

From Venice to Newport: a painting by Giambettino Cignaroli lost and found

by ANDREA TOMEZZOLI



37. *Venus asks the River Numicius to purify Aeneas*, by Giambettino Cignaroli. 1735. Ceiling painting originally in the Palazzo Labia, Venice. Canvas. (Salve Regina University, Newport; photograph Michael Eudenberg).

IF ONE ENTERS the first room on the right of the entrance hall of what is now the seat of the Salve Regina University at Newport, Rhode Island, and looks up to the ceiling one sees a painting – in oil on canvas, measuring almost three metres by five – that is evidently Venetian (Fig.37). The present writer did just this in February 2013 and recognised that it was the work of Giambettino Cignaroli (1706–70), one of the most competent Veronese artists of the eighteenth century and the founder of the Veronese Accademia di Pittura (1764). He was celebrated in his hometown in an exhibition in 2011–12 that drew attention to his work for a group of prestigious international clients,¹ as also emerges from the painter's diary.²

I am grateful to Xavier F. Salomon for telling me of this painting. Research for this article was funded by Progetto di rilevante interesse nazionale 2010–11.

¹ F. Magani, P. Marini and A. Tomezzoli, eds.: exh. cat. *Il Settecento a Verona. Tiepolo Cignaroli Rotari la nobiltà della pittura*, Verona (Palazzo della Gran Guardia) 2011–12; reviewed by X.F. Salomon in this Magazine, 154 (2012), pp.146–48.

² The present writer and Bruno Chiappa are working on a critical edition of Cignaroli's diary, for which see B. Chiappa in Magani, Marini and Tomezzoli, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.251–52, no.99.

³ These sheets, first recorded by Franco Renzo Pesenti: 'Il ritrovamento di tre libri di disegni di Giambettino Cignaroli', *Arte Lombarda* 4 (1959), 1, pp.126–30, have recently been recatalogued by Robert Randolph Coleman on the website of Biblioteca Ambrosiana, and in printed form: R.R. Coleman: *The Ambrosiana Albums of Giambettino Cignaroli (1706–1770). A Critical Catalogue*, Milan and Rome 2011. For

Where did the canvas at Newport come from, when was it painted and when did it arrive in the United States? The first two questions can be answered by one of the 375 well-known drawings by Cignaroli bound into three albums in the last years of his life and since 1836 conserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana of Milan, the gift of Gaetano Taverna.³

A sheet in one of these albums (Fig.38)⁴ corresponds in all its elements and its composition to the scene shown on the canvas. The inscription in brown ink makes clear that the drawing relates to a 'Ceiling painted in oil in Ca' Labia Venice 1735'.⁵ So the canvas at Newport is one of the ceiling paintings made by Cignaroli for the Venetian palace of the Labia family in campo

other considerations on the nature of these drawings, see A. Tomezzoli in Magani, Marini and Tomezzoli, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.178–80, no.51.

⁴ Fol.F 256 inf.79. Inscribed at the top in brown ink: '1735'; at the base on a strip stuck onto the cardboard support in brown ink: 'Soffitto ad oglio dipinto in Ca' Labia Venezia 1735'.

⁵ On this drawing, see E. Martinelli Pedrocco: 'L'arredo del palazzo', in T. Pignatti, F. Pedrocco and E. Martinelli Pedrocco: *Palazzo Labia a Venezia*, Turin 1982, pp.168–69; D. Tosato: 'Giambettino Cignaroli a Venezia', *Arte Veneta* 54 (1999), p.103; Coleman, *op. cit.* (note 3), p.150, no.80, where Warma's hypothesis that the painting was frescoed is accepted; see S.J. Warma: 'The paintings of Giambettino Cignaroli (1706–1770)' (unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Georgia, 1988), pp.226–28, nos.87–89 who, however, prevaricates over the actual subjects of the ceilings.



38. *Venus asks the River Numicius to purify Aeneas*, by Giambettino Cignaroli. 1735. Pen and black ink, grey wash, black and red chalk on white paper, 36 by 56.7 cm. (Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan).



39. *Aurora leaves Tithonus*, by Giambettino Cignaroli. 1736. Pen and black ink, grey watercolour, black and red chalk on white paper, 34.3 by 57.4 cm. (Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan).



40. *Juno adorns the peacock's tail with the eyes of Argus*, by Giambettino Cignaroli. 1738. Black and red chalk, pen and black ink, grey watercolour on white paper, 29 by 55.8 cm. (Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan).

⁶ I. Bevilacqua: *Memorie di Giambettino Cignaroli eccellente dipintor veronese*, Verona 1771, pp.9 and 82.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.12: '[Cignaroli] del 1744 si portò a Venezia per colorire a fresco in casa Barbarigo a S. Maria in Zobenigo una soffitta e tre sopraporte'; on these frescos, see Tosato, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp.104–07.

⁸ The inventory of Cignaroli's oil sketches, listed by Dalla Rosa in the atelier of his uncle in 1798, records for Palazzo Labia 'Soffitto Latona, con Apollo, e Diana bambini', 'Giunone, che orna la coda del suo pavone con gl'occhi di Argo', 'l'Aurora, che si licenzia da Titone' and 'Le nozze di Giove con Giunone con tutte le altre deità e molte figure soffitto [...]. Grande a fresco a Venezia'; see A. Tomezzoli: 'L'inventario dei modelletti di Giambettino Cignaroli', in Magani, Marini and Tomezzoli, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.256–58, nos.13, 33, 36 and 91. In another document Dalla Rosa cites 'Latona con Diana con tre putini e Vulcano con Venere con altre sei figure. Sono due modelli ben eseguiti per che soffitti



41. *The marriage of Rhea and Saturn*, by Giambettino Cignaroli. 1737. Black chalk, pen and black ink and grey wash on white paper, 44.4 by 61.7 cm. (Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan).

S. Geremia, as was recorded in the sources from Ippolito Bevilacqua onwards.⁶ Bevilacqua, Cignaroli's first biographer, as well as specifying that it was the painter's uncle Francesco Lugiati who introduced him to the Labia palace where he worked for about four years, painting 'a fresco', mentions three ceilings in the palace: one of 'Juno', another of 'Aurora who leaves Tithonus' and 'Latona with Diana' ('Giunone', 'Aurora che si licenzia da Titone' and 'Latona con Diana'). The present decoration of Palazzo Labia, the result of several successive campaigns, the most important of which was the collaboration of Giambattista Tiepolo and Girolamo Mengozzi Colonna (to which we shall return), makes it impossible to verify Bevilacqua's statement, but it is reasonable to suspect that he was wrong about the 'Latona with Diana' (in fact *Latona with the infant children Diana and Apollo*), a subject that Giambettino certainly frescoed in Venice, but in the Palazzo Barbarigo at S. Maria del Giglio some years later in 1744.⁷

However, Bevilacqua's statement influenced later historians, the first being Saverio Dalla Rosa (1745–1821) – also a painter, the nephew and artistic heir of Cignaroli – who, in writing of his uncle's compositions, claimed that 'Latona e Diana' was for Palazzo Labia.⁸ Very soon the sources had created a confusion as to the exact number of ceilings painted by Cignaroli in Palazzo Labia, their subjects and technique.⁹

Giuseppe Biadego attempted to pin down the date of Cignaroli's activity in Venice, noting that he was still documented in Verona in September 1733, but was certainly in Venice in April 1735.¹⁰ Franco Renzo Pesenti was able to confirm the dates more precisely using the album in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana.¹¹ There

fatti a Venezia in casa Labia'; see G.P. Marchini: 'L'Accademia di Pittura e Scultura di Verona', in P. Brugnoli, ed.: *La pittura a Verona dal primo Ottocento a metà Novecento*, Verona 1986, II, p.507. In the 1820s, Dalla Rosa records in the possession of a certain Giambattista Anselmi in Verona, 'due bellissimi modelli di due soffitti già fatti in Venezia da Giambettino Cignaroli cioè Gionone, e Venere con Vulcano'; see E.M. Guzzo: "'Nota delle pitture degli autori veronesi per farne l'incisione ed altri aneddoti'" di Saverio Dalla Rosa sul patrimonio artistico veronese', *Studi storici veronesi Luigi Simeoni* 52 (2002), p.402.

⁹ The most important source for Veronese artists, D. Zannandreis: *Le vite dei pittori scultori e architetti veronesi pubblicate e corredate di prefazione e di due indici da Giuseppe Biadego* [ms., 1831–34], Verona 1891, p.378, speaks of works in fresco.

¹⁰ G. Biadego: *Di Giambettino Cignaroli pittore veronese. Notizie e documenti*, Venice 1890, pp.4–6. But, the letter noted by Biadego dates from 1736, as Tosato made clear;



42. *Juno adorns the peacock's tail with the eyes of Argus*, by Giambettino Cignaroli. 1738. Canvas, 54.6 by 95.1 cm. (Private collection).

were four drawings that interested him in particular, all dated in Cignaroli's hand: *Aurora leaves Tithonus*, dated 1736 (inv. F 256 inf. 78 bis; Fig. 39); the *Marriage of Rhea and Saturn*, dated 1737 (F 256 inf. 86; Fig. 41);¹² and *Juno adorns the peacock's tail with the eyes of Argus*, dated 1738 (F 256 inf. 89; Fig. 40). In addition, the drawing that interests us, F 256 inf. 79, is dated 1735.

The dates on the drawings – 1735–38 – fall immediately after the work on the reconstruction of the Labia palace, documented in October 1734 by a famous letter of Rosalba Carriera.¹³ Adriano Mariuz has suggested that the ceiling with the *Marriage of Rhea and Saturn*, with its particularly complex composition and its large number of figures, was adapted to decorate the central salone which had just been completed (perhaps by the architect Andrea Tirali),¹⁴ the large dimensions of which made it necessary for Cignaroli to work in fresco.¹⁵ In addition, the subject of a wedding lent itself to the celebration of a family marriage, transformed in paint into a mythological fantasy. On 19th January 1738, Paolo Antonio Labia (1710–65), son of Giovan Francesco II and Maria Civran, married Fiordelise Emo.¹⁶ If Mariuz's identification is correct, this would have been the ceiling that was destroyed to make way for the frescos of Giambattista Tiepolo and Girolamo Mengozzi Colonna of the *Story of Antony and Cleopatra*. Before those astonishing frescos were made, it is worth emphasising that Cignaroli, with his four ceiling paintings, had been the artist who had decorated the *piano nobile* of one of the most prestigious Venetian palaces of its day.

It is necessary briefly to dwell on Cignaroli's subject-matter, comparing the painting in Rhode Island to the relevant drawing. That it is Venus who descends from her chariot is confirmed by the two white doves held on a red rein by the putto on the left and also by the presence of the blindfolded Cupid who appears on the lower right in the drawing, but is not present in the painting. The goddess speaks to a river god who pours water from an urn and gestures towards an old man with a white beard sleeping in the foreground. The sheet in the Ambrosiana shows various pieces of armour in the foreground that are not evident in the painting. On the left are three girls, the one on the left possibly being a river nymph since her hair seems to be entwined with seaweed. It is tempting to interpret the scene as the *Dream of Aeneas* in Virgil's *Aeneid* (VIII, lines 42–104), in which the god of the River Tiber appears to Aeneas in a dream and foretells the end of his journey and his misfortunes.

It has to be admitted that in the *Aeneid* Venus does not intervene, nor does the episode take place in daylight. The solution may perhaps be found in another episode relating to Aeneas, told not in the *Aeneid* but in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (XIV, lines 581–608)¹⁷ in which Venus orders the River Numicius to restore her son Aeneas, who has grown old, to his youthful appearance, so that she can grant him immortality.¹⁸ Aeneas' depiction as an old man reveals Cignaroli's real literary source: not the original Latin text, where there is no reference to Aeneas' age, but the version in *ottava rima* by Giovanni Andrea

Tosato, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 109, note 5. The painter wrote another letter from Venice on 14th January 1737; see A. Tomezzoli: 'Verona, madre e nutrice d'eccellenti pittori', in Magani, Marini and Tomezzoli, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 36 and 52, notes 30 and 32.

¹¹ F.R. Pesenti: 'Appunti per Giambettino Cignaroli', *Arte antica e moderna* 12 (October–December 1960), pp. 420 and 423, note 15. The question was clarified by Tosato, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 103.

¹² I. Artemieva: 'La fortuna di Pietro Rotari e Giambettino Cignaroli in Russia', in Magani, Marini and Tomezzoli, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 71–72, interpreted the subject as the *Marriage of Rhea and Saturn* which Dalla Rosa had described as 'The marriage of Jupiter and Juno in the presence of all the other gods'.

¹³ B. Sani: *Rosalba Carriera. Lettere, diari, frammenti*, Florence 1985, II, p. 595, no. 501.

¹⁴ V. Fontana: 'Dal "pòrtego" al salone. Proporzioni e armonie dell'architettura civile veneziana fra Sei e Settecento', in L. Puppi, ed.: *Giambattista Tiepolo nel terzo centenario*

della nascita, atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Venice, Vicenza, Udine and Paris, 29th October–4th November 1996), Padua 1998, I, p. 120.

¹⁵ A. Mariuz: *Le storie di Antonio e Cleopatra. Giambattista Tiepolo e Girolamo Mengozzi Colonna a Palazzo Labia*, Venice 2004, pp. 35–36. The dimensions of the model, much larger than that of other oil sketches, bear witness to the effort Cignaroli expended on this undertaking; Marchini, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 506, nos. 10, 11, 12 and 149.

¹⁶ C. Bullo: *I Labia in Venezia. Notizie storico-genealogiche*, Venice 1879, genealogical table between pp. 16 and 17, and p. 33.

¹⁷ I thank Fernando Rigon for having drawn my attention to this passage.

¹⁸ The concluding moment of this episode, *Venus gives immortality to Aeneas*, that took place immediately after Cignaroli's scene, was painted, for example, by Luca Giordano in the canvas now in the Museo Civico, Vicenza (inv. A 208).

dell'Anquillara, in which Aeneas is described as elderly (*'il canuto Troian'*).¹⁹

The difficulty of identifying the scene explains the erroneous title given it by Dalla Rosa of *'Venus and Vulcan'*,²⁰ which does not take into account the identity of the other figures represented. This error can perhaps be explained by the compositional similarity of this scene with the ceiling that Cignaroli frescoed the year before, in 1734, on the staircase of Palazzo Pellegrini in Verona: that was certainly of *Venus and Vulcan* – confirmed by the two Cyclops among the clouds at the base – and although it has been destroyed, it is known from a drawing by Cignaroli (Fig.43).²¹

There are some slight differences between the drawing and the painting: the small putto in the drawing carries a whip, useful for driving Venus' chariot, and Cupid appears among the clouds to the right of the goddess, while in the painting he is replaced by three small putti, perhaps zephyrs. But in the drawing the foreshortening of the principal figures is assured, and the scene is shown *di sotto in su*, an effect that is somewhat lost in the painting, in which Venus appears to be seen from the side. Cignaroli was a methodical artist, always seeking to improve his art. I believe that the drawing in the Ambrosiana, given its clean condition and its firm lines with no corrections or alterations, is not a preparatory study for the canvas once in Palazzo Labia but, as is true of a large number of the sheets in the album, more probably a *ricordo* of the work, made perhaps some time later with improvements.²²

The Newport ceiling owes an obvious debt to Antonio Balestra (1666–1740) in the clarity of its composition based on a zigzag structure, in the solid volume of the figures, in the assurance of the foreshortening and the physiognomy of the characters. But Balestra's soft chiaroscuro, which owes so much to Emilian painting, is substituted in this early phase of Cignaroli's activity by a more diffuse light that makes the blue and white of Venus' clothes sparkle and lights up the red robe of the sleeping warrior. This is probably the effect of the artist's intense study in Venice of the Renaissance masterpieces of the school.²³ Otherwise it would be difficult to explain the sixteenth-century appearance of the jewels on Venus' shoulder and breast. But on all this Cignaroli imprints his inimitable gracefulness and tender sensibility, evident in the 'dialogue' of the three putti at Venus' side.

These elements are noticeable on a small canvas depicting *Juno adorns the peacock's tail with the eyes of Argus* that appeared recently on the art market attributed to the Piedmontese painter Claudio Francesco Beaumont (1694–1766) (Fig.42).²⁴ But its exact correspondence with another drawing in the Ambrosiana (F 256 inf.89; Fig.40) and the sketchy brushstrokes show that it is



43. *Venus and Vulcan*, by Giambettino Cignaroli, 1734. Black chalk, pen and black ink and watercolour on greyish-ochre paper, 44.4 by 61 cm. (Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan).

Cignaroli's preparatory modelletto for the last of the ceilings in Palazzo Labia. In the lower-left corner, next to the gods of Olympus, a pretty peasant girl in contemporary dress looks down at the viewer.

The same stylistic traits are still present in two frescos painted by Cignaroli not many years later in the Villa Pompei Perez at Illasi, near Verona: the *Judgment of Midas* (1739) and the *Sacrifice of Iphigenia* (1741), which however display greater technical ability in the use of perspective.²⁵

It remains to ask why the Labia family decided to entrust four ceiling paintings in the palace to a 'foreign' painter aged only twenty-eight and still unknown in Venice. One should bear in mind that, on the one hand, in 1735 Sebastiano Ricci had been dead for a year; Louis Dorigny was at work on the decoration of the cathedral at Trento; Giambattista Piazzetta had proved that he could work on a large scale in ceilings with his canvas of *St Dominic in glory* for the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, but his style was not entirely suitable for the grandeur of a private palace; on the other hand, Giambattista Tiepolo had not yet burst onto the Venetian scene; this only happened in 1739, when he painted the ceiling of the Gesuati in Venice. Given the absence of any obvious local talent, perhaps it was prudent to summon Cignaroli from Verona who already in 1733 had been praised by Balestra, himself a Veronese painter who was well known in Venice,²⁶ but perhaps the recommendation of Cignaroli's maternal uncle Francesco Lugiatì carried more weight.²⁷ Lugiatì had made close ties with the Labia family, as in 1739 he published in Verona the *Rime nelle nozze di Sua Eccellenza Paolo Antonio Labia e Sua Eccellenza Donna Fiordelisa Emo*, a collection of poems in honour of the newly-weds.

¹⁹ *Le Metamorfosi di Ovidio, ridotte da Gio. Andrea dall'Anquillara in ottava rima e di nuovo da esso rivedute, et corrette. Con l'Annotationi di M. Giuseppe Horologi, et con gli argomenti di M. Francesco Turchi*, Venice 1587, ottave 244–46.

²⁰ Tosato, *op. cit.* (note 5), p.103, has tentatively suggested that the scene shows *Venus and Mars*, but it would be difficult to identify the sleeping old warrior as the god of war.
²¹ Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, F 256 inf. 78; see Coleman, *op. cit.* (note 3), pp.149–50, no.78. On Palazzo Pellegrini, see G. Castiglioni: 'Arcadia e sentimento. Novità per Pietro Antonio Rotari', *Verona Illustrata* 16 (2003), pp.113–19; the present writer has reservations about some of his suggested attributions.

²² On the complex question of the purpose of these drawings, see A. Tomezzoli, in Magani, Marini and Tomezzoli, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.178–80, no.51.

²³ On Cignaroli's study of Titian and Paolo Veronese during his Venetian sojourn, see Bevilacqua, *op. cit.* (note 6), p.10.

²⁴ Sale, Christie's, Amsterdam, *Old Masters & 19th Century Art including Dutch Impressionism*, 13th–14th May 2014, lot 86; provenance: the Lieben family, Vienna, in the nineteenth century.

²⁵ For Cignaroli's frescos in Villa Pompei Perez at Illasi, see D. Tosato in G. Pavanello, ed.: *Gli affreschi nelle ville venete. Il Settecento*, I, Venice 2010, pp.300–02, no.79.

²⁶ In a letter written from Verona on 10th September 1733, Balestra told the Florentine Francesco Maria Niccolò Gabburri that 'sig. Cignaroli ha un grande spirito e talento distinto dagli altri' and finished 'in Verona non vi sono di meglio del signor Rotari e del Cignaroli'; see M.G. Bottari and S. Ticozzi: *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura ed architettura scritte da' più celebri personaggi dei secoli XV, XVI e XVII*, Milan 1822–5, II, 1822, p.405.

²⁷ Bevilacqua, *op. cit.* (note 6), p.9: 'per mezzo di Francesco Lugiatì suo Zio materno, ebbe modo d'introdursi a dipingere in Venezia in casa Labia, da' quali Signori si riguardava con occhio assai amorevole il Zio, che poté e volle con questo mezzo patrocinare il nipote, e mettergli al fianco più gagliardi sproni, per fargli correre felicemente la carriera, che ha corso, a gloria della sua Patria e de' suoi congiunti'.

²⁸ See Martinelli Pedrocchio, *op. cit.* (note 5), p.170.

²⁹ G. Moschini: *Guida per la città di Venezia all'amico delle belle arti*, Venice 1815, II, part I, p.53.

³⁰ E. Paoletti: *Il fiore di Venezia*. . . , Venice 1837–40, III, 1840, p.48; G. Fontana: *Venezia monumentale. I palazzi*, Venice 1845–63; new ed., introduced and annotated by L. Moretti, Venice 1967, p.216; Bullo, *op. cit.* (note 16), p.10. Fontana (p.217) claims that 'nell'edificio [. . .] rimangono in qualche stanza [. . .] altri quattro plafoni dipinti dal Cignaroli

If it was the painting of the frescos by Tiepolo and Mengozzi Colonna in c.1746–47 that led to the destruction of Cignaroli's principal ceiling painting – the only one in fresco – the other ceiling paintings, on canvas, survived, as an inventory of 29th November 1749 still records '*Del Cignaroli-Soffitti tre*'.²⁸ In 1815 Moschini described the subjects, one with Venus, which we have discussed, another with Aurora and Tithonus, and a third with Latona and Diana, as 'this one in fresco, the other two in oil', thereby perpetuating his only mistake, whether because he failed to look carefully or read the sources uncritically, repeating them without checking from life.²⁹ His account was repeated in 1840 by Ermolao Paoletti, in 1845–63 by Gianjacopo Fontana and finally by Carlo Bullo in 1879.³⁰ Only in 1926 did Giulio Lorenzetti finally conclude that Cignaroli's works were no longer in Palazzo Labia.³¹

Now we should turn to the building that houses the painting today.³² The Salve Regina University has its administrative centre in what was once Ochre Court, one of the most luxurious 'cottages' of Newport. Its last owner, Robert Goelet (1880–1966), left it to the Religious Sisters of Mercy in 1947. It had been commissioned by his father, Ogden Goelet (1846–97), from the American society architect Richard Morris Hunt (1827–95), who built it between 1888 and 1892.³³ Jules Allard (1832–1907), the owner of a famous interior decoration *atelier* in Paris, with a sister company in New York since 1878, became involved in the furnishing and decoration of the Goelets' 'cottage'.

In July 1890 Allard stated that he had already bought for Monsieur Goelet '*une série peintures pour plafond Salle à Manger*' and a series of four paintings '*école Boucher*', old paintings that had been relined and repaired; in addition, he alluded to his 'progress with the ceiling paintings that I am getting from Italy from among which you must make your choice for the ceiling of your large salon'.³⁴ The choice was between two '*magnifiques peintures pour plafond*' that were to arrive in his Paris studio, which the Goelets were to visit. It seems that no decision was taken until March 1891, when Allard wrote again to Ogden Goelet on the necessity of installing the canvas before *boiseries* were put in place. In order to adapt the canvas to its new setting, Cignaroli's painting had to be enlarged, as is evident to the naked eye and when the drawing is compared to the painting. A new frame in the Rococo style was carved for the painting. The canvas was glued to the ceiling, a procedure that has damaged it, reducing it to a fragile and thin canvas that in some places has come unstuck from the plaster behind it.

e dal Tiepolo', which might suggest that he had seen the rooms in Palazzo Labia.

²⁸ G. Lorenzetti: *Venezia e il suo estuario. Guida storico-artistica*, Venice 1926, repr. Trieste 1994, p.453.

²⁹ I am very grateful to Paul Miller, Curator of the Preservation Society of Newport County, for having alerted me to important documents among the papers of the Goelet family which are preserved in the archive of the Salve Regina University of Newport.

³⁰ J.L. Yarnall: *Newport Through Its Architecture. A History of Styles from Postmedieval to Postmodern*, Lebanon NH 2005, pp.133–37.

³¹ '... avances sur les plafonds qui me viennent d'Italie parmi lesquels vous allez faire votre choix pour le plafond de votre Gran Salon'; Goelet Family Papers, Salve Regina University of Newport Archives, Newport.

³² A. Bettagno: 'Un soffitto ritrovato di palazzo Pisani', *Arte Veneta* 29 (1975), pp.224–26. G. Knox: *Antonio Pellegrini 1675–1741*, Oxford 1995, p.248, no.302 claimed that the canvas was removed from Palazzo Pisani c.1890, a date that coincides with that of the letter written by Allard to Ogden Goelet.

³³ See L. Moretti: 'Miscellanea riccesca', in G. Pavanello, ed.: *Sebastiano Ricci 1659–1734, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, 14th–15th December 2009)*, Venice 2012, pp.80–84. Moretti gives a careful reconstruction

of the decoration at The Elms, to which should now be added Sebastiano Ricci's two over-doors, which were acquired by the Preservation Society of Newport County and are now also installed at The Elms. For the decoration of Marble House and The Elms, see T. Gannon and P. Miller: *Newport Mansions. The Preservation Society of Newport County*, Newport 2010, esp. pp.32, 54 and 59.

It should not be forgotten that Jules Allard had other Venetian canvases to install in houses in Newport: the extraordinary ceiling by Giannantonio Pellegrini, for example, to go in Alva Vanderbilt's bedroom in Marble House, originally decorated the library of Palazzo Pisani.³⁵ Later a cycle of paintings that included canvases by Pellegrini, Bortoloni, Angeli, Trevisani, Ricci, Molinari and Lazzarini, once in the Ca' Corner Tacchi, were installed in The Elms, the residence of Edward J. Berwind.³⁶

In the *Registri delle licenze per l'esportazione all'estero di oggetti d'arte*, still preserved in the archive of the Accademia di Belle Arti, Venice, the name of Jules Allard is registered in February and March 1891. In those years, however, the name of a Paris-based antiques dealer of German origin occurs more frequently, that of Raoul Heilbronner, who requested permission to export a remarkable number of objects of all kinds: paintings, statues, furniture, tapestries, but also architectural capitals, columns, wells, mantelpieces, balusters, works in bronze and even part of the choir from the church of the Agostiniane, on 5th March 1891. To give a more specific example, on 6th July 1889 Heilbronner obtained a licence to export a ceiling painting on canvas; on 1st May 1890, thirteen decorative ceiling paintings; and on 8th August of the same year two other '*plafonds*': all paintings that the Ufficio per l'esportazione declared were by unknown eighteenth-century artists. The statues from Palazzo Pisani, from which Pellegrini's ceiling also came, were also exported by Heilbronner.³⁷ Therefore it cannot be excluded that it was again Heilbronner who exported from Venice some of the paintings later acquired by Allard for his American clients.

The removal of Cignaroli's ceiling painting occurred in one of the darkest periods of the history of Palazzo Labia, when it belonged to the Königsberg Foundation of Vienna, who converted the palace into apartments to rent. The sale of the furniture and contents probably occurred at the same time, around 1890.³⁸

In the introduction to the catalogue of the sale (6th–10th April 1964) of the furnishings of the palace – which since autumn 1948 had belonged to Charles de Beistegui – Antonio Morassi wrote that 'as well as six tondi by Tiepolo, various ceilings by Cignaroli were exported in the first years of this century', an indication that Cignaroli's works were still remembered at that time.³⁹

The rediscovery of the canvas at Newport leaves open the possibility that other traces of Cignaroli's work in Palazzo Labia have survived. The aim of this article is both to bring to notice a painting that was believed to be lost and also to express the hope that, given its precarious state of conservation, it may soon be restored, the only way to prevent the work from being lost for ever.

of the decoration at The Elms, to which should now be added Sebastiano Ricci's two over-doors, which were acquired by the Preservation Society of Newport County and are now also installed at The Elms. For the decoration of Marble House and The Elms, see T. Gannon and P. Miller: *Newport Mansions. The Preservation Society of Newport County*, Newport 2010, esp. pp.32, 54 and 59.

³⁴ G. Pavanello: 'Antonio Gai's Statues for Palazzo Pisani Rediscovered in Baltimore', *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 60/61 (2002–03), pp.27–31.

³⁵ L. Moretti, in Fontana, *op. cit.* (note 30), p.218, note 5; F. Pedrocchio: 'Il Labia di San Geremia', in Pignatti, Pedrocchio and Martinelli Pedrocchio, *op. cit.* (note 5), p.49. In June 1887, the Königsberg Foundation sold Giambattista Tiepolo's altarpiece originally in the small chapel in the palace and it was bought by the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, where it still is (inv. no.717); see M. Gemin and F. Pedrocchio: *Giambattista Tiepolo. I dipinti. Opera Completa*, Venice 1993, p.282, no.130. For the sale of Palazzo Labia to the Viennese foundation, see Bullo, *op. cit.* (note 16), p.11.

³⁶ 'oltre ai sei tondi del Tiepolo, vi furono asportati, nei primi anni di questo secolo, vari soffitti del Cignaroli'; see A. Morassi: 'Il Tiepolo a palazzo Labia', in *Catalogue des tableaux objets d'art et d'ameublement appartenant a M. Charles de Beistegui dont la vente aux enchères publiques aura lieu a Venise au Palais Labia du 6 au 10 Avril 1964* . . . , unnumbered pages.