

with the initials M.K. Hopkins

SICILIAN ETCHERS. The Palermo publishers, Caracol, have launched a series of small publications devoted to works by printmakers and draughtsmen in Sicilian collections, the first of which, written by Diana Malignaggi, concentrates on four Neoclassical etchers (*L'Acquaforte: Vincenzo Riola, Francesco La Farina, Bartolomeo e Luca Costanzo 'Incison', Palermo, Edizioni Caracol, 2008, 80 pp., 11 col. and 14 b. & w. ill., €16*). In an introductory chapter the author outlines the history of the teaching of printmaking in the island during the first 40 years of the nineteenth century. For almost all this period Agostino Sarzi was Director of the Regia Università degli Studi, while Vincenzo Riolo headed its Accademia del Nudo from 1828 until his death from cholera in 1837. The latter, after initially studying in his native city moved from Palermo to Rome, where he became a pupil of the French painter and collector Jean Baptiste Wicar between 1792 and 1796. Among his friends there were Felice Giani and the poet and dramatist, Vittorio Alfieri. Back in Sicily, he was the prime figure in the revival of etching, taking his subjects from Classical mythology and Homer's *Iliad*.

Four of Riolo's prints are presented here, together with three preparatory drawings of them. The first of these, *Aristodemus and the Ghost of his Daughter*, an episode from his friend Vincenzo Monti's 1792 comedy, as Malignaggi notes, is stylistically related to the work of Fuseli, who exerted a powerful influence on Italian as well as British and Danish artists who came into his circle during the Swiss artist's time in Rome. By the time that Riolo made his 1814 etching, *Cornelia, Mother of the Guacchi*, his style had become firmly attached to international Neoclassicism. In his *Pyrrhus Killing Polyxena on the Tomb of Achilles*, a subject taken from Euripides, the Sicilian derived the figure of Polyxena from a then famous painting by Bénigne Gagneroux, a model that, according to Malignaggi, he also used somewhat incongruously in a painting of *Psyche Transported to the Zephyrs*. It was in his *St Peter Freed from Prison by an Angel*, among the etchings discussed here, that Riolo came closest to the style of Wicar.

By contrast, to judge by the etching *Hercules Punishing the Centaurs*, a subject taken from Seneca, Francesco La Farina was more interested in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Italian art than in contemporary Neoclassicism. Half a dozen years junior to his fellow Palermitan, La Farina was another victim of the cholera that swept through Sicily in 1837. The other printmakers, whose work is discussed here, were the brothers Bartolomeo and Luca Costanzo, who executed competent portrait etchings, which, however, did not rise to the quality of Raffaele Morghen. Among their sitters was the famous astronomer, Giuseppe Piazzi. The brothers were also responsible for the illustrations of metopes after the drawings of Giuseppe Scaglione for Barone Pietro Pisani's *Memoria sulle opere di scultura in Sicilia sospese, 1825*. Impressions of Riolo's *Cornelia, Mother of the Guacchi* were sold through the lithographer Gaspare Scoduto, in partnership with Perrotta in the Via Cimatoria, Palermo. Mention of this leads Malignaggi to a digression on lithography and print publishing in Sicily. Scoduto and Perrotta invested some of their money in the Prima Compagnia 'dal up in Palermo in 1813, for which see Rosario Lentini, 'Set in Palermo alla

fianza: I negozianti-banchieri inglesi nella Sicilia occidentale tra XVIII e XIX secolo', in Antonino Cusumano and Rosario Lentini, *Mazara 800-900: Ragionamenti intorno all'identità di una città* (Palermo 2004, p. 115, n. 59). Malignaggi mentions the lithographic views of Palermo executed by Giuseppe Tresca after Calogero De Bernardis, coloured by his brother Giuseppe, published in 1825, and Tresca's reproductions of Pietro Novelli's paintings and his illustrations of the events of the Palermo revolution of 1821. He also discusses the publications of the Rome-trained *intaglio* printmaker and lithographer, Pietro Waincher (Vaincher), who made small versions of Pinelli's *Costumi dei fuorusciti di Romagna e del Regno di Napoli, c. 1825-26*. Waincher became a specialist in costume and fashion plates, copying plates sent to him from Paris for *Il Vapore* between 1834 and 1837. Many fashion plates were also published in the journal *Passatempo per le dame* between 1833 and 1837. Other Palermo printmakers who were attracted by the commercial possibilities of this genre were Minnici, Filippone and Scoduto. Vaincher also worked in association with the painter Giuseppe Patania on subjects taken from the *Iliad*. In many cases gouache was added to these prints to make them more saleable. We learn too that a print dealer called Silvestro Diliberto and a printmaker and book dealer, Filippo Baronechia, sold etched views of Palermo and its environs by Francesco Zerilli, which were tinted in *chiaroscuro* or colour.

In the eastern end of Sicily, Letterio Sulba taught *intaglio* printmaking at the Accademia di Pubblici Studi in Messina, having succeeded Mariano Bovi, but complained in 1822 at the lack of tools and equipment. In 1826 the local authority of the province of Messina sent Tommaso Aloisio Iuvarrta to Rome to study both drawing and printmaking. Eventually Ferdinand II decreed the institution of a single school of drawing and *intaglio* printmaking in Messina's Accademia Carolina. Aloisio Iuvarrta taught the subject at the Regia Università in the same Sicilian city between 1840 and 1844, before becoming Professor of Printmaking at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Naples from 1847, and eventually rising to the post of Co-Director of the Regia Calcografia Romana in 1869. At the far west end of Sicily in Trapani teaching was in the hands of Giuseppe Errante (1760-1821) from 1792, and Michele Laudicina was Director of the Reale Accademia di Belle Arti Trapanese up to 1832. In 1838 a triennial exhibition was set up, with Aloisio Iuvarrta responsible for awarding prizes for printmaking. We know from a statement of the Luogotenente Generale of the Bourbon King that by 1840 Pietro Waincher, Cavallaro and Lazzaro Di Giovanni were teaching printmaking privately in Palermo. Several lithographic workshops had been opened in the city by this date.

The second of this series of publications is devoted to French engraved portraits presented in 1815 to the Regia Università di Palermo by Giuseppe Emanuele Ventimiglia, Prince of Belmonte (Diana Malignaggi, *Galleria di Ritratti: Stampe di incisioni francesi dei secoli XVII e XVIII*, Palermo, Edizione Caracol, 2009, 96 pp., 13 col. and 33 b. & w. ill., €16). The prints by Gerard Edelinck, Roulet, three members of the Drevet family, Michel Dossier and Pierre Michiel

Alix are not outstanding. Roulet is here called Joan-Louis rather than Jean-Louis. Some of the prints are in poor condition and in one case the photograph is cropped so badly that part of the inscription is omitted. The individual catalogue entries concentrate on the sitters rather than the engravings, apart from a remark on the illusionistic character of the Drevet's frames. This is made in an entry on the one Drevet engraving where no frame is visible in the illustration. The Prince of Belmonte belonged to the more liberal section of the Sicilian aristocracy. He was a friend of Louis Philippe d'Orléans, later to be King of France, who in 1809 married Princess Marie Amalie, daughter of King Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies. The Prince accompanied him to Paris on the fall of Napoleon, but soon died in the French capital. He had been one of the prime movers in converting the Accademia degli studi in Palermo into the Regia Università, which was founded in 1806. One learns from a brief essay on Belmonte's collection that among the other prints the Prince gave to the new institution were 42 engravings of Raphael's *Logge*, which had been coloured in tempera. This gift also include six of Volpato's engravings of the *Logge*, and two famous prints by Gerard Audraix of historical subjects from the life of Alexander the Great. Further engravings by such artists as Nanteuil, Guillaume Vollet, Georg and Philipp Andrea Kilian, Jean Baptiste de Volly and others are recorded in the university museum's 1857 inventory. MARTIN HOPKINS