

A 2 BR 1221

ORAZIO ALBRIZZI

(active in Piacenza and Rome 1620-1651)

Marcus Aurelius

Bronze

H. 73 cm

Incised in the side of the base: A.m.t.)(. Copia de Marelio pio posto a Campidoglio \*\*\*\*  
di Bronzo fatto di modello da Horatio Albrizi Romano \*\*\*\*

Albrizzi (whose name is variously spelt in the sources) may have been Piacentine by birth: he certainly shared his name with a distinguished Piacentine contemporary, the orator Luigi Albrizzi (1579-1655), and he is first recorded as Mochi's assistant in casting and setting up the two equestrian monuments of the Farnese in Piacenza (1620-1625). However, he proudly signed himself "romano" (and son of Nunzio), and in the 1620s he was busily occupied in Rome, where he contracted for one of the columns of Bernini's Baldacchino in St. Peter's, together with Giacomo Lamentiano, on 5th November, 1624 (it must also be the Baldacchino, and not the Cathedra, to which Bernini's letter of 10th March 1632 cited by Thieme-Becker mentioning Albrizzi refers). Subsequent work in Rome included casting the altar in the lower church of SS. Luca and Martina for Pietro da Cortona, in company with G.P. del Duca and Giovanni Artusi, and a commission to make a plaster cast of the Laocoon for Philip IV of Spain in 1651, followed perhaps by a bronze versior This last commission was part of Velasquez's Roman purchases for the King.

This commission for a model of the Laocoon points to a role beyond that of simply a bronze-founder, and shows that he was highly thought of as a modeller after the Antique as well. It links up with another group of works after the Antique with a significant bearing on the present bronze. In 1879 a group of four bronzes, approximately 75 centimetres high, of the Marcus Aurelius, Farnese Hercules, Villa Borghese Cer'aur, and Giambologna's Neptune were to be seen in the collection of the sons of the Marchese Luigi Spinola in Genoa (cf. Santo Varni, Ricordo di alcuni fonditori in bronzo Genoa 1879, p. 48). One at least of the group was incised with the date 1624 and the name "Orazio Albrizio romano". Now not only does the exceptional size of these bronze reductions of the antique correspond with that of the present Marcus Aurelius, but a bronze Neptune after Giambologna's figure in Bologna, with similar dimensions, facture, and base, and from the same source, was exhibited by this gallery in the summer of 1966 (cf. exh. cat. Italian Paintings and Sculptures of the 17th and 18th centuries, no. 46). It is therefore possible that the present Marcus Aurelius and the Neptune are identical with those formerly in the Spinola collection - or else that they are from a different set of casts

59, JERMYN STREET - ST. JAMES'S . LONDON . SW1Y 6LX . 01-493-0688 - CABJ HEIMGAL

21. 44300097

from the same moulds. In either case the discovery of the signature (which must have been incised in the original wax model) on the Marcus Aurelius is an exceptionally rare occurrence for an early bronze, and is an invaluable document towards the rediscovery of the beginnings of the making of bronzes in early Baroque Rome.

*Exh: Summer 1982, no. 16.*

Liebieghaus, Frankfurt, Natur und Antike in der Renaissance  
(catalogue no. 319) 1985