

THE DORIA COMMODORE

A late baroque bombè commode, depicting mythological scenes that can be found within Ovid's and Apuleio's Metamorphoses, Virgil's Georgics and Greek Myth, composed of five drawers with Spanish broccatello marble top.

Designed and painted overall with tempera and oil technique by Lorenzo De Ferrari (1680-1744). (Here attributed: we are grateful to Anna Orlando, Andrea Lercari and Roberto Santamaria for helping in our study)

Carved walnut decoration possibly executed by Francesco Maria Mongiardino or Bartolomeo Steccone.

Genoa, 1737 Circa.

Height: 35,82 in. (91 cm)

Width: 53,54 in. (136 cm)

Depth: 20,86 in. (53 cm)

Provenance:

1737 circa: We reputed commissioned by Ambrogio Doria di Carlo as part of the decoration for his new apartment on the noble floor of his palace, called "Palazzo Nuovo", near the family church of San Matteo nad near the church of San Domenico (today piazza De Ferrari, 3) to be finished before his wedding with Veronica Doria di Federico, on January 23, 1738;

1790 circa: most probably inherited within the palace and all his contents by his only child Carlo Federico di Ambrogio (born in 1765 and died in 1792 without children);

1792: most probably inheritad by Cesare Doria Lamba di Francesco Maria (1760-Milano 1804) (a) within the palace and all his contents;

1800-1805: most probably moved to Cesare Doria Lamba's apartment or palace in Milan where he lived at that time (b);

ante 1805: most probably moved from Milano to a bedroom in the "Palazzo Nuovo" in Genoa;

1805, 31 gennaio: most probably documented in the bedroom in the "Palazzo Nuovo" in Genoa, inheritad by Livia Orietta e Maria Orietta, Cesare Doria Lamba's doughters, within the palace and all his contents; 1805-1826: possibly sold by Livia Orietta and Maria Orietta (between 1805 and 1815) or by Livia Orietta (between 1815 and 1826) with other forniture and silver pieces and possibly bought by Ambrogio Doria di Giorgio (177-1812) or Giorgio Doria di Ambrogio (1800-1878)

1892: documented in the collection of Ambrogio Doria di Giorgio (1826-1912) in his palace in Strada Nuova (today via Garibaldi, 6);
then by descent.

(a)Cesare Doria Lamba (Genoa January 1, 1760 - Milan, December 27, 1804) is a person of great importance and contributes to the prestige of the family. He was enrolled in the Golden Book of the Republic on 11 September 1766 and holds important positions of government. In particular, he is governor of Savona in the two years 1791-1793. On July 31, 1793, in the cathedral of that city, he

married the Genoese noblewoman Angela Lomellini of the late Senator Nicolò. From this union born two daughters, Livia and Maria destined to contract marriage unions with the members of two of the main Genoese patrician families, respectively with Francesco Serra Giovanni Battista was Geronimo and with Fabio Pallavicino was Gio. Andrea was Alessandro. During the revolutionary period Cesare underwent the confiscation of property, as evidenced by a rich inventory of the precious furnishings and paintings that were in his palace near the church of San Domenico.

(b)The news that Cesare Doria Lamba lived in Milan (where he died December 27, 1804) "in the house where he lived in the district of Jesus", and that is said "residing for some years for his pleasure in Milan and who recently lived in the district of Jesus at n. 1288 "is derived from a document dated January 21, 1805 (State Archives of Genoa, ancient Notaries, Notaries of the Cornice, Francesco Maria Borlasca, filza 8).

Exhibition:

Lab.n.471. Exh.cat.n.29, Esposizione di Arte Antica, Palazzo Bianco, Genoa 1892.

Publications:

- L.Doria. *Grandi e piccole dimore liguri. Attico in PalazzoDoria*, Bramante Editore, Milano, 1969.
- *Arte e cultura a Genova e dintorni*. Az. Promozione Turistica, Genova, 1980.

Literature:

- Enrico Colle, *Il mobile rococo' in Italia*, pp.130-131 (as roman?) pp.262-265 and 268-271.
- Alvar González-Palacios, *Il Mobile in Liguria*, Genova, 1996, pp. 136-137, plates 163, 164; pp.142-143,; pag.145, plate 169; plate172; pp.158-166, plates 187-190, 193; plates 263 and 264.
- Alvar González-Palacios, *Il Tempio del Gusto, La Toscana e l'Italia Settentrionale*, Milan, 1986, Vol. I, La galleria dorata dei Carrega, pp. 375-376, Vol. II, fig. 835 and 836.
- Orlando Grosso, *Decorazione e mobilia di palazzi genovesi nel Seicento e nel Settecento*, in Dedalo, Year 11, 1921, Vol. I, p. 62.
- Giuseppe Morazzoni, *Il Mobile Genovese*, Milano, 1949, refers to Carrega Cataldi group of seat furniture

The Bombé Commode with twin urn shape little drawers, under the original Spanish Broccatello marble top. The five iron locks inside both drawers are also the original ones as all the perfect pinewood for internal drawer linings (made of *pino marittimo*, a very particular kind of high pine tree still existing in the region of Liguria). The third, the fourth and the fifth drawer are bigger and they follow the accentuated bombe' design of the entire commode with wonderful tempera and oil painted mythological scenes all around sides and front. The carved and gilded walnut decoration includes lion paw foot with acanthus leaves as above on any corners cut "à pain coupé", terminating by four top female masks with a complex early rococò motifs around them.

Our commode was almost certainly created for a wedding, perhaps for the most representative newlyweds room of the palace. This is the case with the decoration of the apartment in the Doria palace in piazza de Ferrari, whose direction is entrusted to the Genoese painter Lorenzo De Ferrari, known as the Abate Ferrari (1680-1744), by the marquis Carlo Doria, father of the groom, on the occasion of the wedding of his son Ambrogio with Veronica Doria, celebrated on January 23rd 1738. The first description of the decorative apparatus of the palace is due to Carlo Giuseppe Ratti who in his "guide" of 1766 describes the dwelling "of Signor Ambrogio Doria with all the good taste adorned and painted". And he explains: "The vault of the room, whose ornaments were tastefully modernly renovated by Abbot Ferrari, who added terms, *finti rilievi*, and similar things" in the room with the previous 17th century central fresco by Giovanni Battista Carlone (1). In 1769, the biographer of De Ferrari so specified this decoration: "*in ispecie entro la sala, ove alcuni anni prima aveva dipinto il Carlone la ritrovata di Mosè nel Nilo...il Ferrari compose nuovi ornamenti arricchiti di finti rilievi a chiaroscuro, e di termini con leggiadrissimo intreccio*"(2).

"ha qui dipinto altre stanze l'Abate Ferrari con figure esprimenti in ispecie la notte e il carro del sole"(4).

"anche in un gabinetto vi dipinse otto piccoli quadri a tempera, di bellissimo impatto, e con forza non dissomigliante dal dipingere ad olio. In essi quadri sono esposte alcune favole tratte dalle metamorfosi d' Ovidio"(5).

In 1818 this room has been described as "un lindo e grazioso gabinetto, ornato tutto e riccamente dorato. Il tutto fatto con disegno dell'abate Lorenzo Ferrari, che pur vi colori sei belli ovali a tempera ed altri quattro nella volta con favole tratte dalle metamorfosi di Ovidio" (6).



Ceilings in De Ferrari Place Palace, one chiaro scuro (3)



The sun chariot and the night



The Metamorphosis room decoration.

There are stuccos and ovals in oil and tempera, the same technique used for our commode. The walls are covered with gilded stucco ornaments and mirror *lambris* with stucco decorations in which are inserted the six oil-on-canvas ovals with tempera finishes (about 105 x 45 cm) with episodes related to the stories of Diana: Diana and Endymion, a subject that we also find on the left side of the commode; Diana and Pan, a subject that we also find on the right side of the commode; Diana with nymphs in the bathroom, similar to the first drawer at the bottom of the commode; Diana hunting; Diana and Apollo dart the daughters of Niobe and Diana and Apollo with Latona. The vault is entirely covered with gilded stuccos on the same blue background of our commode with pink and green-gray pastilles, in which four medallions are depicted with the Four Elements: the chariot of Ceres (Earth), the rape of Europe (Water), Mercury and Iris (Aria), Ganymede kidnapped by Jupiter in the form of Fire (7). On the front of the chest of drawers is the scene with Mercury and Psyche. The dating of this intervention is derived from the precise and detailed information offered by the historian and biographer Carlo Giuseppe Ratti in 1769 who, in the life of Lorenzo De Ferrari, writes: "*In occasione, che il Signor Gio. Carlo Doria fece fare alcuni nuovi lavori nel suo palazzo, situato presso la*

chiesa di San Matteo, per le nozze del vivente Signor Ambrogio, chiamò il Ferrari, che molte cose vi dipinse" (8). Knowing the date of the wedding (January 23, 1738), the decoration of the Metamorphoses room can be dated to about 1737 and this year should also date the construction of the commode on the design of Lorenzo De Ferrari himself. With regard to the painted part, not only are the findings with the decoration of walls and vault and therefore the iconographic and semantic relevance with the entire decorative structure, but also some precise references to details or figures with certain works of De Ferrari. See for example the drawing for a ceiling preserved in Palazzo Rosso's Drawings and Prints (inv. 2162) with Jupiter with the three Graces, where the figure of the king of Olympus is quite similar to the one painted on the front of the commode, thus attesting to the use of designs as repertoires of multi-purpose models.

Everything allegorically emphasizing the virtues of the bride, the difficulties of a future life together, the entry into a new family, the future birth of children, given the largely amorous and "feminine" themes taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or from the work of Apuleius, as his *Love and Psyche pièce*.

There are numerous versions of the Greek myth, it is directly related in our case to the allegorical meaning of these paintings, called to represent impossible loves, in fact despite all difficulties. According to one of the most famous and simple version of the myth, it was the beauty of Endymion that attracted Selene, the goddess moon, who fell in love with him. To be able to see him forever she gave him eternal sleep and youth. As it is well known, the moon, which is often represented by Diana - who carries *une lune croissant* on the top of her forehead - she can't lose her virginity and do not to be approached by any man.

The hunter Acteon was in fact punished by her, turned into a deer and then devoured by his own dogs for having seen naked Diana taking her bath.

The representation of Diana is very often served, symbolically, to depict sexual purity, a chaste goddess who can't know the erotic abandonment, of which she feels the need, but who controls to deny it, as a spiritual sacrifice.

Diana, guardian of virginity and purity, also rules female fertility, protecting young brides and pregnant women.

The story of Pan and Diana, here narrated, it can give different interpretations. It is possible to see a reference to the fickleness of the love things (as a modest gift that can seduce even the most chaste of the goddesses) or to catch an allusion to the gifts of love even in a nuptial key, in the hypothesis that the paintings of Love and Psyche can be interpreted as the celebration of a marriage.

THE MYTHS:

The correct reading of the commode must begin with the last drawer at the bottom and at the two side bands with the goddess Diana as the protagonist.

Diana and Actaeon, first lower front drawer.

The depicted myth of Diana and Actaeon, can be found within Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, (Book III, Lines 138-259). The tale recounts the unfortunate fate of a young hunter named Actaeon and his encounter with chaste Artemis, known to the Romans as Diana, the goddess of the hunt. The latter is nude and enjoying a bath in a spring with the help from her escort and nymphs when the mortal man unwittingly stumbles upon the scene. The nymphs scream in surprise and attempt to cover Diana, who, in a fit of embarrassed fury, splashes water upon Actaeon. He was transformed into a deer with a dappled hide and long antlers, robbed of his ability to speak, and thereafter promptly flees in fear. It is not long, however, before his own hounds track him down and kill him, failing to recognize their master. Rather than directly illustrating one of the dramatic moments in well-known episodes from myths about Diana, the scene shows a woman and her attendants quietly at her toilette, the Greek and Roman goddess Diana ("Artemis" in Ancient Greece) with four of her companions. As she sits on a rock, a nymph sitting at Diana's left, holds her own left foot with her right hand, another, behind Diana, sits with her partially bare back to the viewer, other two nymphs stands somewhat apart from the rest of the group and they attempt to cover Diana with a veil. Two dogs sits in the lower left-hand corner near Diana, one its back to the viewer as it faces the goddess. In the left corner Actaeon with the deer's head, with wears yellow dress, is chased by his own dogs, which do not recognize him. In the lower right of this scene, it's represented a fountain, possibly the allusion of the existing one in the middle of San Domenico Place in 1738 (now Piazza De Ferrari), still called from Genoese people *barchile*.

Diana and Pan, right side down.

Pan seduces Diana with a fleece of white wool as described in Virgil's *Georgics* (Book 3, Lines 384-393). The position of the shepherd god is standing, flanked by a sheep, with his right arm stretched upwards to offer the wool to a beautiful Diana, who fills the entire frame, which slopes from the sky.

Diana and Endymion, left side down.

In the Greek mythology, when Diana first saw the young shepherd Endymion sleeping in the shelter of a cave, she instantly fell in love with him. Jupiter put the beautiful youth Endymion to eternal sleep in return for perpetual youth, so that she could adore him forever. Diana, in contradiction to her personification of chastity, used to visit him any night. The goddess, recognizable thanks to the crescent moon adorning her hair, is watching him in flight, on a bundle of clouds. The flowing draperies emphasize her movement. A little cupid hidden among the leaves spies what is happening, and in the lower right Endymion sleeps with his dog.

The second part of the commode, which concerns the three front division parts and the two side bands at the top, represents the myth of Eros and Psyche.

Eros and Psyche is a story originally coming from *Metamorphoses* (also called *The Golden Ass*), written in the 2nd century AD by Lucius Apuleius Madaurensis, probably one of the best love stories in classical mythology. It concerns the overcoming of obstacles to the love between Psyche and Cupid (Latin Cupido, "Desire") or Amor ("Love", Greek Eros Ἔρως), and their ultimate union in a sacred marriage. Eros, son of Aphrodite, was the personification of intense love desire and Psyche, a beautiful maiden, personifies the human soul. In fact, she is the symbol of the soul purified by passions and misfortunes and who is, from now on, prepared to enjoy eternal happiness. The child born from the couple will be Voluptas (Greek Hedone Ἡδονή), "Pleasure." In the love story of Eros (Cupid in Latin) and Psyche (meaning "soul" in Greek), we can see the perseverance of a man even when he is possessed by passion and the effort of a woman to overcome many obstacles in order to achieve the happiness of love. Since the rediscovery of Apuleius's novel in the Renaissance, the reception of Cupid and Psyche in the classical tradition has been extensive. The story has been retold in poetry, drama, and opera, and depicted widely in painting and sculpture, here in our case also in an outstanding piece of furniture including both.

Psyche for having back the beloved spouse and to appease the Venus wrath, she will have to put herself to her complete disposal by submitting herself to four very harsh trials.

These steps could be interpreted by the three cupids that we find on the left side. One with the helmet and the sword representing the quarrel, the second one with the club and the skin of the lion, as the symbol of the won tests and the most important is the third one representing Jupiter, which holds thunder and lightning like the eagle that is representing him as the protection which we can also understand it represents the heraldic emblem of the Doria family. Higher up there is the scene of Psyche that invokes Juno's help, protector of the births of child, on her beautiful golden chariot driven by peacocks.

The centre of the commode is painted with Mercury, complete as usual with winged feet and helmet that leads Psyche to the gods. Mercury is also recognized as a god of merchants, or of bankers like in our case, so we could identify him as the groom. The conciliation of the gods shown over there corresponds only partially to the description made by Apuleius in the *georgics*. Starting from the right with the Juno's peacock and Minerva wearing her helmet, her spear and the *gorgoneion*, on their left we find Jupiter with his drape, resting on a cloud. Between his legs his eagle representing him again. His gaze is turned towards Eros; he's listening to him waiting to be able to give him an answer (please see below the signed design by De Ferrari now in Palazzo Rosso). Eros is slightly turned from behind and looks a little bit flushed towards Jupiter. Neptune with the trident is behind him. Further to the left, Mars with his spear and his helmet, Apollo with a lyre and a young Hercules beside him. Behind them Bacchus with his head surrounded by wreaths of vines, raises his cup, perhaps the same from which he will then offer it to Psyche so

becoming immortal and Vulcan strained on his anvil and his hammer, less amused at the scene, whose gaze seems to go towards the tall, to his wife Venus. We can see her on the top of all with her golden chariot, driven by white doves, surrounded by cupids, with the flames of desire, as the goddess of passionate love, beauty and fecundity.



Doria Palace facade in Piazza De Ferrari

On 23 January 1738 Ambrogio Doria (son of Carlo or Gio. Carlo) marries Veronica Doria (daughter of Federico), belonging to a different branch of the Doria family. They were given a flat on the noble first floor of the family building (now Piazza De Ferrari, 3) which originated in the sixteenth century and was later incorporated with the building on the back of the church of San Matteo (noble church of the Doria family). On the occasion of this wedding, important works were carried out on the modernization of various rooms, commissioned to the leading Genoese painter and decorator Lorenzo De Ferrari (1680-1744) for the entire direction of the decorative apparatus (see below). It's possible to date precisely De Ferrari's work since Ratti indicates clearly the circumstance of the marriage of Ambrogio with Veronica, of which the deed is conserved in the archive of the Abbey of San Matteo, Register of the Acts of Marriage at 23 January 1738: "Ill. D. Ambrogio de Auria (Doria) Excel.mi D. Caroli contraxit matrimonium cum D. Veronica Doria f. Il.mi Federici " (9). This makes it possible to limit the works to the year 1737 or approximately to the two-year period 1736/37. In this context there are reasons to imagine that the works included the preparation of furnishings and, among these, the construction of the commode object of this study, whose chronology, according to the shape and type can correspond perfectly to this era. It is not possible at the moment to ascertain with documents or elements deduced from the sources the origin of the commode from the Palazzo Doria in Piazza De Ferrari, since the first document of property dates back to 1892 when it was lent by the Marquis Ambrogio Doria di Giorgio resident in the building of Strada Nuova (Via Garibaldi 6) at the exhibition held that year in Palazzo Bianco. It should be noted that the piece of furniture is defined as "*credenziera con vetrina*" because on that date the chest of drawers is kept together with a stand (display cabinet), also kept by Ambrogio Doria di Giorgio, but from another branch of the family from which it has recently been equally acquired, which seems evident to have been added in the

following period (even if perhaps a few decades) to the commode, whose Spanish brocatello plan, certainly coeval and pertinent, proves to have been originally conceived without a rise. Even in the absence of a certain document it is possible to argue the probable provenance of the Doria commode from the Palazzo Doria in piazza de Ferrari on the basis of a series of considerations.

First of all we can ascertain that at least another important work coming from that residence merged into the collection of Ambrogio Doria di Giorgio, leaving ample possibility that it was not the only one. It is the "portrait of a rare woman of fineness, and beauty, of Leonardo Da Vinci" mentioned by Carlo Giuseppe Ratti in the palace of the other Ambrogio Doria di Carlo in Piazza De Ferrari in 1780 - "a portrait of a female of a rare finitezza, and beauty, by Leonardo da Vinci" ⁴ - which, without any ambiguity, we find in the same collection of Ambrogio Doria di Giorgio, which he lent together with the commode in 1892 at the Palazzo Bianco exhibition, (10) appearing in the relative catalogue as Bianca Maria Sforza.

Everything brings us to believe that the furniture and all interiors of the Palazzo di Piazza De Ferrari were alienated (or passed on to the other branch of the Doria family) on the occasion of the change of ownership of the building on 23 January 1826, when Livia Orietta Doria di Cesare he sold the palace to the wealthy Marquis Andrea De Ferrari, banker and owner. Livia Orietta Doria, married to Francesco Serra and resident in Naples, after having commissioned the reconstruction of the façade on piazza de Ferrari and a careful restoration of the interiors (11), she decided to sell the property to De Ferrari (12). When Federigo Alizeri described in 1846 the home of Duke Raffaele De Ferrari of Andrea (1803-1876), he mentioned fresco and stucco decorations, but made no mention of a picture gallery. In 1826 the palazzo of Strada Nuova (Via Garibaldi, 6) was inhabited by Giorgio Doria of Ambrogio (1800-1878), father of that Ambrogio di Giorgio who will lend the two works to the exhibition of Palazzo Bianco and that evidently at the death of his father, in 1878, he had inherited the palace and, at least in part, the assets stored there. The transfer of ownership from the Doria Lamba of Piazza de Ferrari to the Doria Montaldeo in Via Garibaldi of the portrait of Leonardo and the commode can therefore be dated between 1818 (the year in which the picture gallery is still described in the palazzo di piazza De Ferrari) and 1847 (the year in which there isn't description of any paintings and instead the Leonardo already appears at Strada Nuova). In 1847, Alizeri mentions "*il ritratto della duchessa Sforza, dipinto in tavola da Leonardo da Vinci, o da migliori allievi*" as the only painting in a "*gentil gabinetto*" of the Marquis Ambrogio Doria's palazzo in Strada Nuova (13), it doesn't mention any furniture. The origin of the commode from the Palazzo Doria in Piazza De Ferrari can also be assumed with reasonable certainty due to the uniqueness of its decoration in all respects consistent with the decoration of one of the rooms of the modernized apartment under the direction of Lorenzo De Ferrari. The correct reading of the goddess Diana as the protagonist.



Doria Palace facade in Strada Nuova, now number 6, Via Garibaldi and the interior court, since 1892, the documented and probably the second location of our commode, in this year it was exhibited next front door in Palazzo Bianco for Arte Antica exhibition.

The centuries have sometimes created a heraldic puzzle with the presence of great families around Strada Nuova. This palace of the Doria di Montaldeo family, third on the downhill side, was in reality born as a Spinola palace in 1563, ordered by the brothers Gio. Battista and Andrea of the princes of Vergagni branch. The Doria ownership, which was responsible for the late seventeenth century decorations, gave credit to this palace with a splendid picture gallery mainly of the seventeenth century. Real masterpieces, by Grechetto and other Genoese artists, still adorn these rooms, while other pictures of Lombard, Bolognese and Flemish schools lost during the last century, have been bought and collected, for the major part, by the Cassa di Risparmio di Genova.

Lorenzo De Ferrari:

Lorenzo was the son of the painter Gregorio De Ferrari and Margherita Piola, the daughter of another famous Genoese painter, Domenico Piola. He studied by making copies of work by Guido Reni and Anthony van Dyck, and accompanied his father to Marseille at the age of twelve, where he worked as his assistant for two years. Upon their return to Genoa, it is also probable he assisted in the restoration of Andrea Ansaldo's dome in the Basilica della Santissima Annunziata del Vastato. According to Jane Turner's *The Dictionary of Art*, his style was "...influenced by the graceful, elongated figures, spiral movements and elaborate quadratura of his father." He was also influenced by the more refined and academic work of several contemporary Genoese artists who had worked in Rome, such as Paolo Girolamo Piola and Domenico Parodi. He often used elements established by the Piola family in his ceiling decoration, such as pairs of nudes and corner ornaments. His earliest dated work, *Allegory in Honor of Doge Lorenzo Centurione*, was completed in 1717 and engraved by Maxmilian Joseph Limpach. Its complexity attests to a high degree of skill when he began working with his father on the decoration of the church of Santi Camillo e Croce, where he painted in his father's style an altarpiece *Saints Nicholas, Matthew and Lucy*. He also collaborated with Gregorio in the decoration of the cupola, the *Triumph of the Holy*

Cross (completed between 1715–1726). He also painted the lunette fresco, Heraclius Carrying the Cross to Jerusalem, simplifying his father's designs. From 1720 to 1722, Lorenzo painted an altarpiece, Virgin and child with Saints Joseph, Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier, for the Church of Santi Ignazio e Francesco Saverio. In the same period, to celebrate the canonization of Luigi Gonzaga and Stanislaus Kostka, he designed an ornamental structure erected in the Genoese church of the Gesù. Two years later, he completed frescoes in the nave of Santa Marta. Also in the 1720s he completed a vault in the Palazzo Pallavicini-Podesta-Bruzzo, which he worked on with Francesco Biggi, based on designs by P. G. Piola. Lorenzo later executed a fresco, according to its style executed between 1730–34, based on the stories of Aeneas in the Palazzo Sauli. Some time afterwards, in 1734, he visited Rome, where he is said to have met the major painters Sebastiano Conca and Marco Benefial. Returning through Florence, he met Ignazio Hugford and Francesco Maria Niccolo Gaburri. The latter, who was Luogotenente of the Florentine Academy of Fine Arts, helped get him awarded an honorary membership (August 1, 1734). This trip, although short, greatly influenced Lorenzo as an artist and contributed to his formation of a more intricate Rococo style. In 1736, he erected a series of elaborate structures, of which no trace remains today, in the Genoa Cathedral to celebrate the canonization of Catherine Fieschi Adorno. In the same year he collaborated with Giovanni Battista Natali on a series of frescoes in the gallery of the Palazzo Spinola, where the central medallion shows Venus and Bacchus with Cupid, all of which demonstrate his newly formed style.

Circa 1738, Lorenzo decorated four highly illusionistic frescoes in the church of Gesù, in the style of Domenichino. Around the same time, he completed a series of vault frescoes in the Palazzo Gio Carlo, painted to celebrate the Doria marriage much probably related to our commode. His final works before his death were also the Palazzo Spinola and the Carega Cataldi Golden Galleries, with the documented related pieces of furniture like the mirrored doors now in Met, the set of 18 chairs and the set of four settees now all in private collections.

Never married, Lorenzo sometimes wore clerical garb and was nicknamed l'Abate de' Ferrari.

inteso rilievo. Nè debbo ommettere, che il **Ferrari** sapeva egregiamente la Prospettiva, e molto grazioso era nel fregiare, ed adornare con arabeschi, fogliami, e d'altri speciosi ritrovati qualunque vattissimo sito. In ciò egli tendeva allo stile nobile, e serio; e a quello appunto, che usavasi nell' aureo tempo da' migliori nostri Maestri. Quindi avveniva, che egli era frequentemente richiesto del suo disegno, non solo per li lavori di pittura, che faceansi ne' principali palazzi; ma anche per quei di legno, o d'intaglio a cesello sopra i metalli. Laonde l'invenzione era sua, se d'altri era l'esecuzione.

In occasione, che il Signor Gio. Carlo Doria fece fare alcuni nuovi lavori nel suo palazzo, situato presso la Chiesa di San Matteo, per le nozze del vivente Signor Ambrogio, chiamò il **Ferrari**, che molte cose vi dipinse; e in ispecie, entro la sala, ove alcuni anni prima avea dipinto il Carbone la ritrovata di Mosè nel Nilo. In quella sala il **Ferrari** compose nuovi ornamenti arricchiti di finti rilievi a chiaroscuro, e di termini con leggiadrisimo intreccio. In questo stesso palazzo dipinse pure le volte di due stanze; nell'una effigiò il Sole in cocchio attorniato dall'ore; nell'altra figurò la Notte. Anche in un gabinetto vi dipinse otto piccoli quadri a tempera, di bellissimo impasto, e con forza non diffonigliante dal dipingere ad olio. In essi quadri sono disposte alcune favole tratte dalle Metamorfosi d'Ovidio.



Ratti and Soprani, Genoa, 1768, Vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti genovesi, Vol. 2, p.269. About the important commission of the related work by Lorenzo for the wedding of Ambrogio and Veronica Doria, five years before the Carrega Cataldi golden gallery one, here after Lorenzo De Ferrari self-portrait the decoration representing the night with very similar cherubs in the ceiling fresco.

OTHER NOTES ABOUT PROVENANCE:

The Gio Carlo Doria Palace works in paintings of the Lorenzo de Ferrari Metamorphosis room including in the following room a female portrait by Leonardo Da Vinci.

**Un ritratto di femmina d'una rara finitez-
za, e beltà, di Leonardo da Vinci.**

C.G.Ratti, *Istruzione di quanto può vedersi di più bello in Genova in pittura*, Genova, 1780, pag.314.

The catalogue description including also a later display cabinet on the top of our commode, made en suite many years after the commode. It comes from another branch of the Doria di Pantaleo family. It was the lot after Bianca Sforza portrait by Leonardo da Vinci; they were both originally in De Ferrari place in 1780 (Ratti p.314) and they move both to Strada Nuova between 1818 and 1845, so we find the same Leonardo female portrait with the commode when loaned to the iconic exhibition by Marquis Ambrogio Doria in 1892.

26 — **Ritratto di Bianca Maria Sforza**, di LEONARDO DA VINCI. — Alla bellezza in questo dipinto è unita la verità nell'espressione, così che la persona pare si muova.
29 — **Credenziera** con vetrina, dipinto a figure mitologiche, stile Luigi XV.



The catalogue description about the Leonardo and the display cabinet with his label depicting the same number of the commode when was presented on the top of our commode and exhibited both in 1892 at the Arte Antica Exhibition in Genoa, Palazzo Bianco. Paw foot and the mythological painted figures were much later but inspired to the commode with very different taste, quality and general design, also with a lighter painted blu colour on the ground and a completely different carving and gilding, identical to the later added floral giltwood cascades present in the commode lower corners when published in 1968 by L.Doria and recently removed when the cleaning and restoration was in progress.



The commode published in *Grandi e piccole dimore liguri, Attico in Palazzo Doria*, 1969.

His exhibition label with the same number of the later display cabinet.

The commode published in *Arte e cultura a Genova e dintorni* (1980) with the later lower garlands and vertical frames.

COMPARATIVE EXAMPLES OF CARVED FURNITURE DESIGNED BY LORENZO DE FERRARI IN THE SAME YEARS:

About the carved parts in carved and gilded wood, the stylistic consonance with gilded stuccos is so evident, as are so many possible comparisons with certain works performed after Lorenzo De Ferrari design.

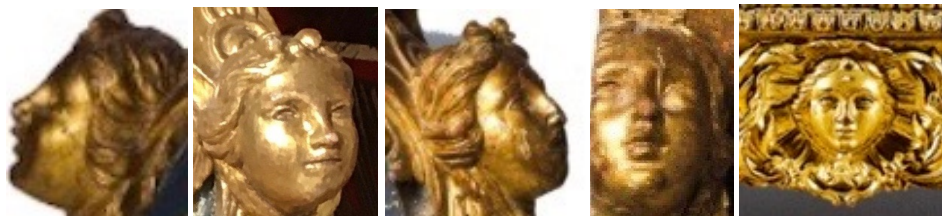
The comparison with the Golden Galleries in Pellicceria place and in Carrega Cataldi is interesting also because the critics agree in attributing to Lorenzo the design and the unified design of the whole rooms, as well as the design of some furniture for that environment 17, exactly as it happens in Palazzo Doria in piazza De Ferrari and we believe it must also refer to the design of the piece of furniture and the execution of the painted part.



Similar circular carved gilt wood details present in Maddalena Doria consoles for Spinola palace, Pellicceria Place, Genoa, 1736-1738. One of the set of four Carrega Cataldi Settees when still in the original conditions, Genoa, 1743-1744

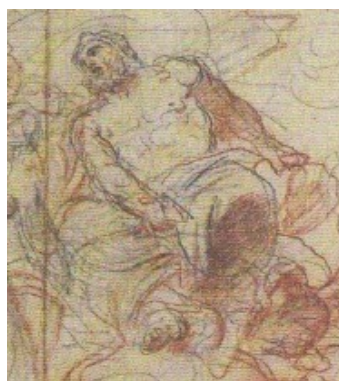


Other similarities about paw lion feet present in our commode and in the original Golden Gallery interiors of Carrega Cataldi family Palace, Genoa 1743-1744: Detail of the mirrored doors now at Met, detail of one of the legs present in the set of four settees now all in private collections, both sold in London by Sotheby's coming from ex Stanford White collection NYC, lot 15, the 7 July 2009, two lot 14 Treasures, 6 July 2011. Please also note one of the legs of the YSL set of 18 chairs coming from Christie's Sale in Paris lot 710, 23 February 2009, all with very similar paw foot.



Four Doria female heads and the fifth present in lower parts of all Carrega Cataldi Sitting furniture. .

The commode before restoration, still with the later flower garlands in the lower corners and a detail of a related signed design for a ceiling by Lorenzo De Ferrari, depicting the same Jupiter present in the frontal drawer, now in Palazzo Rosso collection, Genoa.



The work, due to the presence of figurative coeval painted decoration, is configured as an authentic *unicum* in the production of all surviving late Baroque and rococo Genoese furniture.

Notes:

1 C. G. Ratti, *Istruzione di quanto può vedersi di più bello in Genova in pittura, scultura ed architettura*, Genoa 1766, p. 292.

2 C. G. Ratti, *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti genovesi*, part II, Genoa 1769, p. 269.

3 The images comes from Gavazza 1965, cit., figg. 70-71.

4 Ratti 1766, cit. p. 293; cfr. also Ratti 1769, cit. p. 269.

5 Ratti 1769, cit. p. 269; cfr. also Ratti 1766, cit. p. 293.

6 *Descrizione della città di Genova da un anonimo del 1818*, E. e F. Poleggi, Genova 1969, p. 218.

7 for this description cfr. Gavazza 1965, cit. p. 99.

8 Ratti 1769 cit., 269.

9 L'atto è rinvenuto e trascritto da E. Gavazza, *Lorenzo De Ferrari*, Genova 1965, p. 97.

10 *Esposizione d'arte antica*, Genova, Palazzo Bianco 1982, cat. 29.

11 Alizeri reports to the new owners such restorations "the new owners having ordered some changes and refreshments to this palace under the direction of Carlo Barabino, several rooms are decorated with ornaments in chiaroscuro, executed with rare skill by Professor Michele Canzio" (F Alizeri, *Artistic Guide for the City of Genoa*, Volume I, Part I, Genoa 1846, pp. 431-432).

12 G. Airaldi, In dialogue with the future. Raffaele De Ferrari, in G. Airaldi, F. Manzitti, *The Duke of Finance. I Galliera di Genova: patronage and solidarity*, Genoa 2013, p. 24.

13 F. Alizeri, *Guida artistica per la città di Genova*, Vol. II, parte I, Genova 1847, p. 446.