

# La santissima Passione di Nostro Signore Giesù Christo. Con la Resurrettione, recitata in Roma, dalla Venerabile Compagnia del Confalone nel luogo consueto, detto il Coliseo

## Part 1: La Passione

Late in the sixteenth century, when the Gonfalone had completed the decoration of its oratory in Via del Gonfalone and revised its Statutes to reflect changes in its status and devotions, it allowed a last revised version of its famous plays to be printed. At least three editions appeared. The first, without date, printed by Giovanni Osmarino Gigliotti, might be viewed as the confraternity's definitive version of the play.<sup>1</sup>

Gigliotto's chronological limits are 1570–1586, and his workshop was “alla chiavica di Santa Locia.” Despite the proximity of his workshop to the oratory, I have not found his name in the Gonfalone membership lists published by Rossella Pantanella.<sup>2</sup> He had married Agnese, daughter of the Roman printer Antonio Blado, in 1558, and specialized in devotional tracts and travel books that could be sold to pilgrims on the Via Pellegrina: at least eleven editions in Italian of *Le cose marauigliose dell'alma città di Roma, doue si tratta delle chiese, stationi, indulgenze, & reliquie de' corpi santi, che sono in essa. Con la guida romana ch'insegna facilmente a tutti i forastieri a ritrouare le piu notabil cose di Roma. Et li nomi de i sommi pontefici, de gl'imperatori, de i re di Francia, e di Napoli, de i dogi di Venetia, & duchi di Milano. Con vn trattato d'acquistar l'indulgentie. Aggiuntoui vn discorso sopra li fochi de gli antichi* (1571, 1572, 1573, 1575 (2), 1579, 1580, 1581, 1582, 1584, 1585) and one in Spanish (1575); as well as two editions of Palladio's guide, *Le antichità di Roma* (1572).<sup>3</sup> Giovanni Gigliotti apparently died in 1586, and a second edition of the *Passion and Resurettione* was printed by his heirs in 1587.<sup>4</sup> The printer of the third edition (here called B), which survives only in one copy that lacks its first and last gatherings, has not been identified.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LA SANTISSIMA / PASSIONE / DI NOSTRO / SIGNORE GIESV / CHRISTO. / Con la Resurrettione, recitata in Roma, / dalla Venerabile Compagnia del / Confalone nel luogo consue / to, detto il Coliseo. [Woodcut: oval framing Christ on Cross]. A2r: INCOMINCIA LA PASSIONE / DI CHRISTO. / [Small woodcut: Christ enters Jerusalem on a donkey] / Il nuntio in forma d'Angelo recita un / Capitolo, nelquale si contiene tut/ti li misterij della Passione / de Christo, L'Angelo dice. Inc. E3v: LA RESVRETTIONE, / con alcuni miracoli delli / Apostoli. Colophon, G8v: IL FINE. / IN ROMA. / Appresso Giouanni Osmarino Gilioto / alla Chiauca di Santa Lucia. Copy consulted: London: British Library, 11422.aaa.12.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Oratorio del Gonfalone a Roma: Il ciclo cinquecentesco della Passione di Cristo*, ed. Maria Grazia Bernardini (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2002), pp. 217–23.

<sup>3</sup> <http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/>. He also printed confraternal statutes. Edit16 synthesizes his career: “Tipografo originario della Val Sabbia attivo a Roma, padre di Domenico. Nel 1558 sposò Agnese, figlia di Antonio Blado, da cui ebbe sei figli: Domenico, Tarquinia, Elisabetta, Lucrezia, Giulia, Clarice. Lavorò sia da solo che in società con gli eredi Blado. M[ori nel] 1587. Indirizzo: alla chiavica di Santa Locia.”

<sup>4</sup> LA SANTIS[SIMA] / PASSIO[NE] / DI NOSTRO SIGNOR / GIESV CHRISTO. / Con la Resurrettione recitata in Roma, dalla / Venerabile Compagnia del Confalo- / ne, nel luogo consueto / detto il Coliseo. / [Woodcut: oval framing Christ on cross]. A2r: INCOMINCIA LA PASSIONE / DI CHRISTO. / [Large woodcut: Christ enters Jerusalem on a donkey] / ¶ Il Nuntio in forma d'Angelo recita un capitolo / nel quale si contengono tutti li misterij / della passione di Christo. / L'Angelo dice. Colophon, H8v: IL FINE. / IN ROMA. / Per gl'Heredi di Giouanni Osmarino Gigliotto. / M. D. LXXXVII. / Con Priuilegio, & Licentia de' Su-/periori. Copy consulted: Rome: Biblioteca Corsiniana, 92.A.7.

<sup>5</sup> On the basis of Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, 69.7.A.6–2, Vincenzo De Bartholomaeis edited the surviving part (*Passione*, v. 566–*Resurrettione*, v. 376; lacking vv. 377–914) in his *Laude drammatiche e rappresentazioni sacre*, 3 vols. (Florence: Le Monnier, 1943), 2: 154–196; with a short discussion there, p. 120; see also his “Di alcune antiche

### The Woodcuts

Most of the woodcuts of the first Gigliotti edition were re-used by his heirs in the second edition, but many are damaged. Almost all the Passion woodcuts are full-width, and about 4.5 high x 9 cm wide; exceptions are half-page images: Woodcut 10, the Last Supper (B4r); Woodcut 20, the Death of Judas (D1r); Woodcut 23, Christ nailed to the Cross (D4v); and Woodcut 25, Christ on the Cross (D5v). The Resurrection woodcuts are fewer and smaller, about 3.5 x 6 cm, and with even less detail; exceptions are the Resurrection from the Tomb, c. E3v; the Harrowing of Hell, c. E6v; Christ appears to his Mother, c. F1r; the Upper Room, c. F8r (which repeats the Supper on c. B4r); the Coronation of the Virgin, which illustrates the Ascension, c. G1r.

Transcribing the *Passione* and *Resurettione*, I became aware that it is intended as an *epitome*, an approved copy with all the key elements, from the miracles and the Stoning, through to the Ascension. It largely avoids Lazarus, but does have Bethany as an important place. In spite of this sense of being canonical, we find after the Ascension two new apocryphal episodes that are not found in any previous version of the Gonfalone plays: St Peter's imprisonment by Herod and his escape, and St James's contest with the magician Hermogenes. Although in their legends, these contests lead ultimately to the martyrdom of the saint, here the episodes end with the saint's triumph.

The Gigliotti edition also incorporated a number of stage directions that made it more effective as a reading text by visualizing action; for example, “CAIPHAS *risponde a Giuda, levandosi in piedi, e accarezzandolo dice,*” direction after v. 247. He provided some rhetorical punctuation (which I have largely incorporated), and paid some attention to accents (particularly in *Giesù/Giesu*, where the final vowel may be stressed or unstressed). The spelling and morphology were largely normalized to a standard of the day: etymological *h* is still used, long *s* appears with short *s*, and *u* for *v*; but we no longer find *ngni* and *lgli*, or *de* for *di* that abound in the manuscript texts.

A small number of errors were probably due to mis-distribution of type (rather than misreading of the original): confusion of *r/t* (*credere/credete*), *u/v, f/s* (*sempre ferò seruo*, v. 750). In my transcription I suggest probably readings in the right margin. Other errors of metre and transcription have been preserved, but where the simple interpolation of a letter will restore meaning or metre, this has been done parenthetically (as in *osse(r)vare*). Gigliotti's type, like his woodblocks, is badly worn: the letter *l* is frequently so worn that it makes no impression at all.

The text has been divided into two files, one of *La santissima Passione di Nostro Signore Giesù Christo*, and the other of *La Resurettione, con alcuni miracoli delli Apostoli*. The cross references in the right hand margin refer to other redactions of the play as follows:

#### [Lazaro](#)

*La Resuscitatione di Lazaro in rima vulgari secondo che recita de parola in parola la dignissima Compagnia de lo Confallone di Roma in lo loco ditto Coliseo*, before 1515 (in Italian and English).

[1501 Passion](#)

*La Passione di Christo historiata in rima vulgari secondo che recita e representa de parola a parola la dignissima compagnia del Confalone di Roma lo Venerdì Santo in luocho dicto Coliseo composta per più persone: per misser Iuliano Dati florentino e per misser Bernardo di maestro Antonio Romano.* Rome: without name of printer, 1501 (in Italian and English).

[Resurrectione](#)

La Resurrectione de Christo historiata in rima vulgari secondo che recita e representa de parola a parola la dignissima compagnia delo Confallone di Roma (in Italian and English), c. 1515.

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Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Arciconfraternita del Gonfalone 36 (formerly Mazzo XII), *Rapresentatione Recitata nel Teatro del Collosseo nel Venerdì Santo*

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*La representatione della Passione del Nostro Signore Yhesù Christo*, manuscript in Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Fondo Ashburnhamiano 1542 (LA). [Part 1A](#); [Part1B](#); [Part 2](#) (Deposition); [Part 3](#) (stanzas for *Ecce Homo*).

The edition that follows in based on the British Library copy, 11422.aaa.12. One other copy has been indentified in Italy, in the Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, Bergamo.