

ROME SCHOLARSHIPS

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Galeazzo Alessi and the Sacro Monte: architecture and pilgrimage in Cinquecento Italy

The aim of this research project was to bring to light the work conducted by the architect Galeazzo Alessi to redevelop the Sacro Monte di Varallo in the mid-sixteenth century. As an important pilgrimage site that recreates in a series of 45 chapels the principal events from the life and passion of Christ, the Sacro Monte di Varallo has attracted in the past a wealth of scholarship. However, very little attention has been paid to Alessi's plan to redevelop the site in 1565–9. This is perhaps due to the fact that, shortly after his death in 1572, Alessi's plan was subjected to drastic changes, and today only isolated sections of his design remain intact.

Through an analysis of the so-called *Libro dei misteri*, a book of 318 drawings produced by Alessi for the Sacro Monte in which he detailed each of the 45 chapels designed by him, and which I was able to study at first hand at the Biblioteca Civica di Varallo, it has been possible for me to reconstruct Alessi's design for the site. This *Libro dei misteri* is a truly remarkable document, for drawings just do not survive in this sort of number for individual sixteenth-century architectural projects. My work on this collection of drawings therefore not only has helped me to discover new things about Alessi's plan for the Sacro Monte di Varallo, but also has revealed exciting new information on Alessi's use of drawing in his architectural practice, an area of research that will be the subject of a forthcoming article.

A large proportion of my time at the British School at Rome was spent reading guidebooks and pilgrims' accounts of the Sacro Monte di Varallo (including the *Guida storica e pittoresca della Valsesia e del Santuario di Varallo*, held in the library of the BSR), in order to gain an understanding of how the Sacro Monte functioned as a pilgrimage site. I also spent a considerable amount of time reading secondary sources, mainly at the Bibliotheca Hertziana, in order to reconstruct the incredibly complicated history of the Sacro Monte di Varallo.

During the Rome Scholarship period, I gave a paper at the Renaissance Society of America in San Diego on the subject of Galeazzo Alessi and his design of the Carignano church in Genoa, and I participated in activities held in Genoa and Perugia to honour the 500-year anniversary of the birth of Alessi. In addition, whilst at the BSR I wrote an article entitled 'Reconstructing the exterior of Santa Maria Assunta di Carignano, Genoa: Galeazzo Alessi and a drawing of a bell tower', which is due to be published with the Genoese journal, *Studia Ligustica*. I also passed my viva for my Ph.D. during the tenure of my Scholarship, and was able to graduate in December. As a result, my Scholarship at the BSR has allowed me to start a new strand of research beyond my Ph.D., which I plan to combine with the research that I conducted for my dissertation and publish this work as a book on Galeazzo Alessi and ecclesiastical architecture in Tridentine Italy.

My work has benefited greatly from conversations held with other scholars at the BSR, as well as from discussions with fellows from other foreign academies in Rome, and I am grateful to have been able to benefit from such an interdisciplinary environment. I would

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REBECCA GILL (2012–13)
(Independent scholar)
rebecca.gill2012@gmail.com

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Roman kings: the art of Rome's royal allies in the first centuries BCE and CE

The courts of allied kings, although on the peripheries of the Roman Empire, were nevertheless centres of artistic production and patronage. My time at the British School at Rome was devoted to investigating these cultural outputs in the Augustan and Julio-Claudian periods, and how they sought to adapt from, and relate to, imperial art produced in Rome. The somewhat awkward position of these monarchs of nominally independent regions, caught between imperial command and local custom, between the need to appear at once Roman and royal, spurred a period of experimentation across a range of media.

My research in Rome centred on two such kings, Herod of Judea (r. 37–4 BCE) and Juba II of Mauretania (r. 25 BCE–c. 23 CE), who form the focus of my doctoral dissertation. The wall painting of Herod's palaces at Caesarea, Herodium, Jericho and Masada reveal a patron who carefully calibrated Augustan wall painting to the expectations of empire-wide and local audiences. They range from the banquet hall of Masada, which kept the optical illusions of the second style of Roman wall painting, while stripping it of its iconographic motifs, to the detailed mythological landscapes and sea-battles painted around the royal box of Herodium's theatre.

Close study in Rome of the Augustan wall paintings from the villa under the Farnesina, the auditorium of Maecenas, the pyramid of Cestius, the house and villa of Livia, and the house of Augustus allowed me to compare the use Herod made of wall painting with those of his Roman contemporaries.

In December I had the chance to give a lecture on this material at a meeting of the Associazione Internazionale di Archeologia Classica. I spoke about the wall paintings from the three Herodian palaces at Jericho, and analysed how the changes between these three structures' decorations revealed that Herod's selection of the latest Roman fashions shifted to match, and develop, his political situation and aspirations. This work led to an article on the legacy of Herodian wall painting, detailing how Herod's use of Augustan motifs to construct his position vis-à-vis Rome changed the operation of wall painting in Judea. This potential of wall painting to position its patron with regard to Roman and local expectations was adopted by Judean élites in the first century CE, even to express political positions at odds with Herod's own successors.

Juba II's sculpture sparked a similar enthusiasm for the medium amongst the élites of Mauretania. The sculpture collections of the Vatican, Capitoline and Palazzo Massimo museums (amongst others in Rome) aided me in calibrating the eclecticism of the portraits Juba II commissioned of himself, his father Juba I, his wife Cleopatra Selene and his son Ptolemaios. Juba's commissions are a rare, provable example of an allied