

SMALL ITALIAN BRONZES AT THE BARBER INSTITUTE

By A. C. SEWTER



No. I.—NEGRO BOY RIDING A GOAT : SCHOOL OF ANDREA RICCIO, CIRCA 1500

THE study of the smaller Italian bronzes is recognized to be one of the most difficult of all branches of art-history. Its documented landmarks are extraordinarily scanty; and even the major distinctions between one school and another, or one period and another, are often sufficiently uncertain to undermine the self-confidence of the most experienced connoisseur. For one not a specialist in this field to venture into print with an article such as this requires some temerity, and calls perhaps for an apology. My sole object, however, is to draw attention to a small collection recently formed at the Barber Institute, in the University of Birmingham, which is already of considerable interest, and contains a few pieces of real importance.

Perhaps the most outstanding of these is a group representing a *Naked Negro Boy riding on a long-haired Goat*, holding one of the animal's horns with his right hand, while with his left he supports a huge conch shell on his shoulder (No. i). No other example of this group, which came from the collection of Mr. John McCann, of Simons-court Castle, near Dublin, is known. It has been published by Dr. Leo Planiscig, the greatest authority on Italian bronzes,* who points out that the goat and the shell are familiar in the work of Andrea Riccio, but maintains

* L. Planiscig, in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen im Wien*, XIII, 1944, p. 249, illus. p. 250. I am indebted to Dr. Planiscig for kindly drawing my attention to this article.

that the group has other features which do not fit in with an attribution to this master. The drapery on the animal's back, forming a kind of saddle for the rider, and especially the rider himself, Planiscig asserts, differ entirely from the manner of Riccio, and bring the piece into relationship with a number of bronzes which Planiscig wishes to associate with a hitherto unrecognized naturalistic movement in Venetian sculpture of the Fifteenth Century. He even ventures an attribution to Severo da Ravenna, a Paduan sculptor working in the last quarter of the century, on the basis of a comparison with a bronze representing a boy extracting a thorn from his foot, in the Museum at Klosterneuburg, also assigned to the artist by himself.* Without wishing in any way to depreciate the great advances which Dr. Planiscig's researches have achieved—every student of Italian bronzes will be aware of the enormous debt which we owe to his labours—it is nevertheless clear that we are, at this point, in a kind of maze of conjecture. The relationships in question

* See L. Planiscig, 'Severo da Ravenna' in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen im Wien*, IX, 1935, p. 85, and *Katalog der Kunst Sammlungen im Stifte Klosterneuburg*, III, *Die Bronze*, 1942, No. 1. The Klosterneuburg bronze is also illustrated in the same author's *Piccoli Bronzi Italiani del Rinascimento*, 1930, pl. XXVIII, as Paduan, end of the Fifteenth Century; likewise in *Andrea Riccio*, 1927, p. 98.



No. II.—THE DRUNKEN SILENUS : PERHAPS PADUAN, XVI CENT. : H. 9½ IN.

depend upon Dr. Planiscig's intuitions of stylistic resemblance (based, it may be rather unkind though truthful to remind oneself, in some cases only on photographs, which can be specially misleading in this field), unsupported by documentary evidence. If one cannot follow him in these intuitions, what becomes of his case? In actual fact, the wider series of pieces with which Dr. Planiscig associates the McCann bronze is a very mixed bag, and appears to my eye to have little enough in common. If I may be so bold as to venture an independent opinion, the decisive comparisons for the Barber Institute piece seem to me to be those with two *Goats* and the *Satyr on a Goat* of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, accepted as the work of Riccio by Planiscig.* Despite minor differences, these seem sufficiently close to justify the present attribution to the school of Riccio. The Beit Collection contained a piece of a type similar to the Vienna *Satyr on a Goat*, which was sold with the rest of that remarkable collection at Sotheby's on October 7th, 1948, when it was catalogued under the name of Riccio, and changed hands at £1,000. It would not be unfair to claim a definite superiority for the Barber Institute example, not only on account of the better proportions between goat and rider—the rider in the Beit piece is certainly too small—but also in the beautiful finish and patination. At a later period the Barber bronze may have

* L. Planiscig, *Andrea Riccio*, 1927, illus. pp. 192-5.



No. IV.—PACING HORSE: A WORK BY PIETRO TACCA: HEIGHT, 12½ INCHES

influenced the *Infant Bacchus on a Goat*, of the Wallace Collection (S.209), which is definitely French of the Eighteenth Century; for it is clear from the mounting that the Barber piece was in France at that time.

Another piece which may be associated, though more loosely, with the school of Padua, is a small group of *The Drunken Silenus* (No. ii). Silenus is represented nude, wearing a wreath of grapes on his head, and sitting astride an ass which is grazing. He is supported on his right by a faun, on whom he leans, cheek to cheek, his right arm resting across the faun's shoulders. This group was formerly in the collection of Lord Rochdale, and was acquired from a London dealer in 1948. A similar piece, which differs in some details, notably in the absence of the drapery or pelt from the left knee of the faun, was about 1912 in the possession of an art dealer, and was regarded by Bode as the work of an Italian master of about 1600.* This date seems perhaps somewhat too late, and though the piece has a rollicking humour to which it is not easy to find a parallel, it may be regarded as coming perhaps from Padua, or maybe from Venice.

An elaborate group representing *The Punishment of Dirce* (No. iii) is certainly the most spectacular bronze in the collection. It consists of two male and two female figures, with a bull, mounted on a base of rocks with numerous smaller animals, birds and figures in relief, and stands in all about 17 in. high, with a dark greyish-black patination. The composition is a copy, with some changes, especially in the base, of the famous antique marble known as *The Farnese Bull*, by the Rhodian sculptors Apollonius and Tauriscus, which was found in the Baths of Caracalla, Rome, in 1540, and is now in the National Museum at Naples. The subject repre-

* W. von Bode and Murray Marks, *Italian Bronze Statuettes of the Renaissance*, III, 1912, illus. p. 15.



No. III.—THE PUNISHMENT OF DIRCE: BY FRANCESCO SUSINI: HEIGHT 17½ INCHES

sented is the punishment which Zethus and Amphion, the two sons of Antiope (who stands in a deprecating attitude in the rear), devised to inflict upon Dirce in revenge for the wrongs of their mother, who for many years had been treated by her with the greatest cruelty. They tied her by a rope to the horns of a bull which dragged her about until she died. Another small bronze copy, on a similar scale to this, but with some differences, especially in the base, and finished in a more refined, polished manner, is in the Borghese Gallery, Rome, dated 1613 and signed by Antonio Susini.* Another belongs to Earl Spencer at Althorp House. The Barber Institute example was purchased in 1948 from a London dealer. Its style differs sufficiently from the examples at Rome and at Althorp for it not to be considered as by Antonio, but its character is wholly in accordance with the work of his nephew Francesco Susini who, as we know from Baldinucci, worked for some time in Rome making studies from antique marbles.

The next piece, the noble and elegant figure of a *Pacing Horse* (No. iv), was acquired for the Barber Institute from the sale of the Beit Collection at Sotheby's on October 7th, 1948. The sale catalogue, rightly curtailing Bode's attribution† to a 'Flemish imitator of Gian Bologna working in Florence,' described it simply as 'School of Giovanni Bologna,' with which no one is likely to quarrel. One can, however, be rather more definite than that, despite the enormous number of horses made by sculptors of this school, and their great family resemblances, for an exact counterpart exists in a work by Pietro

* A. Venturi, *Storia dell'arte Italiana*, X, Pt. iii, p. 935.

† W. Bode, *Catalogue of the Collection of Pictures and Bronzes in the Possession of Mr. Otto Beit*, privately printed, 1913, p. 108.



No. V.—EQUESTRIAN GROUP: BY A FOLLOWER OF LEONARDO DA VINCI: H. 10½ INS.

Tacca which belongs to the Detroit Institute of Arts. It is an equestrian statuette of Philip IV of Spain, made in 1635 as the first study for the statue in Madrid, and the horse is an exact counterpart to the Barber one.* But for the fortunate preservation of this beautiful group at Detroit, the problem of attribution for the Barber horse might well have proved insoluble, for the position of the horse in the statue itself is different. Now that we have a name for it, and a date, there are no obstacles in the way of our enjoyment of this superbly aristocratic animal, whose long, wavy mane and tail, broadly treated masses, proudly held head, and graceful movement



No. VI.—HERCULES: BY GIOVANNI BOLOGNA: H. 16½ INCHES

make it the worthy bearer of a proud king. It may certainly fear no comparison with the finest horses by other artists of Gian Bologna's school, such as that by Antonio Susini in the Victoria and Albert Museum † or that by Adriaen de Vries in the Kunsthistorisches Museum at Vienna.‡

The Barber Institute collection already contains three other bronzes from the workshop of Gian Bologna, of which the best is a splendid figure of *A Bull* (No. vii) standing with left foreleg raised, neck slightly flexed, and the tail curled and resting on its back. This was purchased at the sale of the L. M. Lowenstein Collection at Sotheby's, July 13th, 1945. It has a dark, highly polished patina like that of the horse, and is in a beautiful state of preservation. A somewhat similar bull was in the J. P. Heseltine Collection,§ and another was illustrated by Bode,|| while two other casts of the identical model are in the collection of Mr. Henry Harris.¶ This bull is not an original conception of Gian Bologna's, however, but a copy of an antique bronze, fortunately preserved and now in the Torrie Collection at the National Gallery of Scotland (No. viii). The antique is slightly larger, but it is abundantly clear that the Renaissance sculptor owed almost everything in the composition to his prototype. He by no means comes badly out of the comparison. The *Hercules* (No. vi) is a figure occur-

* Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, *Master Bronzes*, 1937, No. 144, illus.

† Sir Eric Maclagan in *The Burlington Magazine*, XLVI, 1925, pp. 94-9.

‡ L. Planiscig, *Die Bronzeplastiken im Kunsthistorischen Museum in Wien*, 1924, No. 336.

§ Sotheby's, May 24th, 1935, Lot 58.

|| Bode and Marks, *op. cit.*, II, 1908, pl. 114.

¶ I owe this information to the kindness of Professor Bodkin. The Victoria and Albert Museum has also recently acquired an example.

ing in many examples, for instance at the Louvre,* and in the Museo Nazionale at Florence.† The Barber Institute specimen is a fine one, with a brown glossy patination, rubbed on some of the convexities to a yellowish tint. The condition is perfect, except that the fingers of the outstretched left hand have been very slightly bent downwards. Like the preceding and the following piece it came from the Lowenstein Collection.

Last of the three Gian Bologna bronzes is an example of the figure of *Astronomy*, of which a slightly larger, gilded version in the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum is signed by the sculptor.‡ Another specimen was in the collection of Dr. Eduard Simon of Berlin,§ and there are many others. The present example, from the Lowenstein Collection, is in condition the least satisfactory of the bronzes here discussed, having fairly extensive restorations, to the left hand, the left foot and elsewhere. The somewhat exaggerated pose was a favourite one of this sculptor, which he repeated with variations in a number of works with both female and male figures.

Having disposed of a number of pieces which raise few problems, let us now turn to one of a more problematical character. The imposing *Equestrian Group* (No. v) of a man in armour shouting and raising a sword in his right hand, mounted bareback on a horse with a tremendous arched neck and hogged mane, came from the E. G. Raphael Collection, sold at Sotheby's on November 9th, 1945. The patination is a dull greyish colour. The tail is a restoration, except for the stump; and the rider's sword is missing. Examples of the horse without rider occur in the Wallace Collection,|| the Museo Estense, Modena, at Berlin, at Munich, in the Foulc Collection, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, generally described as copies of a model by Leonardo.¶ The horse, in fact, derives from Leonardo's studies for the Trivulzio monument, on which he was working about 1508-11, and shows a close relationship with several of his drawings, for instance with the top study on No. 12,359 and both top and bottom studies on sheet 12,360 in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.** The rider, however, is unlike any of the sketches made for the Trivulzio monument, and resembles rather the shouting horsemen of Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari*, commissioned by the Signoria of Florence and painted in the years 1503-6. There is indeed a certain lack of accord between the calm and powerful movement of the horse and the violent, almost hysterical action of the rider, whose posture suggests that he may have been intended originally to ride a rearing horse turning to the left rather than to the right. Though both horse and rider derive from similar Leonardesque sources, it seems likely that they were not from the outset designed for each other. Perhaps one may apply to this horse the suggestion

* Illustrated by Bode and Marks, *op. cit.*, III, pl. 199.

† Planiscig, *Piccoli Bronzi*, pl. 208.

‡ L. Planiscig, *Die Bronzeplastiken im Kunsthistorischen Museum im Wien*, 1924, No. 250. This piece has recently been exhibited in London.

§ Bode and Marks, *op. cit.*, III, pl. 194.

|| J. G. Mann, *Wallace Collection Catalogues, Sculpture*, 1931, No. S.70, pp. 29-30 and pl. 28.

¶ The Modena version is illustrated by Bode and Marks, *op. cit.*, II, pl. 132. Another rather different model, from the collection of the Duchessa d'Arenella, Naples, was shown at the Mostra di Leonardo da Vinci, Milan, 1939, *Catalogue*, p. 136, illus. pl. 92. A particularly fine specimen, formerly in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin, was owned by Clarence H. Mackay (see W. R. Valentiner, *The Clarence H. Mackay Collection, Italian Schools*, privately printed, New York, 1926, No. 20).

** Sir Kenneth Clark, *Catalogue of the Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci in the Collection of H.M. the King at Windsor Castle*, 1935, I, pp. 41-2.



No. VII.—A BULL : WORKSHOP OF GIOVANNI BOLOGNA : HEIGHT 9½ INCHES

which Maclagan put forward in connexion with one by Susini,* namely that it was a type kept in the workshop, to which riders, often portraits, could be added as and when required. At all events there was evidently a workshop turning out small Leonardesque bronzes, of which quite a number are known. In some ways the most impressive of them, and the one with perhaps the best claim to Leonardo's personal hand, is the *Man on a*

* Sir Eric Maclagan, *ibid.*



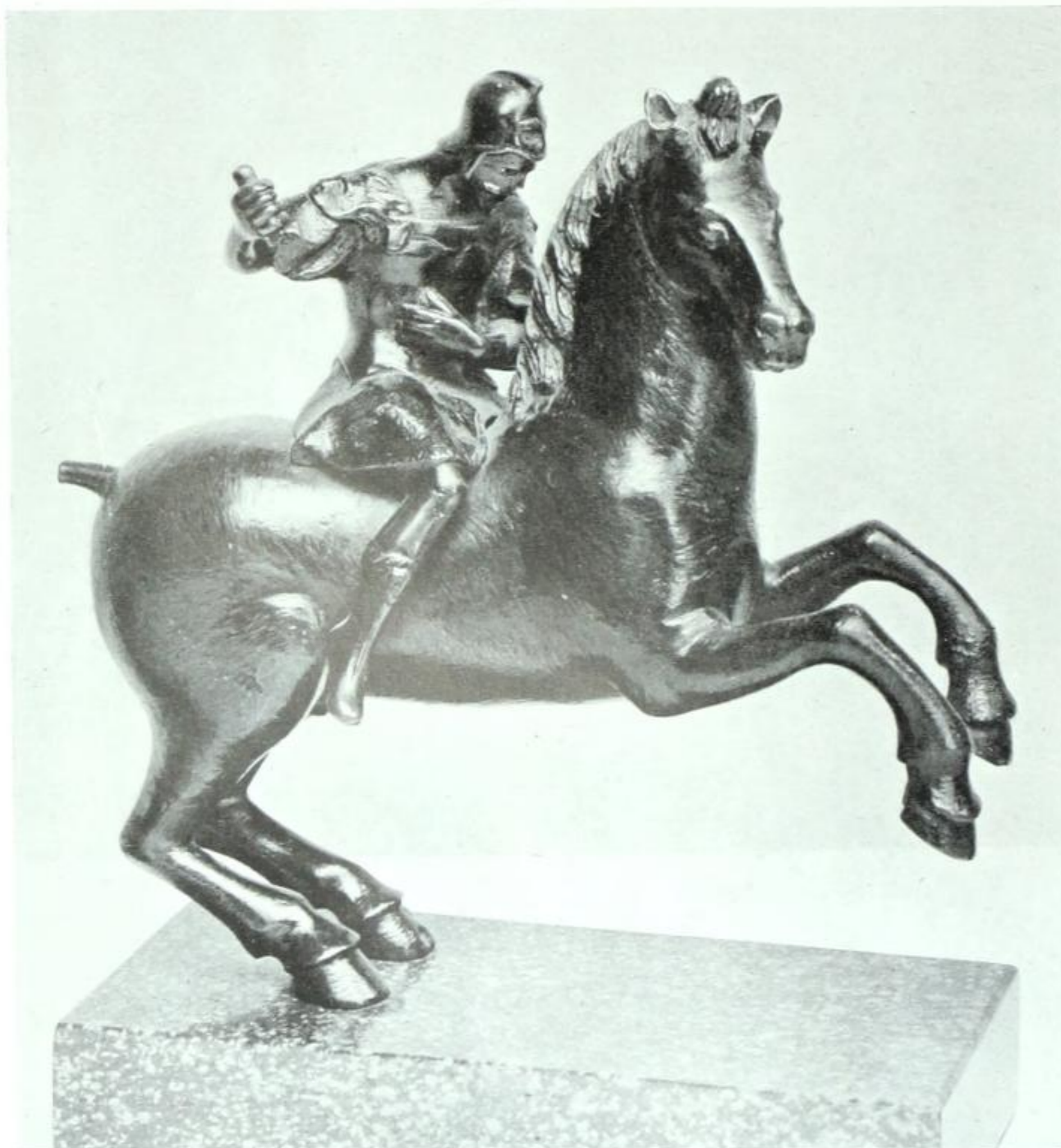
No. VIII.—A BULL : ANTIQUE, PROBABLY GREEK : NAT. GAL. OF SCOTLAND

Rearing Horse in the Budapest Museum.* Vasari refers, in the last pages of his life of Leonardo, to Giovanni Francesco Rustici having worked at bronze-casting under Leonardo's directions, but there is nothing specific to connect these horses with Rustici. The influence of Leonardo was, of course, very widely felt, and Andrea Riccio's *Shouting Rider* in the Salting Collection at South Kensington provides another example of its operation. Here too, incidentally, the rider is cast separately, and when one handles the group proves a surprisingly loose fit.

Another small *Equestrian Group* (No. ix) at the Barber Institute, which also comes from the E. G. Raphael Collection, is of less interest, but still of fine quality. It is mounted on a *fleur-de-pêche* marble base, and the surface shows that it was thoroughly worked over with a coarse file after the casting, which was in two pieces. The patina is of a golden-brown colour. This figure was probably intended for a St. George, whose right hand held a spear, presumably thrust into the dragon who must have crouched below. Two small dowel holes, one in the horse's chest and the other in his left rear hoof, may have been for fixing the dragon in position. It is, to a certain extent, reminiscent of some sketches for a picture of St. George by Fra Bartolommeo which are in the albums formerly at Weimar and now in the Koenigs Collection at Haarlem, of which one is reproduced by Berenson,† but the treatment of the bronze is much more heraldic in style. It may possibly be Florentine, and the drawings, which belong

* S. Meller, 'Die Reiterdarstellungen Leonardos und die Budapester Bronze Statuette' in *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, XXXVII, 1916, pp. 213-50.

† *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, III, 1938, Fig. 447.



No. IX.—ST. GEORGE : PERHAPS FLORENTINE : EARLY XVI CENTURY : HEIGHT, 6 IN.

to the period 1508-12, give us an approximate date.

Two more pieces remain to be described. *A Fountainhead* (No. x) in the form of a nude standing *putto* holding a dolphin under his left arm, was acquired from the sale of the Lowenstein Collection, when it was catalogued as the work of Jacopo Sansovino. Though there appears to me to be some similarity between this piece and the work of the so-called Master of the Putti, Nicolo Roccatagliata, the last exponent of the style deriving through Sansovino from the Venetian High Renaissance,* its proportions are admittedly more Sansovinesque, and the similarity may perhaps be accounted for, not by attributing this piece to Roccatagliata, but rather by assuming that it was from such pieces as this in Sansovino's production that the later master developed his more elongated and self-consciously cherubic *putti*. The fountain issued from a small pipe fixed in the mouth of the dolphin. The square bronze base, chased with interlaced strapwork and floral motives, is cast in one piece with the figure, and the whole has a dark, nearly black patina.

The last of these bronzes which I wish to mention should not really be included in an article under my present heading. It is a *Rhinoceros* (No. xi), standing with the right fore and hind legs slightly advanced, and with the head lowered and turned a little to the right. This is one of three exactly similar bronze examples, one of which, from the Heseltine and Madame de Behague Collections, now in the Louvre, was at one time regarded by Bode† as Italian work of the Fifteenth Century. That is the reason for its inclusion here. Bode later changed his opinion, however, and his later work‡ omitted it, carrying instead a note saying that it is probably of later date. The third

example, moreover, which is in the Salting Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, was labelled as French or German of the third quarter of the Eighteenth Century. The reason for this opinion was that the same model occurs as the support of a clock in Frankenthal porcelain.§ The connexion with Germany is confirmed by the fact that a marble version, about half life-size, which is at Waddesdon, came originally from Frankfurt.|| The rhinoceros was in any case almost unknown in Europe until the middle of the Eighteenth Century, when a live specimen was imported to Venice and painted there by Pietro Longhi. It is true that Dürer in 1515 made a drawing and a woodcut of one, but these were copied from a drawing from the life sent to him from Portugal, to which country the animal had been shipped from Goa. It had been dispatched as a present to the Pope, Leo X, but never reached Italy, as it suffered shipwreck near the Porto Venere. This bronze is clearly, on the other hand, based on direct studies from the life, so that it is almost certain that it represents the animal mentioned above. This creature was

* Cf. the numerous examples of his work illustrated in L. Planiscig, *Venezianische Bildhauer*, 1921, pp. 597-628.

† Bode and Marks, *op. cit.*, II, pl. 118.

‡ W. von Bode, *Die Italienischen Bronzestatuetten der Renaissance*, 1922, p. 81.

§ See *Guide to the Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum*, 1926, p. 43. The clock is illustrated in F. H. Hofmann, *Frankenthaler Porzellan*, 1911, II, pl. 191.

|| I am indebted for this information, and for help on many other points in this article, to the kindness of my friend Mr. John Pope-Hennessy, who tells me there was also a small version in bronze, 4½ in. high, in the sale of the Whitehead Collection, May 1898, Lot 98



No. X.—FOUNTAINHEAD: BY JACOPO SANSOVINO
HEIGHT, INCLUDING THE BASE, 20¼ INCHES

also commemorated by a medal, which records in an inscription that it was weighed at Stuttgart in Würtemberg on May 6th, 1748,* thus providing proof that a German sculptor had the opportunity of seeing it.

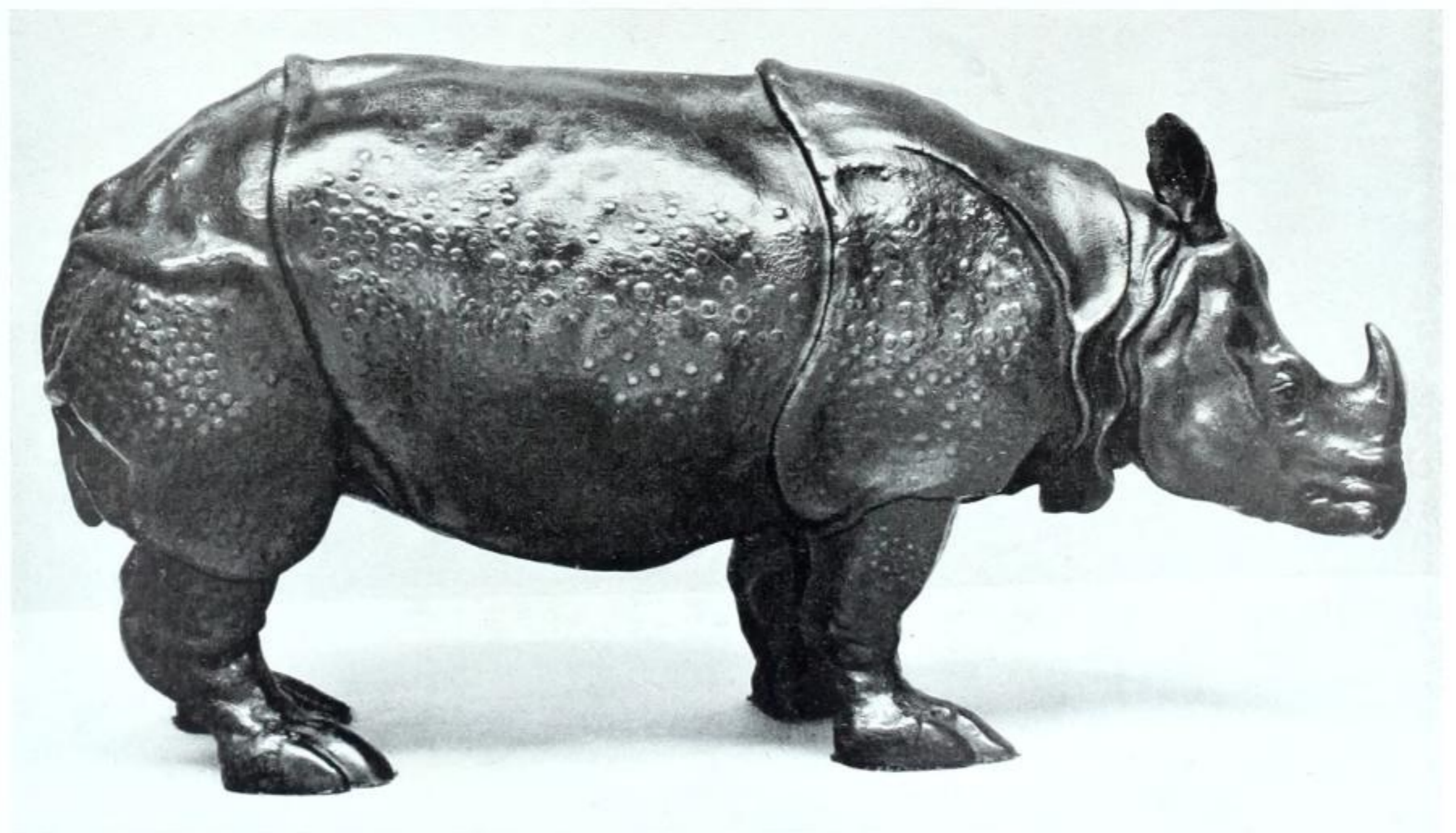
If, as may be fully anticipated, the standard set by these few pieces is maintained in the future, Birmingham may look forward to the eventual possession of a collection of small bronzes which for quality can be rivalled in British public galleries only at South Kensington, Oxford and Cambridge. It is, indeed, a matter for regret that most of our English provincial museums and art galleries

surface texture, the preponderance of full convex shapes or of richly varied indentations, the plastic relationship of limbs and projections to the central mass, so that they feel integral parts of it as the piece is held—all this is as essential to the appreciation of a small bronze as its purely visual effect. Yet it is only the latter which can penetrate the glass of a showcase, unless one has sufficient experience of similar pieces to realize the tactile effect imaginatively. In view of these considerations it is a matter of some importance that many of the Barber pieces are displayed on a table, without the protection of glass, where they can be touched and, under supervision, handled by students. To most people, it must be confessed, and even to many otherwise sensitive artists and collectors, the difference between the common Victorian mantelpiece ornament and fine specimens of antique, Renaissance, or eighteenth-century bronze sculpture is hardly apparent. It is the development of the tactile sense which is missing.

Another factor which may operate to check the taste for the older bronzes is the modern sculptor's use of the cast metal to reproduce the effect and quality of the other material in which he actually works, clay. We have become so accustomed to this clay-like appearance of bronze that the Renaissance sculptor's different, and more appropriate, use of the metal has the strangeness of an unknown tongue.

Finally, and perhaps most important, there is the difficulty of determining authorship. Though it is no longer true, as Bode complained in 1908, that the subject 'can hardly be said to have received any attention from the real student,'* a great proportion of the literature which has since appeared is in German or Italian, and much of it in periodicals and catalogues which few British libraries contain. Thus the collector is apt to find himself at the mercy of the dealer or the auctioneer's catalogue. Moreover, there is little uniformity in the practice of nomenclature: pieces which in one catalogue would be described under several headings such as 'Gian Bologna,' 'Workshop of Gian Bologna,' and 'Follower of Gian Bologna,' may in another all be listed as 'after Gian

* *Florentine Sculptors of the Renaissance*, 1908, p. 180.



No. XI.—A RHINOCEROS: PROBABLY GERMAN OF THE MIDDLE OF THE XVIII CENTURY: HEIGHT, 9½ INCHES
(Concluded on page 64)

have neglected this field, in which it is still possible at moderate cost to obtain fine examples of Italian Renaissance workmanship. Partly, no doubt, the neglect is a natural result of the curator's lack of experience in this difficult subject, and his consequent fear of being deceived; but partly, I am convinced, it is due to an absence of enthusiasm for the bronzes themselves. This state of affairs is lamentable, but easily understood. The appreciation of bronzes, like that of ceramics, or of Japanese lacquer, is virtually unattainable unless pieces can be handled; and the opportunity to handle genuine Italian bronzes does not come the way of our provincial curators every day. It is, however, a duty of those museums which possess collections to allow the serious student facilities for making thorough and intimate acquaintance with their pieces, and I have always found keepers ready enough to help. The feel of the bronze in the hand, its weight, balance and

* D. Balletti in *Rassegna d'arte*, III, 1903, pp. 132-3.

GIOVANNI SEGANTINI

By Gottardo Segantini

(In German)

(Rascher Verlag, Zurich, 1949. Sw. Fr. 38.)

IT is fifty years since Giovanni Segantini died and here we have a new volume by his son, Gottardo, which is welcome, if only because it is a larger and much more fully illustrated work than his earlier testimonies to his father's talent.

Fifty years ago, when we were young and sentimental, we were very fond of Segantini's work. There is in it such a wide field of fresh sentimentalism, coupled with visions of a world which, with its rarefied atmosphere of the Engadine and its blue distances, is essentially romantic.

He is an artist who needs enthusiasm to interpret him in his many phases; and in the present monograph Gottardo Segantini, with a son's justifiable reverence for his talented father, proves perhaps the best interpreter we could hope for.

Born and bred among the peasants of the Italian Tirol, Giovanni Segantini grew to maturity with a deep love and understanding of Nature in his heart, a simple piety in his soul and a profound sympathy with the homely peasant life which he so loved to paint.

This painter of the High Alps is here presented to us in a familiar, intimate biography, supplemented by a study of the painter as an artist and thinker. The author rightly finds in the artist's works the influence of J. F. Millet and speaks of him as an earnest, solid painter combining the robustness of a Liebermann with the old-style sentiment of a Rossetti. But the emphasis in his critical survey would seem to be upon the individuality which is so strong an ingredient in all Segantini's work.

The book is illustrated with sixteen plates in full colour (finely reproduced), forty-eight half-tone plates and ninety-nine text illustrations, from which we may revive our memories of all his finest works.—C. G. E. B.

SMALL ITALIAN BRONZES AT THE BARBER INSTITUTE

(Continued from page 29)

Bologna.' The result is a natural confusion. The distinctions, however, are more verbal than real, for in the complex and laborious technical processes of bronze sculpture a large amount of the actual manual labour of production is commonly delegated to assistants. In any case the study of the subject is still in a condition where nearly half of the current attributions are no more than guesses, though the guesses of a Bode or a Planiscig may often be inspired by exceptionally acute intuitions of style. Consequently one should not be put off by descriptions which imply a measure of dubiety in the attribution, or frankly admit complete anonymity. The quality and beauty of the piece itself should override all considerations of name as of date.

STAMP CENTENARIES OF 1949

(Continued from page 39)

London to study the process of stamp engraving by the mill-and-die method at the Perkins, Bacon *atelier* in 1848, should have become acquainted with John Henry Robinson, R.A., who was a pupil of their chief engraver, Frederick Heath, and being fully occupied with the organization and equipment of the Brussels Stamp Works, delegated to him the delicate task of cutting the master-die for the Belgian stamps, particularly as the method used was the very reverse of that employed in medallurgy. There can be little doubt, therefore, that the dies were in fact executed by J. H. Robinson, and that Jacques Weiner was responsible only for the laying down of the

copper plates (of two hundred subjects each), and possibly for the choice of the design.

The stamps themselves were recess-printed upon handmade paper watermarked with the Royal Cypher, two 'L's' interlaced within a rectangular frame, and were, of course, imperforate, Archer's perforating machine having still to be invented.

On July 1st, 1849, then, the first Belgian stamps were at length issued to the public: 10 centimes, brown, to defray the internal postage on single letters up to 30 kilometres, and 20 centimes, blue, for those conveyed over longer distances.

For simplicity of design and beauty of execution they have few equals. For this reason they are much esteemed and assiduously sought after by connoisseurs of early line-engraved issues. Intensive study of the printing-plates by philatelic specialists has revealed the existence of major varieties in the form of re-touches and re-entries, double-impressions and the like, that has served further to stimulate the already rising values of fine specimens, either singly, or more especially in pairs, blocks and strips of these singularly attractive labels. Out of five and a quarter million pairs originally printed only a small minority has been preserved, and few of those in immaculate condition. As a result, within the last decade, prices for even average copies have appreciated by something like fifty per cent. Again, it is in the country of their origin that Belgium's century-old stamps enjoy their greatest vogue.

A commemorative issue carrying a facsimile of the original design signaled the seventy-fifth anniversary of their inception, in 1925, and this year, as in France, there was issued a centenary series to coincide with the holding of an important stamp exhibition in Brussels, in July.

Seen beside the artistic productions of Belgium and France, the initial postage stamps of the old Germanic kingdom of Bavaria appear crude and utilitarian in the extreme. The design, if such it can be called, is dominated by a bold figure of value set in a parallelogram in the case of the rare 1-kreuzer value, and on a circular plaque for the 3 and 6 kreuzer that followed after. Devised by Herr Peter Raseney of the National Bank, the printing-plates of 180 subjects were built up with separate metal *clichés* cast from dies engraved by F. J. Seitz and locked together in a chase by the printer, J. G. Weiss of the University Press, Munich. First used on November 1st, 1849, the 1-kreuzer black stamp of Bavaria is numbered among the fifty rarest stamps of Europe, the intense black shade being somewhat scarcer than the subsequent printing in grey-black. Incidentally, it was the first postage stamp to be issued in the whole of Germany.

THE JAMES B. NEALE COLLECTION OF OLD ENGLISH SILVER

(Continued from page 51)

ship but not pleasing, although showing his remarkable virtuosity.

The collection in its present setting, next to the Garvan Collection of American silver, will prove most instructive and interesting, for while it is by no means so great numerically, nor does it contain so many examples which in relation to its field occupy a relative position of importance, the Neale pieces show many interesting points in relation to American work. This has already been mentioned in connexion with the two Monteiths and the tapering tankard with moulded mid-band. The Charles II porringer, by the maker IA, illustrated here is interesting in comparison with the more ornate covered cup with the Bayard arms, by the early-eighteenth-century New York maker, Gerrit Onkelbag, while Pieter Van Dyck's large, straight-sided, lighthouse caster with the Schuyler arms, early Eighteenth Century, keeps the seventeenth-century form as compared with the octagonal form of the Queen Anne pierced examples in the Neale Collection, which are practically contemporary with it. The student will find other points of relationship and contrast between American and English silver, making it valuable to have these collections under the same roof.

Photographs of silver in the Neale Collection are reproduced by courtesy of the Yale Gallery of Fine Arts.