

CASSIANO ON THE JEWISH RACES

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Windsor *Bassi Rilievi* IV is chiefly distinguished by its representations of the theatre, banquets, games, funerals, and shopping of the ancients.¹ The games and gymnastic accessories predominate (Figs. 1-7, for example). A few other such drawings are to be found amongst those in *Bassi Rilievi* VIII,² as well as in the volume known as the *Antichità Diverse*.³

As one might expect in an assemblage such as *Bassi Rilievi* IV, there are a number of spectacular drawings of gladiatorial contests, fully in the sixteenth-century antiquarian tradition represented by figures such as Pirro Ligorio, Fulvio Orsini, and Onofrio Panvinio, and sometimes copied from them;⁴ but amongst those which have yet to receive the attention they deserve are the many representations of runners (Figs. 1 and 2), chariot races (e.g. Fig. 3 out of very many possible examples), boxers, *pancratiastai*, *luctatores* (e.g. Figs. 4 and 5), bathers, and any number of other ancient sports. These too were frequently taken from the Cinquecento sources.⁵ Also notable are the many drawings of *strigiles*, *caestus*, and other ancient means of inflicting hurt on one's sporting opponent (Figs. 6 and 7). There is a strong interest in reliefs and fragments of what might be called the junior versions of these games, in which erotes replace men as riders of chariots, or as the protagonists in ball, hoop, and discus contests, and in pastimes

¹ RL 8401-8483. It goes without saying that the indispensable starting-point for the study of these drawings, as well as of those cited in the following note, remains Vermeule (1966).

² RL 8702-8783.

³ RL 10189-10297.

⁴ The chief source for these drawings was most probably the *Codex Ursinianus* (BAV, Vat. Lat. 3439), in Cassiano's time still in the possession of the Farnese. See the article by Vagenheim in *Quaderni puteani* 2, as well as her "Les inscriptions ligoriennes", *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 31, 1987, note 255, p. 272, as well as pp. 250-1 and 272-3. For evidence of the relationship between Cassiano's drawings and the *Codex Ursinianus*, note, for example, the drawings of the *venatio* in a circus arena, RL 8448, apparently derived from Panvinio and Orsini, as in BAV, Vat. Lat. 3439, fol. 53, and RL 8449 (a fragment of a triumphal relief with *pugillatores*), which is clearly related to Vat. Lat. 3439, fol. 65. In a similar fashion, many of the drawings of the theatre and feasts in *Bassi Rilievi* IV are clearly derived from the equivalent drawings in the *Codex Ursinianus*. For further instances, see the following note as well.

The key Panvinio source in this context was his *De ludis circensibus*, published as *De ludis circensibus libri II. De triumphis liber unus...*, Venice, 1600, Padua, 1642, Padua 1681, etc. For Ligorio's interest in the ancient circus, see D. de Chapeaurouge, "Eine Circus-Rekonstruktion des Pirro Ligorio", *Antike und Abendland*, 18 (1973), pp. 86-96. On the relationship between the chief collections of such drawings in the sixteenth century, see now A. Nesselrath, "I libri di disegni di antichità. Tentativo di una tipologia", in S. Settis ed., *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, III: *Dalla tradizione all'archeologia*, Turin, 1986.

⁵ As, for example, are the drawings of the runners, RL 8450 and 8447 (Figs. 1 and 2 here). They may usefully be compared with BAV, MS. Vat. Lat. 3439, fols. 58b verso and 55, as well as with *Codex Pighianus*, fol. 100. The drawings of boxers and wrestlers in Cassiano (Figs. 4 and 5, RL 8441 and 8440) were presumably also taken from Vat. Lat. 3439, fols. 54 recto and 55 respectively. Other instances of the derivative relationship with the drawings in the *Codex Coburgensis*, *Codex Ursinianus*, and Vat. Lat. 3439 are given by Vermeule (1966) in the case of RL 8438-8442, 8449 and so on.

From: Cassiano dal Pozzo's Paper Museum Vol. II, (Quaderni Puteani 3), Milan: Olivetti, 1992.

such as cockfights.⁶ The whole congeries is to be seen not only in the light of purely antiquarian concerns, but also in the line of those treatises which combined antiquarian knowledge with medical theory, of which the most notable and influential was Hieronymus Mercuriale's *De Arte Gymnastica* – which Cassiano must have known well.⁷ The aim of this paper, however, is neither to judge the archaeological value of these drawings, nor to assess their status as evidence of ancient sporting practices. Instead, it is to bring to the fore one aspect of Cassiano's interests that has received little attention so far – his interest in *modern* sports and games. This in turn forms part of a concern with modern life and ethnography that emerges in the correspondence much more frequently than one might perhaps suspect, not only in the many references to popular customs and practices, but in the constant preoccupation with contemporary political issues in almost every part of Europe. But this is another story. Here I want, in the first instance, to give some idea of the kinds of modern games that seem to have interested Cassiano and his circle, and to suggest (rather than plot) something of their filiation with the antique. In the second place I wish to present a description of the Jewish races of Rome that has remained absent from the histories of the Roman carnival and all the many accounts of the history of the Jewish community in Rome. That Cassiano should also have left posterity with material on the Roman Jews of his time merits more than passing attention; and so it forms the chief focus of what follows.

It is impossible to proceed with this account of a passage from ancient to modern without introducing Cassiano's friend Giovanni Battista Ferrari, little-noticed as professor of Hebrew at the Jesuit College in Rome from 1618-1647, but well-known as a writer on horticulture and botany.⁸ While the *De Florum Cultura* of 1633 was written and published with the aid of rich subsidies from Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Ferrari's *magnum opus*, the *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultura* of 1646, was written not only with the encouragement of Cassiano, but also with the aid of a rich body of natural historical material, both documentary and artistic, supplied by him.⁹ In the first book of the *Hesperides*, Ferrari sets out the background to the culture of citrus fruit – “culture” in both senses of the word. He discusses the most important ancient statues, reliefs, and coins of Hercules and the Hesperides, critically assesses the information provided by all the other writers on citrus fruits, from Pliny to Pontanus, and gives much other general aetiological and botanical material besides. The book is full of the most extraordinary and learned mythological information, and contains long digressions on the taxonomy

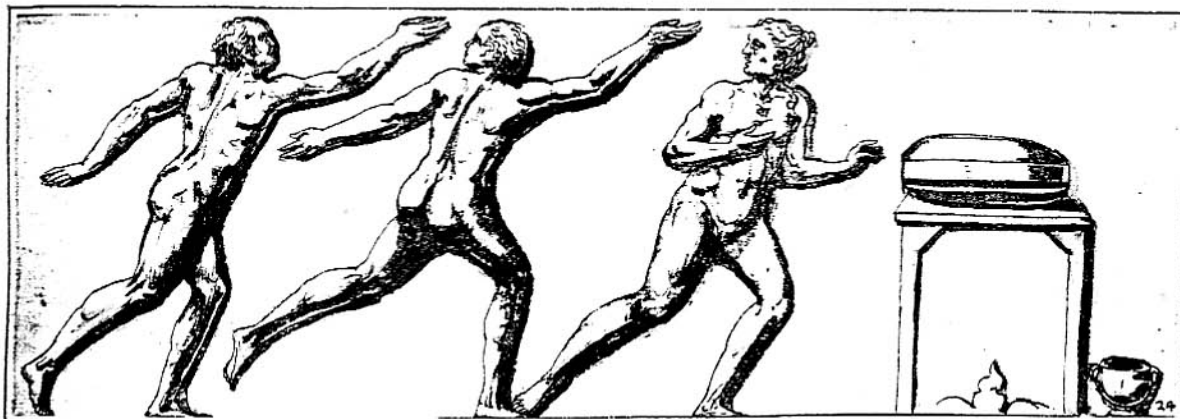
⁶ See, *inter multa*, RL 8405 (hoops), 8406-8, 8454-5, 8753 (chariot races), 8758 (ball games), 8759-60, as well as several drawings in the little known miscellanea in Florence, Gabinetto Nazionale dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Architettura 7034 (ball games), 7074 (hoops) etc.

⁷ The *editio princeps* was Hieronymus Mercurialis, *Artis gymnasticae apud antiquos celeberrimae, nostris temporis ignoratae libri sex*, Venice 1569. The important illustrated (second) editions, published as *De arte gymnastica libri sex*, are those of Venice 1573 and Paris 1577, but there were many subsequent editions (Venice 1587, Venice 1601 etc.) using the same plates, and culminating in the splendid Amsterdam edition of 1672. For the important fact that Mercuriale owed twelve of his illustrations to Pirro Ligorio, and that it was thus

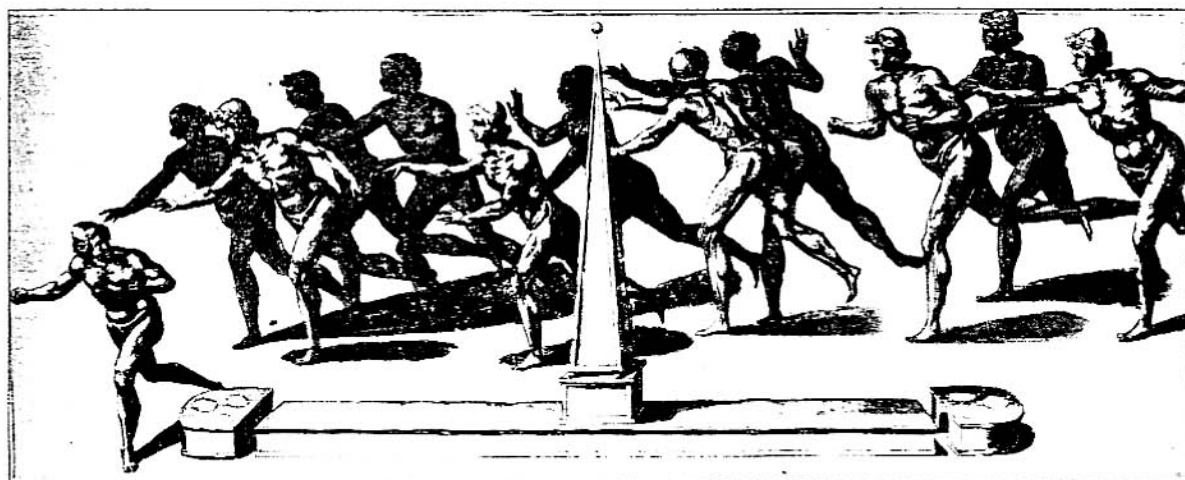
through his book on gymnastics that Ligorio's designs became so well-known, see now G. Vagenheim, “Some Newly-Discovered Works by Pirro Ligorio”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 51 (1988), pp. 242-5. See also note 17 below.

⁸ On Ferrari see Freedberg (1989a) and Freedberg (1989b), both of which will be superseded by my forthcoming biography.

⁹ See especially Freedberg (1989a). For a fuller and more accurate outline of the payments for *De Florum Cultura*, see also the excellent appendix in J. Merz, *Pietro da Cortona, Der Aufstieg zum führenden Maler im barocken Rom*, Tübingen, 1990, pp. 210-2, as well as my forthcoming biography, which will contain the full set of documents.



1. *Race of Nude Athletes*. Pen and brown ink with brown wash (RL 8450).



2. *Footrace in the Circus Maximus*. Pen and brown ink with brown wash (RL 8447).



3. *Scenes of a Chariot Race in the Circus*. Pen and brown ink with brown wash (RL 8456).

and etymology of the various types of citrus fruits. It includes much Arabic data and contains a vivid account of the Jewish use of the citron, the *Etrog*, on the feast of Tabernacles, as well as an enquiry into the etymology of the word, and a graphic description of where and how it was bought by the Jews of his time.¹⁰ From the second book onwards, the work is devoted to the sub-families of the citrus, in such a way that it probably constitutes the most important attempt at citrological classification before Linnaeus.

Hardly does Ferrari begin to describe the citron family when he embarks upon an extended account of a most uncommon use to which these fruit were put in Reggio di Calabria. From carnival onwards it was the habit of the young men in that town to play a peculiar game, with which, as Ferrari puts it, they warmed the cold days of Lent. Instead of the traditional stone-throwing of towns like Siena, so clearly derived from the ancient *lapidatio*, the adolescents of Reggio actually formed teams in order to throw citrus fruit at each other (just as they still do in Ivrea). These mock battles took place on the old Campus Martius, of course, and all the citizens of the town, both noble and plebeian, gathered to watch these fierce and fruity battles. But if any side showed signs of yielding, the spectators rushed into battle as well, and did so in a way that collapsed the normal social distinctions. Women leaned out of the windows and poured buckets of water onto the participants in order to cool their ardor. The stony fruit – in February they were still immature – were hurled with such ferocity that they burst open on impact, and transformed the boys' faces into *globi citrei* themselves. (As one learns to expect from Ferrari, the account is interspersed with several other instances of this kind of wordplay.) Despite the fierceness of these battles, once they were over, the ludic enemies became friends again; since *per ludos bacchanales serio irasci non licere*.¹¹ But in the case of the citrus battle of Treviso, the conflict did get seriously out of hand. Here Ferrari embroiders a story he found in Pietro Giustiniani about the origins of an early thirteenth-century battle between Venice and Padua.¹² Installed in a castle in the centre of town were a group of young girls, *amabiles Amazones*, whose task was to defend the luxuriously appointed fortress from a handsome group of besieging *adolescentuli*. The main weapons of war, needless to say, were citrus fruit, and also flowers. Everything proceeded pleasantly enough, until the temptations of the castle became too much for a number of hooligans from Venice. They broke into the castle and set up the Venetian flag; whereupon an enraged group of *tifosi* from Padua in turn broke into the castle, tore down the flag of St Mark, and ripped it to shreds. The results of this *bellum malis citreis* were bloodier than expected. Only with the firm intervention of the municipal guard could the two sides be separated, and the games called to a final halt. Typically, Ferrari concludes his entertaining account of these citric battles with an ancient parallel. It comes from Flavius Josephus and tells of how the Jews threw the citrons they carried on the feast of Tabernacles at the hated Alexander Jannaeus.¹³

¹⁰ Ferrari (1646), pp. 38-9.

¹¹ Ferrari (1646), p. 70.

¹² P. Giustiniani, *Rerum Venetarum ab urbe condita ad annum MDLXXV historia*, Venice, 1575, p. 43. The first edition appeared in 1560, and there were many subsequent ones (Venice, 1575 and Strasbourg, 1611 in

Latin, and Venice, 1576 and 1671 in the vernacular).

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-1 Interestingly enough, the event is also referred to very briefly in Ovidio Montalbano's 1668 "edition" of Ulisse Aldrovandi's *Dendrologia*, Bologna, 1668, p. 519.



4. *Pugilists Fighting with Bound Fists*. Pen and brown ink with brown wash (RL 8441).



5. *Athletes Wrestling*. Pen and brown ink with brown wash (RL 8440).

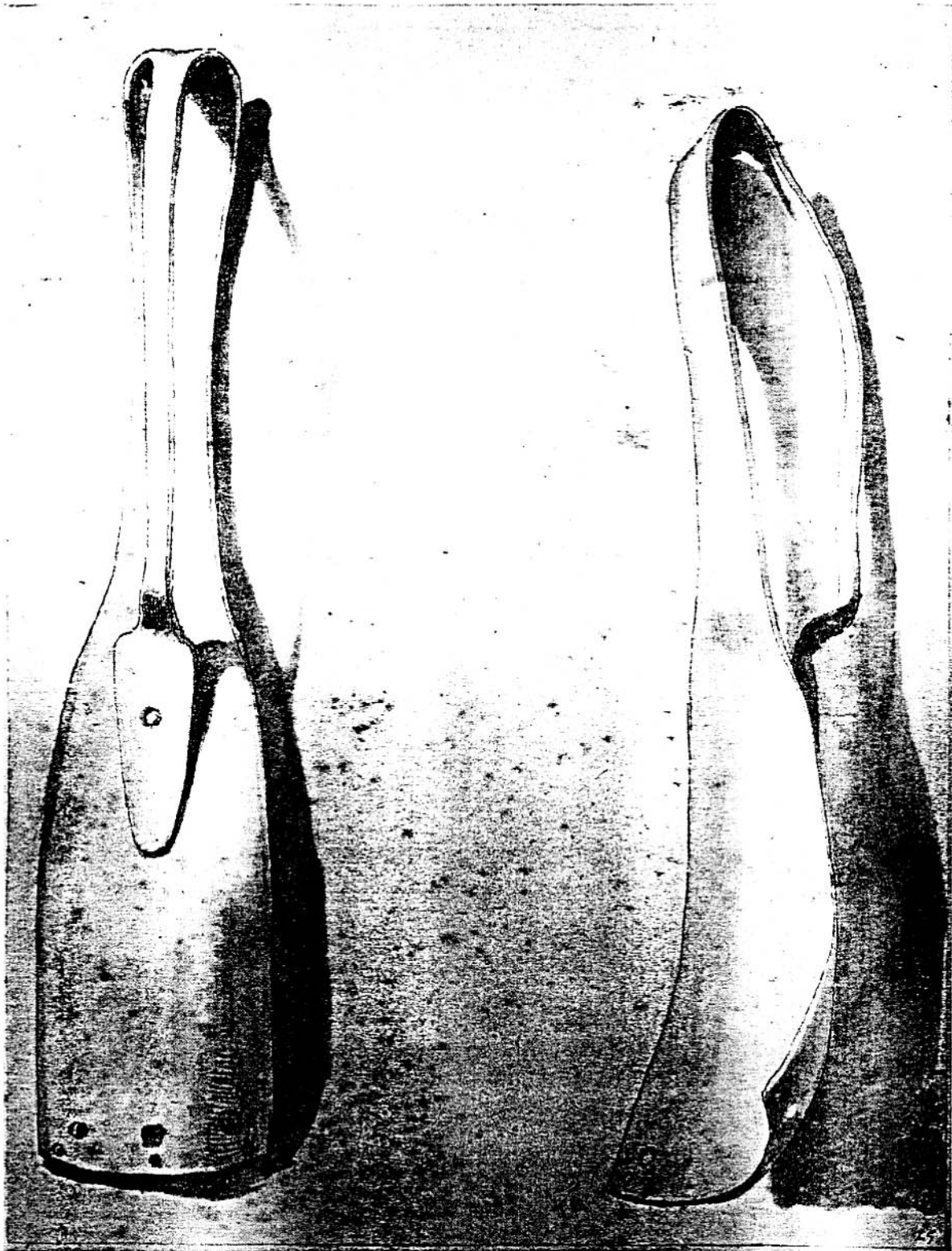
But how was the interest in ancient games, as evidenced by *Bassi Rilievi* IV and VIII, and the *Antichità Diverse* volume, transformed into the more specifically ethnographic concerns not only of these accounts, but also of the recently rediscovered volumes of Cassiano's prints showing *feste*,¹⁴ and above all, by the text with which this essay will conclude? The line from ancient to modern is much more direct than one might think. It emerges with some clarity, not surprisingly, amongst the *primi lincei*. Cassiano, as is well-known, acquired the library and much of the laboratory-museum and literary remains of the founder of the Accademia dei Lincei, Federico Cesi;¹⁵ and he, along with Cesi's closest friend and collaborator, Francesco Stelluti, was chiefly responsible for the promulgation of the Lincean theories and the final publication of the labours of the first Lincei, the great book generally called the *Tesoro Messicano* of 1649-51.¹⁶ Indeed, Cassiano's work was much more a continuation of that of the Lincei than is generally acknowledged. But this is not at issue here. The way had been prepared much earlier.

¹⁴ On this aspect of the *Museo Cartaceo*, still being rediscovered, see now Griffiths.

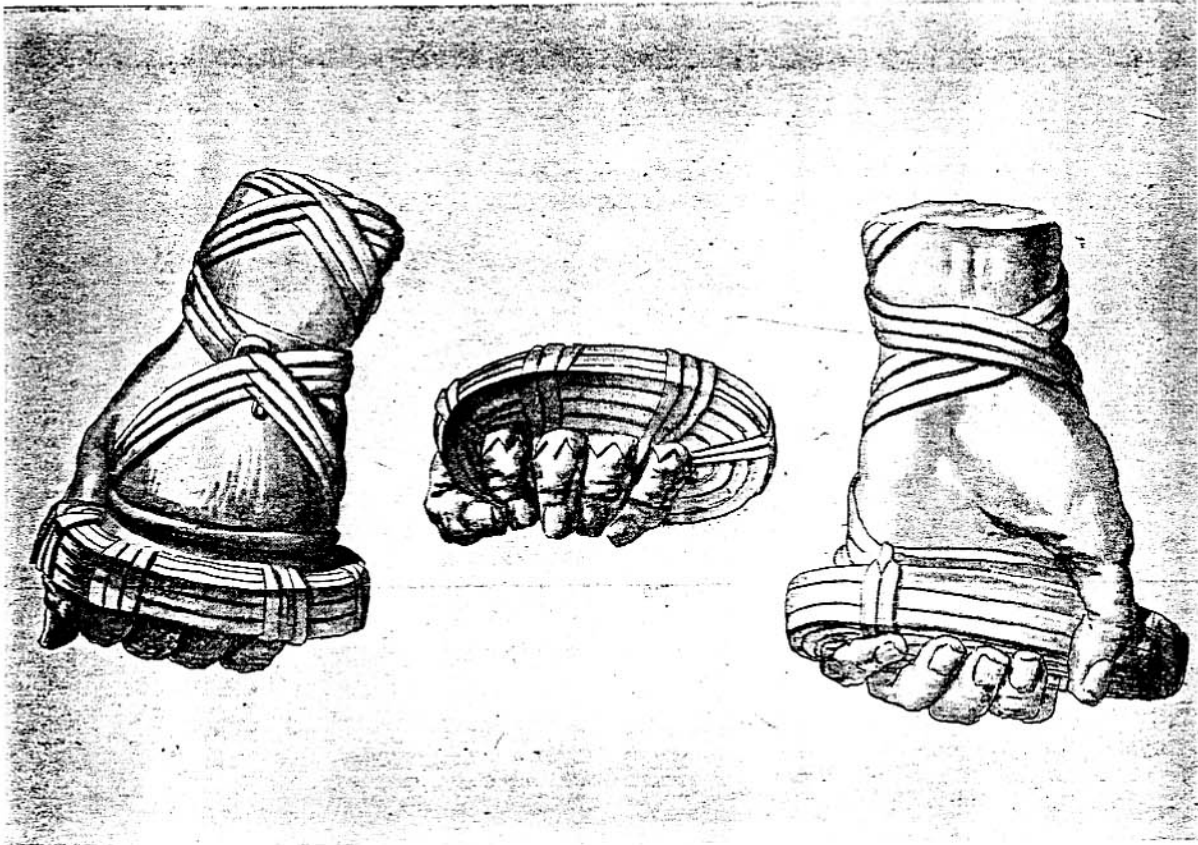
¹⁵ See Nicolò & Solinas (1985).

¹⁶ On Stelluti, see still G. Gabrieli, "Francesco Stelluti Linceo Fabrianese", now available in Gabrieli (1989), pp. 913-52; on the *Tesoro Messicano*, see G. Gabrieli,

"Il cosiddetto Tesoro Messicano edito dai primi Lincei", in Gabrieli (1989), pp. 373-84, and Alessandrini, especially pp. 143-201, as well as the rather general articles by F. Guerra, C. Sanchez-Tellez and G.B. Marini-Bettolo, in *Cesi Atti* 1985, pp. 307-42.



6. *Two Studies of a Bronze Strigil*. Pen and ink with grey-brown wash (RL 8502).

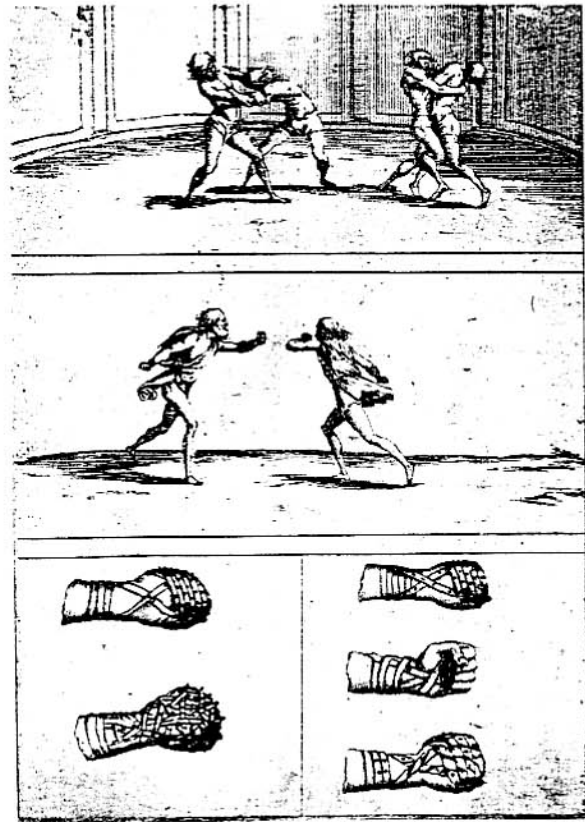
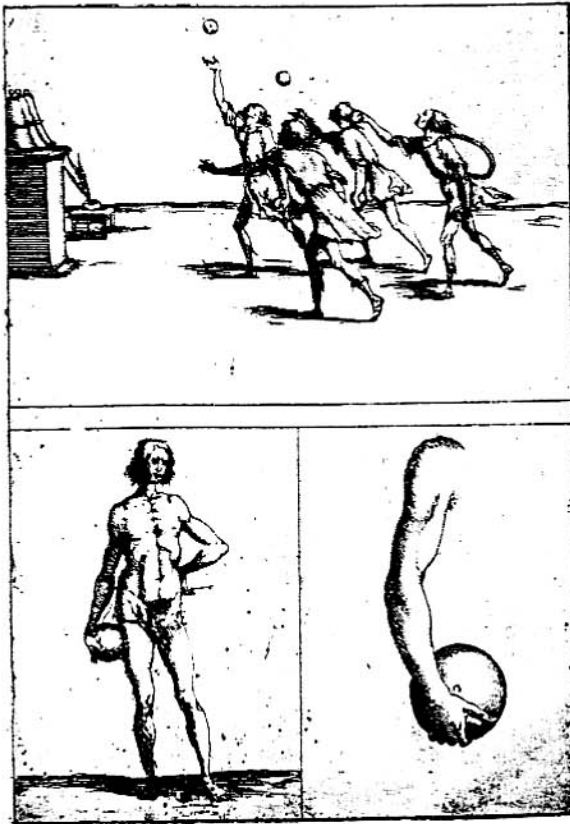


7. Three Studies of the Bound Left Hand of a Pugilist. Pen and brown ink with brown wash (RL 8445).

The second of the four original Lincei was the young Dutchman, Johannes Eck, Giovanni Eckio. More persecuted by the young Cesi's hostile father than any of the other early *lincei*, Eck was accordingly sent into exile, and then went mad. He was interested in botany above all; and one of the very first of the doctors, scientists, and *eruditi* he specifically set out to meet on his forced travels was none other than the 74 year old Hieronymus Mercuriale in Pisa. On that occasion and by means of a subsequent correspondence he enlisted Mercuriale's sympathy for the eager young group of scientists, and was in turn responsible for introducing Mercuriale's work to them.¹⁷ Hand in hand with the discussions about botanical simples would have gone the awareness of his book on exercises, and its interest for the Lincei would have lain not only in its medical dimension but also for the parallels it offered with modern games.

¹⁷ On Eckius, see D. Carutti, "Di Giovanni Eckio e della istituzione dell'Accademia dei Lincei", *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, Memorie*, ser. 3, vol. 1, 1887, pp. 75-7, and G. Gabrieli, "Gli scritti inediti di Giovanni Ecchio Linceo", "Alcune lettere del medico Giovanni Ecchi di Deventer Linceo", and "Qualche altra notizia sugli scritti e sulla vita di Giovanni Ecchio Linceo", in

Gabrieli (1989), pp. 1053-1116. On the meeting with Mercuriale and the connection with the other Lincei, see Gabrieli (1989), pp. 230, 434 and, especially, 1107 (citing the *Gesta Lynceorum* where Eck's visit to Pisa is recorded thus, "ibi Mercurialem visitavit, et cum Lynceis familiarem reddidit"). See also the important letter written by Eck to Mercuriale on 1 April 1606, in *Carteggio Linceo*, n. 42, p. 100.



8. Illustration to *Il Disco*. Engraving (Adimari, p. 9).
 9. Illustration to *La Lotta*. Engraving (Adimari, p. 11).

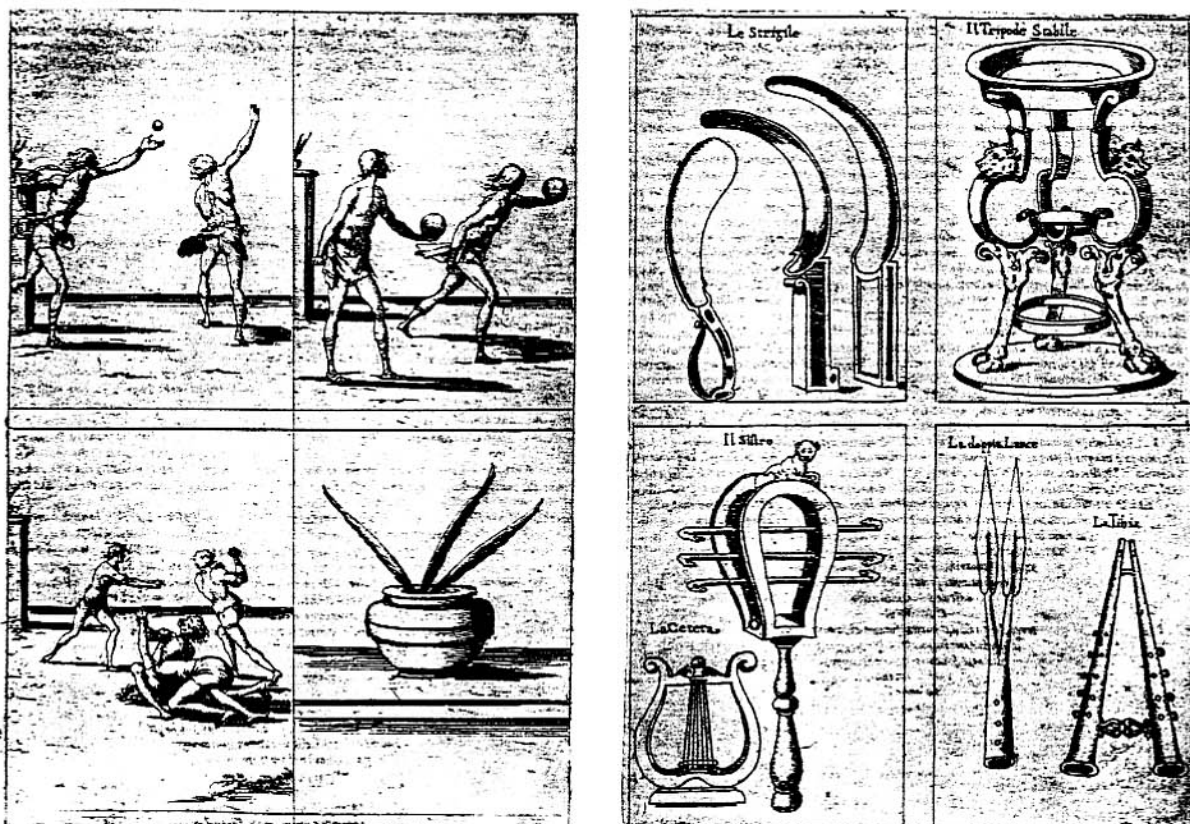
That the Lincei were deeply interested in these too, and in modern popular ethnography, emerges in a number of unexpected places, such as a letter from Cesi himself to Johannes Faber of 12 October, 1619. In it, Cesi tells of how he and Stelluti had gone out into the hills around Acquasparta in order to collect bulbs and seeds, which they then planted in Cesi's garden. "Ma li tempi sregolati e stemperati poco le permettono", he continues, "e quello che è peggio disturbano et malamente interrompono le feste vendemmiale, solite a celebrarsi in questi paesi solennissimamente"; and then, displaying a concern with the quality of the wine that was altogether typical of Cassiano as well, goes on to describe the effects of the preceding winds and dryness on the Umbrian harvest of 1619 - before turning to another favourite subject of those years, the cultivation of the passion fruit.¹⁸

But the real turn to ethnography and vernacular culture comes in the work of Stelluti, the estimable and devoted third member of the Lincei. In 1624, he wrote a long description of the *Cocciata* or *Scampanata* of Acquasparta. Like the other Italian charivari known as the *mattinata*,¹⁹ this peculiarly obnoxious game was held whenever a widow made the mistake of taking a second husband. The original idea of this "uso antichis-

¹⁸ *Carteggio Linceo*, n. 549, pp. 695-6.

¹⁹ See now C. Klapisch-Zuber, "The 'Mattinata' in Medieval Italy", in *Women, Family and Ritual in*

Renaissance Italy, transl. L. Cochrane, Chicago and London, 1987, pp. 261-82, for an excellent discussion of largely fifteenth-century material.

10. Illustration to *Il Calcio*. Engraving (Adimari, p. 13).

11. Strigil, Tripod, Double Lance, Tibia, Sistrum and Cithara. Engraving (Adimari, p. 15).

simo", as Stelluti calls it, was to put the widow to shame for doing so. The game, if one can call it that, would occur on the marriage night itself. As soon as the couple were safely inside their house, the townsmen would arrive in a regiment, block the entrance with a huge mound of stones; and then proceed to make a clangorous racket with the aid of *soi-disant* musical instruments, all based in some remote way on ancient ones (Stelluti makes use of the opportunity to give an extended description of a series of antique instruments). The racket would continue until four in the morning; and then be repeated for the two following nights. Stelluti's account was occasioned by the double *Cocciata* of 1624, when both bride and groom were embarking upon matrimony for the second time.²⁰

Stelluti's interest in vernacular culture evidently ran deep (and so it did in Cesi too, but the evidence is more sporadic). He wrote at least one poem in Sicilian dialect,²¹ and in 1630 published his translation of Persius, with its rich fund of digressive and discursive notes.²² These notes provide much information about the lives and the experiments of many of the early *Lincei* and their friends, and are consequently of great importance for

²⁰ For this account, see BAV, MS. Vat. Lat. 9680, fols. 924-948; also partly published and discussed by G. Gabrieli, in *Lares*, 2, 1931, pp. 58-61.

²¹ BAV, MS. Vat. Lat. 9685, fols. 67-69 ("Amuri amaru

ingiustissimu Diu...").

²² *Persio tradotto in verso sciolto e dichiarato da Francesco Stelluti Accademico Linceo da Fabriano*, Rome (Giacomo Mascardi), 1630.

the history of seventeenth-century science; but there is much on local culture too.²³ It was in this work, for example, where the classical, the vernacular and the scientific so strongly meet, that Stelluti chose to reproduce the evidence of his and Cesi's famous microscopic examination of the bee.²⁴

While Stelluti's *Persius* gives a good sense of the dense and intricate interconnections not only between science and the study of the classical world, but also of the relations between these areas and the interest in popular ethnography and games in particular, there is one other translation of a difficult classical author, where the relations are clearer still. It appeared just a year after the *Persius*, in 1631. I refer to the Pindar translation by Alessandro Adimari, whose intended inscription into the *Albo Accademico* of the Lincei was thwarted by Cesi's death the year previously.²⁵ While it should perhaps be remarked in passing that Adimari's tabular analyses of the Pindaric odes are of unusual epistemological interest, it is the illustrated section of his paraphrase, in *rima toscana*, of the Olympians, Pythians, Nemeans, and Isthmians that is most relevant to the history and ethnography of modern games.

The illustrations are of athletes.²⁶ They show discus throwers, a variety of *pugillatores* along with the *caestus* they used, and players of ball games (Figs. 8, 9, 10). As Adimari notes, the illustration of the discus players comes from Mercuriale, while the plate of the *pugillatores* is taken from a relief in the garden of his friend Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini in Via Montemagnanapoli.²⁷ Following these plates comes the inevitable illustration of *strigiles*, here depicted along with ancient musical instruments (Fig. 11). But in this section of the book, annotated, like Stelluti's, with all kinds of apparently extraneous information, Adimari is not simply content to describe the ancient games. He cannot resist drawing the modern parallels, most notably with the *calcio*, the "fiero e leggiadro giuoco della bellissima mia patria Firenze", which fortunately, as Adimari notes, was now played without "il nocivo strumento del cisto".²⁸ He points out that the ancient discus was not dissimilar to the *ruzzola* of his day, "che per gran forza di braccia si fa rotare per strada".²⁹ The garments worn by the modern players give him the opportunity for a learned discourse about the *perizonium*, while there is a somewhat longer digression on the distinctive types of *palle* used in the ancient games. Quite justly, before becoming too involved in his description of the *calcio*, he refers the reader to the short treatise by Giovanni de' Bardi, which first appeared in 1580 and received its first reprinting by the Giuntine heirs in 1615.³⁰ Perhaps even more interesting, because

²³ Aside from the many observations on the home districts of his friends (such as Francesco Barberini and Cesi himself), or of the poet's birthplace Volterra (where the Falconcini family was directly descended from him), and the constant discussion of dialectal variants of ancient and natural historical terms, see, for example, the discussion of the red wine of Civita Castellana on pp. 170-2.

²⁴ See especially *Persio tradotto* (as in note 20), p. 52, but also pp. 47-52 (description of the microscopic examination of the bee) and p. 127 (flea). It should also perhaps be noted here that if this was the first microscopic examination to appear in a printed book, then the microscopic examination of hibiscus seeds which appeared in Ferrari's *De Florum Cultura* of 1633, p. 499, was the second.

²⁵ *Ode di Pindaro ... tradotto in parafrasi et in rima toscana da Alessandro Adimari et dichiarato dal medesimo...*, Pisa (Francesco Tanagli), 1631. It should be noted that the title on the engraved frontispiece is rather more concisely given as *Pindaro Poeta Greco Tradotto in Verso Toscano et Dichiarato da Alessandro Adimari Accademico Linceo*. On Adimari see the precious article by Gabrieli, "Di Alessandro Adimari Linceo", now available in Gabrieli (1989), pp. 935-8.

²⁶ Adimari, pp. 7, 9, 11, 13, 17.

²⁷ Adimari, p. 10.

²⁸ Adimari, p. 12.

²⁹ Adimari, p. 8.

³⁰ Adimari, p. 12. G. de' Bardi, *Discorso sopra il giuoco del calcio fiorentino*, Florence, 1580; Florence, 1615; Florence, 1673, etc.

the game is less known, is Adimari's short account of race run on 22 July by the *uomini della plebe ignudi*, just prior to a good game of *pugna*.³¹

But for much more on just this kind of game one has again to turn, perhaps surprisingly, to Giovanni Battista Ferrari. While the account of local games in the *Hesperides* of 1646 is unexpected enough, there is almost nothing else in his oeuvre to suggest that he would have carried this interest still further.

On 17 January 1653, Cassiano wrote to Daniel Heinsius about a new book by Ferrari. Heinsius is on his Italian tour, and Cassiano writes to him in Florence. Cassiano's future biographer, Carlo Dati, is to accompany Heinsius to Pisa, and then on to Lucca. "At Pisa," says Cassiano, "you will be able to see the game, or battle, of the Ponte, which is proper to that city around carnival time. This is what Father Ferrari has described most precisely in his *Collocutiones*, which he has just handed over to the printer. I will keep a copy for you, since in it he also describes the game of the *calcio*, and other similar games, of which the good Father was intending to make a collection. The few descriptions in these dialogues of his serve as an essay for that work."³²

The *Collocutiones* Heinsius refers to must in fact have just appeared in Siena - to which the rather sickly father had retired in 1650 - since the date of publication is given as 1652.³³ The work contains a selection of Ferrari's rather overwritten juvenilia, such as a pair of tragedies on Romulus and Remus, as well as precious information about the Jesuit theatre and some vivid passages on performances at the Collegio Romano. In addition to the predictable religious poems, there is a charming eulogy of Tivoli, and an overwrought dialogue between Johannes Candidus and Franciscus Fuscus - John White and Frank Black - on the terrible tortures to which the Jesuit martyr Marcello Mastrilli was submitted in Japan. But the first four *collocutiones* are devoted to the chief games still played in modern Rome and Tuscany: the Roman races and stone-throwing, the Sienese *pugna* and *palio*, the Florentine *calcio* (of course referred to as a *harpastum*), and the Pisan *ponte*.

These descriptions are of extraordinary interest, even though they make for slightly tedious reading, written as they are in a difficult, florid, and overly technical Latin. This is certainly the fault of Ferrari himself, rather than that of the men into whose mouths he puts the descriptions of these games, namely, the distinguished historian of ancient music, Giovanni Battista Doni for the Florentine games, and the minor Jesuit poet Francesco Rossermini for Pisa. Since he was from Siena himself, Ferrari speaks in the first person about the games of his native town. But into whose mouth does he put the description of these games and sports, who is most qualified of all to make the comparison between ancient and modern games, and establish the derivation of the latter? None other, of course, than his old friend, Cassiano dal Pozzo. And it is clear from the correspondence between Ferrari and Cassiano that Ferrari depended for much of his material on this subject, as with so much of his previous work, on information supplied

³¹ The account is in the section on the *Corso* in Adimari, p. 16.

³² BLC, Archivio dal Pozzo, MS. 17, fol. 104. It is impossible to resist adding here Heinsius's comment about the small format Elzevir editions of the classics: *Questi libri in forma piccola sono amabilissimi per il potersi comodamente portare, e per questo si rende tole-*

rabile, se non vi si pone tutto quello, che a un editione grande si riserva (loc. cit.). Not all scholars were to follow him in his gratitude for these precious and convenient early pocket editions.

³³ G.B. Ferrari, *Collocutiones*, Siena (apud Bonettos Typis publicis), 1652.

to him by Cassiano.³⁴ Let us examine, then, the first of the collocations in the book, and leave the others for another occasion.

The first - and now forgotten - game described by Cassiano was the modern *lapidatio*. It was played in a large open space near the baths of Diocletian. The players were all assigned roles derived from the ancient *fetiales*, *funditores*, and *excubitores*. They also had to have lictors to keep order. Ferrari puts into Cassiano's mouth a technical description of the ancient equivalents, but he does so in so ornate and sentimental a way that it is often hard to distinguish the data from the decoration.³⁵

There follows a fairly technical outline of many of the ancient games illustrated in the Windsor volumes, and an account of their physical benefit, very much in the manner of Mercuriale. This is perhaps all the more poignant for having been written by an aged Jesuit who, as we learn from another letter to Cassiano, was unable to walk "senza gabella di sangue".³⁶ But after this discussion, with its concentration on ancient runners and exercisers, and its predictable admiration of adolescent muscularity, there comes something entirely unexpected. Having declared that "in our times the chariot races have degenerated into footraces", Cassiano immediately goes on to speak of the Jewish races of Urbinate Rome.³⁷

When Cassiano, in the version provided us by Ferrari, describes the annual ceremony of homage which the leaders of the Jewish community paid to the Roman conservators, he has almost a plethora of ancient terms with which to colour the scene; but when he comes to the Jewish race itself he has absolutely no equivalent terms from antiquity. This, of course, was the race of the bipeds, as it was generally called in the long period in which it was run, in order to distinguish it from the races of the quadrupeds held on the following days (and described by Cassiano as well).

The Jewish races were officially integrated into the Roman carnival by Paul II in 1466.³⁸ The course varied: sometimes it was from Piazza San Marco (the present day Piazza

³⁴ See, for example, Ferrari's letters to Cassiano from Frascati on 20 March and 4 April, 1650, and Cassiano's letters to him on 1 April, 1650 and again on 15 November, 1652, in BLC, Archivio dal Pozzo, MS. 4, fols. 382, 384, 435 and 437 respectively.

³⁵ See, for example, the dreadful puns about the young stone-throwers - or Deucalions, as he calls them, on p. 8: "Ah rabiem ponite nostratis Arbaiae Petraeae heroes", followed immediately by "Ah ne Latium cum Saxonia confundite Saxones voluntarij manuque prompti".

³⁶ BLC, Archivio dal Pozzo, MS. 4, fol. 388 (from Siena, 19 December, 1651).

³⁷ For the history of the Jewish races, F. Gregorovius, *Der Ghetto und die Juden in Rom* (1853), in *Wanderjahre in Italien*, remains fundamental, both for its range and its understanding of the general situation of the Jews in Rome. The text is available in F. Gregorovius, *Wanderjahre in Italien*, ed. H.-W. Kruft, Munich, 1967, pp. 205-48, especially 220-7. The fullest modern work on the Roman carnival is F. Clementi, *Il Carnevale Romano nelle cronache contemporanee*, Rome, 1899; but it is preferable to use part I of the revised edition, published as *Il Carnevale Romano nelle cronache contemporanee dalle origini al secolo XVII*, Città di Castello, 1939. Clementi still offers the most substantial sources for the Jewish races run on the first day of

carnival week. An important, basic collection of texts is offered by P. Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom*, II, Berlin, 1895, pp. 137-41 ("Historische Texte über das Karnevalsrennen der Juden"). But see also the important work by A. Ademollo, *Il Carnevale di Roma nei secoli XVII e XVIII*, Rome, 1883, which also has much useful information, and now the near-definitive study by Martine Boiteux, "Les Juifs dans le carnaval de la Rome moderne (XVe-XVIIIe siècles)", *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome (moyen âge - temps modernes)*, 88 (1976, 2), pp. 745-87, provides the most recent and most detailed account of the Jews and the Roman carnival. The most accessible collection of material, however, is provided by the useful work by B. Premoli, *Ludus Carnelevarij, Il Carnevale a Roma dal secolo XII al secolo XVI*, Rome, 1981. E. Toaff, "Il Carnevale di Roma e gli Ebrei", in *Scritti in Memoria di Sally Meyer (1875-1953). Saggi sull'Ebraismo Italiano*, Jerusalem, 1956, pp. 325-43, offers important material on eighteenth-century attitudes towards the Jews at the time of carnival, as well as the continuing impositions. Although every history of the Roman Ghetto gives some account of the Jewish races, it is surprising how few modern Romans have heard of them, even though the memory of the horse races - the famous *Corsa dei Barberi* - seems to have survived.

³⁸ For the institution by Paul II, see *Rerum Italicarum*

Venezia) all the way up the Corso to Santa Maria del Popolo, sometimes it was the shorter route from San Lorenzo in Lucina down to Piazza San Marco, but often, in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries it seems to have been from the Campo dei Fiori, or the Cancelleria, all the way down the Via Giulia to the Piazza San Pietro or to the Castel Sant'Angelo. In Urban's Rome it was always the long route up the Corso. There were, of course, other races too, generally held on the days following the Jewish races. These were generally races of young men, horses, asses and buffaloes, although in some years other groups ran too. The prizes for each of these races were the splendid *palii*, entirely subsidized by the revenue from special taxes on the Jewish community. Indeed, the Jews were already encumbered with other taxes related to the history of the Roman carnival. They had long been required to pay onerous taxes to subsidize the *ludi testatie et ludi agonis*, played for hundreds of years on Piazza Navona and beside Monte Testaccio, before Paul II regularized the carnival games.³⁹

In general this is what happened with the Jewish races.

Eight (or occasionally twelve) men were chosen. Initially they seem to have been young men. Some historians, possibly embarrassed by the event as a whole, have maintained that the Jewish races were run, at least in the beginning, in the same sporting spirit as the other races; and that the Jews were not especially ashamed by them. But everything suggests the contrary.⁴⁰

First, it was the practice to make the Jews run nude, or protected by a scanty loincloth. Second, since the races always took place in February, it was almost always cold, wet, and very muddy. In the *Avvisi* of 1583 there is a more or less typical entry to the effect that "lunedì i soliti otto ebrei corsero ignudi il pallio loro, favoriti di pioggia, vento e freddo, degni di questi perfidi mascherati di fango a dispetto delle grida. Dopo queste bestie bipedi correrano le quadrupedi..."⁴¹

Third, the races often had to be run twice, since the first attempt was judged unsatisfactory for some reason or another, usually unspecified.⁴²

Fourth, at an early date it was thought that the race could be more amusing if the runners were made to stuff themselves first, so that they stumbled and vomited as they ran.⁴³

Scriptores, III (*Platynae Historici Liber de Vita Christi ac omnium Ponti AA. 1-1474*), p. 380; Clementi, pp. 78-9; and now Premoli, pp. 30-1, for the most accessible transcription of the relevant documents.

³⁹ See, for example, E. Rodocanachi, *Le Saint-Siège et les Juifs. Le Ghetto à Rome*, Paris, 1891, p. 224, for the statutes concerning these payments in 1312; C. Re, ed., *Statuti della città di Roma*, Rome, 1880, pp. 239-40, for the 1363 statutes (available in Premoli, p. 6), and the 1469 statutes cited in Premoli, p. 40. But whether the Jews participated themselves is more problematic. Boiteux (p. 770) has rightly observed that the evidence for the *Gioco de' Saraceni*, in which the Jews had had to act as the horses for the participants in this mock joust, or the much crueller sport in which an aged Jew was chosen to be enclosed in a barrel which would then be allowed to roll down the Monte Testaccio, often with mortal results, cannot be traced back further than the seventeenth century.

⁴⁰ Gregorovius, for one, was under no illusions. He concluded his account of the races with these words:

"Gerade zwei Jahrhunderte lang erduldeten die Juden Roms diese empörende Entehrung, bis sie nach immer wiederholtem Flehen durch päpstlichen Edikt davon erlöst wurden" (Gregorovius, pp. 219-20).

⁴¹ BAV, Cod. Urb. 1051, 9 febbraio. Also cited in Clementi, p. 318, and Premoli, p. 155. The bad weather was, of course, typical enough, as is obvious from many of the *Avvisi* (which in turn offer many other signs of the degradation the runners were made to suffer). In 1603, the Jews ran "nudi, havendo sempre neve et un freddo eccessivo" (*Avvisi di Roma*, BAV, Cod. Urb. 1071, 7 febbraio), while in 1649 "corsero li Giudei con molta acqua" (Ademollo, p. 10).

⁴² Thus, in 1501-2, Burchard noted simply that the Jews had to run again "quia dicebatur quod mossa non fuisset bona", while in 1505 it was "quia prima motio non fuit bona". For the appropriate references to Burchard, see notes 50 and 49 below.

⁴³ They could still not have offered quite as much amusement as the naked dwarfs who were made to run a race in 1633. "Dominica in strada Giulia, a spese di

Fifth, the public diverted itself still further by throwing mud and a variety of missiles at the runners.

Sixth, not all the runners actually completed the race. Either they collapsed from exhaustion or, as happened on a few occasions, they died *en route*.

The Jewish races only came to an end in 1668, with a papal chirograph of Clemente IX, straightforwardly declaring that the races were henceforward abolished, "considerato la poca convenienza che proviene dal vedersi correre detti ebrei".⁴⁴ "La poca convenienza"! One hopes that the motivation for this *breve* was a little more than simply one of those frequent attempts to ensure better public order at these carnival festivities.⁴⁵ The by-now conventional tax in lieu of a previous imposition was levied, 300 further *scudi* and a few lesser levies per annum.⁴⁶

Now it is true that there are quite a number of references to the Jewish races from the mid-fifteenth century on.⁴⁷ In a letter of 1512 to the Duchess of Mantua, Trissino provides an unusually detailed account,⁴⁸ while Johannes Burkardus refers to them in the years from 1493 to 1506.⁴⁹ In 1501-2, when the races were held in December, he notes that following the Jewish races the prostitutes were also made to run.⁵⁰ Montaigne saw the Jews run at the carnival of 1581.⁵¹ For Urbinate Rome itself we have the colourful account of the carnival of 1632 by Jean-Jacques Bouchard. He tells us that "enfin vers les 24 heures" - "*les 24 heures*" - "les Juifs coururent tous nus: ils avoient seulement des escarpins aux pieds, de petites braves de toile et une coiffe à la teste. De douze qui partirent de la place du Popolo il n'y en eut que trois qui arrivassent à St Marc".⁵² But he is much more concerned, in this account, with other things, such as sodomy as a remedy for piles, the masks which everyone wore, the women's garments worn by some of the men, and the water-filled painted and enamelled eggs which the grandees of the town - including all the Barberini *nipoti* - threw at each other. Indeed, he is most concerned about the damage done to his clothes by one such missile.⁵³

The account of the festivities on the fictional island of Eudemia, published in Janus Nicius Erythraeus' satire of the same name, must also have been based on the experi-

particulari, con licenza dei superiori, fu corso un palio di gobbi ignudi molto ragguardevoli per la varietà delle loro gobbesche schiene, che per esser cosa nuova in questa città vi concorse molto popolo e nobiltà in carrozza, in modo che appena capeva in quella contrada, oltre che tutte le finestre delle case e palazzi erano piene di persone" (Ademollo, p. 10, citing the *Avvisi* of 1633). For the race of the prostitutes, see note 50 below.

⁴⁴ Clementi (1939), pp. 556-7, reproduces the whole text of 28 January, 1668.

⁴⁵ Both Clementi and Ademollo give abundant examples; but in his own declared opposition to the nineteenth-century continuation of the events he describes, Ademollo offers a revealing insight into attitudes of disapproval to carnival licence - especially at the races.

⁴⁶ Clementi (1939), p. 558; Boiteux, pp. 748-9; Toaff, p. 340.

⁴⁷ For a good selection see the important appendix to the discussion of the races in P. Rieger, *op. cit.* (note 37).

⁴⁸ A. Luzio, "Federico Gonzaga ostaggio alla Corte di Giulio II", *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia*

Patria, 9 (1886), pp. 536-8 (with a good brief account of the homage to the Conservators as well).

⁴⁹ Johannes Burkardus, *Liber Notarum*, I-II, in L.A. Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, 32, 1, p. 398 (1493, nine races this year), 32, 2, pp. 126 (1499), 206 (1500), 311 (1501, run on 27 December), 351 (1503), 470 (1505, when the Jewish races were run over again, "quia prima motio non fuit bona"), 505 (1506).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 311: "cucurrerunt etiam quamplures meretrices a pyramide Burgi usque ad plateam sancti Petri pro paliis solitis, quae habuerunt". It is strange, in the light of "pro paliis solitis", that the prostitutes race is not more frequently mentioned in the records. In Ferrara the *palio* of San Giorgio was run by prostitutes and Jews, up till the fifteenth century, as in B. Zamlotti, *Diario ferrarese dall'anno 1476 al 1504*, Bologna, 1934. For other Jewish races in Italy, see Boiteux, pp. 763-4.

⁵¹ M. de Montaigne, *Journal de voyage en Italie*, Paris, 1946, pp. 216-7.

⁵² J.J. Bouchard, "Le carnaval à Rome", in *Journal*, I, ed. E. Kancheff, Turin, 1976, p. 143.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-55.

ence of the Urbinate races.⁵⁴ It includes a passage clearly alluding to the annual procession of homage by the Jews to the Roman conservators, and the various prizes subsidized by them. In referring to their fictional equivalents, Erythraeus speaks of the "Apochichiri" whom he defines as a "genus hominum, religione a nobis dissidentium, callidum, versutum, fraudulentum, sacrilegum, periurum: iis palmarium est, aliquem ex nobis in fraudem illicere, et quo die id illis contigit minus, se diem perdidisse conqueruntur".⁵⁵ And although Erythraeus briefly alludes to the amusement derived by the protagonists of his tale from the sight of the naked runners, "detractis omnibus vestibus nudi",⁵⁶ their chief concern, rather like Bouchard's, is with the other festivities of the carnival days, with the food, the fancy dress, the masks, and the generally boisterous behaviour of this holiday period.

So it is to Cassiano, or rather his mouthpiece Ferrari, that one has to turn for the longest available account of the Jewish races held in Rome.

The following is a summary of the salient aspects of this difficult text: on the Saturday before carnival the *palii* subsidized by the Jews were carried around in solemn procession, "hastilibus praefixa per celebriores urbis vias festo cum tubarum sonitu circumferentes".⁵⁷ First they were carried to the Pope (who, of course, blessed them with the sign of the cross), then to the *Conservatores*, and finally to the individual members of the Pope's family, in other words, to the well-known *nipoti*. On Monday morning a huge scarlet *pallio* is hung from a window on the Capitol. In the afternoon, four trumpeters go to the Ghetto and summon the Jews: the time has come, as Cassiano says, for the yellow heads to come out of the synagogue - *iam tempus esse crocea capita e synagoga prodire*.⁵⁸

This, in essence, is what happened next. First the Jews had to render their customary homage to the *Conservatores*. Then everyone proceeded downhill from the Capitoline to the Piazza San Marco, where the Venetian ambassadors had laid on a sumptuous feast. With some enthusiasm, Cassiano - or Ferrari - describes the decorations along the Corso, the masks worn by the grandees of Rome, and the customary transvestitism of that particular day. The eight Jewish runners, with SPQR painted on their foreheads, approach the starting post. "Et sane cursura decet in primis Hebraeos, ut nomini suo re ipsa respondeant, dum curriculo transeunt".⁵⁹ The judges gather, a trumpet sounds - and they're off. The crowd derisively shouts out words of encouragement to individual runners. Some throw pieces of cloth at them, in a mock attempt to help them reduce their sweat level; others beat them on with bundles of twigs directed at their thighs; while still others throw rotten oranges them, which Ferrari describes with a characteristically bad pun: "putribus alij coniectis malis Medicis lassitudini male mederi".⁶⁰ From another part of the crowd the Jewish spectators themselves add their own distinctive cries of encouragement, *voce, nutu, gestuque*: "Eia Bel-nasot", they shout, "hurry up, run ahead". "Come on Maymon, you've not got far to go". Or, "look out, overtake him,

⁵⁴ Janus Nicius Erythraeus, *Eudemiae Libri Decem*, Cologne (Iodocus Calcovius et Socii), 1645, pp. 213-38. I am very grateful to Ingo Herklotz for having drawn my attention to the excerpts from this very important and neglected passage in L. Gerboni, *Un umanista del Seicento, Giano Nicio Eritreo*, Città di Castello, 1899.

⁵⁵ Erythraeus, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

⁵⁶ Erythraeus, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

⁵⁷ Ferrari (1652), pp. 14-5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

you'll get first prize". Or "O dear - *o factum male* - Politron has tripped. Get up quickly, you don't look too bad in your muddy makeup, you're covered in it, you've even lost your hat, you can still win": and so on.⁶¹ But despite these vigorous exhortations, only two or three actually manage to stay the course. The others give up, either from exhaustion or because of the excessive ridicule. To the applause of all the spectators the victor gets his prize. Then, says our collocutor, he returns with his fellows to the smelly theatre of the circumcised - *in olidum acclamantium recutitorum theatrum*. "And so the triumphant victor of today", he adds, "becomes tomorrow's matchseller and peddler across the Tiber".⁶² Cassiano and Ferrari immediately move on to Tuesday's horse races, described in equal if not greater detail, and then end their conversation with a brief discussion of the races of donkeys and buffaloes.⁶³

About all *these* races we are reasonably well informed; but none of the ancient or modern writers describe the Jewish races quite so closely, or with such local colour. Just as the rather shorter description by Erythraeus, Ferrari's account seems to have been entirely unknown even to the great students of the Roman carnival, Ademollo, Clementi and Boiteux.⁶⁴ Whether its tone is to be ascribed to Cassiano himself or to Ferrari is not clear. But the description of the Jewish races of Rome stands as further evidence of the collaboration between Cassiano and Ferrari, which reached its high point in the great book on oranges and lemons. There the evidence merits nothing but admiration; but in this case, for all its undoubted ethnographic interest, it is much more troubling.

⁶¹ Cf., on p. 20 alone, "Eia Bel-nasot, perge, praecurre: tuo congruentem nomini virtutique victoriam praecipe. At vero alius, Age Maymon: parum abest, quin: praeverte, praevola: primos palmae fructus pedibus praecerpe. *o factum male!* Politron caespitans prolapsus est. Surge, festina, non indecoro luti tectorio cerussatus, totusque vel fine pileo luteus, nudos potes superare".

⁶² The degrading phrases follow swiftly upon each

other: "... interque raucum tubarum gaudium praemio donatus per triumphum revertitur in olidum acclamantium recutitotum [*sic*] theatrum: ubi strena tubicines impertit. Sic hodiernus in curriculo triumphator fiet crastinus transtiberinus ambulator, & sulphuratorum venditor" (*ibid.*, p. 20).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-5.

⁶⁴ See note 37 above.