NICOLA FONTANA
AT THE CORRER MUSEUM
XVII PLATES BY NICOLA FONTANA DA URBINO AT THE CORRER MUSEUM VENICE A STUDY IN EARLY XVI\textsuperscript{TH} CENTURY MAIOLICA WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY WALLIS
PREFACE.

Although the celebrated maiolica plates by Nicola Fontana at the Correr Museum have been the subject of more frequent allusion than, probably, any other examples of the art, it has happened that seven only of the seventeen were engraved in the books and articles which at various times have discussed them from different points of view. If only for purposes of reference, an illustration thus restricted was manifestly inadequate and required completion. It was this consideration which prompted me in the first instance to undertake the present publication—intended originally to consist only of copies of the compositions ornamenting the plates together with a brief technical description of the objects. But on looking over the literature to which they had given rise, I found that the source whence Nicola had derived his inspiration for some of the pictures—namely, the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili and the Ovidio Methamorphoseos vulgare—had escaped the notice of the writers taking part in the discussion. It seemed therefore desirable, as relating to the painter’s procedure in invention, and also from the fact that the above works are not always easily accessible, to add facsimiles of the cuts referring to the paintings based upon their design. My doing so has necessitated an extension of the text, for which I venture to crave the indulgence of the reader.

The illustrations of Nicola’s paintings are, of course, only intended to be studies of the compositions, and not of their effect as paintings on maiolica. The student to whom the originals are unknown may obtain from two of the chromolithographs in Delange’s Recueil, and one of those illustrating Prof. Argnani’s Rinascimento delle Ceramiche Maiolicate in Faenza, a fair notion of Nicola's colour-schemes.

My best thanks are due to Prof. Angelo Scrinzi, Keeper of the Civic and Correr Museum, and to the Secretary of the same, Cav. ab. Giuseppe Nicoletti, for facilities afforded in studying the objects.

II. W.
DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

The present examples of the art of Nicola Fontana belong to the period when in all technical qualities Italian Maiolica had reached a high standard of excellence. The "body" is firm and tenacious, the stanniferous glaze is evenly applied, the colours are fresh and transparent, and the firing has perfectly succeeded. The execution, the brushwork, has the easy, flowing grace of fine vase-painting. The figures throughout are outlined in blue, the flesh tone being lightly indicated in a pale tint. In the nude figures an additional brilliancy is occasionally obtained by the application of an extra coating of the stanniferous glaze; the draperies are nearly always in pale tints. There are now and again accentuated passages of dark tone, as in the stems of the trees and in certain masses of foliage; the upper portions of the skies are usually in deepish cobalt-blue; the architecture is painted in cool greenish-grey tints. The reverses are covered with the plain white glaze, tending to pinkish, on account of its tenuity; in one instance only is found what may be termed a mark, and this merely consists of two blue lines crossing each other; it is on fig. 25. The rims of the five Orpheus plates and fig. 27 are black, the rest are all yellow. The upright sides of the tondini are ornamented in *sopra-bianco* rosettes; these have been omitted in the illustrations. The absence of arms, devices, or numbers seems to suggest that none of the pieces belonged to a "service," although they may have formed parts of series. The Italian names of the pieces (in English they would all be called plates) follow the text of Lazari, in his *Notizia*.

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Fig. 12.—Disco da frutta. D. 28 cm.

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Fig. 15.—Disco da frutta. D. 27 cm.

Fig. 16.—Piatto. D. 287 mm.

Fig. 17.—Piatto. D. 29 cm.

Fig. 18.—Piatto. D. 288 mm.

Fig. 19.—Piatto. D. 29 cm.

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**DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS.**

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Note.—The monogram on the cover is copied from the back of the Plate in the National Museum, Florence, described on p. 22.
Among the benefactors to art there are few who have shown more discriminating intelligence in the bestowal of their bounty than the Venetian patrician, Theodore Correr. He belonged to what is now almost an extinct race, that of the born collector equipped at all points with the panoply of the antiquary. All these great collectors of the past, even when men of fashion, like Horace Walpole, were scholarly, erudite, and of wide artistic sympathies, and these qualities were reflected in their collections. They likewise lived in times favouring their quest; indeed, this was a necessity of their being. Whether it was in XVIIIth century London, at Paris after the French Revolution and during the Napoleonic wars, or even later—but with diminishing facilities—up to the middle of the last century, they enjoyed opportunities which may never occur again. Yet, from the standpoint of propitious time and place, if there was one more fortunate than the rest, it will be agreed that the luck, the preponderating advantage, rested with Correr; born in Venice in 1750, and living on till 1830.

For it will be remembered that at the time of his birth Italy had been declining for a couple of centuries or more. Her former state of prosperity, as at the time of the Renaissance, had been exchanged for one of ever increasing impoverishment. Venice, however, had retained something of her ancient dignity and much of the wealth acquired by her commerce, which, also, was still considerable. Moreover, amongst her nobles, merchant princes, the large cultured class, and the many wealthy foreigners who had made Venice their place of residence, the love of art was still a passion. Hence, when the owners of the accumulated artistic treasures with which the palaces throughout Italy were filled had begun to feel the pinch of poverty, they naturally sent
their most precious and valuable objects to the Venetian market. Finding there a ready sale for them, the supply had continued, so that the artistic riches of Venice in the XVIIIth century must have been enormous; and there they remained till the disastrous year of 1797, which saw the end of the Venetian Republic and the financial ruin of the city.

Meanwhile, Correr, on arriving at man’s estate, had been deputed to fill certain offices assigned to persons of his rank and station. In these he gave evidence of more than ordinary capacity and business ability, inducing the belief that a brilliant official career was within his reach. He had already, however, begun to occupy himself with artistic studies and the acquisition of works of art. The passion gained strength until he came to the conclusion that in these pursuits lay his true vocation; he resigned his offices and finally withdrew from political life. Little seems to be known respecting his earlier acquisitions—those made previous to the catastrophe of 1797,—but it is on record that the bulk of his collection was obtained after that date. He had prepared himself for such an opportunity, and when it came he was master of the situation. His acquisitions then and afterwards were of the first importance, and on such a scale as to constitute his collection a veritable museum—which, indeed, he had intended it to be; for he piled up treasures of art with no sordid aim of gain or personal profit. At the wreck of his country’s fortunes he bought without stint, but it was to save these marvels of Italian skill and genius from leaving the country. He held them in trust for Venice when her evil days had passed. It was a noble ambition, and the illustrious patrician must be counted truly fortunate, in that at the end of a long life he had the supreme felicity of knowing that his early ideal had been realized.

The Correr Museum is rich in many departments of art, in some exceptionally so; again, in others, while the examples are not so numerous as those in celebrated collections formed at the same time, they contain particular objects which hold a unique position in the history of art. This is the case in the section of Italian Maiolica, which includes the well-known series of seventeen Plates painted with subjects taken mainly from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, and respecting which there has been such a diversity of opinions among the writers on maiolica. The matter of debate, it will be remembered, referred to their date and locality of production. The writers were in agreement as to the intrinsic artistic excellence of the paintings, but it was long before any conclusion was arrived at, leaving no reasonable doubt about the personality
of the painter and the school to which he belonged. The discussion has now become in a sense historic, and constitutes in itself an interesting chapter in the literature of the art. It may therefore be useful before considering the artistic qualities of the objects to glance briefly at the arguments put forth during the debate, especially, as the reader may be aware, since they have to be sought out in various volumes and publications extending over a period of nearly forty years.

The first critical account of the Plates appeared in a Handbook or Guide to the Correr Museum written by a former Director, Sig. Vincenzo Lazari, and bearing the date 1859*. Preceding the descriptions of some of the different classes of objects, the Director wrote short historical notices of the respective arts. That dealing with maiolica refers to its relationship with the ceramic art of antiquity and its rise in the Middle Ages; mention is likewise made of the authors who have written upon the art in modern times. It is clear, however, that Lazari’s opinions on the subject were either conjectural or derived at second hand. He classed the Plates with the maiolica of Faenza, not from his possessing any definite knowledge of Paventine design or technique, but because Tommaso Garzoni in his Piazza Universale, written in 1585, extols Faenza “che fa le majoliche cosi bianche e polite,” which is simply the laudatory remark that a writer having no special acquaintance with the subject might have applied to the XVIth century wares produced at other Italian cities. Lazari accepts the figures 1482 on the painting of Solomon adoring an Idol (fig. 22) as that of the date of its production, which shows that his perception of style was not very acute. His descriptions of the Plates and of the paintings decorating them are generally correct, although his title to fig. 23, “Adonia in the atrium of Bathsheba,” is not in agreement with the Biblical story; and he, an Italian scholar and Director of an Italian Museum, might also have indicated the poems or novelle whence the painter took the subjects of figs. 25, 26, 27. On one point Lazari certainly made a valuable suggestion, namely, on the necessity for a copious and classified illustration of the known examples of maiolica, if we are ever to arrive at a satisfactory account of its history. He justly remarked, that as the examples of the wares are in Museums and Collections scattered over Europe, a comparison of the separate objects can only be made by means of copies. He therefore suggested that the various national

* Notizia delle opere d’Arte e d’Antichità della Raccolta Correr, di Venezia; scritta da Vincenzo Lazari. 1859.

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Museums should publish their maiolica in chromolithography, stating that he had one of the Correr pieces so reproduced. The limited funds at his disposal probably prevented Lazari carrying out his scheme, but his idea may, perhaps, have been the inspiring motive of Delange's monumental work. It is to be regretted that as he so poignantly felt the need of illustrations, he did not accompany his Guide with engravings of the objects he described; they would then most likely have been, after the manner of the time, no more than outlines, but nevertheless, more useful than the misleading reproductions of photographs which do duty for illustrations in some of the Museum Handbooks of to-day.

From the period of the publication of the Notizia onwards, reference to the Correr Plates is found in nearly all the works treating of maiolica, the earlier authors contenting themselves with repeating Lazari's theory of their derivation. Thus Alfred Darcel, in the Introductions to his Catalogues of the Italian faience at the Louvre *, and to Delange's chromolithographs of examples of maiolica †, while calling attention to the artistic importance of the objects, emphasizes Lazari's attribution by styling them the highest expression of Faventine ceramic art. Delange himself, however, in his description of the two Correr Plates illustrated in the Recueil, suggests that they were made at Cafaggiolo, which is accounted for when it is remembered that he wrote at the time of the Cafaggiolo craze. He also terms them "archaic," by which he probably meant that he did not find in them the facile mannerism and warm coloration of late Urbino wares. The next mention of them known to the present writer occurs in a fresh attempt to catalogue the maiolica in the Correr Museum by Dr. Urbani di Gheltorf, who retains the Faventine attribution but questions the date, 1482, pointing out that from their style of design the paintings cannot be earlier than the first decade of the XVIth century ‡. The new Correr Catalogue was probably unknown to Fortnum when he published the South Kensington Catalogue in the following year §, but it is evident, from the drift of his remarks, that doubts were then current respecting the Faventine derivation of the Plates. He, indeed, includes them with the wares

* A. Darcel. Musée de la Renaissance (Louvre). 1864.
† Delange. Recueil de Faïence italienne. 1867-69.
produced at Faenza, but at the same time he does so on grounds which are only conjectural, and says that if they are not of Faventine they may be of Durantine origin. As showing how near Fortnum was to detecting the actual painter of the composition, the reader is referred to his account of Nicola Pellipario, known as Nicolò or Nicola Fontana da Urbino, at p. 324 of his Catalogue. He there states that Sir Wollaston Franks had identified Nicola to be the painter of the celebrated Gonzaga-Este service*. Sir Wollaston had not visited Venice since his boyhood, consequently it is improbable that he had seen, or, at least, remembered, the Correr Plates; had he known them, even from illustrations, he would scarcely have failed to recognize that they were painted by one and the same hand as the Gonzaga-Este service, and also of other examples of the painter in the maiolica gallery at the British Museum.

Another decade passed, and still the Plates are found classed with the wares of Faenza, as in M. Emile Molinier's volume on Italian maiolica in Italy†. At this period of the discussion the chief point of interest referred not so much to the locality of the pottery where they were made as to the date of the objects, it having then been seen that they belong to a later time than the supposed date of the Solomon Plate. As to that particular composition, M. Molinier concedes the correctness of the inscription, while assigning the rest of the pieces to the commencement of the following century. Four years later, however, in one of a series of articles published in L'Art, he returns to the subject and admits that all the Plates must belong to the same time, explaining the numerals by the supposition that the print or drawing from which the design was copied bore that date‡. M. Molinier ingeniously cites the case of an erroneously inscribed plate in the Musée du Louvre, where the ceramic artist, copying from an engraving, had painted on it the name of the publisher of the print. In this article, to which the author judiciously added illustrations of five of the Plates, he sets forth the evidence for attributing the series to Nicola da Urbino. Again, in the next year he published a summary of his contributions to L'Art in a volume devoted to the XVth century Maiolica still in Italy.§. Finally, Fortnum in his latest work admits that the case for Faenza rests on no valid evidence, and that from analogies of style the Plates are clearly by the painter of the Gonzaga-Este

* See Appendix A.
† Emile Molinier. Les Majoliques italiennes en Italie. 1883.
‡ E. Molinier. L'Art. 13ème année, T. 2. 1887.
§ E. Molinier. La Céramique italienne au XVe siècle, 1888. p. 75.
service, Nicola Fontana da Urbino*. Fortnum, however, says that he still adhered to the hypothesis that the Solomon composition was taken from an unknown print or drawing dated 1482. He does not refer to a statement by Dr. Otto von Falke in the Prussian Jahrbuch of 1894, that three of the cuts in a XVth century Italian translation of Ovid’s Metamorphoses—namely, the Apollo and Marsyas, the Death of Orpheus, and the Apollo, Pan, and Midas—show motives of design similar to those on three of the Plates †. It is therefore probable that the article had escaped his eye, but as none of the cuts relates to the Solomon painting, the circumstance might not have affected his opinion on this point. It is beyond the scope of the present study to discuss the art of Nicola except in relation to his paintings on the Correr Plates; it may, however, be mentioned that an account of a number of his other works is given by Fortnum in his ‘Maiolica.’ Nicola’s position as the head of the Fontana family was pointed out long ago by Sir J. C. Robinson, in an appendix to his Catalogue of the Soulages Collection‡. The name of the family was originally Pellipario, of Castel Durante, the cognomen Fontana being added on its removal to Urbino. At the latter city the bottega in 1528, and probably earlier, was conducted by Guido, the son of Nicola, possibly to enable the father to give his undivided attention to the pictorial branch of the business.

At first glance it might seem that an enquiry relating to the derivation of certain examples of Italian maiolica protracted over close upon forty years savoured somewhat of the methods of Byzantine diplomacy, or of the Court of Chancery in its palmy days. Yet it must be remembered that the record of an art which flourished four centuries back, and whereof the history was not written when it could have been set forth with certitude and authority, may be taken as almost past recovery. We have only to consider what would have been the state of our knowledge of the rise and progress of the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture at the period of the Italian Renaissance, had not Vasari have written his immortal Vite at the precise time when the personality of the artists, and likewise the traditions of their practice, were still fresh in the memory of their countrymen. No such work had been written relating to Italian Maiolica; therefore, when in the last century sprang up a revived interest in the art, and students naturally sought information as to the place of

production of the various wares, together with the names of the ceramic artists and so forth, they discovered that, apart from a few publications of the nature of Passeri's worthless Storia, its history had yet to be written. Respecting the Correr Plates, the truth would probably have been sooner arrived at had Lazari frankly stated that the known evidence relating to them authorized no positive assertion, either as to their date or the locality of the pottery where they were made. His official standing gave a certain weight to his dicta on all concerning the objects in his museum; consequently, when he declared the maiolica to be Faventine, the enquiry was misdirected from its starting-point. It must be admitted that he was unfortunate in possessing no record of the acquisition of the Plates by Theodore Correr. So fine a connoisseur, who had secured for his collection seventeen works of such high character, would, it might fairly be supposed, have learnt something of their painter and the school to which he belonged. Whether he committed the result of his research to writing is unknown. The archives of the Museum contain no document making mention of them whilst still in his possession—so the writer has been informed by the courteous Secretary of the Museum, Abbate Nicoletti.

Throughout the course of the above-mentioned discussion occasional reference was made to the supposed sources whence the compositions of the paintings were taken, mainly in respect to the Solomon Plate inscribed "1482." It was, of course, known to the learned writers that the Maiolicari of the cinquecento were accustomed to copy the figure subjects in their istoriali pieces either from the works of the engravers most in vogue, as Marc Antonio, Agostino Veneziano, and others of the same school, or else they copied designs expressly made for them by masters of repute. The quattrocento ceramic artists, on the contrary, were believed, and with every appearance of probability, to have been themselves the designers as well as the painters of the decorative motives on their pottery. Those engaged in the research would, naturally, not expect to find the Solomon design amongst the works of the engravers of the Marc Antonio school, since in 1482 the master was only six years old. They must, therefore, have looked for it in those of the earlier engravers, or in a drawing by a XVth century master. Not finding either the one or the other, they concluded the original was lost. It apparently did not occur to them to search in another direction, and one singularly rich in all kinds of imaginative compositions, namely, the books with woodcut illustrations of the end of the quattrocento. It was two of these volumes, the Ovid's Metamorphoses of 1497 and the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili of 1499, both printed at Venice, which furnished the inspiring
motives for many of Nicola’s happiest compositions. That he constantly consulted their pictured pages is evident—they were his guides, his closest companions, and his books of reference. At the same time, Nicola was no slavish copyist. Neither in the arrangements of his compositions nor in the attitudes of the separate figures does he exactly repeat his models. Indeed, as his paintings were confined within the limits of a circle, and the cuts were rectangular in shape, he necessarily had to modify the compositions he adopted. Sometimes, however, he stuck pretty closely to the design of the woodcut, at others he only borrowed an attitude, a detail, or a hint for the composition.

No one who has attempted to read Fra Francesco Colonna’s frigid and pedantic romance—the Poliphilus—will imagine for a moment that Nicola would have gone to its text for the subject of a painting. Written at the time when all pertaining to classical antiquity was the object of idolatrous worship, it may have been regarded as an almost divinely inspired revelation in the coteries where the cult of antiquity was a craze rather than a matter of sound learning or intelligent research. But for our painter the interest of the volume rested solely in the woodcuts, and so it will ever remain for those who value and appreciate the fine qualities of the early Italian wood-engravings. Respecting the Italian version of the Metamorphoses, the case was otherwise; for Nicola, to whom, as will be seen later on, the Latin text remained a sealed book, was doubtless familiar with the stories in the quaint trecento Italian translation. Indeed, either in the original or by the medium of translation, the Metamorphoses was, perhaps, at the beginning of the XVIth century, the most widely read of all Latin poems. It was the period when the cultivated Italians, while conscious of their intellectual supremacy, had discovered that their national life lay at the mercy of the foreigner. Also, there was the foreboding that the disaster of 1494, when Charles VIII. marched unopposed through the fairest provinces of Italy, was but the precursor of further invasions, although they may not have anticipated a catastrophe so terrible as the Sack of Rome in 1527. A more sturdy race—or, as the Italian historians put the case, a race that had not become enervated and corrupted, deliberately and of set purpose, by the iniquitous policy of the Despots and the Curia, typified by the statecraft of the Medici and the Borgias—would have organized a national militia and kept the foreigner at bay. Instead of so doing, the supersubtle contemporaries of Machiavelli sought safety in schemes of pitting Spaniards, French, and Germans against each other—with the result which might be expected,—themselves, meanwhile, finding solace from present trouble in the
dreams of their ancient poets or in feasting their eyes with the luscious inventions of the living Venetian painters. For these highly educated princes, refined courtiers, dilettanti prelates, and elegant literati—all pleasure-loving—the gods and heroes of ancient Greece lived again in the exquisite verse of Ovid. The personages were unreal, but they were very graceful and their stories highly pathetic. The Arcadia in which they dwelt was far removed from the actual world of ribald German landsknechts or insolent Spanish soldiery; hence to wander in imagination by its streams and groves must have afforded infinite consolation to a generation whose faith had departed, who had lost its illusions, and whose national life had been so deeply lacerated.

It was for patrons of this class that Nicola painted his istoriati maiolica. They were all men of refined taste—connoisseurs in the true sense of the word. Theirs was no assumed interest in art as the fashion of the day; its technique and procedure were familiar to them, and not seldom were they accomplished practitioners. The design they demanded at the time when the Correr Plates were painted—the first or second decade of the XVIth century—was that of the ripe Renaissance period. In pictorial art it was the frescos of the “Stanze” and the Villa Farnesina of Raphael, the “Bacchus and Ariadne” and the “Sacred and Profane Love” of Titian, and the idyllic compositions of Giorgione from which they derived full and unalloyed enjoyment. They may have admitted the high qualities of the quattrocentisti, but the respect accorded was cold; they raised their caps and passed on, reserving their enthusiasm for the more sonorous style and liberal graces of the later masters. That Nicola’s inclination was towards the severer design of the XVth century painters is possible, seeing his evident admiration for the art of the early woodcuts. Those, especially, which illustrated the Metamorphoses were of the kind to evoke the keenest delight in the soul of the born painter. His Umbrian temperament must have been stirred to its depths by their force of dramatic representation, in like manner as were his remote Etruscan ancestors by the master-work of Athenian artists. And, truly, in their strength and simplicity these woodcut-outlines have in them something of those qualities which have found their highest expression in the noble design and splendid freedom of line characterizing the imaginative conceptions of the Greek vase-painters. But whatever his personal predilection, Nicola must have been aware that his admiration for the severity and restraint of the quattrocento designers was not shared by the class for whom he catered. Its artistic sense would have been offended by the introduction of a note out of harmony with the decorative scheme of an apartment wherein the
maiolica on the sideboard was painted in the style of the preceding century. The painter therefore introduced into his compositions the much-admired "paesi," and sought to draw his figures in the prevailing manner of his day, which, at its best, was of singular grace and refinement. The result being that, at least in the case of the Correr Plates, Nicola produced a series of paintings which unite in their design some of the finer qualities of the earlier and later ceramic art of the Renaissance.

Of all the stories in the Metamorphoses, it will be generally admitted that

Fig. 1.

the loves of Orpheus and Eurydice is the most touching and pathetic. Fortunately five of the Correr Plates are illustrated by the same number of incidents described by the poet, or rather, it should be said, by his Italian translator (see figs. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15). The series is probably incomplete, since it may fairly be supposed that Nicola would not have omitted the dramatic scene of Orpheus pleading at the throne of Pluto and Proserpine for the return of Eurydice to the upper world. On comparing the subjects depicted by the artist with the illustrations in the above-mentioned volume of 1497, it will be seen that four of them are found in three of the cuts (see figs. 1, 2, 3).
It will be observed that the Eurydice bitten by the Serpent is not treated the same in the Plate as in the cut, the only point of resemblance being the action of Eurydice, who is running with her arms outstretched. The cut shows her with her companions, as narrated in the verse of Ovid, whilst the Plate represents her pursued by Aristeus, probably taken from Virgil’s version of the incident, and which is found introduced in the text of the translation of 1497; hence the inference that whilst the designer of the woodcut was aware of the translator’s interpolation, Nicola himself was unable to read the poem in its original Latin. After the manner of the early painters, the same cut contains representations of two other incidents of the story, the Marriage of Orpheus (not found in the Correr series) and Orpheus awaiting Charon on the Stygian shore. In the latter, Nicola, while retaining the motive of the design, has depicted Orpheus in front view. As to the remaining incidents—Orpheus with the Beasts and the Death of Orpheus—their comparison with the cuts will show how deeply the painter was indebted to them for the arrangement of his compositions and the action of their figures.
In the case of the Orpheus series, it is evident that Nicola drew his inspiration as to their design directly from the woodcuts, and, having regard to the object of the present study, the enquiry respecting the treatment of the subject in Italian art of the period need proceed no further. Yet seeing how profoundly the myth had impressed the popular imagination, it may be interesting to glance at some of the illustrations of the Death of Orpheus in other forms of art, and which would doubtless have been known to Nicola. In line- engraving the Hamburg Museum possesses a unique copy of a XVth century print by an unknown engraver of the Paduan or Venetian school of remarkable force and precision of design. The figure of Orpheus is in the same attitude as in the woodcut, but reversed, and there are only two Bacchantes; one of these resembles the energetic figure seen in back view, of the woodcut, and which it was an error on the part of Nicola not to have retained in his painting. Again, we find Orpheus in the same attitude in the fine pen-and-ink drawing of the subject by a follower of Mantegna in the well-known book of XVth century drawings belonging to Lord Rosebery; there, also, the
Bacchantes are only two in number. In bronze-work there is the XVth century medallion of the subject by an anonymous North Italian Master, which M. Molinier has pointed out is similar in arrangement to Nicola’s painting; the attitude of Orpheus, however, is not the same, nor are those of the five Bacchantes. In another medallion of the subject in the collection of M. Dreyfus (which contains also an example of the one just mentioned), attributed to Moderno and probably of the early XVIth century, the figures are the same in number, but the attitude of Orpheus is again different. It may be that the compositions in all these engravings, medals, etc. were based on some celebrated painting by a North Italian artist which is now lost, or even on a Greek bas-relief of the subject, also lost. Be that as it may, its frequent repetition by contemporary artists sufficiently explains how Nicola came to treat the story of Orpheus with more than usual fulness.

The Metamorphoses of 1497 contains no illustration of the incident of Pluto seizing Eurydice, nor has the present writer been able to discover an engraving or woodcut of the subject. Lazari remarks that the painter had not drawn his inspiration, in the case of the Orpheus series, from the text of Ovid, but from a short poem in ottava rima by an anonymous author of the XVth century. It has been shown that Nicola must have read the story in the volume of 1497, but it is possible that he may also have seen the metrical version, which was not improbably the original of the chapbook which, like the Ottinello and Julia—to be mentioned later,—was constantly being republished. The earliest copy in the British Museum is dated 1530, and, as was usually the case with these popular poems, it is illustrated by a woodcut representing the lovers returning to earth, but before Orpheus had looked back at his bride. It is quite possible, however, that in some earlier edition the cut represented the scene as depicted on the Plate. The subject was painted by Luca Signorelli in one of the roundels illustrating mythological stories, together with others from the Divina Commedia, in the chapel of S. Brizio, at the Duomo of Orvieto. Luca painted the frescos at the commencement of the XVIth century; they may therefore have been seen by Nicola. If such was the case, he would naturally have been deeply impressed by their superb design, and as a maiolica painter he would have studied them from the point of view of his own department of art. In Nicola’s composition of Pluto (or rather a demon) seizing Eurydice, the figures are to some extent arranged on the lines of the fresco, although as a whole the presentation is vastly less dramatic. The group of struggling demons is omitted, the despairing agony
of Luca's Eurydice is considerably toned down, and the horror-stricken gesture of Orpheus is not even attempted; in short, there is little of the "terribilità" which the Italians found in the design of the great Cortonese painter, and which, could it have been rendered by Nicola, would have been out of harmony with the rest of the series.

Of the remaining five subjects from the Metamorphoses, three only were inspired by the woodcuts in the Venetian translation (see figs. 16, 17, 18). The first of these is the Apollo and Marsyas, the two figures in each case being represented in somewhat similar attitudes, except that Apollo's contempt for the performance of his rival is expressed by different gestures (see fig. 4): the scene of the flaying has more grip in the cut than in the painting. The backgrounds of the cuts are rightly summary in treatment; hence, as a rule, Nicola ignored them altogether; yet, as indicating how quick he was to seize a picturesque accessory, it will be observed that in this instance he reproduced in his landscape the temple from the cut.

Next in the series comes the story of Midas (see figs. 5 and 17), wherein the
woodcut shows the trial of skill in two groups, whilst Nicola combines the action in a single composition. The incident of Apollo affixing the ass's ears to the head of Midas is omitted in the cut. The subject was treated by Nicola at a later period in the large plateau at the British Museum, and again the painter changed the composition while introducing the same *dramatis personae*, this time, however, representing Apollo twice—playing the violin and holding a lyre. The story was probably a favourite one with the courtiers and connoisseurs of the XVIth century, who valued themselves on their refined taste as compared with the grossness of the rustics and the common herd *.

The last subject which can be traced to the woodcuts is the Peleus and Thetis; it is also the one in which Nicola appears to have been the least indebted to the XVth century artist, yet, as he has followed his predecessor

* The woodcut also appears to have been its accepted rendering in pictorial art, since once at Venice the writer came across a XVIth century decorative panel, worthless as a work of art, but which had evidently been copied from the cut.
in substituting a dragon for the tigress of the text of Ovid, it is clear whence he derived his inspiration (see fig. 6). The translation of 1497 also errs on this point, stating that Thetis was "converti in serpe." The volume contains no woodcut illustrating the story of Narcissus and Echo; hence, unless Nicola found a drawing or engraving of the composition elsewhere, this, one of the most beautiful of the series, is the fruit of his own invention. The contrasted figures of Echo slowly changing into stone and of Narcissus at the stream are dramatically conceived, and nothing could be more tender and pathetic than the dead Narcissus mourned by a Nymph, in the medallion. The last of the Ovidian subjects is taken from the story of Meleager, and which certainly does not correspond with the text of the Metamorphoses, nor with the story as given in the 1497 translation. If the design is due to Nicola himself, it offers a signal proof of his ability as a maiolica painter, if not as an illustrator sticking close to his text: the offended Diana and the stricken Meleager are designed in the true spirit of Renaissance art.

Turning to the other Venetian volume—the Poliphilus,—whereof the illustrations were a source of inspiration to our painter, we find in it the prototypes
of the striking allegorical picture of the Four Seasons, reminiscent of the art of Mantegna, yet, perhaps, more nearly allied to that of Bellini, in his allegorical panels at the Venice Academy (see fig. 21). The subject is found in the *Poliphilus*, presented in four separate cuts, of which two are given in facsimile in figs. 7 and 8. In grouping the figures together, Nicola attempted no elaborate composition, nothing could be simpler than their arrangement. They stand naturally, without *pose* or pretension. Their distinct individuality is preserved, so that there is no mistaking their intention, and scarcely need the inscription at their feet. By the aid of the cleverly contrived and poetically conceived landscape background they are united in a picture, harmonious, in perfect "keeping," and in all respects masterly. Nicola has in some instances slightly changed the attitudes of the figures as drawn in the cuts, and in the case of Spring and Summer substituted nude for draped figures. He has, however, transferred the wood-engraver's Mantegnesque conception of the "plumpy Bacchus," who stands for Autumn, into his picture almost intact, but he has changed the sex of Winter—in the cut represented by Jupiter Pluvius—whilst retaining the background of dropping rain-clouds and adding
the barren mountains, which are contrasted with the serene sky and smiling landscape appropriate to Spring—personified by Venus and Cupid.

As Lazari did not discover that the painting of the Four Seasons derived its motives from the woodcut illustrations of the *Poliphilus* (whereof a copy was in the library of his Museum), it is not surprising that he failed to identify the suggestion for the composition of the Solomon adoring an Idol (see fig. 22) in the same volume. The general arrangement of the figures appears, however, to have been based on the cut of Tyndareus offering the two eggs of which Leda had been delivered to Apollo at Delphi (see fig. 9), and the attitude of Solomon on that of the kneeling figure of Acrisius, the father of Danaë, adoring Apollo, the fifty-fourth cut in the volume. If the reader will compare Nicola's design with the cuts he will perceive the obvious analogies of figure arrangement in the compositions. The mere grouping of six figures, male and female, together with a statue, and displayed in the same order, might, of course, be a coincidence, even when the principal figure is a king kneeling before a statue. But when the two figures to the right are priests and in the same position, when the architectural backgrounds are similar in design, and, further, when it can be shown that Nicola copied other figures from the illustrations in the same volume, it must be admitted that the above-mentioned analogies are not accidental. It will be observed that the pedestals of the statues in the cuts are square, whilst that in the painting is round and highly ornamented; but the same pedestal with the identical scheme of ornamentation is seen in the woodcut
of Paris shooting at Achilles praying before a Statue of Apollo, in the other
volume that Nicola consulted so frequently—the *Metamorphoses* of 1497.
As showing how his mind was saturated with the art of the *quattrocentisti*, it is
interesting to note that the Idols of his paintings were none other than a John
the Baptist of the school of Donatello, and of which a study was probably in
the painter’s book of drawings. It is found again doing duty as a heathen
divinity in his composition of Curtius leaping into the chasm in the Roman
Forum, in the large plate painted by him which was formerly in the Basilewsky
Collection and is now at St. Petersburg.

But whilst the examination of the woodcuts may enable the student
conversant with the procedure of pictorial art to understand the genesis and
inception, the building up, of the Solomon composition, it does not explain the
enigmatical supposed date, 1482. It will be well, then, to carefully examine
the writing on the plinths of the two columns in the painting. Respecting
that on the right hand, it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than
that it is meaningless scribble. Some of the characters are purely fictitious,
others resemble Arabic numerals, the whole being jumbled together in four
lines. On the left hand plinth there is no mistaking the *SALOMONE*, but the
letters below have been differently read by different persons. Lazari supposed
them to be GIO in Roman capitals; Fortnum thought they might be TMB
in mediaeval characters. Nicola possibly had some notion that the plinths
should bear inscriptions, in the same manner as the antique slabs imitated in
the *Poliphilus* are covered with Latin texts. So instead of writing the name of
Solomon on the pavement as in fig. 23, he inscribed it on the plinth, and there
his literary inspiration terminated. It is to be regretted that the painter did
not inscribe his own signature and the actual date instead of these enigmatic
characters. Another instance of meaningless scrawl supplying the place of
legible characters can be cited on another of his paintings, namely, the large
plateau painted with the story of Apollo and Marsyas at the British Museum.
The border is covered with elaborate ornamentation in which occur four tablets
bearing what at first glance appear to be inscriptions, but which on examination
are found to be fictitious characters, rather carefully touched in. It is difficult
to understand Nicola's peculiarity in this matter: he can scarcely have intended
a mystification; it must therefore remain inexplicable.

The series contains a second Plate in which the figure of Solomon is
introduced and which evidently is a companion to the one just discussed (see
fig. 23). Subjects connected with the philosophical and amatory King of Israel
appear to have been popular in Italy at the beginning of the XVIth century, witness the frequent repetition of the Judgment of Solomon in pictorial and other forms of art. Hence it is probable that these two are the remaining examples of a series of plates illustrating incidents in the life of Solomon and passages in his writings. As previously remarked, Lazari was mistaken in describing the picture to be Adonijah in the atrium of Bathsheba; he was followed, however, by Fortnum, who added the reference I. Kings, ch. 1. It appears more likely that the actual passage illustrated by Nicola will be found in Proverbs VII. 5; wherein is narrated the dramatic incident of "the young man void of understanding" who was decoyed into the house of the harlot. We are shown the window out of which Solomon looked, the harlot's house at the corner, her bed bedecked with coverings of tapestry, and, in order to make the tableau more convincing, we are also shown Solomon listening to her "fair speeches" and the "flattering of her lips," and which he will indite in the volume he carries in his hand. No other representation of the incident is known to the writer, but it is quite possible one might be found amongst the biblical woodcuts of the period.

The paintings on the four remaining Plates—figs. 24, 25, 26, & 27—illustrate scenes from poems or novelle which were doubtless well known and admired by the readers of the time throughout Italy. Lazari has pointed out that the picture of the hawk flying away with the handkerchief which he has snatched from the face of the sleeping Ottinello (see fig. 24) is similar in motive to a woodcut on the titlepage of a XVIIth century copy of the poem of Ottinello and Giulia (see fig. 28). He probably knew that it was a debased reproduction of an earlier cut, which, however, he does not seem to have discovered. As a matter of fact, the original of Nicola's painting was a fine XVth century Florentine woodcut (see fig. 10), this being proved by his adhering both to the figures and also to the main lines and features of the landscape in his own background (see Appendix B). But we may suppose the charming figure of Fortune on a weathercock, in the medallion, was the invention of the painter. The poems or novelle inspiring the last three pictures are unknown to the writer; the subjects, however, thanks to the painter's faculty of dramatic presentation, are in each case easy of interpretation. The medallion of Leda in fig. 25 has been suggested by a woodcut in the Poliphilus illustrating the Triumph of Leda, where she is figured on a triumphal car.

Accepting, as we must, that the numerals 1182 on the Solomon adoring an Idol do not stand for the year of its production, and further that all the Correr
Plates belong to the same period in the life of the painter, but possibly ranging over an interval of a few years, the question arises whether any evidence is attainable giving at least their approximate date. Fortnum devoted considerable attention to this point, finally arriving at the conclusion that the series was painted between 1515 and 1518. His reasons being that all the plates were produced when the Pellipario family was still at Castel Durante, and likewise because the series was anterior in date to the Gonzaga-Este service, which he surmised was painted in 1519 or 1520, the assumed date of the removal of the family to Urbino. On this last point it would have been more satisfactory if the historian had brought forward some definite evidence, but as to the rest he was probably near the mark. At the same time, where so much depends on surmise and inference, a wider margin than three years might perhaps have been allowed wherein to include the production of all the Plates. In the absence of documentary evidence referring to them we naturally enquire if any signed works of the master are available for comparison of style or execution. Neither the Correr Plates nor the Gonzaga-Este service bear dates or signatures. Two, however, of Nicola's most important works are both signed and dated—the first being a plate formerly in the Basilewsky Collection; the second, also a plate of large dimensions, is in the National Museum at Florence.
The painting on the former, which is signed and dated 1521, represents a seated King, presumably David, crowned and holding in one hand a sceptre, in the other a globe; his costume being that of a Roman Emperor. He is placed in the opening of an arch against which stand two columns. On their plinths are inscribed, in Roman capitals, Spes mia in Deo est, and Domine memento mei. In this case, unlike the inscriptions on the plinths of the columns in the Solomon picture (fig. 22), the writing is legible and fills each its respective quadrangular space. The attitude of the figure is academic, the hands reproduce the Michael Angelo mannerism of being forcibly flexed at the wrists. The colouring is pale, the outline correct (after its academic fashion), and the proportions are just. The background of sea and sky, the marine fortress, the pavement of yellow and white chequers, and the style of architecture are reminiscent of the buildings and backgrounds in the Correr plates, although more pallid in tint.

Respecting the second dated work, this splendid example of XVIth century maiolica displays on the obverse a painting from Marc Antonio’s engraving after Raphael’s cartoon of the Martyrdom of St. Cecilia. On the reverse it bears the monogram of Nicola and the inscription—"Historia de Sancta Cecilia la quale fu fata in botega de guido da castello durante in Urbino 1528." The general impression derived from the examination of this important composition of thirty-four figures is that we are in the presence of the work of a painter in the full plenitude of his power. The execution has an air of assured mastery only to be arrived at after long practice. In the countenances and the nude the representation is wrought to a high degree of finish without being stippled; the form is thoroughly understood and rendered in warm full-toned flesh tints. The coloration is especially powerful. Strong passages of orange, of deep blue, vivid green, and of brilliant yellows recall the resplendent harmonies of Palma and Paris Bordone, without, of course, the crimsons and scarlets of the latter, which find no place on the palette of Nicola. The general force of colour suggests something of the effect of translucent enamel but without its flashing lights. The consummate technical ability of the painter has enabled him to avoid the heavy, solid handling of the later maiolicari, but the colour comes perilously near losing the quality pertaining to all fine ceramic art. Altogether, in drawing, colour, and execution, there is a wide and palpable difference between the Florence Plate and those at Venice, although the individual style of the artist is apparent in both. In the latter the drawing is free, it has slips in the proportions of the figures not found in the work
either of 1521 or 1528, but the line suggests the swift stroke of impetuous youth; the touch, whether in the broad washes of the sky and foreground, or in the details of figures and landscape, has the frankness of the accomplished vase-painter; it has also the other quality ever present in Nicola’s early pieces, the representation is not realistic, it does not seek to enter into competition with the finished work of the painter in oil, such as that which found favour with the connoisseurs and critics of the after time. The colour also, though pure is cool and fresh—"alquanto freddo," as Lazari, whose standard of excellence was that of the mid-XVIth century painters, considered it,—evincing a preference for cool cobalts, transparent greens, and manganese violets; the yellow inclines to a lemon colour and the fine orange of Italian maiolica is sparingly applied. These marked differences of treatment in divers particulars imply a considerable interval of time between the production of the later works and the Venice series; but so many circumstances, of which we are necessarily ignorant, have to be taken into consideration in endeavouring to estimate its length, that to affix a particular date to the latter, solely on the evidence of style, appears scarcely permissible.

Neither can this definite assertion be arrived at from the examination of the influence of contemporary pictorial art on that of Nicola. It might have been possible did we possess the whole of his work, or even the greater part of it; yet, as indicating the sources whence he derived certain special qualities of design and manner, it may be worth while to glance at some phases of the art of the time with which he must have been familiar. That Nicola would have studied with attention the works of his great fellow-countryman, Raphael, is only what might be expected, since nowhere would the admiration for the genius of the master have been more fervent than at his native city, Urbino. The Camera della Segnatura, at the Vatican, was finished in 1511, and it was in the frescos adorning this room that Raphael’s style was shown in its utmost purity. It is not unlikely that Nicola had seen the originals, but in any case he would have known them from copies or drawings. Hence the reflections of the Raphaelesque principles of design evinced in the present compositions and which are perceptible in the attitudes and movement of some of the figures, as in the Concubines exulting over Solomon, the figure of Echo, the Aristeus, and even in the infuriated Bacchantes in the Death of Orpheus. The study of the works of the Master taught Nicola to give unity to his compositions, an air of distinction to his figures, and something of the grace and simplicity of classic art in their representation. The lessons learnt were valuable, but they do not
appear to have constituted the sole factor influencing his style in design at the opening period of his career, the time when he painted the Correr Plates. These in their spirit, and also in some aspects of their design and colour, show the influence of the Venetian painters of the school of the Bellini, and especially of the master of Castelfranco, Giorgione (1477–1511).

From the absence of documents relating to the life of Nicola it cannot be positively asserted that he went to Venice, although it is highly probable that, like other artists of his age, he did so, either to seek employment or in the mere spirit of adventure. If he visited Venice it is certain that he must have seen the works of Giorgione, since it is recorded the Master decorated the outsides of various palaces in that city. Unfortunately, these frescos have all perished, and no copies of them, saving engravings of a few of their figures surviving till the XVIIIth century, have come down to our own time. But we know from the statement of Ridolfi that the subjects of the frescos "were for the most part taken from the fables of Ovid, and represent the life of the Golden Age. There, in the shade of umbrageous groves or verdure-clad rocks, and lulled by the music of falling streams and fountains, repose the peaceful children of a primeval race. Here also we see the noble Lion, there the gentle lamb, elsewhere the flying hart with other animals of the forest and plain". This passage proves that, at least as to the subjects, the frescos of Giorgione would have had considerable interest for Nicola. But it was the essential qualities of the art, which, it may be advanced, produced a profoundly stimulating impression on him, and for a time influenced his own style. The known authentic easel-pictures of Giorgione are now few in number and have suffered from restoration, yet something of those qualities which commanded the enthusiastic admiration of his contemporaries may be discerned when before the "Concert" at the Louvre and the "Woman suckling her Babe" at the Giovannelli palace, Venice. Alike in subject and in execution these, and others of the class, exercise a singular fascination over the spectator. But this is not attained by the representation of any strong situation; the motives are of the simplest, the action natural and unaffected, yet the painter has infused an emotional quality into his figures such, as of its kind, has never elsewhere been equalled in pictorial art. So also with the landscape which forms an important feature in Giorgione's pictures. The meadows and streams, the skies and the mountains are suggestive of all that is lovely in nature; they likewise breathe

* Ridolfi. Maraviglie dell' Arte. 1648. p. 79.
the same spirit of suavity and abiding serenity animating the personages of these gracious idylls.

It is not, of course, intended to imply that Nicola aimed at the imitation either of the magical atmospheric effects of Giorgione’s canvases or his marvellous manipulation; these, he would have been aware, could only have been rendered in fresco or oil. He would know that the warm palpitating flesh tints, and the balmy summer landscape of the rich sub-Alpine region, were unattainable on the glazed surface of maiolica. He therefore wisely abstained from attempting the realistic representation proper to oil-painting. Still, it was only natural that his admiration for Giorgione’s art would lead him to essay the same class of subjects, and to select figures of the same type. Thus it is seen that when the subjects are not illustrations of classical story, the personages wear the same handsome garb of young Venetian nobles and ladies of the period as in Giorgione’s canvases; we see also the same mingling of classic and romantic elements found in the composition of the Master. From the study of Giorgione he possibly derived his skilful treatment of landscape, making it one of the chief attractions of his paintings. And although in so doing he violated one of the first principles of ceramic ornamentation—which should treat the surface of the vessel as a ground to be ornamented, but not by means of linear and aerial perspective to represent other than its outside—he seems to have confined the “paesi” to plates, decorating his vases with the Renaissance ornament of his time. In respect to his painting of skies, he usually introduced a cumulus cloud or so in their upper part, leaving below a space in white having a few touches of yellow above the horizon, after the manner of Marco Basaiti, as in his “Sons of Zebedee,” at the Venice Academy. It has been said that Nicola’s compositions at the Correr Museum display the influence of Timoteo delle Vite (1470–1523). The statement may perhaps have arisen from the known fact that Timoteo lived at Urbino till his death, and also from the praise bestowed on his works by Vasari. He was, however, but a second-rate painter, and his art can scarcely be considered stimulating.

The only clue to the contemporary estimation of Nicola which we possess is the fact that Isabella d’Este commissioned him to paint a credenza for her personal use. She is known to have been one of the finest judges of art of the Renaissance, and ever eager in obtaining examples of the most renowned artists of the time for her collection. Hence her patronage of Nicola at some early period of his career authorises the inference that he had then achieved a
high reputation as a painter of maiolica. But we have no means of knowing the opinion of the *cinquecento* connoisseurs as to the relative merits of his later works compared with his earlier ones. It is probable they valued the former the more highly, and it is certain such was the verdict of the majority up to the last century. Happily, not of all, since we have the notable exception of Correr, who only collected the early work of the Master, and by wise forethought arranged that this splendid series should always remain intact—thus enabling lovers of maiolica to realize and enjoy the rare quality of Nicola's art at the period of its finest fruition.
ILLUSTRATIONS.
FIG. III. EURYDICE AND ARISTEUS.
FIG 12. ORPHEUS ON THE STYGIAN SHORE.
FIG. 13. EURYDICE TAKEN BACK TO HELL.
FIG. 14. ORPHEUS AND THE BEASTS.
FIG. 15. THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS.
FIG. 16. APOLLO AND MARSYAS.
FIG. 18 PELEUS AND THETIS.
FIG. 19.—NARCISSUS AND ECHO.
FIG. 20. MELEAGER AND DIANA.
FIG. 21. THE FOUR SEASONS.
FIG. 22.—SOLOMON ADORING AN IDOL.
FIG. 24.–OTTINELLO AND GIULIA.
FIG. 26.—THE LOVE GIFT.
FIG. 26 CHASTITY.
FIG. 27.-THE JUDGMENT OF CUPID.
APPENDIX.
APPENDIX A.

The attribution of certain plates and a hanap or ewer, once forming portions of a "credenza" or service of maiolica belonging to Isabella d'Este, to Nicola Fontana has been determined by style alone. The pieces themselves were, of course, identified as having been made for Isabella from bearing shields whereon are blazoned the arms of Gonzaga impaling those of Este, but we believe no document has been discovered referring to them. It has been erroneously supposed that a letter from Gio. Francesco, alias the poet, to Jacopo Calandra, the secretary to Duke Frederick of Mantua, dated from Pesaro Aug. 1, 1530, refers to the Isabella service. The one, however, alluded to in the letter was a service to be made for the Duke, Isabella's son (see Campori. Istorie delle Fabbriche di Majoliche Metaurensi, di G. Vanzolini. 1879. vol. ii. p. 215). The only remaining pieces forming part of the Gonzaga-Este service known to the writer are a large plate at the Bologna Museum, the subject of the painting taken from the story of Myrrha, as illustrated in the Venetian translation of the Metamorphoses of 1497; the incidents represented are Myrrha pursued by Cinyras and the birth of Adonis. As a work of art this is the finest of the paintings. The British Museum possesses two of the plates, S. Kensington Museum (the Salting Collection) has one, which is, perhaps, the nearest in style and colour to the Correr series. Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan's collection contains three plates, and Baron Alphonse de Rothschild's the ewer or hanap; these all bear the before-mentioned arms, along with imprese and mottoes belonging to Isabella, likewise the numbers referring to the service. There is a perceptible difference both of colour and manner of drawing in these eight pieces, suggesting that the service was some time in hand, and also that portions of the paintings are the work of assistants. The number of pieces composing this service is not known; sometimes there were as many as two hundred in a service (see Dennistoun. Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino. 1851. vol. iii. p. 440).
APPENDIX B.

Although the editions of Ottinello and Giulia must have been very numerous, copies of the poem are now rare; hence a brief statement of the argument will serve to explain the incident depicted on fig. 24:—Ottinello and Giulia were the children of the Princes of Salerno and Capua, who were at war with each other. Ottinello, having heard of the beauty of Giulia, resolves to visit the court of Capua in disguise; he does so, and enters the service of her father. He succeeds in winning the love of Giulia, but fearing that her father will not consent to their union when he learns his real name and parentage, he prevails on the princess to elope with him. At night the lovers lie down to sleep in a desert country. Giulia covers Ottinello’s face with a veil richly
embroidered with rubies and precious stones, which attracting the eye of a hungry falcon, that supposes it may be edible, swoops down and snatches it away. Ottinello, being awakened thereby, follows the falcon to recover the veil, leaving Giulia asleep. The scene is thus described in the poem:—

"E Giulia bella del viso vermiglio,
Gli pose sotto il capo un guaccialetto
Poi ad un velo presto diè di piglio,
Il viso gli coperse ad un lato,
Ch' era di gioje, e perla ricamato.
Poi ancor lei si venne a dormentare,
Perch' era stanco col suo amoroso,
Un Falcon, che avea voglia di cibare,
Passando vidiè un vel si uninoso,
Però che vidde un rubino illustrare,
Credo fusse pasti per suo uso.
Calossi e 'l volto a Ottinello sraggiò,
Onde smarrito in piedi si levo.
Vidde il Falcon che 'l velo si portava,
Ch' era gran valuta per certano,
E niente la donnella risvegliava,
E messo a seguirlo per quel piano
Sol per veder se 'l Falcon lo lascava."

Ottinello’s pursuit of the falcon leads him to the seashore, where he is made prisoner by pirates, taken to Cyprus, and sold into slavery. Giulia, on awakening and finding her lover had gone away, assumes male attire. In her great sorrow she renounces the world, she builds a hospital for the poor and an inn for travellers on the shore of the Mediterranean. Ottinello escapes from slavery and takes passage for Italy in a ship which is wrecked near the house of Giulia; of all the passengers and crew he alone reaches the shore. The lovers recognise each other; their fathers forego their ancient enmity and consent to the marriage of their son and daughter.

The poem begins with an invocation in the usual quaint style:—

"O Cupido gentil leggiadro Amore,
Saettar di tutto l’ universo,
Illustra alquanto il mio misero cuore,
Soccorrimi che mai non sia sommerso,
Prestarmi gratia che io possa cantare,
E raccontar in rima qualche verso,
De due Amanti molto sfortunati,
Che per fortuna insieme fur trovati."
The above is from an edition published at Venice in 1620. The copy from which the titlepage, given in fig. 28, of later date and printed at Naples, then belonging to Spain, and where, consequently, the Inquisition kept its eye on the press, begins:

"O vero Sommo, o giusto Redentore,
Governator di tutto l'Universo."

The fifth line is also different, being—

"Donami grazia, Padre Salvatore."

There are likewise verbal changes in the last three lines.
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Nicola Fontana da Urbino

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