dei scultori*. Moreover, given the circumstances behind the eulogy of Venuti, it seems obvious that he discussed his intentions



Sl. 8.  
Položaj kamenoloma  
Antonio Corradini,  
Religion. Paris,  
Musée du Louvre

Sl.9.  
Female statue  
("Agrippina"). From  
ANTON MARIA  
ZANNETTI, Delle  
Antiche Statue...  
(note 26), tab. IX.

with connoisseurs who later promoted his work. All in all, Corradini's challenges of the natural qualities of marble, making it look soft and translucent, were evidently part of his strategy to present himself as an

heir to the most celebrated sculptors since antiquity and as someone who was able to surpass them in a field where everything already seemed achieved.

## Bilješke

- <sup>1</sup> »Praxitelis filius Cephisodotus et artis heres fuit. cuius laudatum est Pergami symplegma nobile digitis corpori verius quam marmoris impressis.« (Pliny, Nat. Hist., XXXVI, 24). See e. g. JEROME JORDAN POLLITT, *The Art of Ancient Greece: Sources and Documents*, Cambridge, 1990<sup>3</sup>, 111; *Der Neue Overbeck: die antiken Schriftquellen zu den bildenden Künsten der Griechen*, Berlin, Boston, 2014, III, 530, n. 2391; for the sculptor e. g. BERNARD ANDREAE, s. v. »Kephisodotos (II)«, *Künstlerlexikon der Antike*, ed. R. Vollkommer, Munich, Leipzig, 2001, I, 410-411; for Symplegma e. g. ADRIAN STÄHLI, *Die Verweigerung der Lüste: erotische Gruppen in der antiken Plastik*, Berlin, 1999, 58-68.
- <sup>2</sup> For Mozia (Motya) Charioteer, discovered only in 1979, see e. g. JOHN PAPADOPOULOS, »The Motya Youth: Apollo Karneios, Art, and Tyranny in the Greek West«, *Art Bulletin*, 4, 96 (2014), 395-423, with bibliography.
- <sup>3</sup> For Bernini's marble group in Galleria Borghese, of 1621-22, see e. g. Matthias Winner, »Ratto di Proserpina«, *Bernini scultore. La nascita del barocco in Casa Borghese*, exhibition catalogue, ed. A. Coliva, S. Schütze, Rome 1998, 180-201, cat. no. 16, with bibliography; MARINA MINOZZI, in *Bernini*, exhibition catalogue, ed. A. Bacchi, A. Coliva, Rome, 2017, 162-164, with select bibliography.
- <sup>4</sup> See e. g. LOTHAR SCHULTES, »Die Plastik – Vom Michaelermeister bis zum Ende des Schönen Stils«, *Geschichte der bildenden Kunst in Österreich. Bd. 2. Gotik*, ed. G. Brucher, München, London, New York, 2000, 344-396; for the Krumauer Madonna e. g. JAROMÍR HOMOLKA, »Krumauer Madonna«, *Die Parler und der Schöne Stil 1350-1400. Europäische Kunst unter den Luxemburgern*, Köln, 1978, II, 686.
- <sup>5</sup> »E pur l'Algardi ha cusì degna strada, / Che ognun dir poderave a bona ciera: / Quel è statua de carne, e no de piera, / O, se piera la xe, la xe incarnada.«. See MARCO BOSCHINI, *La carta del navigar pitoresco*, ed. A. Pallucchini, Venice, Rome, 1966, p. 520. For Boschini and his reception of contemporary sculptors, see SIMONE GUERRIERO, »Boschini e la scultura: Clemente Molli scultore di »colossi««, *Marco Boschini. L'epopea della pittura veneziana nell'Europa barocca*, ed. E. M. Dal Pozzolo, P. Bertelli, Treviso, 2014, 281-295. For the wider context see e. g. JORIS GASTEL, »Ambiguities of the Flesh. Touch and Arousal in Roman Baroque Sculpture«, *Magische Bilder. Techniken der Verzauberung in der Kunst vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. U. Fleckner, I. Wenderholm, Berlin, 2015, 161-181.
- <sup>6</sup> For Le Court and his altarpiece in Santa Maria della Salute see, most recently, MAICHOL CLEMENTE, *White marble and the black death. Giusto Le Court at the Salute*, Venice, 2019, with bibliography.
- <sup>7</sup> For the formation of Bonazza and influence of Parodi, see e. g. SIMONE GUERRIERO, »La prima attività di Giovanni Bonazza«, *Arte Veneta*, 67 (2010), 73-101, spec. 84.
- <sup>8</sup> RUDOLF WITTKOWER, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600-1750*, rev. ed. J. Connors, J. Montagu, London, 1999, III, 68.
- <sup>9</sup> For Corradini, see BRUNO COGO, *Antonio Corradini. Scultore veneziano 1688-1752*, Este, 1996, and here below.
- <sup>10</sup> For Corradini in Padova see BRUNO COGO, *Antonio Corradini...* (note 9), 41-42, 147-148; for Bonazza in Santa Maria dei Servi see MATEJ KLEMENČIČ, »Le opere di Giovanni Bonazza a Santa Maria dei Servi«, *La Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Servi in Padova: archeologia, storia, arte, architettura e restauri*, ed. G. Zampieri, Rome, 2012 (Le chiese monumentali padovane, 4), 223-234.
- <sup>11</sup> For the catalogue of his works, see BRUNO COGO, *Antonio Corradini...* (note 9).
- <sup>12</sup> His early personal style and his role in establishing the *Collegio dei scultori* are discussed in MATEJ KLEMENČIČ, »Antonio Corradini, Collegio dei scultori, and Neo-Cinquecentismo in Venice around 1720«, *The Enduring Legacy of the Venetian Renaissance*, ed. A. Banta, Farnham, 2016, 103-119; MONICA DE VICENTINI, SIMONE GUERRIERO, »Per Antonio Corradini, 'Prometeo Tritoniano' della scultura veneziana«, *Arte Veneta*, 77 (2020), i. e. 2021), 99-117.
- <sup>13</sup> »Il y a un sculpteur à présent, à Venise, nommé Corradino, Vénitien, qui a fait un Adonis, qui paroît une des belles choses qu'on puisse voir : vous diriez que le marbre est de la chair; un de ses bras tombe négligemment, comme s'il n'étoit soutenu de rien.« LE BARON ALBERT DE MONTESQUIEU, *Voyage de Montesquieu*, Bordeaux, 1894-96), I, 65. English translation from TOMASO MONTANARI, »'A Thing of Beauty.' Antonio Corradini's Rediscovered Masterpiece«, »One of the Most Beautiful Things'. *A Rediscovered Masterpiece by Antonio Corradini*, ed. A. Butterfield, New York, 2013, 22.
- <sup>14</sup> The New York statue came from a French private collection, where it was located outside and close to a pool. For the rediscovery, iconography and provenance see e. g. TOMASO MONTANARI, *A Thing of Beauty...* (note 13), 9-45; ANDREA BACCHI, »Antonio Corradini e i Sagredo«, *Il tempo e la rosa. Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Loredana Olivato*, ed. P. Artoni et al., Treviso, 2013), 130-135; MATEJ KLEMENČIČ, *Antonio Corradini...* (note 12), pp. 113-114.
- <sup>15</sup> For his role in establishing *Collegio dei scultori*, first tentative of establishing an academy of arts as well as possibilities of self-promotion see

- e. g. MATEJ KLEMENČIČ, Antonio Corradini... (note 12); MATEJ KLEMENČIČ, »Venetian Early Modern Single-Leaf prints after Contemporary Sculpture: Questions of Form and Function«, *Works of Art on Parchment and Paper. Interdisciplinary Approaches*, eds. N. Golob, J. Vodopivec Tomažič, Ljubljana 2019, 103–111; MONICA DE VINCENTI, SIMONE GUERRIERO, Per Antonio Corradini... (note 12).
- <sup>16</sup> For Dresden works see BRUNO COGO, *Antonio Corradini...* (note 9), 240–261; the original commission and dates are discussed in: BARBARA MARX, »Diplomaten, Agenten, Abenteurer im Dienst der Künste: Kunstbeziehungen zwischen Dresden und Venedig«, *Venedig - Dresden: Begegnung zweier Kulturstädte*, ed. B. Marx, A. Henning, Leipzig, 2010, 10–67, esp. 41 ss.; SIMONE GUERRIERO, »Antonio Corradini a Waddesdon Manor«, *Venezia Settecento. Studi in memoria di Alessandro Bettagno*, ed. B. A. Kowalczyk, Cinisello Balsamo, Milano, 2015, 95–101.
- <sup>17</sup> For the two statues, both of early 1720s (Saint Ambrose documented in 1720), see BRUNO COGO, *Antonio Corradini...* (note 9), 188–190, 240–261.
- <sup>18</sup> See e. g. FRANCIS HASKELL, NICHOLAS PENNY, *Taste and the Antique. The lure of classical sculpture, 1500–1900*, New Haven, London, 1981, pp. 217–219, cat. no. 41.
- <sup>19</sup> See e. g. MATEJ KLEMENČIČ, Antonio Corradini... (note 12), 103, 105.
- <sup>20</sup> »Ancor qui in Venezia abbiamo di presente un giovane scultore, chiamato Antonio Corradini, che si porta assai bene, ed ha fatto una statua d'una Fede col capo e Faccia velata, che è una cosa che ha fatto stupire tutta la città, a riuscire con tanta grazia d'un tal impegno, di far con il marmo apparire un velo trasparente, oltre la figura tuttavia graziosa, ben vestita e ben disegnata.« GIOVANNI GAETANO BOTTARI, STEFANO TICOZZI, *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura ed architettura scritte dai più celebri personaggi dei secoli XV, XVI e XVII*, Milan, 1822, II, 125; the English translation is from PATRICIA WENGRAF, »Antonio Corradini«, *The Glory of Venice: Art in the Eighteenth Century*, exhibition catalogue, ed. J. Martineau and A. Robison, New Haven, London, 1994, 446, cat. no. 58.
- <sup>21</sup> For the identification see MONICA DE VINCENTI, »Piacere ai dotti e ai migliori. Scultori classicisti del primo Settecento«, *La scultura veneta del Seicento e del Settecento: Nuovi studi*, ed. G. Pavanello, Venice, 2002, 237; earlier bibliography in BRUNO COGO, *Antonio Corradini...* (note 9), 164–177, cat. nos. 9–10 (for the statue in the Manfrin collection, identified by early nineteenth-century writers as the one from Balestra's letter, and for the statue now in the Louvre, again tentatively identified with the one from the Manfrin collection; see also here below); for the Manin Faith in Udine, see BRUNO COGO, *Antonio Corradini...* (note 9), 181–5, cat. no. 12.
- <sup>22</sup> »Nap[oli], 22. Lug[lio]. È stata eretta nella Chiesa Gentilizia de' Sigg. Principi di Sansevero di Tangro la famosa Statua rappresentante la Pudicizia si elegantemente, e naturalmente ricoperta di un velo, che inganna gli occhi de' più avveduti. Questa è opera dell'insigne Antonio Corradini. Egli con questo nuovo ritrovato è stato il primo, che abbia avuto l'invidiabile piacere di aver superato gli antichi celebri Scultori Greci, e Romani; giacchè nè le Storie ci fanno parola di alcuna statua di marmo, che abbia avuto il volto coperto di un velo, nè tra tutte quelle, che si sono dissotterrate fin oggi, si è mai rinvenuto si fatto prodigio ne' Marmi.«, published in »Stato politico dell'Europa«, *Magazzino italiano*, I (1752), 71.
- <sup>23</sup> For some later similar observations see REGINA DECKERS, *Die Testa velata in der Barockplastik. Zur Bedeutung von Schleier und Verhüllung zwischen Trauer, Allegorie und Sinnlichkeit*, München, 2010, 299–300. The commemorative inscription reads: ANTONIO CONRADINO VENETO / SCALPTORI CAESAREO ET APPOSITI / SIMULACRI VEL IPSIS GRAECIS INVIDENDI / AUCTORI QVI DVM RELIQUA HVIVS TEMPLI / ORNAMENTA MEDITABATVR OBIIT / A. MDCC-LII. / RAYMVNDVS DE SANGRO S. SEVERI PRINCEPS P.« - transcription from REGINA DECKERS, *Die Testa velata...* (note 23), p. 280.
- <sup>24</sup> For the earlier history of the motif and later *fortuna critica*, see REGINA DECKERS, *Die Testa velata...* (note 23).
- <sup>25</sup> BRUNO COGO, *Antonio Corradini...* (note 9), 170–177, cat. no. 10; for the identification with the Sagredo statue: MATEJ KLEMENČIČ, Antonio Corradini... (note 12), 113–114; ANDREA BACCHI, Antonio Corradini... (note 14), 132–133.
- <sup>26</sup> See e. g. ANTONIO MARIA ZANETTI, *Delle Antiche Statue Greche e Romane, che nell'Antisala della Libreria di San Marco, e in altri luoghi pubblici di Venezia si trovano*, I, Venice, 1740, tab. IX (Agrippina); GUSTAVO TRAVERSARI, *Museo archeologico di Venezia. I ritratti*, Rome, 1968, 39–40 cat. no. 19; GINO BENZONI, in *Lo Statuario Pubblico della Serenissima. Due secoli di collezionismo e antichità 1596–1797*, exhibition catalogue, eds. I. Favaretto, G. L. Ravagnan, Cittadella, 1997, 158–159, cat. no. 20. For the *Statuario pubblico* see e. g. MARILYN PERRY, »The Statuario Pubblico of the Venetian Republic«, *Saggi e Memorie di storia dell'arte*, 8 (1972), 77–150; *Lo Statuario Pubblico...* (note 26).
- <sup>27</sup> »Sembra l'opera a prima vista di niuno o poco rilievo, alla quale ogni mano e con breve applicatione possa supplire: perché un dito, un pezzo di veste, un piede, una mano presto si forma. Ma se si consideri doversi far queste parti in maniera, che la rimanente della Statua, alla quale devonsi riconnettere, non disconvengano, ma corrispondano, e nell'atteggiamento, e nel carattere questi piccoli membri, che ora sono per farsi alle altre parti di un corpo di somma perfezione e di Auttore, è in conseguenza di costruito antichissimo la operazione di difficile e di faticosissima riuscita. // Non basterà avere riformato un membro una volta, nè due, sarà d'uopo riformarlo e tre e quattro volte, e meno e più, fino che abbia ottenuto la mano dell'Artefice, che ha il suo proprio carattere, l'arduo fine di avere imitato un Carattere tanto straniero e Antico. // Sortito finalmente che abbia di avere imitato l'antica maniera di una di quelle Statue, altrettante volte dovrasi ripetere il medesimo studio quante sono le altre Statue che àn bisogno di essere restaurate, avendo ognuna di esse, come VV. EE. han rilevato dalla mia Rellazione, il suo Auttore particolare e differentissimo, e per la sua nazione e per l'età in cui fiorì.« BRUNO COGO, *Antonio Corradini...* (note 9), 83–84.



## Meko i prozirno: iluzionističke kvalitete mramora u djelu Antonija Corradinija

MATEJ KLEMENČIĆ

Kao skulpturalni materijal mramor karakterizira tvrdoća, potpuna neprozirnost i - kada je u pitanju »marmo statuario« iz Carrare - gotovo poput bjelokosti topla bijela boja. Umjetnici su često pokušavali ove prirodne značajke kamena preoblikovati kako bi u očima gledatelja stvorili iluziju mekoće, prozirnosti ili višebojnosti. Takve primjere poznajemo od antike, spominje ih i Plinije, a od ranog novog vijeka nadalje kipari su se redovito, u smislu dokazivanja svog talenta i tehničkih sposobnosti, natjecali kako s antičkim djelima tako i s djelima njihovih poznatih prethodnika. Članak predstavlja rad Antonija Corradinija, koji se proslavio svojim ženskim likovima prekrivenim

velom (tzv. *donna velata*), pri čemu su kritičari u njima brzo prepoznali djela koja nisu imala paralela u antici, jer se ni u drevnim tekstovima a niti u starijim kiparskim djelima ne susreće motiv lica prekrivenog velom. Corradini je također pokazao svoje tehničko znanje pažljivom obradom površine mramora. Koristeći razne tehnike poliranja kako bi dočarao iluziju različitih materijala ili boja, mramor se kao i kod djela nekih poznatih prethodnika, pod pritiskom prstiju, pretvorio u meko živo tijelo. Sve je to povremeno bilo potkrijepljeno oduševljenim reakcijama poznavatelja umjetnosti njegova doba.