



## THE AUTHOR

**Gabriele Vangelli de Cresci** (Rome 1989) graduated from the Roma Tre University, specializing in glyptics and goldsmithery from the Greco-Roman and Renaissance periods. Scholar and collector of ancient and neoclassical art, he has studied the refined art of engraving hard stone (carvings and cameos). He combines his scientific research and cataloging activity - also carried out as curator of the Museum of the Ancient Mint of Lucca and of European private collections - with that of an expert in the sector market, directing a department of ancient glyptics between Rome and London modern at an Italian auction house. Some of his studies on imperial Roman glyptics are currently being published.

# THE WORK

The volume presents a complex mix of Italian and French artistic history, which arose in the glorious setting of the Grand Tour and was still in vogue during the Napoleonic era, following the story of a recently discovered and unpublished Lucca factory, specialized in the refined art of making impressions taken from engraved gems, cameos, medals and small bas-reliefs. These effigies, easily transportable and completely faithful in style to the original ancient artefact, include portraits of illustrious characters and mythological scenes, and became an invaluable source of moral teaching and artistic inspiration between the 18th and 19th centuries. The fashion, widespread in this period, of collecting and studying these small casts fully reflects a new cultural attitude aimed at the exact study of ancient vestiges, in the name of utility and beauty. The refined production of this Tuscan manufacture, largely preserved in the Museum of the Ancient Mint of Lucca, is investigated in its protagonists, in its family and commercial events, and in particular in the complex technical procedures and in the very fine materials used. What makes this research even more precious is the presence, as if in filigree, of the ancient sources, examined in detail in relation to the cataloged artefacts and the "different ways of making impressions". The discovery of the laboratory, which remained intact over time within the ancient property that belonged to this eclectic family business, located in the Lucca district, proved to be a treasure chest of precious testimonies and shed new light on the technical procedures, which had so far been little investigated. From the extraordinary Lucca collection, which constitutes an invaluable universal anthology of thousands of models referable to that vast artistic production of continental scope, both figurative and ornamental, dating from classical antiquity to the 19th century, a rich reasoned selection is presented, illustrated by a rich photographic apparatus. According to the testimonies collected, this is the largest repertoire of the time: ancient and modern glyptics, Renaissance plaques of sacred and profane subjects, friezes with historical, mythological and ornamental representations, figured plates, reliquaries, coins, medallions and medals, including the entire Napoleonic "Historia metallica". It should be noted that in the history of the manufacture, renowned in the Parisian artistic environment, prestigious orders can also be included from the Cabinet des médailles of Paris. But what stands out in the same collection, for its exceptional state of conservation, for its completeness and for the great beauty and imagination of the representations, is the set of imprints taken from a selection of engraved gems, which were once part of the legendary and prestigious collection of the Polish prince Stanislaus Poniatowski (1754-1833), whose intricate story is analyzed and labeled as "the false true"; undoubtedly one of the most fascinating and surprising cases of planned forgery in the history of collecting. The undisputed protagonists of this exhibition are therefore myth, compositional art and style between classical, neoclassical and "invention": retracing the main myths of Greco-Roman antiquity, through these captivating scenes of love, metamorphosis, struggle, death and beyond the grave, these subjects are accompanied by the verses of the ancient authors and by the iconographic research of the models of inspiration.

# SUMMARY

## PRESENTATIONS

Marcello Bertocchini

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Hadrien J. Rambach

## INTRODUCTION

Gabriele Vangelli de Cresci

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### CHAPTER I - **The collection of impressions and matrices preserved at the Museum of the Ancient Mint of Lucca: the Barsanti manufacture of Terzoni**

- Utility and beauty: some reflections on the manufacture of imprints of engraved gems, cameos and medals between the 18th and 19th centuries

- The collection of imprints and matrices from the 19th century preserved at the Museum of the Ancient Mint of Lucca: an overview
- The Barsanti factory of Terzoni
- Terzoni
- The Barsanti of Terzoni
- Some testimonies on the trade, between France and Italy, of the imprints of carvings and medals produced by the Barsanti factory of Terzoni: the "mouleurs en médailles"
- Charles Rouy and the Galerie Vivienne n. 42 in Paris
- An illustrious production of prints: T. E. Mionnet, T.M. Dumersan and the Cabinet des médailles in Paris
- Reflections on the territory: the workmanship some considerations on the artistic workmanship of plaster in the Middle Serchio Valley during the 19th century and on Italian figurine makers abroad
- The technique: the different "ways" of making the imprints in the 18th and 19th centuries - The wax imprints of Spain
- The tripoli and the glass imprints - The imprints in plaster and sulfur
- The imprints of the cameos
- The plaster
- The chalk quarry of the Forêt de Montmorency
- The ancient chalk quarries in Tuscany and the "Plastic of the Tartars »
- The sulfur
- The New manuel complete du mouleur en médailles
- From the first part: the plaster and sulfur impressions
- From the second part: the Clichage
- From the third part: electroplating applied to the arts
- The traces of the laboratory in Terzoni: the documentary evidence on the procedures used and the methods of packaging the set of imprints
- The collection of imprints and matrices preserved at the Museum of the Ancient Mint of Lucca: a reasoned selection
- Achille Collas and the publishing enterprise of the Trésor de numismatique et de glyptique: the correspondences with the repertoire of the Barsanti manufacture of Terzoni
- An anthology of models: Friezes and bas-reliefs, Medals and medallions, Intaglios and cameos, Plaquettes, medallions and bas-reliefs of religious subjects, Plaques, medallions and reliefs of historical, mythological and ornamental subjects

### CHAPTER II- **Breve confinium arti et falsi: myth and composition in some engraved gems from the Poniatowski collection**

- The collection of engraved gems of Prince Stanislaus Poniatowski: the "true false »

- The style and composition between classic, neoclassical and « invention"

- Birth, love, liberation
- Metamorphosis
- Fights
- The Labors of Hercules
- Death and the afterlife

### CHAPTER III- **Catalogue of 500 prints taken from the collection of engraved gems of Prince Stanislas Poniatowski**

- WARNINGS

- Catalogue

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