

broadened his circle of interests. The great artist read many books as well; Venice was one of the great book-publishing centers of Europe and, naturally, many books were available to him.

Really, Vasari did not much value the works of Titian: he had no special attention for the great artist in the first edition of his famous *Vita* (1550). Titian was not an intellectual artist from Vasari's viewpoint, he was not capable of abstraction, and he was too inclined towards color. Vasari did concede, in the second edition, that the Venetian painters systematized *disegno* and *colore*, however. In that regard it is necessary to note that many Venetians criticized Florentine-Roman centralism and defended Venetian painting in their treatises on painting in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They wrote very often about the profound sense of the works of Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese. Of course, we can say that the sentence "life as nature" is identical to the sentence "natura potentior ars." But is it the strong position or not in Titian's works? Valeska von Rosen remarks justly that the opposition of theory and practice in Titian's works need not perpetuate the *mythos* of the genius, who was not understood and remained in isolation. The *Pietà*, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, and his many portraits show that Titian knew the historical and political realities of ancient Rome and his time. For example, he knew the famous tract of Castiglione, *The Courtier* (1528).

The text includes many quotations about the work of Titian's contemporaries in Italian from the scholarship of contemporary specialists in the history of art. However, they are too voluminous. Unfortunately, there are only a few color illustrations. But these flaws are not serious drawbacks. I must say that this book is very interesting and useful not only for specialists in art history, but for all who have interest in the culture of Italian Renaissance.

Priorista: 1407–1459. Pagolo di Matteo Petriboni and Matteo di Borgo Rinaldi. Ed. Jacqueline A. Gutwirth and Gabriella Battista. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2001. 622 pp. €70.24. ISBN 88-87114-95-1.

REVIEWED BY: Robert A. Pierce, International School of Luxembourg

Priorista (1407–1459) is an impressive and exhaustive work in the paleographical tradition of historical scholarship. During the constitutional reforms in Florence in 1282–83, the position of *priore* was established. Originally representing the three most important trade corporations, *priori* eventually came to represent different sections of the city, with their number expanding to eight. For many years, the *priori*, who served two-month terms, constituted the *signoria* and made up the chief governing body of Florence. A *priorista*, which could be either a publicly authorized or a privately produced document, was a registry of the names of the *priori*. *Prioristi* often included events of public importance as well, and historians of the era (and later) turned to them for information. For the first book of his *Istorie fiorentine*, for example, Giovanni Cambi drew heavily upon the Petriboni-Rinaldi *priorista*, which certainly was known also to Poggio Bracciolini and Flavio Biondo, and possibly to Niccolò Machiavelli. Jacqueline Gutwirth's edited version of this text, begun by Pagolo di Matteo Petriboni and completed by Matteo di Borgo Rinaldi, represents a significant contribution to the recovery of this important document, all but forgotten for most of the modern era.

In the introduction Gutwirth clarifies several substantive issues surrounding the Petriboni-Rinaldi *priorista*. There are actually two surviving manuscript versions, the Pluteo LXI, Codice 35 (BLF) in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze and one classified as *Conventi soppressi*, C.4.895 (Santa Maria Novella) in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di

justice" the author has considered. For the last of his appendices, Bianco has selected some of Lucrezio Palladio's illustrations, depicting the Friulian nobleman Lucio Torre's violent scandals. Finally follows the Udinese abbot Giacomo Narduzzi's manuscript account of Torre's execution in nearby Habsburg Gradisca during the early eighteenth century.

What unites all these "stories" as subject of a single volume are their splendid illustrations. These images form the most intriguing element in the mix of thematically diverse subject matter this publication combines. Moderately sized, *Storie raccontate & dissegnate* holds a wonderful variety of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century graphic art the author has reproduced. Furio Bianco must be particularly commended for the reproduction of the handwritten and richly illustrated documents, which may have been executed with later publication in mind. He has lifted from archival obscurity a number of visual gems with raw illustrative power.

Mimesis und Selbstbezüglichkeit in Werken Tizians: Studien zum venezianischen Malereidiskurs. Valeska von Rosen. Berlin: Edition Imorde. 2001. 487 pp. €58.00. ISBN 3-9805-6446-0.

REVIEWED BY: Yuri Ivonin, University of Smolensk

This excellent book by Valeska von Rosen is an essential contribution to the investigation of Titian Vecellio's works. It is a short, abridged version of the author's dissertation from the Freie Universität Berlin in 1998. The main features of this book are scrupulous analysis and much new data. Rosen's thesis is directed against Giorgio Vasari's opinion of Titian as an artist with no philosophical background who merely imitated nature and accentuated the play of color. To critique Vasari's conception, Rosen uses the notions of mimesis and self-definition. She writes that Vasari considered Titian to be an artist of limited education and intellect, underestimating his practical style of thinking because of the special social and cultural situation of the rich merchant city of Venice. Rosen perfectly uses the notion of mimesis, exploring the correlation between art and real life in Titian's works. She fruitfully examines the tracts of ancient authors (Plato, Aristotle), which are very necessary to understand many principles of Italian painting of the Renaissance. The author knows very well the modern scientific literature on the problems of this art.

Whether Rosen is correct in using the notions of mimesis and self-definition as necessary for the revision of the apparatus of ideas in the study of the arts (similar to "linguistic turn" in the theory of literature of the twentieth century) is questionable; but her reflections and searches in this direction are worthwhile. Of course, there is too much that is imaginary and only similar to truth in the works of painters for true mimesis, but the sense of it is found in the reflection of genuine feelings and emotions in the characters portrayed. As Rosen proves, Titian did much for mimesis, though, as Vasari wrote, *disegno* in his works is less apparent than in the works of the artists of Florence and Rome (Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo). It goes without saying that the differences between the Florentine and Venetian schools of painting were very significant. The usual opinion is that the great artists of Florence reflected and theorized too much, but the artists of Venice had more practical sense with their great love for color. The study of Italian treatises on the arts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries brings Rosen to the conclusion that Titian also was inclined to "ragionare della pittura." The works and letters of Pietro Aretino, who lived in Venice for a long time and was friendly with Titian, are particularly important clues to this conclusion. It is very significant that Titian's friendly contacts with many Venetian humanists and writers