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The Representation of Philosophers in the Art of Salvator Rosa



Fig. 1: Salvator Rosa, *The Philosophers' Wood*, c. 1641 – 43, Oil on canvas, 147 x 221 cm, Florence, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti (Luigi Salerno, *L'Opera completa di Salvator Rosa*, Milan 1975, fig. XXII).

In his *Life of Salvator Rosa* Filippo Baldinucci, who knew the painter well, included this memorable description – “An overriding love and thirst for glory created in him, from his early years, a passionate desire to appear in all his words and deeds a true philosopher. His thoughts were always full of dreams of walking beneath the spacious porticoes of Athens in the company of the ancient Stoics”.^[1] Scenes from the lives of the ancient philosophers, rare subjects before the 17th century, form a major part of Rosa's production. In this essay I shall concentrate primarily on those from Rosa's final years, from 1660 to his death in 1673, when he responded to strains of contemporary thought and feeling very different from those which had inspired him in his early career.

A brief look at these early philosopher paintings, however, will serve to heighten this difference. Rosa was born in Naples in 1615, and trained in the studio of the Spanish artist Juseppe de Ribera, at precisely the moment, in the mid 1630s, when the Spanish artist was making a speciality of galleries of half length portraits of philosophers. Ribera's are learned works, full of details culled from classical and antiqua-

rian sources, yet astonishingly vital; he shows the ancient philosophers as beggars, in torn and ragged clothing, bizarrely patched together, and utterly absorbed in the world of the mind. They have much of the humour of Lucian's dialogues, one of the most popular 17th century sources for lively descriptions of the ancient philosophers.

Ribera's philosophers remain, throughout Rosa's career, a constant presence in his art. In the 1640s he was court painter to the Medici in Florence, and here he encountered fresh sources of inspiration. The mood of much Florentine Seicento painting is witty and irreverent, and when Rosa arrived in Florence Giovanni da San Giovanni's decorations of the summer apartments of the Palazzo Pitti had just been completed. Here, in one fresco, blind Homer totters forth from Mount Parnassus, whilst on the opposite wall Lorenzo, at the feet of Plato, volumes of philosophy piled up beside him, enjoys the company of poets and scholars at the academy of Careggi.^[2] There is more than a hint of mockery of Raphael's stately fresco of the *School of Athens* (Rome, Vatican, Stanza della Segnatura) and Rosa picked up some-



thing of Giovanni da San Giovanni's light hearted yet learned tone.

More important than the Medici court was the world of the Florentine literary academies. Rosa himself founded an academy, the Accademia dei Pericossi, which attracted many of the most brilliant Florentine literary men, scholars, high churchmen and scientists. Here Rosa nurtured his ambitions as satirical poet as well as painter, and swiftly became the centre of the Florentine literary world, whose double laurels made him celebrated. Of especial importance in this world were two writers whose works often read like a rich source for Rosa's iconography, the Jesuit scholar Daniello Bartoli, and the moral philosopher Paganino Gaudenzio. They shared an interest in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Ancient Philosophers*, (3rd century AD) whose popularity grew in the 17th century, and especially in the novel eccentricities of the Cynics and Stoics. In 1645 Bartoli published his immensely successful *Man of Letters (Uomo di Lettere)*, whose fame rapidly spread throughout Europe, and Queen Christina of Sweden was to ask for a copy.[3] The Florentine edition of this work was dedicated to Rosa, who in his letters expresses his interest in Bartoli's writings.[4] The book is a passionate defence of the intellectual life, and of the joy which the study of letters brings to humankind. Bartoli does, however, believe that this study must be undertaken in solitude, far from the corruption of the court, and his heroes are the early philosophers, Socrates, Diogenes, Crates, and Pythagoras; the melancholic headings of many of his chapters, the *Wise Man Ill*, the *Wise Man in Prison*, the *Wise Man in Exile*, the *Wise Man in Poverty*, convey his gloom about the place of the literary man in contemporary society. His writings are rich in echoes of Seneca and anecdotes from Diogenes Laertius, and he describes with comic relish the best loved antics of those ancient philosophers who had so spectacularly resisted the lures of worldly success and wealth.

Wonder at the ancient philosophers [...]. One who throws his riches into the sea, making himself a beggar, in order not to avoid poverty [...], one who lives in a barrel, like a dog in its kennel, rather than man in his residence. One

who throws himself into Mongibello (Etna) and one into the sea, the first because he could not understand the movement of the tides, and the next to seek out the origins of the volcanic flames. Pythagoras turns into a hundred beasts [...]. Xenocrates is of marble, without sense, Diogenes a dog, Epicurus an animal, Democritus a madman who always laughs, Heraclitus desperate, and always weeping.[5]

Bartoli encourages the intellectual to furnish his mind with knowledge, with history, literature, and the sayings of ancient sages. He was interested in Rosa and, as we shall see, provided a brilliant description of one of his most unusual philosopher paintings.

Paganino Gaudenzio gives a contrary view. In 1640 Gaudenzio had moved from Barberini Rome to take up a post as professor of eloquence at the university of Pisa; his *Del Seguitar la Corte o no* preaches that the intellectual has a duty fully to participate in the world of the court.[6] Indeed Gaudenzio's works illuminate the concerns of the élite intellectual and courtly circles for which Rosa painted; he was an immensely prolific and successful author, who experimented with many genres and wrote on many themes, amongst them poetry, philosophy, theology, history, political science, and eulogies in both Latin and Italian. He wrote histories of both patristic and Roman philosophy, and lamented the dominance of Aristotle in the universities, recommending that Plato, the Stoics and the Pythagoreans should also be studied. His ground breaking history of Roman philosophy argued for a new method of study, in which not only the thought of the ancients should be studied, but also their lives and deeds, and the historical contexts in which they worked, and he encouraged an interest in the lives of the philosophers generally.[7] As in the writings of Bartoli, they spring to vivid life in his prose and both may have encouraged painters to take up similar themes. One of Gaudenzio's first works had been a small treatise on the transmigration of souls, the *De Pythagorea animarum transmigratione* (1640), in which he paid homage to Galileo; there followed the *Della peregrinazione filosofica* (1643), where he discusses the legends and superstitions which had accumulated around the earliest philosophers. Both

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Plutarch only insinuates Pythagoras' belief in metempsychosis, but it was a subject much debated by Rosa's learned contemporaries, and the painting would have stimulated debate on this subject and on all the famed oddities of Pythagoras' diet. It was a subject that fascinated Queen Christina, who, a passionate admirer of Lucretius, was deeply interested in atomism, and the doctrine of the World Soul. In 1650 she had read Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, his great poem on atomism, in the new edition by Michel de Marolles, which was dedicated to her.[36] Marolles had argued that Lucretius' primary aim was to refute Pythagoras' belief in the transmigration of the soul. Her interest was sparked by this and other works, and in 1652 she had commissioned Johannes Schaeffer to write a commentary on the Pythagoreans in the tradition of Diogenes Laertius and this appeared as *De Natura et Constitutione Philosophicae Italicae seu Pythagoricae* in 1664, very close in date to Rosa's painting. Schaeffer pays great attention to the doctrine of metempsychosis, and to the inclusion of women in the fundamental doctrines of the Pythagorean academies.[37] So fascinated was the Queen in these subjects that later, in 1676, Leibniz, planned a dialogue in which Christina was to argue with Descartes on the Soul of the World, a dialogue which was to include Pythagorean arguments on the transmigration of souls.[38]

The pendant shows Pythagoras' other persona, in which, as the sceptic Timon of Philiasos wrote in the third century, "Down to a juggler's level he sinks with his cheating devices, laying his nets for men, Pythagoras, lover of bombast".[39] Its subject is Pythagoras' supposed descent into Hades, an anecdote related by Diogenes Laertius. Pythagoras, he tells us, hid below ground for a long period, employing his mother to keep him informed about events above. He then ascended, "withered and looking like a skeleton [...]". And declared he had been down to Hades". His followers wept and wailed, and called him divine; they sent their wives to him for instruction, and they became known as the Pythagorean Women. [40] Here he emerges from the cave with a truly wicked grin on his face, in sharp contrast to the grand figure in the companion piece.

This ruse, the claiming of divinity by a trick,

was often mentioned by libertine philosophers, and religion as imposture or deceit is a traditional topos in libertine writing. It recurs obsessively in the writings of Gabriel Naudé, who had been Christina's librarian in 1650-1651, and who in 1624 had published his *Apologie pour les Grand Hommes Soupçonnez de Magie*, an attempt to peel away many of the legends of spells and magic that had blackened the reputations of many of the early philosophers. In 1639 Naudé had followed this with his *Considerations Politiques*, many times republished in the 17th century, in which he explores the theme of religion and fear, and the role of secrecy and deceit in maintaining power. He sums up a long passage on this with the comment that all princes treat religion in the manner of charlatans, and make use of it as of a drug to ensure the splendour of their role.[41] In the *Apologie* he had likened Pythagoras to other great religious tricksters, such as Mahomet, who was reputed to have hidden one of his companions down a well, and then, through a sarbacane, have caused him to yell "Mahomet is the great prophet sent by God on earth".[42] Rosa may first have known the story through Paganino Gaudenzio, who in his *Della Peregrinazione Filosofica* of 1643 had recounted Ermippo's telling of Pythagoras' stay in an underground grotto. But, he concludes, this was probably an invention of Ermippo; Pythagoras, in the account of Ovid, absolutely denies the realms of Pluto, so surely he would not claim to have been in hell, and in the realms of the underworld?[43] Here Gaudenzio clearly reveals himself as a disciple of Gabriel Naudé, who, as we have seen, wrote in support of his work. Probably around 1659 the anonymous tract *Theophrastus Redivivus* was published, which similarly attacks the deceits of religion, whilst defending absolutism as the only way in which the wiseman could live according to nature. The author, who recounts the Pythagoras' story at length, sees its implications, and the way in which the idea of a feigned resurrection had implications for the resurrection of Christ. He concludes his narration with a passage debunking the very concept of resurrection, and adds this comment: "Thus it is clear that all legislators and princes are cheats and dissimulators, religion is nothing other than a way of dominating a credulous people." [44]

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ment on the overweening folly of the philosopher's desire, rooted in Tertullian's negative remarks on him in *De Anima*. Here Tertullian makes merciless fun of the philosopher, laughing at his belief in transmigration, and his claim to have once been a fish (why not a tasty melon, mocks Tertullian); he chose Etna for his grave, where he truly roasted like a fish.^[73] These three poems together capture the spirit of the debates that clustered around Empedocles.^[74]

And perhaps Rosa's painting, too, was intended to be ambiguous, and to provoke this kind of discourse. Here Rosa abandons the classical structure that had characterised even his wildest landscapes of the 1650s and early 1660s. Sky, rocks and fiery crater are brought close to the frontal plane, and the entire surface seems shifting, unstable, threatening to engulf the spectator. It may be that Rosa saw not only Kircher's illustrations but also the drawings and watercolours which Kircher took from nature, and the vertical shaft, with the pools of flame at its base, is close to these sources; the painting seems to be the first painted representation of a volcano in eruption.^[75] Against the crater the tiny figure of Empedocles seems heroic, and the painter evokes the wonder and mystery of this legendary figure from the earliest era of human knowledge. But he does include the golden slipper, evidence of Empedocles' cheating, a device which links him to Pythagoras the trickster with a golden thigh, and provokes a kind of lingering unease in the mind of the viewer; it is possible to see the bat-like, sprawling figure of Empedocles as comic, as Crates before him had been.

It is these ambiguities, the ways in which this deeply read painter reflects so many strains of thought and feeling that provides the lasting fascination of Rosa's philosopher subjects. He suggests a 17th century passion for *novità* and *meraviglia*, yet looks forward to the 18th century sublime, with its passion for the awesome grandeur of nature.

Endnotes

1. Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie de' professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua*, ed. Ferdinando Ranalli, 6 vols., Florence 1671-1728, repr. Paola Barocchi, Florence 1974-1975, p. 497: "Da tale suo soverchio amore e appetito di gloria era ancora nato in lui fin da un gran tempo un fervente desio d'apparire in ogni suo fatto e detto un vero filosofo: e pare che il passeggiare per gli spaziosi portici d'Atene in compagnia degli antichi Stoici fosse continova occupazione de'suoi pensieri".
2. On these frescoes see Elizabeth McGrath, *From Parnassus to Careggi: a seventeenth celebration of Plato and Renaissance Florence*, in: *Sight and insight: essays on art and culture in honour of E.H. Gombrich at 85*, ed. John Onians, London 1994, pp. 191-220.
3. John Renaldo, *Daniello Bartoli: a Letterato of the Seicento*, Naples 1979, p. 41.
4. On this dedication see Floriana Conte, *Salvator Rosa tra Roma e Firenze. Vecchie questioni e nuovi materiali*, in: *Metodo di ricerca e ricerca del metodo: storia, arte, musica a confronto*, Atti del convegno di studi Lecce 21-23 May 2007, ed. Benedetto Vetere, Congedo 2009, p. 247.
5. Daniello Bartoli, *L'Uomo di Lettere*, Bologna 1646, pp. 112-113: "Mirate gli antichi filosofi...Chi butta le ricchezze in mare, e si fa mendico, per non diventare povero. [...] Chi vive in una botte, più come un cane nel suo nido, come che un' huomo nel suo albergo. Chi si butta nel Mongibello, e chi nel mare, l'uno perche non intende la cagione di que'movimenti, l'altro perche non rintraccia l'origine di quelle fiamme. Pitagora si trasforma in cento bestie. [...] Senocrate è un marmo senza senso, [...] Diogene un cane, Epicuro un'animale, Democrito un pazzo, che sempre ride, Eraclito un disperato, che sempre piange."
6. Paganino Gaudenzio, *Del seguitar la corte o no*, Pisa 1645. On Gaudenzio see Caroline Callard, *Le Prince et la République*, Paris 2007, pp. 98-99 and 164-171.
7. Paganino Gaudenzio, *De Philosophiae apud Romanos initio et progressu volumen*, Pisa 1643. On this see Ilario Tolomio, *Il Genere 'Historia Philosophica' tra Cinquecento e Seicento*, in: *Storia delle Storie Generali della Filosofia*, ed. Giovanni Santinello, Brescia 1981, vol. 1, pp. 119-123.
8. Paganino Gaudenzio, *La Galleria dell'Inclito Marino Considerata vien dal Paganino Con alcune composizioni dell'istesso Paganino*, Pisa 1648, p. 183.
9. For recent research on Rosa in Pisa see Franco Paliaga, *Pittori, incisori e architetti pisani nel secolo di Galileo*, Pisa 2009.
10. For *Diogenes throwing away his bowl* see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, with an English translation by Robert Drew Hicks, London 1970, II, p. 39, VI.37, and for *Crates throwing his Money into the sea* ibidem, p. 91, VI.87.
11. Bartoli 1646, *L'Uomo di Lettere*, p. 39; "reliquie del secol d'oro", on this passage in Bartoli see Helen Langdon, *Relics of the Golden Age: the Vagabond Philosopher*, in: *Others and Outcasts in early Modern Europe: Picturing the Social Margins*, ed. Tom Nichols, Burlington VT 2007, pp. 157-178.
12. Traino Bocalini, *I Ragguagli di Parnaso*, with an English translation by Henry, Earl of Monmouth, London 1649, p. 100.
13. Antonio Santacroce, *La Secretaria di Apollo*, Venice 1653, pp. 438-439. For Rosa's admiration of Santacroce see Salvator Rosa, *Lettere*, ed. Gian Giotto Borelli, Naples 2003, p. 170. The book was first published in 1650.
14. For the poem see Leandro Ozzola, *Vita e Opere di Salvator Rosa*, Strasburg 1908, pp. 225-228.
15. For this painting see *Salvator Rosa, Bandits, Wilderness and Magic*, ed. Helen Langdon, London, Dulwich Picture Gallery and Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum, 15 September 2010 – 27 March 2011, pp. 218-219.
16. For this engraving by Crispijn van Passe see: *Fortune: "All is but Fortune"*, ed. Leslie Thomson, Washington DC, Shakespeare Library, January 18th – June 10th 2000, p. 30, cat. no. 43.
17. Christies, London, King St; *Old Master and 19th century Art, sale* December 8th 2009 lot 27.
18. Luigi Salerno, *L'Opera completa di Salvator Rosa*, Milan 1975, Tav. XXXIX.

19. For these etchings see Richard Wallace, *The Etchings of Salvator Rosa*, Princeton, New Jersey 1979, cats. 104, 103 and 108.
20. Wallace 1979, *The Etchings*, cat. 109.
21. Paganino Gaudenzio, *Della Peregrinazione filosofica Trattatello di Paganini*, Pisa 1643, p.10.
22. Rosa 2003, *Lettere*, p. 326.
23. Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, V 3.
24. Daniello Bartoli, *La Tensione e la Pressione*, Rome 1677, pp. 1-14. I am grateful to Floriana Conte for this reference.
25. Bartoli 1677, *La Tensione e la Pressione*, p. 1: "un venerando vecchio, in portamento all'antica, e in abito alla filosofale: di gran persona, e di maestoso aspetto, ma temperato soave, con altrettanta giocondità; e sopra tutto con due occhi d'aquila in capo, sì vivi, e spiritosi, che parlano: tener disteso il braccio, la mano, il dito in atto di comandare ad un villanello, che pochi passi fuor della porta d'una città gli si tien fermo inanzi, e a'suoi piedi ha disposto un fascio di legna".
26. Bartoli 1677, *La Tensione e la Pressione*, p. 1: "Tutti erano fusti, ò barbi, e radici di piante salvatiche, i rami che componevan quel fascio: perciò bistorti, e curui; pieni di groppi, e di sproni, e di giunture storpie, nodose, stravolte: ma con tanta maestria d'ingegno accoppiati e commessi, così strettamente raggiunti, e stivati, col far che ne' difetti dell'uno entrasser gli eccessi dell'altro, e tutti scambievolmente si ubbidissero al riceversi, all'adattarsi, a ben formare un tutto".
27. Bartoli 1677, *La Tensione e la Pressione*, p. 3: "v'ho figuralmente rappresentato quel ch'è la Natura, e quel che de'essere il Filosofo naturale intorno ad essa".
28. Bartoli 1677, *La Tensione e la Pressione*, p. 13: "questo nuovo stil di sapere".
29. Bartoli 1677, *La Tensione e la Pressione*, p. 14: "Quella propone il fatto, questa ne rinviene il perche".
30. Rosa 2003, *Lettere*, p. 294: "Ho concluso i due quadri che stavo lavorando, i soggetti de'quali sono del tutto e per tutto nuovi, nè tocchi mai da nessuno. Ho dipinto in una tela [...] Pitagora lungo la riva del mare corteggiato dall sua setta, in atto di pagare ad alcuni pescatori una rete che stanno tiranno, a ciò si ridia libertà ai pesci, motivo tolto da un opuscolo di Plutarco. L'altro è quando il medesimo, doppio esser stato un anno in una sotterranea abitazione, alla fine d'esso, aspettato dalla sua setta, così d'uomini come di donne, uscì fuori e disse venire dagl'Inferi e d'haver veduto colà l'anima d'Homero, d'Esiòdo, et altre coglionarie appetitorie di quei tempi così dolcissimi di sale". Letter of 29 July 1662. As translated Eckhard Leuschner, *The Pythagorean Inscription on Rosa's London Self Portrait*, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, LVII, 1994, p. 280.
31. Rosanna De Gennaro, *Per il collezionismo del Seicento in Sicilia: l'inventario di Antonio Ruffo Principe della Scaletta*, Pisa 2003, pp. 93, 111, 140. For a full history of the painting see Langdon 2010, *Salvator Rosa*, p. 206.
32. For this anecdote see Plutarch's *Moralia*, with an English translation by Edwin Minar Jr., Francis Henry Sandbach and William C. Helmbold, London / New York 1961, IX 729D.
33. Plutarch, *Moralia* VIII.8, IX, 173, 185.
34. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, with an English translation by Frank Justus Miller, Cambridge / London, repr.1994, vol. IV, XV.165-175, p. 377.
35. Ovid 1994, XV.81-82. For a comparison of Rosa and Rubens see: Helen Langdon, *Salvator Rosa: his Ideas and his development as an artist*, unpublished PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London 1974, p. 345. For Rubens' iconography see Elizabeth McGrath, *Rubens: Subjects from History*, London 1997, vol. II, pp. 48-52.
36. Susanna Akerman, *Queen Christina of Sweden and her Circle*, Leiden / New York / København / Köln 1991, pp. 73-74; Michel de Marolles, *Le Poete Lucrèce*, Paris 1650.
37. Akerman 1991, *Queen Christina of Sweden*, p. 97.
38. Akerman 1991, *Queen Christina of Sweden*, p. 84.
39. As given in Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, *Measuring Heaven. Pythagoras and his Thought and Art in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Ithaca / London 2006, p. 21.
40. Diogenes Laertius 1970, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, II, p. 357, VIII 41.
41. Gabriel Naudé, *Considerations sur les Coups d'Estat*, Rome 1667, p. 275.
42. Gabriel Naudé, *Apologie pour les grands hommes soupçonnez par magie*, Amsterdam 1712, pp. 160-162. For a discussion of this theme see Lorenzo Bianchi, *Rinascimento e Libertinismo*, Naples 1996, pp. 127-136.
43. Paganino Gaudenzio, *Della Peregrinazione filosofica*, Pisa 1643, pp. 42-43; "il che forse tutto fù inventato, e finto da Ermippo. Certamente Pitagora appresso Ovidio, pare che neghi assolutamente i regni di Plutone. Come dunque s'asserisce che Pitagora disse di venir da gl'infernali, e sotterranei regni?"
44. "Unde manifestum est omnes legislatores et principes esse deceptores ac simulatores, religionemque qua populos trahunt nihil esse quam astutiam et commentum ad dominatus utilitatem." As cited in Tullio Gregory, *Theophrastus Redivivus: erudizione e ateismo nel Seicento*, Naples 1979, p. 106.
45. Herodotus of Halicarnassus, *Histories*, with an English translation by Harry Carter, London 1962, I.75, p. 33.
46. Athanasius Kircher, *Mundus Subterraneus*, Amsterdam 1665, vol. I, pp. 233-234 for description and illustrations.
47. Athanasius Kircher, *Latium*, Amsterdam 1671, p. 140: "sub ponte profundissima voragine, quam ex horrendo spectaculo inferni fauces diceret, partim extra urbe per altissimam rupem in communem aquae voraginis abyssum dilapsus, per alios aliosque subterraneos cuniculos totidem aliis Catarractis committitur", as given in Joscelyn Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World*, London 2009, p. 136.
48. Kircher 1671, *Latium*, pp. 141-142.
49. Godwin 2009, *Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World*, p. 187.
50. Aspasius Caramuelius, *Loco seniorum naturae et artis, sive magiae centuriae tres*, Frankfurt 1667, p. 226.
51. Herodotus 1962, *Histories*, I.85, p. 38.
52. Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, X, 12.8 -10.
53. For the reception of Archytas in the Renaissance see Anthony Grafton, *Conflict and Harmony in the Collegium Gellianum*, in: *The Worlds of Aulus Gellius*, eds. Leofranc Holford Stevens and Amiel Vardi, Oxford 2004, pp. 318-342.
54. Giorgio De Sepibus, *Romani Societatis Jesu Musaeum Celeberrimum etc*, Amsterdam 1678, pp. 2-3 lists Kircher's machines. The dove of Archytas is no.15.
55. Gaspar Schott, *Mechanica hydraulico-pneumatica*, Frankfurt 1657, p. 243; Grafton 2004, *Conflict and Harmony*, p. 342.
56. Athanasius Kircher, *Magnes: sive de arte mechanica opus tripartitum*, Rome 1654, p. 264, fig. 23. For a description of this model see Athanasius Kircher: *Il Museo del Mondo*, ed. Eugenio del Sardo, Rome, Palazzo Venezia, 28th Feb - 22 April 2001, pp. 253-255 and Grafton 2004, *Conflict and Harmony*, p. 341. For an illustration, p. 254.
57. Horace, *The Complete Odes and Epodes: with the centennial Hymn*, with an English translation by William G. Shepherd, London 1983, Book I, p. 28.
58. Grafton 2004, *Conflict and Harmony*, p. 339.
59. Theodoor Galle, *Illustrium Imagines, ex antiquis marmoribus, numismatibus, et gemmae expressae*, Antwerp 1606, ill. no 27. For a discussion of the sources on Archytas, including Horace's ode, see p. 17. For a discussion of likenesses of Archytas see Gisela Richter, *Portraits of the Greeks*, London, 1965, II, p. 179.
60. Guercino's painting is known through a drawing in Princeton University Art Museum. For a fuller discussion of Rosa and Ruffo see Xavier Salomon and Helen Langdon, *Of Men and Mechanical Doves: Salvator Rosa's Archytas for Don Antonio Ruffo*, in: *Boletín del Museo del Prado*, forthcoming.
61. For Etna in ancient and Renaissance literature see Dominique Bertrand, *Mythologies de l'Etna*, Clermont-Ferrand 2004.
62. Pindar, *The Odes of Pindar*, Cambridge / London 1978, p. 157.
63. Paganino Gaudenzio, *Della Filosofica Peregrinazione*, Pisa 1643, pp. 62-64.
64. Emanuele Tesauro, *Il Cannocchiale Aristotelico*, Turin 1655, p. 449.
65. Athanasius Kircher, *Mundus Subterraneus*, Amsterdam 1665, preface, chap. III, unpaginated; "craterem cum jam obtinuisssem, horrendum dictu, totem igne illuminatum vidi cum intolerabili sulphuris & bituminis ardentis mephiti. Hic prorsus ad inusitatum rei spectaculum attonitus, inferorum domicilium me intueri cre-

debam, in quo praeter daemonum horrenda phasmata, nil adeo aliud deesse videbatur. Horrendi percipiebantur montis mugitus & fremitus, putor inexplicabilis, fumi subfuscis ignium globis mixti, quos ex undecim diversis locis, tam fundus, tam latera montis continuo eructabant, identidem me illud eructare cogebant", as given in Godwin 2009, *Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World*, p. 133. For the illustration see preface.

66. Kircher 1665, *Mundus Subterraneus*, vol. I, pp. 186-188.
67. Diogenes Laertius 1970, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, pp. 383-384, VIII. 69.
68. Naudé 1712, p. 193.
69. Paganino Gaudenzio, *Considerazioni Accademiche*, Florence 1631, p. 87: "Plinio l'autor della storia naturale, per osservare l'incendio del monte Vesuvio, a se cagiona la morte. Aristotile, non ritrovando perche s'aggiri l'Euripo, si getto in esso. La cagione della morte d'Orero fu il non sapere sciorre un'enigma."
70. Irene Baldriga, *Lo sgomento della morte di Plinio*, in: *Rome et la science moderne: entre Renaissance et Lumières*, ed. Antonella Romano, Rome 2008, pp. 418-421.
71. Gaudenzio 1643, *Della Filosofica Peregrinazione*, p. 43.
72. Paganino Gaudenzio, *De Pythagorea Animarum Transmigratione*, Pisa 1642, pp. 298-299.
73. Tertullian, *De Anima*, XXXII. I.
74. Paganino Gaudenzio, *Nuovo Poema in Sonnetti*, Pisa 1648, pp. 26-28.
75. For these drawings see del Sardo, *Athanasius Kircher* 2001, figs. 78, 79 and 80. The originals are owned by the Museo di Geologia Università degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza'.

Figures

Fig. 1: Salvator Rosa, *The Philosophers' Wood*, c. 1641 – 1643, Oil on canvas, 147 x 221 cm, Florence, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti (Luigi Salerno, *L'Opera completa di Salvator Rosa*, Milan 1975, fig. XXII).

Fig. 2: Salvator Rosa, *Crates throwing his Riches into the Sea*, c. 1641 – 1643, Oil on canvas, 146 x 216 cm; Skipton, Boughton Hall (Helen Langdon, *Salvator Rosa - Dulwich Picture Gallery*, London 2010, fig.12).

Fig. 3: Crispijn van de Passe, *Homo Vanitatis et Fortuna ludibrium*, in *Stirpium, insignium nobilitatis*, Basel 1602? (Leslie Thomson, Washington DC, Shakespeare Library, January 18th – June 10th 2000, p. 30).

Fig. 4: Salvator Rosa, *Fortuna*, 1640 – 1642, Oil on canvas, 254 x 144,8 cm, Private collection (Helen Langdon, *Salvator Rosa - Dulwich Picture Gallery*, London 2010, fig. 35).

Fig. 5: Salvator Rosa, *Democritus and Protagoras*, c. 1660 – 1663, Oil on canvas, 185 x 128 cm, St Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum (Helen Langdon, *Salvator Rosa - Dulwich Picture Gallery*, London 2010, fig. 76).

Fig. 6: Salvator Rosa, *Pythagoras instructing the Fishermen*, 1662, Oil on canvas, 132 x 188 cm, Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie (Luigi Salerno, *L'Opera completa di Salvator Rosa*, Milan 1975, fig. LI).

Fig. 7: Salvator Rosa, *Pythagoras emerging from the Underworld*, 1662, Oil on canvas, 131,1 x 189 cm, Texas, Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum (Photograph by Robert La Prella).

Fig. 8: Salvator Rosa, *Thales causing the river to flow on both sides of the Lydian army*, c. 1663 – 1664, Oil on canvas, 73,5 x 97 cm, Adelaide, Art Gallery of South Australia (Gift of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide).

Fig. 9: Athanasius Kircher, *Origin of Rivers, Mundus Subterraneus* 1664, vol. 1, p. 254.

Fig. 10: Salvator Rosa, *Archytas of Tarentum*, 1668, Oil on canvas, 134 x 97 cm, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado (Helen Langdon, *Salvator Rosa - Dulwich Picture Gallery*, London 2010, p. 125).

Fig.11: Theodoor Galle, *Illustrium Imagines, ex antiquis marmoribus, numismatibus, et gemmae expressae*, Antwerp 1606, ill. no 2.

Fig. 12: Salvator Rosa, *The Death of Empedocles*, c. 1665 – 1670, Oil on canvas, 135 x 99 cm, Private collection (Helen Langdon, *Salvator Rosa - Dulwich Picture Gallery*, London 2010, p. 213).

Fig.13: Athanasius Kircher, *Mount Vesuvius in Eruption (Mundus Subterraneus*, 1664, vol.1, opposite p. 200).

Summary

Salvator Rosa longed to be considered a philosopher-painter, and to win a reputation for his learned representation of novel subjects. This essay traces the development of this kind of subject matter in his art, from the satirical paintings of Cynics and Stoics which date from his years in Florence (1640 – 1649) to philosopher paintings of the 1660s, when he chose instead the pre-Socratics, such as Pythagoras and Empedocles, and natural philosophers and magicians. It sets these paintings in their intellectual contexts, in Florence in the world of the literary academies, in which Rosa played a key role, and in Rome in the scientific world of Athanasius Kircher, Daniello Bartoli and Queen Christina of Sweden. The essay aims to illuminate the strains of contemporary thought and feeling to which these paintings so deeply appealed, and, by studying the treatment of such subjects in contemporary poetry and literature, to suggest how they may have been read. It argues that much of their appeal may have lain in their ambiguity, and in the power that they had to stimulate discussion. Several of Rosa's subjects are extremely rare in painting, but, as in the case of two paintings of Pythagoras, they are subjects common in literature. They would not have been seen as odd and eccentric, as now they seem, but as subjects central to 17th century philosophical debates.

Author

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