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FERRARI ON THE CLASSIFICATION
OF ORANGES AND LEMONS

The extremes of the classification of oranges and lemons may be represented by the illustrations in two works: on the one hand, the illustrations in the sixteenth-century editions of Pier Andrea Mattioli's enormously influential reworking of Dioscorides;¹ on the other, those in Ovidio Montalbani's 1668 edition of Aldrovandi's *Dendrologia*, the last of his very free adaptations of the natural historical material collected by Aldrovandi.² The woodblocks of oranges and lemons in the editions of Mattioli stand at the sober pole; those in Montalbani-Aldrovandi at the other, extravagant extreme.³ One has only to compare the single illus-

1. Most – but by no means all – of the illustrations first appeared in the Czech edition published by Georgen Melantrich at Prague in 1565. There was also a series of editions between 1554 and 1596, chiefly coming out of the house of the Valgrisi in Venice, which had considerably smaller woodcut illustrations. On the sixteenth-century editions of Mattioli, see G. FABIANI, *La Vita di Pietro Andrea Mattioli raccolta dalle sue opere, con aggiunte e annotazioni di Luciano Fabiani*, Siena, G. Bargellini, 1872.

2. U. ALDROVANDI, *Dendrologiae Naturalis... Libri Duo*, ed. O. Montalbani, Bologna, I.B. Ferronius, 1668. On the Aldrovandian illustrations in general, as well as the relationship with other botanical illustrations, see the excellent articles by L. TONGIORGI TOMASI-P. TONGIORGI in *L'immagine e Natura. L'immagine naturalistica nei codici e libri a stampa delle biblioteche Estense e Universitaria. Secoli XV-XVII* (Cat. Exhib., Biblioteche Estense e Universitaria / Comune di Modena – Biblioteca Civica / Università degli Studi di Modena), Modena, Panini, 1984. A fundamental addition to the literature on this subject is now provided by E. BALDINI and M.C. TAGLIAFERRI, *Matrici Inedite dell'Iconografia dendrologica di Ulisse Aldrovandi*, « Accademia delle Scienze dell'Istituto di Bologna, Classe di Scienze Fisiche, Memoria presentata il 22 maggio 1990 », pp. 1-78 (hereafter BALDINI 1990), with important further bibliographic references; and E. BALDINI, *Fruits and Fruit Trees in Aldrovandi's « Iconographia Plantarum »*, « Advances in Horticultural Science », iv, 1990, pp. 61-73. G. OLMI, *Osservazione della natura e raffigurazione in Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605)*, « Annali dell'Istituto storico germanico-italiano in Trento », III, 1977 (hereafter OLMI, 1977), pp. 105-181 is fundamental to any study of Aldrovandi and his work. Olmi, pp. 115-116 also offers a series of crucial observations on the differences between the concepts that underlay the original Aldrovandian collections and the seventeenth-century texts based on his work.

3. See, for example, P.A. MATTIOLI, *Dei Discorsi di M. Pietro Andrea Mattioli Sanese... Nelli sei libri di Pedacio Dioscoride Anazarbeo della materia medicinale*, Venice, Felice Valgrisi, 1582, p. 266 (lemon), and U. ALDROVANDI, *op. cit.* (1668), pp. 490, 494, 513, 515, 534, etc. etc.

tration in one of the early editions of Mattioli (Fig. 1) with the large and undisciplined variety of the same fruit in Montalbani-Aldrovandi. On page 515 of Montalbani-Aldrovandi, for example, the *Limon Peristero-Cephalos* is shown – *duplici nomini*, as the caption observes, *pestifugus*, because of its bird-shaped excrescence; while represented below it is the *Limon prosopaetos*, with the whole fruit roughly in the form of an eagle's head (Fig. 2). As if to verify Aldrovandi – to authenticate him, as it were – Montalbani, then the director of the Natural History Museum in Bologna, tells of how he obtained such specimens from local greengrocers in 1660, 1661 and 1662.⁴ With the citron and the *Pomum Adami* (so-called because the indentation in its skin is supposed to have been left by the bite of Adam in Paradise), the Mattiolan range of citrus fruit is exhausted. The same applies to the other group at the sober pole: the illustrations of oranges and lemons in the great herbals published by the house of Plantin in Antwerp, such as the pair of woodblocks on p. 7 of Clusius's justly famed *Rariorum Plantarum Historia* of 1601⁵ showing an orange and the *Pomum Adami* together (Fig. 3). Blocks such as this one were used in many of the botanical compendia published by Plantin in the second half of the sixteenth century, including a number of the editions and versions of Dodonaeus, Pena, Lobelius and Clusius. It is worth remembering that in these famous works, the number of citrus fruit illustrated never exceeded four: an orange, a lemon, a citron, and occasionally another type, such as the *Pomum Adami*.

But with Aldrovandi the situation is very different, in almost every respect. Unlike botanists such as Mattioli, Lobelius, or Clusius, it seems as if he – and his undisciplined editor even more – felt that everything had to be included. Rather than making each category large and essential enough to include all possible aberrations, Montalbani-Aldrovandi appear to have created a new category for each aberration. Hence the fierce crocodilian specimen and the lemon with the claw or nail-like extrusions on p. 534 – *Unguibus, Ore ferox Crocodile / Cydonia serva. / Citriaque Hesperius sic quoque / Tutor eris*, as they are captioned. But examples like these are not so surprising in a treatise which includes the raining tree, the *Arbor Indica* from Cape Baiador (p. 35), the absurdly chick-like *Bubo Rhizomenos* (found in England in March 1559, as the accompanying text

on p. 81 assures us), and the improbably anthropomorphic piece of apple bark, described as a *nodosa malini corticis pars quae larvam humanam apprime imitatur* illustrated on p. 360.⁶ This particular example demonstrates, as much as anything else, the persistence of the physiognomic-phytognomic tradition exemplified by that great (and somewhat surprising) hero of the early Lincei, Giovanni Battista della Porta.

It is into this context that the figure of Giovanni Battista Ferrari must be set. Although Ferrari was officially Professor of Hebrew at the Collegio Romano for twenty-nine years, his attention early strayed to botany.⁷ The important *De Florum Cultura* was published in 1633,⁸ while the even greater book on citrus fruit, the *Hesperides, sive De malorum Aureorum Cultu* appeared in 1646.⁹ No more exhaustive book on a single family of plants had yet appeared. The gap between the clear, brilliantly informative, and exceptionally beautiful plates by Cornelis Bloemaert (who did all but three of the eighty-seven botanical illustrations in the book) and the rather too compact woodcuts in Mattioli and Clusius, to say nothing of the much more schematic illustrations of Aldrovandi, could hardly be greater. One has only to compare, for example, Aldrovandi's *Aurantio-Limonium simile Aurantio Virgato Patris Ferrari* (with its characteristic taxonomic clumsiness), or the *Malum Aurantium Citratum* (p. 497), with the illustrations in the *Hesperides* of Ferrari's own *Aurantium Virgatum* and the splendid *Aurantium Citratum* (pp. 399 and 423). The woodcuts seem

6. Aside from providing the essential background to these and other types, E. BALDINI, *Simulacri, Meraviglie, Prodigii e Mostruosità nella Dendrologia Aldrovandiana e nell'Interpretazione Scientifica Moderna*, « Atti della Accademia delle Scienze dell'Istituto di Bologna, Classe di Scienze Fisiche, Rendiconti », s. XIV, vol. V, 1987-88, p. 1-26 situates the Aldrovandian monstrosities in the context of modern scientific interpretations. On Aldrovandi and monsters see the basic pages in OLM, 1977 (as in note 2 above), pp. 128-138, as well as the important appendix on pp. 177-181.

7. See D. FREEDBERG, *From Hebrew and Gardens to Oranges and Lemons: Giovanni Battista Ferrari and Cassiano dal Pozzo*, in: *Cassiano dal Pozzo: Atti del Seminario Internazionale di Studi*, ed. F. Solinas, Rome, De Luca, 1989 (hereafter 1989a), pp. 37-72, and D. FREEDBERG *Cassiano dal Pozzo's Drawings of Citrus Fruits*, in: *Il Museo Cartaceo di Cassiano dal Pozzo. Cassiano Naturalista*, « Quaderni Puteani », I, 1989 (hereafter 1989b), pp. 16-36, for the most recent biographical data – although both will be superseded by my forthcoming biography of Ferrari.

8. G.B. FERRARI, *De Florum Cultura Libri IV*, Rome, Stephanus Paulinus, 1633; translated into Italian by Ludovico Aureli as *Flora ovvero cultura dei fiori*, Rome, Pier Andrea Facciotti, 1638. For these and subsequent editions, see D. FREEDBERG, *op. cit.* (1989b), note 17.

9. G.B. FERRARI, *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Rome, Herman Scheus, 1646.

4. U. ALDROVANDI, *op. cit.* (1668), p. 513.

5. C. CLUSIUS, *Rariorum Plantarum Historia*, Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus, 1601.

clumsy, elliptical, and improbable; Bloemaert's engravings are refined, and give the impression of conveying both essence and accident of each fruit.

But this is not all. In addition to every rumple and modulation of surface texture, which Ferrari described and Bloemaert was so successful in conveying, the plates almost always show the sections, the cortex, the pulp, and occasionally the seeds of each fruit. Sometimes the microscope may have been used, as was certainly the case in the pioneering illustration of a hibiscus seed on p. 499 of the *De Florum Cultura*, and possibly in looking at the seeds of the multiform citron (*Malum citreum multifforme*) illustrated on page 79. Illustrations such as those of the striated lemon from Amalfi (p. 249), the *Limon sponginus Calabriae rugosus* (p. 301), and the round and oblong citrated limes (pp. 337 and 339) are resplendent in their scabious rugosity; while a few, such as the multiform citron (p. 79) and the *Lumia expers medullae* (p. 329) seem almost all cortex, in their pulpy lack of succulence. No one, in short, had yet attempted to make even remotely as thorough or systematic an examination of citrus fruit.

Ferrari's friendship with Cassiano dal Pozzo has recently come to the fore.¹⁰ It is witnessed by the 60 surviving letters between them (fifty-seven from Ferrari but only three by Cassiano), and by the fact that Cassiano helped Ferrari in the preparation of the *Hesperides* by assembling a 130-page collection of *notizie* about *agrumi* gathered from his friends not only in Rome but all over Italy.¹¹ Cassiano also seems to have helped arrange and draw up the contract for the book and pay for the expenses of illustration and publication.¹² It was he, furthermore, who assembled the drawings of oranges and lemons which were rediscovered some years

10. D. FREEDBERG, *op. cit.*, (1989a).

11. The letters, to be included in my forthcoming biography of Ferrari, are in Rome, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 4, ff. 323-438 (not in perfect chronological order). A few other letters are to be found elsewhere in Cassiano's voluminous correspondence. The *Notizie diverse del Sig. Abb. Cassiano dal Pozzo originale spettante a Agrumi et Historia d'essi*, stampata in Roma del P. Gio. Batt. Ferrari della Compagnia di Gesù sotto titolo d'*Hesperides* are preserved as a bound volume in Rome, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 39. Once again I have to record my gratitude to both Anna Nicolò and Francesco Solinas for the many ways in which they helped me in my work on the Cassiano and Ferrari documents in Rome.

12. D. FREEDBERG, *op. cit.* (1989a), p. 69; see especially Rome, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 39, ff. 1-1 v.

ago in Windsor Castle and elsewhere (along with a large proportion of the rest of his natural historical drawings).¹³ They were commissioned and collected by Cassiano, who then allowed Ferrari to use them as the basis for the plates in the *Hesperides*. All these drawings (by Vincenzo Leonardi and others) must have come from a now dismembered volume on *agrumi* mentioned in a letter from Cassiano to Giovanni Nardi, the doctor of the Medici grandukes, in 1652.¹⁴ It was perhaps similar – but certainly in a larger format – to the *Erbario Miniato* that still remains in Windsor and is so precious a record for the history of visual documentation in the service of botanical description and taxonomy.¹⁵

Much the same, if not more, may be said for the *Hesperides*. Ferrari's treatise represents one of the most important attempts at the classification of any single genus of fruit before Linnaeus. Of course there were others who proposed a more secure basis for the systematics of a genus – Ferrari was certainly no Fabio Colonna or Gaspar Bauhin. But it is worth noting that he was never entirely superseded by Linnaeus (whose classification of citrus fruit has never won complete approval), and that more than in the case of most other genera of plants, in the field of citrus fruit taxonomic confusion still reigns. In several respects Ferrari may be said to represent a decisive moment in the history of the attempts to survey, order, name, and classify a genus.

At first sight, however, the book may appear to be a somewhat promiscuous jumble of information – often delightful, but still a jumble. It may seem to be laboriously descriptive, lacking any secure principle of classification. An easy allegation about Ferrari's natural historical work would be that he was no more than a kind of Plinian encyclopedist, rather indiscriminately throwing in every bit of information that came his way. But this would be very misleading. It is true that he seems to pack in much seemingly miscellaneous information, such as the recipes for

13. See D. FREEDBERG, *op. cit.*, (1989b) especially pp. 31-34.

14. Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 32, f. 220v (Cassiano to Nardi, 21 December, 1652).

15. Windsor Castle, Royal Library, RL 27691-27901. See the somewhat misleading G. GABRIELI, *Due codici iconografici di piante miniate della biblioteca Reale di Windsor. A proposito di Cimeli Lincei*, «Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei: Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze fisiche, matematiche e naturali», vi, vol. x, 1929, pp. 531-8. For an excellent account of the Windsor *Erbario Miniato*, see now F. SOLINAS, *L'Erbario Miniato e altri fogli di iconografia botanica appartenuti a Cassiano dal Pozzo*, «Quaderni Puteani», I, 1989, pp. 52-76.

sherberts, and the instructions on how to make pills and pastilles and fruit juices. There are constant etymological and ethnographic asides, such as the discourses on the *ethrogim* of the Jews, and the various games played with oranges and lemons.¹⁶ It is also true that his love of rhetoric and wordplay sometimes gets in the way of dispassionate description. He is not as concise as the great herbalists, but then they dealt with *agrumi* as only one genus amongst thousands. Beside Montalbani, on the other hand, he is a model of brevity and wit. Where Montalbani is involuted, Ferrari is direct. And similarly in comparison with others. When Cassiano himself gets on to the subject of an orange or lemon – as he occasionally does in the *Notizie* he was collecting for Ferrari – he is even more long-winded. He writes in those endless sentences that are so typical of his correspondence, and when the threat of analysis looms (since his correspondents frequently ask for his scientific or taxonomic judgement), he almost always presents it in a circular and inconclusive way. In comparison with Cassiano, Ferrari's taxonomic decisions are always direct and efficient.

Towards the beginning of the *Notizie* collected by Cassiano there is a page setting out the *Capi d'Informazione che si desidera avere di tutti gl'agrumi*, which Cassiano sent to his correspondents, and into which he wished them to organize their reports on the local oranges and lemons.¹⁷ I used to think that these *capi* were devised by Cassiano himself, but it is now clear both from a letter from Ferrari to Cassiano and from one from Peiresc to Cassiano acknowledging receipt of a request for information about Provençal oranges that they were devised by Ferrari.¹⁸

These were the *capi* into which all citrological information was to be organized. First, the name of each type, and the origin of the name. Second, the shape of tree, leaf, flower and fruit, along with colour of peel whether hirsute or smooth, whether the medulla was white or not, size and number of segments, colour and flavour, and number of seeds. Third, the methods, of sowing, planting and grafting (here it should be observed that of all the natural-historical questions addressed in these

16. See D. FREEDBERG, *Cassiano on the Jewish Races*, «Quaderni Puteani», II, 1992, forthcoming, on several of these aspects of Ferrari's work.

17. Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 39, f. 6.

18. Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 39, f. 110, and Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, École de Médecine, ms. H. 271, f. 184v.

circles, from the early Lincei to Peiresc, from Fabio Colonna to Cassiano and Pietro Castelli, none occupied more of their attention than the question of *innesti*). Fourth, the site, fifth, the kind of soil, sixth, the kind of manure and when to fertilize, seventh, how to protect the plants from extremes of temperature, eighth, irrigation, ninth, susceptibility to disease, tenth, how resilient, eleventh, how to grow *agrumi* in vases, in the ground, on trellises, and by which methods, twelfth, other uses for the fruit beside the pure pleasure they give – *se oltre il diletto et utilità nota siano questi sorte di piante ad altro giovevoli*.¹⁹ In fact, both Cassiano and Ferrari evidently had a sweet tooth, as we may judge both from their correspondence and from the marvellous page in the *Notizie* in which Cassiano lists the varieties of sweetmeats and oils that could be had from the *agrumi*. These range from distilled oil of green oranges to orange pot-pourri for cushions and cupboards, and from *torrone fatto di scorza di cedro* to orange peel mixed with toasted almond and chopped into pieces.²⁰

The *capi* reveal a great deal about seventeenth century investigative procedures – the initial nomenclatural and etymological requirement, for example, is entirely typical. But although it would be easy to think that they are too undisciplined in their etymological, culinary, horticultural, and agricultural spread, one has only to consider the very much greater number of headings in Montalbani's reworking of Aldrovandi. Here there are long and intricate sections on the always tricky problem of *aequivoca* (though even Gaspar Bauhin in his famous *Pinax* of 1623 continued to worry about the problems of ambiguity), on *aenigmata*, on fables, on oranges in prophecies, emblems, hieroglyphics, and coins, on their medical, alimentary, and even sartorial uses, as well as on much less expected categories such as the ceremonial, legal and maritime uses of oranges.²¹ Ferrari rejected this piecemeal encyclopedic approach almost entirely. While he naturally remained attentive to several of these concerns (particularly the medical ones), he rigorously reduced the number of headings into a more manageable quantity, and thereby allowed the agricultural and botanical issues to come firmly to the fore.

19. Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 39, f. 6.

20. Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 39, ff. 20-20v; cf. a typical reference such as that on f. 16v., where Cassiano refers to Genoese sweetmeats.

21. U. ALDROVANDI, *op. cit.* (1668), pp. 499-534. See also G. OLMI, *op. cit.* (1977), pp. 115-116.

In the book itself he even abandoned the *capi* of 1635. While there remain chapters on local and foreign use, and longish sections on planting, manuring, irrigation, pruning, grafting and so on (and much on sweetmeats and remedies), the real thrust of the book is toward classification and taxonomy. This is clear from the very first pages of the book onwards. Unprecedentedly, and with an economy that one might not have expected from our otherwise prolix author, he set out to put the whole of the citrus family into nomenclatural order.

The task was not as easy as one would think. The same fruit was regularly known by different names and there were plenty of them. As Cesalpinus noted, Pliny's *citrus* was known by some authorities as the *malum medicum*, while others called it the *malum assyrium*. Theophrastus sometimes referred to it as a *malum persicum*.²² Clusius had the oddly named *citria malus*,²³ Dodonaeus the *malus aurantia*,²⁴ Lobelius and Pena the *arantia*,²⁵ all for the orange. And this is to omit the more extravagant names for the other species, to say nothing of the extraordinarily clumsy compound names proposed by Aldrovandi, Montalbani, and their ilk. Then there was the whole gamut of vernacular terminology, to confuse matters even further. One has only to think now of names like *bergamotto*, *melangolo*, and *Portogallo*, and of how difficult it is to classify them exactly (because the corresponding type may vary from locale to locale). And where would one place the *lumia*, the *spongino*, the *limoncello*, and the *citrangolo*?

These are hardly new problems. On 30 September, 1635 Peiresc wrote to Cassiano that although he had no problem with flowers and other plants, « negli Agrumi non possiamo facilmente capire le differenze dei frutti et delli lor nomi ». He had about a dozen orange plants and between 15 and 20 different lemons or *limoncelli*; « ma non intendiamo », he confessed, « la differenza del Cedrato Broncone con il comune, del Pomo di Paradiso con quello d'Adamo, del cedro di Salo grosso con gli altri, del limon dolce grosso con il limon dolce di Spagna. Non habiamo notizia di que' nomi di Spongino, di Rosso ricchuto, di Monna Laura, di Calcedoni, di San Remo, d'Oneglia, per conto di Limoni; siccome per

22. A. CESALPINO, *De Plantis Libri XVI*, Florence, Georgius Marescottus, 1593, p. 140.

23. C. CLUSIUS, *Rariorum Plantarum Historia*, Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus, 1601, p. 6.

24. R. DODONAEUS, *Stirpium Historiae Pemptades Sex sive Libri XXX*, Antwerp, Plantin Moretus, 1616, pp. 791-2.

25. P. PENA-M. DE LOBEL, *Nova Stirpium Adversaria*, Antwerp, Platin, 1576, p. 425.

conto degli aranci: dello Scannellato, vergato di bianco e verde Riccio, con stella, ne manco del Melangolo, de quali frutti possiamo haverne qualcheduno sotto altri nomi o cognomi » etc. etc.²⁶ Four months later, in a letter to Cassiano acknowledging receipt of the *capi d'informazione* from Cassiano (but devised, as we have seen, by Ferrari), Peiresc was candid about the difficulty of finding equivalents between the local fruit and the species and varieties Ferrari was likely to have known. There follows a long list of vernacular names (sometimes in several forms) for a whole variety of citrus fruit, which only further testified to the great nomenclatural and classificatory confusion then prevailing.²⁷

People were waiting for Ferrari's book, and for the verdict on these issues, and they are just the problems which he confronted head-on. In assembling his information, he strove for consistency and sought, sometimes with considerable effort, to wrench this chaos into order. He paid unprecedented attention to the colour and texture of every part of each fruit (perhaps in too nominalist a way), he examined the sections and seeds with great care, and he used the accurate and meticulous Cornelis Bloemaert to illustrate them. When he received a sweet lemon from the garden of Cardinal Antonio Barberini, he wrote to Cassiano anxiously requesting him to have it painted, both *intero e smezzato*, and asking for yet another specimen of the fruit, « per poterlo meglio descrivere ».²⁸

But the real contribution, by which Ferrari left a permanent mark on all subsequent citrus analysis, rests in his firm determination to classify all citrus fruit under three headings, that of the *Malum citreum*, the *Malum limonium*, and the *Malum aurantium*. It is true that these were the chief traditional divisions, but no one before – or indeed after – was so firm, and so successful, in finding a place for every other type of citrus fruit within each of these divisions, even though certain subspecies such as

26. Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, École de Médecine, ms. H. 271, f. 54.

27. Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, École de Médecine, ms. H. 271, ff. 184-185: « ... ma non so se ne potrei rendere quel conto che vi si occorre. Et credo che sarebbe necessario ch'io potessi vedere copia della descrizione che fa detto Padre, di quelli alberi che si truovano in cotesti giardini... Quella denominazione differente, caggionando gran confusione, mentre non sappiamo distinguere qui le specie de' limoni... ». Even on this subject, Peiresc demonstrated his characteristic intelligence in seeing the complexity of a problem and suggesting a way of dealing with it more efficiently – even though the rest of the letter lapses into his characteristic high-nominalist empiricism.

28. Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 4, f. 350 (4 June, 1639).

the lime remained grouped together (under the general heading of lemons). Not for him the inconclusive and slightly obsessive fixation on mixed and borderline cases of the kind which so fascinated Aldrovandi and Montalbani as well as Cassiano and his Lincean friends. While Nardi and Cassiano wasted many pages worrying about a particular fruit that showed the characteristics of both a lemon and citron,²⁹ Ferrari despatched the problem of the citrated lemon and orange with brevity and control.³⁰ When he found a new type, something which, he regarded as different species, he took the step of naming it after an appropriate friend or acquaintance, in the manner of modern botanists.³¹

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There are four books in the *Hesperides*. In the first, Ferrari gets the general mythological, archaeological and ethnographic material out of the way; but each of the other three, named after one of the Hesperidean nymphs, is devoted to one of the main divisions of citrus fruit. Thus, *Aegle* is given over to the *Malum citreum* (the citron), *Arethusa* to the *Malum limonium*, and *Hesperthusa* to the *Malum aurantium*. And although the agricultural and horticultural concerns remain, the drive to classify could not be more clearly demonstrated than by the fact that of the thirty-five chapters on lemons, twenty-five are devoted to individual species; of the twenty-five on oranges, fifteen.

The essence of Ferrari's contribution may be judged, above all, by his success in integrating into his system types of fruit – let us provisionally call them types, rather than species, hybrids, varietals or cultivars – that would previously have been regarded as monsters. In fact, he almost

29. See for example, Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms 32, ff. 198 (Nardi-Cassiano, 10 December, 1652), 214v-215 (14 May, 1652), 219-220 (Cassiano-Nardi) 20 May, 1652); as well as passages such as that in the *Notizie diverse... spettanti a Agrumi* collected by Cassiano, Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, ms. 39, f. 106.

30. Cf. G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.*, (1646), pp. 263-264 and 422. For a modern account of the *Aurantium Citratum*, see E. BALDINI, *Polimorfismo e Teratologia dei Frutti nel Genere Citrus: Ricontri Storici e Attualità Biologiche*, «Atti della Accademia delle Scienze dell'Istituto di Bologna, Classe di Scienze Fisiche, Rendiconti», s. XIV, vol. VI, 1989, pp. 1-35.

31. As, for example, in the case of the *Limon Rosolinus* and the *Limon Sbardonius*, named after Fabrizio Sbardonio and Hieronimo Rosolino of Bergamo (FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), p. 251 and plates 253 and 255 respectively.

wholly eschewed the term monstrous. Despite the evident delight with which he later wrote to Cassiano about a « rarissima e nobilissima curiosità » consisting of a « pomo veramente trasformato in sembianza umano »,³² and despite the charming statement in the *Hesperides* that « abortus & monstra in animantibus plerumque horremus, amamus in pomis »,³³ he avoided the most extravagant of the Aldrovandian inventions, as well as all those *aequivoca* that were still in the manner of the bestiaries.

But of course he could not avoid the multiform, the distorted, the digitated, and the horned altogether. There is even one plate captioned *Alia lima citrata oblonga sive scabiosa et monstrosa* (p. 337), where the desire to cover every descriptive base results in an uncharacteristically cumbersome taxonomic failure. He had also to deal with those cases where one fruit was included within another (as in the citrated lemons illustrated on pp. 269 and 271, figs. 7 and 8), or where two different types of citrus seemed to be combined (as in the citrated lemons and oranges, as well as in the strange *Aurantium callosum* reproduced here as fig. 12), or where they seemed to be « foetiferous » (i.e. the kind we now call navel oranges, as in fig. 10).

But Ferrari was determined to reduce this great and apparently irregular variety – even of the monstrous kind – to a rigorous order. He will not leave out the deformed and that which had hitherto been described as monstrous. Indeed, one can only describe his efforts to integrate monstrosity and deformation into his system of classification as an attempt to naturalize the unnatural. This may not have been the way botanical classification would go after Linnaeus, but for that time it was a bold, decisive, and most instructive move. It should not be misinterpreted. Anthony Blunt, who seems to have looked at the *Hesperides* but not really read it, once made the mistake of calling it a « poème assez pédant sur la botanique, ou plus exactement sur les maladies des plantes ». ³⁴ But in its efforts to subsume the abnormal in the normal, this « poème » (it is in fact a prose text) is probably just the opposite – even though Ferrari does devote some space to the diseases of *agrumi*, and even though modern re-

32. Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 4, f. 368.

33. G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), p. 413, describing the *Aurantium distortum*.

34. A. BLUNT, ed., *Nicolas Poussin, Lettres et propos sur l'art*, Paris, Hermann, 1964, p. 52.

search has shown that several of his apparently aberrant types are in fact the result of insect infestation.³⁵

Take the digitated and corniculated group (eg. figs. 6, 11 and 13), which had also aroused the interest of the early Lincei, as well, of course, as Aldrovandi and Montalbani.³⁶ These forms are well represented in the collection at Windsor, testifying to the interest in the kinds of fruits which Cassiano, Nardi, and many others called the «che scherza» or «che scherzano» group – «cedro mostroso a dita o che scherza», reads one of the notices in the treatise on the *agrumi*.³⁷ For Ferrari, however, these were anything but a joke. He took them seriously, and in a way that is related to what for many art historians is the chief interest of the book.

There are eight allegorical plates in the *Hesperides*. They were commissioned from Cortona, Albani, Poussin, Sacchi, Lanfranco, Romanelli, Domenichino and Reni. Their significance lies not only in the testimony they provide to an unusually close relationship between a comparatively unknown Jesuit father and the major painters of Rome. It also lies in the fact that they were the bearers of an entirely new iconography, devised by Ferrari. They were not simply derivations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as one may at first suspect. Cortona did the title page, while those by Albani, Poussin, Lanfranco, and Reni showed the happy arrival of citrus fruit in Rome, Salò, Naples, and Genoa respectively. But the plates by Sacchi, Romanelli and Domenichino were directly related to the problem of monstrosity.³⁸

The first of the citrus fruits of this genre to demand Ferrari's attention was the *Malum citreum digitatum seu multiforme* (Fig. 4). He concisely enumerates the varieties of digitation and malformation, describes its chief features, and then seeks an explanation. Could it be, he asks, because of

35. See, for example, E. BALDINI, *op. cit.* (1989), for instances of infestation by *Aceria Sheldonii*, where the resultant digitation is very close to that which appears in several of Ferrari's illustrations.

36. U. ALDROVANDI, *op. cit.* (1668), pp. 486-487 and 514 for a variety of corniculated and digitated examples. For Cesi's interest, see *Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France*, ms. 976, f. 84^{bis}. Cf. also E. BALDINI, *op. cit.* (1989), pp. 27-35.

37. Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 39, ff. 103-4. Cf. the letter written from Giovanni Nardi to Cassiano on 21 May, 1652, referring to a citrated orange, «che dicono bene spesso suole la Natura scherzare», Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 32, f. 197.

38. For the existing bibliography on these plates, as well as some information on the whereabouts of several of the preparatory designs, see D. FREEDBERG, *op. cit.* (1989a).

the weakness of the seed that the fruit aborts? Or because a particular kind of fertilization results in several fruits (he refers to them as foetus-es), some of which remain unformed, while others turn into graceful shapes, always, of course, slightly aborted?³⁹ But then he admits that these philosophical conjectures are merely shots in the dark «Et hactenus quidem philosophicas inter coniecturas caecutisse sit satis»;⁴⁰ and he embarks on a different kind of explanation, a poetic one.

There was once a beautiful young boy called Harmonillus, who had, as his name implied, a most beautiful voice. Naturally he came to the attention of Apollo, who enrolled him in his Ephebeum in Arcady, where young male singers were trained. The prefects of the school were fierce old ladies. One year a particularly fierce matron was put in charge, with the suitable name of Vafronia Rabiria. Failing in her attempts to lighten up the earnest young singer and make him devote himself to Thalia, the muse of comedy (he, of course, persisted in cultivating Urania), and intensely jealous of the beauty of his voice, she decided to plot against him. In this she was assisted by a nasty female attendant and a traitorous friend of Harmonillus. On the grounds that he would spoil his precious voice by too much practice, she banned him from all singing for a certain period. The boy was profoundly upset – and then fell into the trap. Pretending to help him out of his distress, the traitorous friend, called Musculus Naserna («nosy little rat» might be a good English equivalent) said to him that he knew of a sequestered place in the woods where he might sing. Having led Harmonillus there, he assured him that no one was within earshot; and the young man poured fourth a lovely melody. But barely had he begun when Vafronia Rabiria's wicked assistant, secretly installed nearby, pounced on him, stopped him from singing, and denounced him to the old lady. While the psychological implications of all this may not be far to seek, what has it to do with oranges and lemons? The point is that at the very moment in which the women pounced on poor Harmonillus, as is clear from the illustration commissioned

39. G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), pp. 75-6.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 76. Compare Nardi's reflection on the strange hybrid of a peach and an almond grown in the Granducal gardens (which much occupied his attention at the time) in his letter to Cassiano of 15 September 1646: «Questa stravaganza [referring to the Pesca-mandorla] ci ha dato da filosofare... ne aspetto volentieri il giudizio di V.S.», Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, ms. 32, f. 206.

from Sacchi (Fig. 5),⁴¹ he began to weep profusely, calling upon his old tutor Cleomedes to come and rescue him. Cleomedes rushes forward, but – too late! Watered by the abundant flow of tears, Harmonillus begins to turn into a citron tree. His feet turn into roots, his arms into branches; but by the greatest miracle of all, his very hands turn – as is clear from Sacchi's illustration of the story – into digitated fruit, the one exactly like the *Malum citreum multiforme* (Fig. 4), the other rather closer to the *Limon a rivo seu rio* (Fig. 6).⁴²

This is a very abbreviated summary of a long and detailed narrative that concludes with a remarkable eulogy of Sacchi. The story is fundamental for two later sets of explanations for digitated and corniculated fruit. When Ferrari comes to the *Limon a rivo seu rio* itself (Fig. 6), he refers back to the Harmonillus story, not at all inappropriately, since Sacchi had also illustrated this fruit in his design. Once again he adduces a «philosophical» explanation, akin to that offered in the case of the *Malum citreum multiforme seu digitatum*; but when he comes to the specimens of one *Limon citratus* included within another (Figs. 7 and 8), he has to find another explanation, and another story. Again the approach is both *philosophice* and *poetice*.⁴³ These examples of one lemon within another are the result of very fertile soil, he says, which cause the seeds to divide into parts, and produce a variety of foetuses, which a lascivious nature brings together in various forms.⁴⁴

The poetical account takes off from the Harmonillus story. The illustration by Romanelli provides the salient features of another lengthy and rather emotional narrative (Fig. 9). It shows how the mother of Harmonillus, Tirsenia, herself turned into a lemon tree when she heard of

the sad end of her son. The scene is in a grove dedicated to Vertumnus, whose statue was adorned with all kinds of flowers and fruits. Tirsenia's servant Ergastus arrives back from Apollo's Ephebeum with the bad news, and presents her with the sweet-smelling fruit from Harmonillus's citron tree. As he hands it over, it is enclosed within a new and paler fruit, the double *Limon citratus* of course (cf. Fig. 7), a kind of pregnancy, as Ferrari says, that recalls the son once born with the womb of the mother.⁴⁵ But the story contains an apt surprise. Just before his panegyric on the great talents of the youthful Romanelli, Ferrari relates how this fruit, generally found in Petra Sancta, was carried to Florence and her neighbourhood, «ubi rerum omnium praestantia vere perpetuo floret», and from there was carried off to grace other pomaria and *agrumeti*.⁴⁶

The final group of this kind begins with the so-called *Aurantium foetiferum* (Fig. 10), clearly the ancestor of the modern navel orange, continues with the *Aurantium corniculatum* (Fig. 11), very similar to a well-known type already collected by people like Cesi,⁴⁷ and concludes with the *Aurantium callosum* (Fig. 12) and the very peculiar shapes of the *Aurantium distortum* (Fig. 13). For the navel orange, Ferrari adduces a similar explanation to that of the double lemon; he suggests that its peculiar fecundity produces the multitude of foetuses here – hence its alternative name *Aurantium foemina*.⁴⁸ The *Aurantium corniculatum*, on the other hand, produces a kind of horn which forces its way through a crack in the cortex, and is therefore also known as an *Aurantium hermafroditum* (Fig. 11).⁴⁹ But this explanation along sexual lines is nothing like as extravagantly sexual as several of the explanations in Montalbani.⁵⁰

With the last specimen, the *Aurantium distortum*, Ferrari once again refers back to the origins of the type of digitated citrus;⁵¹ and once again, as

41. For the preparatory drawing in the Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, see now A.S. HARRIS, *Andrea Sacchi. Complete Edition of the Paintings with a Critical Catalogue*, Oxford, Phaidon, 1977, Cat. No. 86, pp. 101-2. See also the excellent discussion in the landmark catalogue by J. BEAN, *Dessins romains du XVII^e siècle. Artistes italiens contemporains de Poussin. XXXIII^e exposition du Cabinet des Dessins*, Paris, Musées nationaux, 1959, No. 28, p. 56.

42. G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), pp. 81-8 (f.).

43. «Iam vero quaerenti causam praenationis in pomo admirandae philosophicam habeo & poetice affectu», G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), p. 264; cf. note 59 below.

44. ... «uni facile pomo alia ingeneratur, prout partes eadem vario lusu lasciviens natura digesserit», G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), p. 265. With this compare the modern view that such cases of one fruit included within another, or «superfetation» as Baldini calls it, are caused by «an ontogenetic deviation occurring during the course of floral organogenesis», BALDINI and TAGLIAFERRI, *op. cit.* (1990), p. 25.

45. G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), pp. 273-5. See the preceding footnote for the modern view of such «pregnancies».

46. *Ibid.*, p. 275: «merito Florentiam finitimasque in oras translata est: Ubi rerum omnium praestantia vere perpetuo floret».

47. Cf. Paris, Institut de France, ms. 976, f. 84^{bis}.

48. G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), p. 403.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 407.

50. Eg. U. ALDROVANDI, *op. cit.* (1668), p. 487, on the *Aurantia Mala Segmentata* and the *Aurantia Caudata*.

51. G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), p. 413.

if not completely satisfied, invents a novel aetiology for this type. It is related to the first of the stories in the series. And so, in the plate by Domenichino (Fig. 14),⁵² Harmonillus's sister Leonilla, having returned from a boar hunt, rushes to embrace her arboreal mother. Crying « nulla me dies a te divellet o mater », she too is turned into a citrus tree, (with the fruit of the *mala aurea* naturally matching the colour of her golden hair, and distorted like the sad expressions of pain on the faces of mother and daughter).⁵³ This is probably the least satisfactory of the stories and the least satisfactory of the illustrations. Domenichino does not show the *Aurantium distortum* (which it is supposed to illustrate), but – once again – the fruit of the *Limon citratus*, already illustrated by Romanelli (Figs. 7 and 9 respectively). Nevertheless, Ferrari's prose immediately swells into a characteristic panegyric on the art of Domenichino. Although the artist had to represent an aborted fruit, « non abortavit ars tua errare nescia », Ferrari assures his readers.⁵⁴

By now several questions will have occurred to one. Can these poetic explanations be regarded as anything like a solution to the problem of the types we now refer to as bizarre varieties? And what exactly is the current status of the kinds of fruit described by Ferrari, whether bizarre or not?

Thrice in their great treatise on citrus fruit – probably the largest after Ferrari and before the twentieth century – Risso and Poiteau launched a fierce attack on the Linnaean system. They alleged that, following the reform of Linnaeus, botanists had ceased to occupy themselves with an infinity of useful plants, on the misguided grounds that these were nothing but varieties and monsters, unworthy of the attention of even the most minor botanists. And they berated the great naturalist for producing a system in which his followers confused the sweet oranges with the *bigarades* under the single name of *Citrus Aurantium*.⁵⁵ Risso and Poiteau

52. For the preparatory drawing in Windsor Castle, see J. POPE HENNESSY, *The Drawings of Domenichino in the Collection of His Majesty the King at Windsor Castle*, London, Phaidon, 1948, No. 1271 (1340), p. 105 and pl. 69 (mistakenly entitled *The Transformation of Myrrha*).

53. G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), pp. 417-418.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 421.

55. A. RISSO and A. POITEAU, *Histoire et Culture des Orangers. Nouvelle édition entièrement revue et augmentée d'un chapitre nouveau sur la culture dans le midi et en Algérie, par A. Du Breuil*, Paris, Plon et Masson, 1872 (first edition, Paris, 1818), pp. 50-51 («... Depuis la réforme opérée en botanique par Linné, les botanistes ont cessé de s'occuper d'une infinité de

had a point. As is well-known, Linnaeus allowed only a very small number of species of citrus fruit – *Citrus trifoliata*, *Citrus medica* (which included both citrons and lemons), and *Citrus Aurantium* (from which he later separated the pumelo, the *Citrus decumana*). Almost all Ferrari's species were simply regarded as varieties or cultivars, produced by natural hybridization or grafting – even after the crucial taxonomic improvements introduced by Osbeck between 1757 and 1765.⁵⁶ But perhaps more than in the case of any other plant, the Linnaean classification has continued to fray around the edges. While the species of Risso and Poiteau no longer serve as much of a basis for classification, even less, perhaps than Ferrari's, the plain fact is that citrus classification is still in a state of chaos. Modern research, for example, has suggested that the endogenous growth of specimens like the *Aurantium callosum* (Fig. 12), for which recent parallels have been found in Sicily, may be the result of casual hybridization,⁵⁷ and it is now established – though only since the late 1930s – that the majority of digitated forms are the result of infestation by the insect known as *Aceria sheldonii*.⁵⁸

plantes et d'arbres utiles ou agréables... parce que ce naturaliste célèbre prétendait que toutes ces plantes et tous ces arbres n'étaient que des variétés indignes de l'attention du plus petit botaniste... ». Cf. also p. 13 (« C'est une chose assez remarquable que la légèreté avec laquelle les botanistes décident, du fond de leur cabinet, que telle plante est une variété, et qu'en conséquence elle est indigne de leur attention. On les voit blanchir, la loupe à la main, sur une mousse, sur un lichen de la Nouvelle Hollande ou de la Cochinchine, et ils négligent de savoir à priori quel est le froment que fait le meilleur pain et quel est le raisin qui fait le meilleur vin. A peine trouve-t-on quelques Orangers dans leur répertoire... »), and p. 63 («... On ne conçoit pas comment, à la voix de Linné, la botanique a pu rejeter de son domaine les plantes les plus utiles et les plus agréables, en les qualifiant de monstres et de variétés: on ne conçoit pas mieux comment on peut parvenir aux honneurs et à la célébrité, en décrivant des mousses ou d'inutiles moisissures... Depuis que l'Oranger qui nous occupe a doublé ses profits et nos jouissances en doublant ses fleurs, il est devenu un monstre pour les botanistes, et comme tel, banni de leur répertoire... »).

56. For a good summary of the Linnaean classification and the subsequent modifications and refinements, see F. RUSSO, *Tassonomia del genere Citrus e dei generi affini interessanti la coltivazione* in: P. SPINA, ed., *Trattato di Agrumicoltura*, Bologna, Edagricole, 1986.

57. E. BALDINI, *op. cit.* (1989), pp. 13 and 17, together with a photograph of a recent Sicilian parallel.

58. For both these forms see now *ibid.*, and E. BALDINI ed., *Agrumi, Frutta, e Uve nella Firenze di Bartolomeo Bimbi, Pittore Mediceo*, Florence, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, n.d., pp. 41-42.

But for the rest there is only uncertainty. Despite the limited number of names in the botanical gardens, one finds endless terminological vacillation and proliferation, from Acireale, the seat of the Istituto di Agrumicoltura, to the shores of the gulf of Florida. One has only to open the discussion of the well-known paintings of Bartolomeo Bimbi prepared under the guidance of Enrico Baldini to see how much doubt remains about the causes of polymorphism. There is hesitancy to the point of silence not only about the classification of evidently problematic species such as Ferrari's *Aurantium citratum*, but even of ones that one might have thought, after so many years, to be secure, such as the *Pomum Adami* already illustrated by Dodonaeus and Clusius.⁵⁹

Ferrari's contribution was a fundamental one. He isolated a large number of forms and decisively set them into his firm tripartite family. He despatched the problem of borderline cases with remarkable assurance and clarity, as in his descriptions of the *Lumia* and the *Pomum Adami*.⁶⁰ As a result, the problem of ambiguity and *aequivoca* would henceforward seem much less urgent and therefore less distracting. His descriptions were always meticulous and sober; and where his explanations were in doubt, he candidly provided alternatives. Where the fanciful forms of species caught his imagination – or could not adequately be explained by science – he devised narratives in which poetry supplemented philosophy (in the form of natural history),⁶¹ and had them illustrated by the finest artists of his day. It would be easy to dismiss the stories for their longwindedness and to say that they are irrelevant to the scientific program of the work. But they are not; they are integral to it. Where what Ferrari called philosophical explanation and what we call scientific explanation could not sufficiently account for a type, and generate an appropriate category for it, poetic narrative was pressed into service. Where the laws of nature could not be bent to embrace its variety, Ferrari told a story to explain. The poetic imagination, harnessed by

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-44, especially pp. 39-40. But see also E. BALDINI, *op. cit.* (1989), for a more detailed treatment of «polymorphism».

60. Both were placed at the end of the section on lemons, just prior to the concluding chapters on the lime; G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), pp. 309-329.

61. It will be remembered that under the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*, which had formed the basis of Ferrari's education, the second year of the three-year Philosophy course was devoted to natural philosophy (*physica*, which included mathematics as well) chiefly in the shape of the Aristotelian treatises *De Anima*, *De Coelo*, and *De Generatione*.

the rules of rhetoric, became a heuristic tool to supplement empirical logic and the limited evidence of the eyes.⁶²

It is, of course, chiefly through the illustrations of citrus fruit that Ferrari is now remembered, if he is remembered at all.⁶³ And rightly so. Never before had visual documentation been so extensively pressed into the service of the empirical investigation and documentation of a single family of plants, never indeed, of any family within the whole world of nature. And certainly not in so accurate, detailed, analytic, and beautiful a way as in engravings by Bloemaert and Barrière, largely made on the basis of drawings provided to Ferrari by Cassiano dal Pozzo,⁶⁴ presumably by the now otherwise unknown Vincenzo Leonardi.⁶⁵ The inspiration for this nexus between visual description and taxonomic ordering may have come from Cesi and Cassiano; but the quality of art in the service of description was never higher than here. It is both comprehensive and analytic, in its range and in its attention to the detail that distinguishes. The book is a landmark in the field of that most empirical of all sciences, the science of taxonomy. But this is another story altogether.

In the *Hesperides*, Ferrari describes over 150 species and varieties of citrus fruit, illustrated on 87 plates. One would have thought this would have been enough. But on the day before Christmas, 1651, long after Ferrari had retired to his home town of Siena, Giovanni Nardi wrote from Florence to Cassiano in Rome. They were engaged in a long correspondence about a variety of peculiar oranges and citrons grown by Giovanni Carlo de' Medici in his Florentine gardens, and which Nardi periodically sent to Cassiano to put on his terrace on the Via dei Chiavari. «If only Father Ferrari had taken the trouble», he laments, «to make a turn in Florence before he had printed his book, he would also have been able to see other rather similar curiosities, just», adds Nardi, as if to reinforce his reproach by adducing someone evidently much more responsible, «like our dear Father Kircher, who came up here when he was prepar-

62. I am very grateful to Charles Dempsey for having reminded me of the seriousness with which an interpretive approach of the kind embodied in Ferrari's narratives is to be taken. It is too easy, now, to ridicule the once seriously-felt explanatory force of poetical narrative.

63. For an early appreciation, see J. EVELYN, *Sculptura or the History and Art of Chalcography and Engraving in Copper*, London, J. Payne, 1662, p. 78.

64. See, D. FREEDBERG, *op. cit.* (1989b).

65. G.B. FERRARI, *op. cit.* (1646), p. 69, and D. FREEDBERG, *op. cit.* (1989a), p. 55.

ing his own research on musical instruments». ⁶⁶ Since Ferrari himself did not come to Florence, what better occasion than a conference held beside the delightful *agrumeto* of Villa Spelman to render belated homage to a book which demands to be inserted into the history of classification and which challenges our most basic assumptions about the systems we use to order our knowledge of the world of nature.

FRANCA PETRUCCI NARDELLI

L'IMMAGINE E LA LETTERA:
LE LETTERE 'PARLANTI' NELLA TIPOGRAFIA
VENEZIANA ED ITALIANA

Sulle iniziali 'parlanti' non si è scritto molto, anche se si è cominciato a farlo quasi un secolo fa.¹

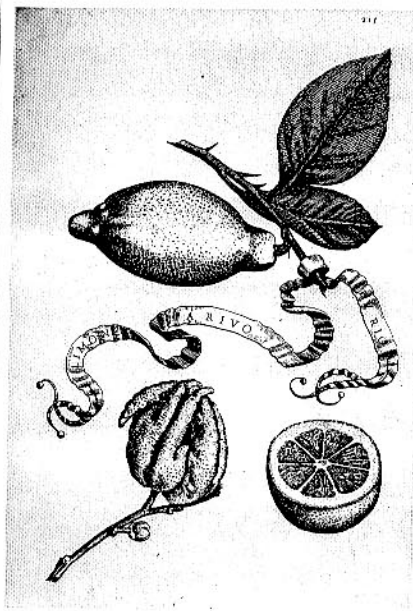
Ma a quali iniziali ci si riferisce con l'espressione 'parlanti'? Un'iniziale così definita ha con la decorazione figurata ad essa connessa un rapporto acrofonico.

1. Nel 1895, infatti Arthur John Butler (A.J. BUTLER, *The initial blocks of some italian printers*, « Bibliographica », I, 1895, pp. 418-427) elencava in un breve articolo un buon numero di casi in cui esse apparivano, con intuizioni di carattere generale soltanto accennate, ma sostanzialmente esatte. M.D. Henkel ed Alfred Forbes Johnson poi, citavano in trattazioni di carattere generale le iniziali 'parlanti' di due tipografi veneziani, Giolito e Giovanni Griffio (M.D. HENKEL, *Illustrierte Ausgaben von Ovidis Metamorphosen im XV., XVI. und XVII. Jahrhundert*, « Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg », 1926-1927, pp. 58-144; A.F. JOHNSON, *Decorative initial letters*, London, The Cresset Press 1931, pp. XIV-XV e LI). Nel 1965 Lamberto Donati, che ne aveva già trattato in un articolo di quindici anni prima (L. DONATI, *Iniziali iconografiche*, « Rinascita grafica », 1949), faceva oggetto di una sua relazione in un congresso tenuto a Bolzano nel 1965 (L. DONATI, *Le iniziali iconografiche del XVI secolo*, in *Studi Bibliografici. Atti del Convegno dedicati alla storia del libro italiano nel V centenario dell'introduzione dell'arte tipografica in Italia*, Bolzano, 7-8 ott. 1965, Firenze, Leo S. Olschki, 1967, pp. 219-239) proprio le iniziali 'parlanti'; l'utilità fornita dal gran numero e dalla varietà di esempi, tutti raccolti « sul campo » dallo studioso, era tuttavia quasi vanificata dall'omissione delle indicazioni bibliografiche e dalla mancanza di una visione d'insieme del problema. Dopo un breve articolo di Antonio Maria Adorasio, dedicato anche alle iniziali nei manoscritti (A.M. ADORASIO, *Iniziali istoriate di manoscritti ed iniziali iconografiche*, « La Bibliofilia », LXXI, 1969, pp. 237-241), molto recentemente l'argomento è stato brillantemente ripreso da Giuseppina Zappella (la Zappella ha annunciato, nel corso del congresso su « La stampa italiana in Italia del '500 », la prossima pubblicazione sull'argomento di un articolo su « Grafica »), che ne ha privilegiato soprattutto l'interesse artistico-iconografico. Per il resto ci si deve limitare alla citazione dell'accenno fatto nel suo *Manuale* da Emma Pirani (E. PIRANI, *Manuale del bibliotecario*, Soc. Tip. Mod., Modena, 1951) e ad un brevissimo articolo di Sergio Samek Ludovici (S. SAMEK LUDOVICI, *Lettere parlanti*, « Italia grafica », 3, 1967), che aveva elencato qualche esempio di iniziali di questo tipo a sua conoscenza, qualificandole come 'parlanti'. Non molto di più si è detto sull'argomento nel Colloquio sulle iniziali tenuto a Mons nel 1987 (*Ornamentation typographique et bibliographique historique. Actes du Colloque de Mons (26-28 août 1987)*, a cura di M. Th. Isaac, Bruxelles, E. van Balberge, 1988 [« Documenta et opuscula », 8]).

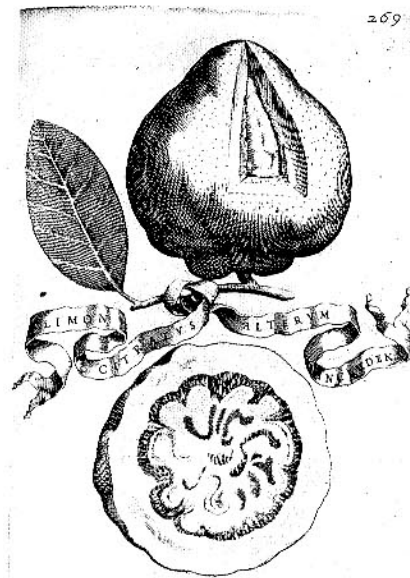
66. « Che se il Padre Ferrari si fosse compiaciuto prima del stampare, del dare una scorsa fra in questo paese, forse havria veduto altre simili curiosità, si come il nostro Padre A. Kircher in materia d'Instrumenti musicali », Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Archivio dal Pozzo, Ms. 32, f. 194.



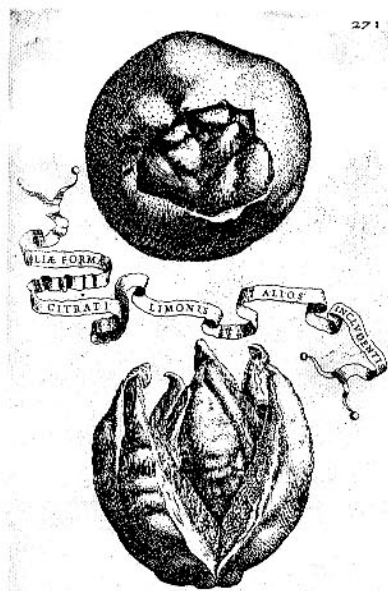
5. C. Bloemart after A. Sacchi, *The Transformation of Harmonillus*, from G.B. Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Rome, Herman Scheus, 1646, p. 89. Engraving, 310: 213 mm.



6. *Limon a rivo seu rio*, from G.B. Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Rome, Herman Scheus, 1646, p. 215. Engraving, 306: 206 mm.



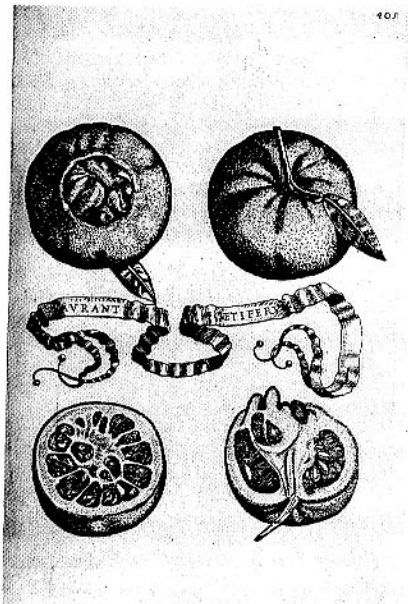
7. *Limon citratus alterum includens*, from G.B. Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Rome, Herman Scheus, 1646, p. 269. Engraving, 299: 200 mm.



8. *Aliae formae citrati limonis alios includentis*, from G.B. Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Roma, Herman Scheus, 1646, p. 271. Etching, 303: 196 mm.



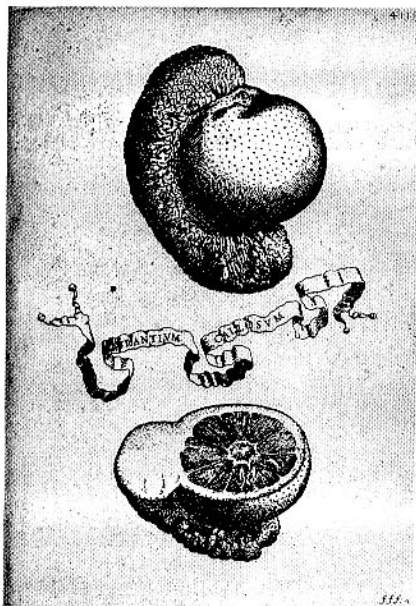
9. C. Bloemaert after G.F. Romanelli, *The Transformation of Tirsenia*, from G.B. Ferrari, *Hesperides sive the Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Rome, Herman Scheus, 1646, p. 277. Engraving, 303: 205 mm.



10. *Aurantium foetiferum* from G.B. Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Rome, Herman Scheus, 1646, p. 405. Engraving, 304: 205 mm.



11. *Aurantium corniculatum* from G.B. Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Rome, Herman Scheus, 1646, p. 409. Engraving, 297: 201 mm.



12. *Aurantium callosum* from G.B. Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Rome, Herman Scheus, 1646, p. 411. Etching, 297: 206 mm.



13. *Aurantium distortum* from G.B. Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Rome, Herman Scheus, 1646, p. 415. Etching, 297: 206 mm.



14. C. Bloemaert after Domenichino, *The Transformation of Leonilla*, from G.B. Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de Malorum Aureorum Cultu Libri IV*, Rome, Herman Scheus, 1646, p. 418. Engraving, 304: 202 mm.