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# THE EARLY RECEPTION OF THE FARNESE ATLAS: AN ADDENDUM TO BOBER & RUBINSTEIN'S RENAISSANCE ARTISTS AND ANTIQUE SCULPTURE

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## Prologue

The long-awaited edition of Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein's *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources* was first published in 1986, with a second, revised edition appearing in 2010, eight years after the untimely deaths of both authors.<sup>1</sup> For reasons that are not altogether clear, neither edition contained information about the rediscovery or influence of the so-called 'Farnese Atlas'.<sup>2</sup> It is hoped that this short note will go some way towards rectifying the omission.

## Description

The *Farnese Atlas* is a Roman statue of a crouching male figure supporting a celestial globe decorated with *bas-relief* figures of the constellations on his back [figure 1].<sup>3</sup> Despite the wealth of subsequent scholarly literature on this figure and its globe, the current state of research on the date of the statue and, more importantly, the date of the putative Greek model upon which it was based has not progressed significantly since the study published by Georg Thiele in 1898.<sup>4</sup> In his study, Thiele proposed that the statue was a Roman copy (more specifically, a Hadrianic copy and, therefore, dating to between 117-138 AD) of a Hellenistic original. He argued that both the iconography and the positioning of the constellations relative to the celestial circles showed that the globe was taken from a Hipparchan astronomical model that recorded an epoch of 128 BC.<sup>5</sup> Recent studies by of the construction of the globe by Elly Dekker have shown that Thiele's instincts concerning the epoch of the Farnese globe are largely correct, though she cautions that it would be wrong to insist from the epoch depicted on the Farnese globe that it or its model was made in 128 BC, since it is quite common for the makers of globes, armillary spheres, celestial maps, star tables and scientific instruments (such as astrolabes) to rely on old, outdated astronomical data when constructing their otherwise completely new creations.<sup>6</sup> All that can be said with

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<sup>1</sup> PHYLLIS P. BOBER, RUTH O. RUBINSTEIN, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture. A Handbook of Sources*, London, Harvey Miller, 1986 (repr. 1987 and 1991; second edition, London, Harvey Miller, 2010). As Elizabeth McGrath's foreword to the second edition recounts, both authors died within months of each other in 2002, and it is largely thanks to the perseverance and dedication of McGrath herself that the second edition made it into print.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth had collected several notes on the *Atlas*, and we discussed it several times during the more than twenty years we were colleagues, friends and neighbours, but I never sensed any intention to add an entry on the *Atlas* to the *Handbook*.

<sup>3</sup> Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, no. 6374.

<sup>4</sup> See GEORG THIELE, *Antike Himmelsbilder, mit Forschungen zu Hipparchos, Aratos und seinen Fortsetzern und Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte des Sternhimmels*, Berlin, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1898.

<sup>5</sup> See THIELE, *Antike Himmelsbilder*, cit., pp. 27-42.

<sup>6</sup> See ELLY DEKKER, *Illustrating the Phaenomena. Celestial Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, esp. pp. 84-102 and 111-15. The recent suggestion that the constellation figures and their positions on the globe are derived directly from Hipparchus's lost star catalogue has been soundly rejected by most scholars (for the proposal, see BRADLEY E. SCHAEFER, *The Epoch of the Constellations of the Farnese Atlas and their origin in Hipparchus's lost catalogue*, << The Journal for the History of Astronomy >>, XXXVI, May 2005, pp. 167-96); and earlier arguments that the globe reflects a later, Ptolemaic epoch of the heavens cannot be sustained, either (see VLADIMIRO VALERIO, *Historiographic and Numerical Notes on the Atlante Farnese and its celestial sphere*, << Der Globusfreund >>, XXXV-XXXVII, 1987-89, pp. 97-123). All that can be said with any certainty is that the model from which the Farnese globe was copied was made sometime after 128 BC. On the perils of relying too heavily on epochs to determine the date of a scientific instrument, see ELLY DEKKER, *Exploring the retes of Astrolabes*, in KOENRAAD VAN CLEEMPOEL, *et alii, Astrolabes at Greenwich. A Catalogue of the Astrolabes in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich*, ed. K. Lippincott, London - Oxford, National Maritime Museum - Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 47-71, esp. pp. 47-49.



FIG. 1. The *Farnese Atlas*, marble, 100-150 AD (?)  
(Napoli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, no. 6374;  
Credit: Creative Commons - Wikimedia:Lalupa).

any certainly is that the model from which the Farnese globe was copied was made sometime after 128 BC. Several aspects of the execution of the *Farnese Atlas* and his globe suggest a later, Roman stylistic and pictorial vocabulary, though opinions vary as to the exact date, with proposals ranging from c. 50 BC to c.150 AD.<sup>7</sup>

#### History

Finding a *terminus ante quem* for the Renaissance re-appearance of the *Farnese Atlas* is not easy.<sup>8</sup> There are a number pre-1500 depictions of the globe-carrying Atlas (as well as of the variant of Hercules bearing the weight of the heavens), but none of these seem to be immediately dependent on the *Farnese Atlas*.<sup>9</sup> The earliest certain record appears to be the notation of a statue of 'Hercules' by the epigrapher Petrus Sabinus

<sup>7</sup> The most recent art historical analysis of the statue appears in URSULA KORN, *Der Atlas Farnese. Eine archäologische Betrachtung*, in *Atlas. Antiquarische Gelehrsamkeit und bildende Kunst. Die Gegenwart der Antike in der Renaissance*, ed. G. Schweikhart, Cologne, W. König, 1996 (<< Bonner Beiträge zur Renaissanceforschung >>, 1), pp. 25-44, esp. pp. 30-38. Korn argues in favour of an earlier, pre-Julian date, though one should be cautious in accepting any date that depends on the highly dubious identification of the grid-like structure above the constellation of Cancer as the 'throne of Caesar'. For additional discussions of this problematic feature, see DEKKER, *Illustrating the Phaenomena*, cit., pp. 88-91 and KRISTEN LIPPINCOTT, *Reflections on the Farnese Atlas: Exploring the scientific, literary and pictorial antecedents of the constellations on a Graeco-Roman Globe*, in *The Imagined Sky. Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Darrelyn Gunzburg, Sheffield, Equinox Publishing, 2016, pp. 55-86, esp. pp. 77-83.

<sup>8</sup> For additional information on the statue, see HENNING WREDE, *Der Antikengarten der del Bufalo bei der Fontana Trevi*, Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 1982 (<< Trierer Winkelmanns-Programme >>, 4), esp. pp. 13-15; HENNING WREDE, RICHARD HARPRATH, *Der Codex Coburgensis. Das erste systematische Archäologiebuch. Römische Antiken-Nachzeichnungen aus der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts (Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg)*, Veste Coburg, Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, 1986, esp. pp. 58-60; CHRISTINA RIEBESELL, *Die Sammlung des Kardinal Alessandro Farnese: ein 'studio' für Künstler und Gelehrte*, Weinheim, VCH - Acta Humaniora, 1989; KORN, cit. and HENNING WREDE, *Die Bürde der verpflichtenden Macht. Octavian und der Ausklang der hellenistischen Kunst in Atlas*, cit., pp. 45-50.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of pre-1500 images of Atlas, see KRISTEN LIPPINCOTT, *Additional thoughts about the construction of Francesco di Giorgio's drawing of Atlas*, << *Journal of The Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* >>, LXXVI, 2013, pp. 179-201. To this list, one might add the design of *Hercules with the celestial vault* for a medal for Pope Nicolaus V attributed to Pisanello (Paris, Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 2319) and the figure in a manuscript of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia* from the 1490s (Paris, BN, lat. 10764, fol. 285r). For images and bibliography on Pisanello's medal, see *Pisanello. Le peintre aux sept vertus* (exh. catalogue, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 6 mai - 5 août and Museo del Castelvecchio, Verona, 7 settembre - 9 dicembre 1996), ed. Dominique Cordellier, Paris, Musée du Louvre, 1996, pp. 453-56, no. 320. For a reproduction, see *Figures du ciel, de l'harmonie des spheres à la conquête spatiale* (exh. catalogue, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, 8 octobre 1998 au 10 janvier 1999), eds. Marc Lachièze-Rey and Jean-Pierre Luminet, Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1998, p. 285.

in his description of the statuary in the *vigna* of the del Bufalo family (in the area where the Trevi Fountain is now located) in Rome sometime around 1500:

... in eadem vicinia (i.e. prope domum Triapanum in Trivio) in domo Angeli Bubali (= Bufali), ubi est statua Herculis et multam deorum in ciclo.<sup>10</sup>

The Netherlandish antiquarian, Stephanus Vinandus Pighius, certainly saw the statue in the del Bufalo vineyard sometime in the early 1550s. He records having seen the figure in his *Hercules Prodicus*, which was published in 1587:

... vidisse me memini Herculis statuam Romae in vinea Stephani Bubalii (sic = Bufali) repertam; qui non horographium sciotericon, sive vas horoscopum cervice, sed caelisphaeram ingentem Zodiaci, atque fixarum stellarum imaginibus pulcherrime sculptis exornatam gestabat.<sup>11</sup>

During his Roman period, Pighius also commissioned a series of drawings to accompany his notebooks. The drawings detail both the figure of *Atlas* and the constellations on the globe, with the successive views of the globe presented almost like globe gores.<sup>12</sup> The drawings record a statue in a very damaged state: the figure of

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Interestingly, none of these figures is kneeling. One of the few early kneeling versions of an *Atlas* figure appears in the multiple copies of the bronze figurine of *Atlas* attributed to Severo da Ravenna (c. 1515?), though the figure is set in a very different pose and shows no immediately apparent signs of having been directly inspired by the *Farnese Atlas*. For two versions of the statuette, see VOLKER KRAHN, *Bronzetti veneziani. Die venezianischen Kleinbronzen der Renaissance aus dem Bode-Museum Berlin* (exh. catalogue, Berlin, Georg-Kolbe-Museum; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum; Venice, Cà d'Oro), Berlin, SMB, 2003, pp. 72-75 (no. 15). Note that earlier scholars usually attribute the bronzes to Andrea Riccio.

<sup>10</sup> See P. SABINUS in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin, G. Reimer, 1863-1936, VI, ii (1882), no. 12234. Wrede suggests that the subject matter of Polidoro da Caravaggio's ornamentation of the del Bufalo garden (c. 1525-27), with references to the Golden Apples of the Hesperides, may have been inspired by the presence of the *Farnese Atlas*, which was then, of course, believed to represent the figure of Hercules. See WREDE, *Der Antikengarten der del Bufalo*, cit., esp. pp. 13-15

<sup>11</sup> STEPHANUS VENANDUS PIGHIUS, *Hercules Prodicus, seu Principis iuventatis vita et peregrinatio...*, Antwerp, C. Plantin, 1587, pp. 360 ff. Cited by PAUL GUSTAVE HÜBNER, *Le Statue di Roma. I. Forschungen herausgegeben von der Bibliotheca Herziana*, Leipzig, Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1912, I, p. 61 and WREDE, *Der Antikengarten der del Bufalo*, cit., p. 14. It is interesting that Pighius goes to some length to say how the statue does not hold a sundial, suggesting that statues of sundial-bearing Hercules statues were something with which his audience was familiar. It may be a reference to the sculpture seen by Bernardo Bembo in Ravenna in 1504, during his trip for the coronation of Julius II. The figure of *Atlas* supported a sundial:

*Spectavimus itidem in area quae pro praetorio est nudatam statuam marmoream basi altero genu innitentem, opus quidem absolutissimum, nisi invida vetustas obstitisset. Etenim semiruta spectatur et fortasse interiisset nisi Hieronymo Donato praetore curante ibi fuisset posita, humerisque hemisphaerium excavatum horologium sciotericum (ut arbitror) gerentem (sic).*

From Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Fond. ital. cl. XI, Ms LXVII, ff. 144-150; cited by EUGÈNE MÜNTZ, *Les monuments antiques de Rome à l'époque de la Renaissance. Nouvelles recherches*, << *La Revue archéologique* >>, I, mai-juin 1884. The citation is from p. 4 of the separately published fascicle (Paris 1884). The Ravenna sundial was also recorded and illustrated by Simeoni in the late 1550s as a '*Hercole orario*':

*Di qui me n'andai sulla piazza, dove trovai una statua di marmo inginocchiata con un quadrante solare sulle spalle, che gli habitatori chiamano Hercole orario, figura molto bella & antica, come dimostra l'esempio di questa altra .*

See GABRIELE SIMEONI, *Illustratione de gli epitaffe et medaglie antiche*, Lyons, G. Van Tournes, 1558, p. 80. There are several fragmentary Roman examples of *Atlas*/*Hercules* figures holding *scaphe* dials above their heads. For a discussion and illustrations, see MRS ALFRED GATTY, *The Book of Sun-dials*, enlarged and re-edited by H.K.F. Eden and E. Lloyd, London, G. Bell & Sons, 1900, pp. 35-36 (and p. 106 for a lost medieval *scaphe* dials held by Hercules) and SHARON L. GIBBS, *Greek and Roman Sundials*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 1976, p. 274 (no. 3054g and pl. 40).

<sup>12</sup> The gores, with a full view of the statue, appear in the *Codex Coburgensis* (Veste Coburg, Kupferstichkabinett, Cod. Hz. 2, cc. 215-218). See WREDE, HARPRATH, *Der Codex Coburgensis*, cit., pp. 58-60. The gores and the statue also appear in the *Codex Pighianus* (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ms lat 2°, Fol. 61 (also sometimes referred to as Lib. Pict. A. 61)), ff. 226r-v, 227v and 228r. The *Codex Pighianus* was first published by OTTO JAHN, *Über die Zeichnungen antiker Monumente im Codex Pighianus*, << *Berichte der Königlich sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, philosophisch-historische Classe* >>, XX, 1868, pp. 161-235, esp. p. 174. As the manuscript was re-foliated in 1979, Jahn's references no longer pertain. A concordance between the *Coburgensis* and the re-paginated *Pighianus* was published by Wrede in 1979 (see HENNING WREDE, *Die Codices Coburgensis und Pighianus im gegenseitigen Vergleich in Antikenzeichnung und*

*Atlas* had lost the upper half of his face, both arms between the shoulders and the wrists and his legs below the hip. There was also a substantial area of loss around the north pole of the celestial globe [figure 2].

The statue is also mentioned as being in the del Bufalo house by the antiquarian, Pirro Ligorio, sometime before 1560:

[*Hercole*] *la piu imagine di bella maestria (?) veggiamo del marmo pario nella casa di M. stephano del Bufalo gentillhuomo Romano, gia tolta della rovine dalla stupende fabrica detta la Terme Antoniane nella parte di Roma detta piscine publica, questa e un Hercole inginocchiato con un ginocchio in terra.*<sup>13</sup>

Intriguingly, he mentions that the figure of ‘Hercules’ is kneeling. As the drawings in the Pighius notebooks clearly show a figure whose legs are cut off at the hips, Ligorio’s sighting must postdate Pighius’s and he probably saw the statue after its first restoration.

This chronology would support Wrede’s interpretation of the otherwise problematic description of the *Atlas* given by Ulisse Aldrovandi, in which he describes the statue, still in its fragmentary state, in the courtyard of the << *casa di M. Bernadino di Fabij à le botheghe oscure, presso S. Lucia* >>:

*Nella corte di questa casa è un busto grande di Atlante senza braccia, ne viso: ma ha su le spalle aggbbate una sphaera marmorea, con tutti i cercoli è segni celesti, che per lo cielo sono, di mezzo rilievo iscolpiti: è una cosa bellissima e rara: e se fosse intiera non si potrebbe comprare. Finsero i Poeti, che Atlante fosse un gigante, che sosteneva il cielo su le spalle.*<sup>14</sup>

Wrede suggested that, rather than speculating as to whether or not there might have been two, nearly identical, ancient statues of the globe-supporting Titan in Rome at the time, it seemed more likely that the statue that Aldrovandi records was never in the de’Fabii collection. Instead, it was probably seen in the storeroom or workshop of the artisans who were engaged to restore the missing head, arms and legs of the statue. By consulting contemporary maps of Rome, Wrede discovered that the workshops of the best-

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*Antikenstudium in Renaissance und Frühbarock*, eds. R. Harprath, H. Wrede, Mainz am Rhien, P. Zabern, 1989 (<< Akten des internationalen Symposions 8.-10. September 1986 in Coburg >>), pp. 141-56, esp. pp. 151-56. From that, one can deduce the following:

Subject	<i>Codex Coburgensis</i>	<i>Codex Pighianus</i>
Drawing of the whole statue	c. 215	fol. 226r
Spring quadrant (centred on Taurus)	c. 216	fol. 226v
Summer quadrant (centred on Leo)	c. 217	--
Autumn quadrant (centred on Scorpio)	c. 218	fol. 227v
Winter quadrant (centred on Aquarius)	--	fol. 228r

There is an overlap of 136 pieces by the same hand in both codices and Harprath has determined that the *Codex Coburgensis* appears to be the dominant model. See RICHARD HARPRATH, *Zeichentechnik und Künstlerische Persönlichkeit des „Meisters des Coburgensis“* in *Antikenzeichnung und Antikenstudium*, cit., pp. 127-40. The *Coburgensis* is certainly the model for the drawings of the *Farnese Atlas*. For additional information on Pighius and his sketchbooks, see FRIEDRICH MATZ, *Über eine dem Herzog v. Coburg-Gotha gehörige Sammlung alter Handzeichnungen nack Antiken*, <<Monatsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin>>, Sept.-Oct. 1871, pp. 445-99 (the *Atlas* is not mentioned); ERNA MANDOWSKY, CHARLES MITCHELL, *Pirro Ligorio’s Roman Antiquities. The Drawings in MS. XII.B.7 in the National Library in Naples*, London, The Warburg Institute / University of London, 1963, pp. 21-25; *Ausgewählte Handzeichnungen von 100 Künstlern auf fünf Jahrhunderten, 15.-19. Jhr.*, ed. H. Maedebach, Coburg, Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, 1970 (exh. catalogue, Kupferstichkabinett der Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, Coburg), pp. 20-22 and BOBER, RUBINSTEIN, cit., p. 465.

<sup>13</sup> Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, Ms XIII. B. 3. 112 sinistra. Cited by KORN, cit., p. 27. As she points out, the << *Terme Antoniane nella parte di Roma detta piscina publica* >> refers to what is now known as the Baths of Caracalla.

<sup>14</sup> Cited from U. ALDROVANDI, *Delle Statue antiche che per tutta Roma, in diversi luoghi, et case si veggono* in LUCIO MAURO, *Le Antichità de la Città di Roma*, Rome, G. Ziletti, 1556, pp. 230-31.

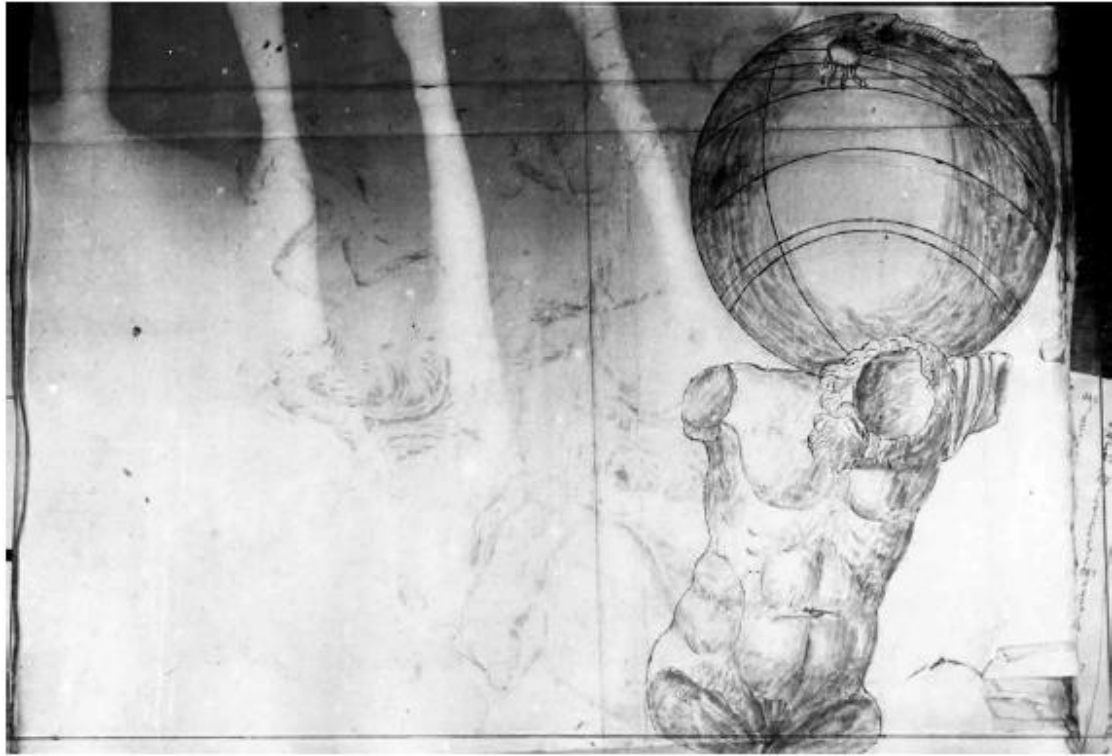


FIG. 2. The *Farnese Atlas* from the *Codex Pighianus*, 1550s, detail  
(Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms lat 2°, A. 61, fol. 226r).

known restorer of antiquities of the period, Guglielmo della Porta, was located right next to the property of Bernardino de'Fabii near the church of Santa Lucia.<sup>15</sup>

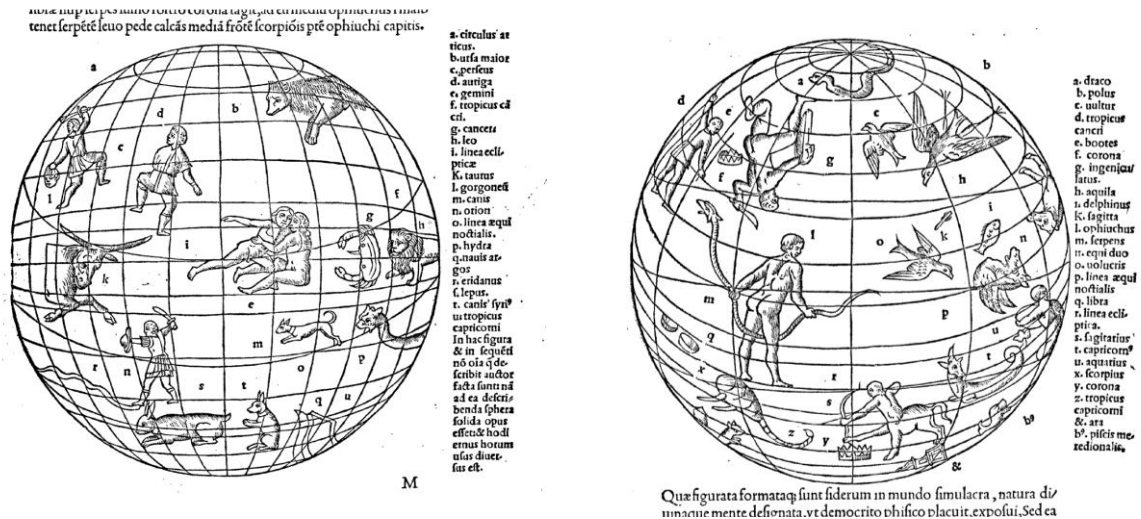
Following its restoration in the late 1550s, the *Atlas* was sold to the Cardinal Alessandro Farnese in 1562 for 250 *scudi*.<sup>16</sup> In an inventory of the Farnese collection from 1642, the statue was valued at 1500 *scudi*.<sup>17</sup> It was restored a second time by Carlo Albacini in Rome in April 1790 and was transported to Naples in 1800 as part of the inheritance of the Farnese heir, Charles of Bourbon.<sup>18</sup> It was displayed as part of the Royal Bourbonic Museum from 1817 and, with the unification of Italy in 1860 and the collection's transfer to state ownership, the *Atlas* became part of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale.

<sup>15</sup> WREDE, *Der Antikengarten der del Bufalo*, cit., esp. pp. 14-15. The façade of the church of Santa Lucia del Gonfalone is on the Via di Banchi Vecchi, between the modern-day Corso Vittorio Emmanuele II and Via Giulia. There is also a small sketch of the *Farnese Atlas*, fully restored and shown kneeling (again with his right leg forward), which appears in the sketchbook now in Amsterdam – the so-called 'Maarten de Vos sketchbook' (Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet, inv. no. 1935, A. 45, fol. 1v). Unfortunately, the artist of this copy-set of drawings is unknown and conjectures regarding the date it was completed vary from the 1540s to the 1560s. See M. M. L. NETTO-BOL, *The So-called Maarten de Vos Sketchbook of Drawings after the Antique*, transl. from the Dutch by G. Schwartz, The Hague, The Ministry of Cultural Affairs..., 1976 (<< Nederlands Historisch Instituut te Rome. Kunsthistorische studiën deel >>, 4), p. 35. As the drawing of the *Atlas* is shown in its restored state, it calls to question Netto-Bol's suggestion that these pictures provide a unique glimpse into what was visible in Rome in the 1530s (p. 10).

<sup>16</sup> For a record of the sale to the Farnese, see RODOLFO LANCIANI, *Storia degli Scavi di Roma e notizie intorno le collezioni romane di antichità*, Rome, Ermanno Loescher, 1902-12, II (1903), p. 163 and RIEBESELL, cit., p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> Cited from the inventory of the '*Statue del Ser.<sup>mo</sup> di Parma, di Roma*' (Naples, Archivio di Stato, 1853 (iii), p. 207), cited by RIEBESELL, cit., pp. 31 and 207.

<sup>18</sup> ALFONSO DE FRANCISCIS, *Restauro di Carlo Albacini a statue del Museo Nazionale di Napoli*, << Samnium >>, XIX, 1946, pp. 96-110, esp. p. 102, where Albacini notes that, in April 1790, he: << ... ricevuto una Statua più Grande del Vero di Atlante dopo ristaurata spedita in Napoli nel 1800 >>. For additional 19th-century references to the statue, see THIELE, cit., pp. 21-22.



FIGS. 3 and 4. Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, Venice: Giovanni da Tridentino, 22 May 1511 (ed. Fra Giocondao), Book IX – celestial globe (left = summer hemisphere; right = winter hemisphere) (Tours, CESR, SR/8B, 1994).

### Representations

Although the cartography of the celestial globe held by the *Farnese Atlas* has fascinated modern scholars, it is curious that there appear to be so few reflections of it prior to the drawings commissioned by Pighius in the 1550s. There are, however, two woodcuts in the lavishly illustrated edition of Vitruvius's *De Architectura*, printed in Venice by the Johannes de Tridino (*a.k.a.* Giovanni Tacuino) on 22 May 1511, which deserve closer attention.<sup>19</sup> As the editor of the volume – the architect, engineer, scholar and Franciscan friar Fra Giovanni Giocondo (da Verona) – made clear on his title page, the impetus behind this new edition was to provide an intelligible and useful version of the text.<sup>20</sup> To this end, he inserted a series of 136 original woodcuts, amongst which are two renderings of a celestial globe [figures 3 and 4], decorated with constellation figures that have been loosely modelled on the Farnese globe. As Fra Giocondo's first trip to Rome dates to 'his youth' and prior to 1498, it reinforces the idea that the earliest interest in the sculpture – and, possibly, its rediscovery – dates to c. 1500.<sup>21</sup>

A set of images influenced by Fra Giocondo's woodcuts appear in the slightly later edition of Hyginus's *De astronomia*, printed in Venice by Melchior Sessa in September 1512.<sup>22</sup> Although many of the woodcuts in this volume are based on images previous published by Thomas de Blavis and Melchior's brother, Giovanni

<sup>19</sup> M. Vitruvius per Jocundum solito castigatior factus cum figuris et tabula ... Venice, Iannis de Tridino, 1511. For additional information about Fra Giocondo's edition of Vitruvius, see LUCIA A. CIAPPONI, *Fra Giocondo da Verona and his Edition of Vitruvius*, << Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes >>, XLVII, 1984, pp. 72-90; Vitruvius, *De architectura*, ed. P. Gros, with translation and commentary by A. Corso and E. Romano, Torino, Einaudi, 1997 and I. Rowland, *The Fra Giocondo Vitruvius at 500*, << The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians >>, LXX, 3, Sept 2011, pp. 285-89.

<sup>20</sup> As explained on the title page: << cum figuris et tabula ut iam legi et intelligi possit >> (... with figures and a table, so now it can be read and understood).

<sup>21</sup> For Fra Giocondo's time in Rome and his antiquarian pursuits during his first trip to Rome, see GIORGIO VASARI, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a' nostri tempi*, ed. Gaetano Milanese, Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1878, III, 38, pp. 264-65.

<sup>22</sup> *Clarissimi Hyginii Astronomi De Mundi Et Sphere Ac Utriusque Partium Declaratione Cum Planetis Et Varijs Signis Historiatis*, Venice, Melchior Sessa et Petrus de Ravani, 15 September 1512. Sessa's edition was reprinted without noticeable changes in Venice in March and September 1517. For a detailed study of the illustrations in early astronomical books, see KRISTEN LIPPINCOTT, *Hyginus, Michael Scot (?) and the tyranny of technology in the early Renaissance*, forthcoming.

Sessa, several new figures have been introduced, which show the constellations as if seen from the rear.<sup>23</sup> This feature points to a new source based on the iconography of a celestial globe; and the similarity to Fra Giocondo's renderings of the Farnese Globe strongly suggests that either his woodcuts, or perhaps, his original drawings were the model for these figures.

Given that the standing or kneeling, weight-supporting male figure is a relatively common pictorial trope, identifying examples that are definitely dependent on the *Farnese Atlas* is a somewhat risky enterprise.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, there are a few images created prior to the statue's acquisition by Alessandro Farnese (and a consequent proliferation of Atlas imagery in both painting and sculpture).

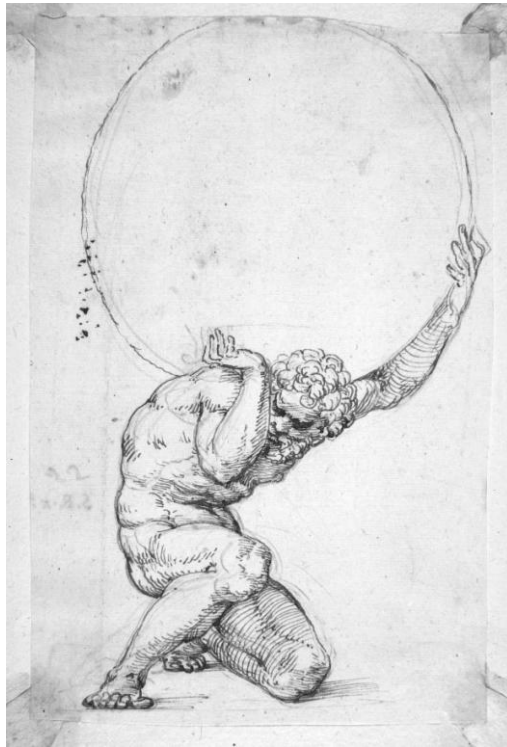


FIG. 5. Baldassare Peruzzi, *Atlas*, pen and brown ink over black chalk or leadpoint (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. 1992.304)

The drawing of *Atlas* attributed to Baldassare Peruzzi is datable to 1527-28. It predates the restoration of the figure's face arms and legs, which may account for the figure kneeling with his right knee projecting [figure 5].<sup>25</sup>

It has been suggested that the drawing attributed to Peruzzi served as the model for the figure of Atlas

<sup>23</sup> The constellations showing the influence of Fra Giocondo's images include Bootes, Auriga, Ophiuchus, Taurus (with a slight change to the position of the horns), Gemini, Sagittarius (with a cape added), Carpicorn, Aquarius (partial), and Lepus.

<sup>24</sup> It is important to reiterate that there were other kneeling figures of this type available during the period. See, for example, the '*Hercole*' in Ravenna cited above (n. 11). Also, artists may have known the pose from smaller antiquities, such as bronzes or gems. See the description of kneeling Atlas-figures in the section on Hellenistic and Roman Atlas-figures in *LIMC*, III, esp. pp. 9-12 and IV, figs. Atlas: 18, 34-38, 43, 47a and 48-49. See also SALOMON REINACH, *Pierres gravées des collections Marlborough et d'Orléans: des recueils d'Eckhel, Gori, Lévesque, de Gravelle, Mariette, Millin, Stosch, réunies et rééditées avec un texte nouveau*, Paris, Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1895 (<< Bibliothèque des monuments figurés grecs et romains >>, 4), pl. 90 and Thiele, *op cit.*, figs. 2-4.

<sup>25</sup> New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 1992.304. For a reproduction, see *Recent Acquisitions. A Selection, 1992-1993*, << *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* >>, n.s. LI, 2, Fall 1993, p. 29 and CHRISTOPH LUITPOLD FROMMEL, *Peruzzis römische Anfänge: von der "Pseudo-Cronaca-Gruppe" zu Bramante*, << *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Herziana* >>, XXVII, 1992, pp. 139-82, esp. pp. 180-81.



emerging from the clouds in the centre of the allegorical frontispiece of Sigismondo Fanti's *Triumpho di Fortuna*, published by Agostino da Portese for Giacomo Giunta in Venice in early 1527 [figures 6 and 7].<sup>26</sup> In the image, Atlas supports a globe on his back upon which the band of the ecliptic is shown. He holds the globe by two handles that project from the celestial poles. The ends of the handles are being turned – in the reversed, printed version of the image – by an angel, on his right side, and by a demon, on his left side.

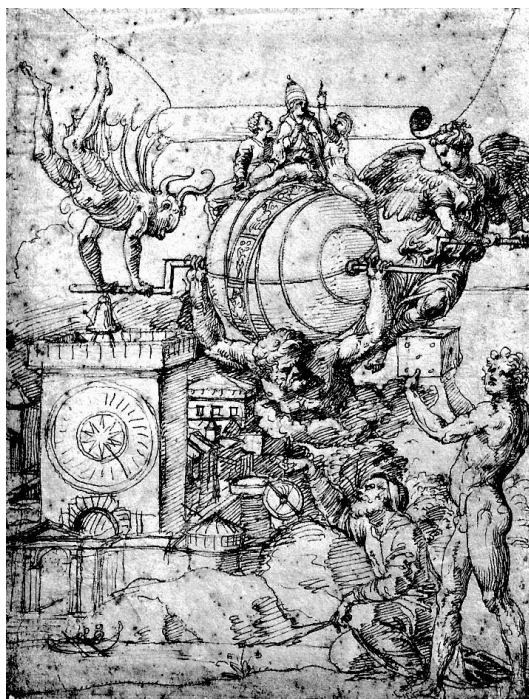


FIG. 6. Baldassare Peruzzi (attr.) Frontispiece for Sigismondo Fanti. *Triumpho di Fortuna*, pen and ink on paper, c. 1527 (Oxford, Christ Church Picture Gallery, OI 37).



FIG. 7 Sigismondo Fanti, *Triumpho di Fortuna*, Venezia, Agostino da Portese per Giacomo Giunta, 1527 (New York Metropolitan Museum, acc 25.7)

There is the depiction of a globe-bearing Atlas (with his right knee forward) on the reverse of a medal of Pope Julius III (reigning 1550-55) by the anonymous medallist, who signed his pieces with the initials 'F.M.L.' and appears to have worked in Rome during this period. The *Atlas* is surrounded by the motto: *Immane pondus vires infractae* [figure 8].<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of the iconography of the frontispiece, see ROBERT EISLER, The Frontispiece to Sigismondo Fanti's *Triumpho di Fortuna*, << Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes >>, X, 1947, pp. 155-59. For a discussion of the drawing by Peruzzi (Oxford, Christ Church, n. OI 37), see JAMES BYAM SHAW, Drawings by Old Masters at Christ Church Oxford, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976, I, p. 117 (no. 358) and fig. 33; II, pl. 250 and CHRISTOPH LUITPOLD FROMMEL, *Baldassare Peruzzi als Maler und Zeichner*, Vienna - Munich: A. Schroll, 1968, p. 137, no. 100, p. 75a. A former attribution to Dosso Dossi (in DETLEV BARON VON HADELN, *A Ferrarese Drawing for a Venetian Woodcut*, << The Burlington Magazine >>, XLVIII, 1926, p. 3010), was dismissed by FELTON GIBBONS in *Dosso and Battista Dossi. Court Painters at Ferrara*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1968 (Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology, 39), p. 268 and figs. 230-33, though he followed previous scholars, such as the Tietzes and Mezzetti, and suggested that the design of some of the inner pages of the book were sufficiently strong to bear attribution to either Dosso or his brother.

<sup>27</sup> See D.P. SNOEP, *Van Atlas tot last. Aspecten van de betekens van het Atlasmotief*, << Simiolus >>, II, 1967-68, pp. 6-22, esp. pp 12-13 and fig. 8 and GIUSEPPE TODERI, FIORENZA VANNEL, *Le Medaglie italiane del XVI secolo*, Florence, Polistampe, 2000, II, p. 710 (nos. 2228 and 2229) and III, pl. 418.

The only possible trans-Alpine copy of the Farnese Atlas I have been able to locate is in one of the roundels of Thomas Hering's *Twelve Labours of Hercules*, carved sometime between 1540 and 1541 for the so-called 'Italian Room' in the Royal Residenz at Landshut. Here, Atlas the King is depicted relieving the bowed Hercules of his burden of a weighty



FIG. 8. Medallist 'F.M.L.', *Medal of Pope Paul III (with Atlas on the reverse)*  
 (from Joannes Jocus Luckius, *Sylloge Numismatum Elegantiorum...*, Strasbourg, Reppian, 1620, p. 142).

Finally, in the Ashmolean Museum there is a large sheet of paper covered on both sides with a number of sketches in red chalk that have been attributed to Michelangelo and his pupils.<sup>28</sup> On the verso of the sheet, the left third of the page is filled with the text of a 33-line *canzone*, to which a series of small sketches of a crab, a grasshopper and two heads of Mercury in profile (the second version copied from the first and by the hand of a pupil) have been added [figure 9].<sup>29</sup> The right two-thirds of the page show a rider leaping over a vase, a giraffe, a skull, another full-face head of Mercury and a series of sketches of ladders. In the lower right-hand corner of the drawing, there is an << earthy thumbnail study >><sup>30</sup> of a male nude with his legs thrown back over his shoulders and spreading his thighs. As has recently been observed by David Ekserdjian, this figure is so strongly reminiscent of the similarly acrobatic posture displayed in the small bronze oil lamp model associated with the circle of Severo da Ravenna, it seems likely that Michelangelo drew the sketch after one of the many 'ubiquitous' copies of the statuette.<sup>31</sup>

In the upper right corner of the page, there is a rapid sketch of a crouching male figure standing with a globe on his back. The divided band of the ecliptic is clearly marked on the surface of the globe and shows it to be tilted so that one of the celestial poles rests above the head and between the hands of the figure [figure 9].

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celestial sphere. The kneeling posture of Hercules closely recalls the Farnese Atlas, though the means of transmission to Landshut (via Hermannus Posthumus?) needs further attention. The sphere in the roundel is one of the few in this group in which the constellations have been more-or-less accurately depicted, though they are not based on the globe held by the *Farnese Atlas* itself. For a discussion and illustration, see JEFFREY C. SMITH, *German Sculpture of the Later Renaissance, c. 1520-1580. Art in an Age of Uncertainty*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 250-51.

<sup>28</sup> Oxford, The Ashmolean Museum, Parker 317. For the most recent discussion of the drawing, see HUGO CHAPMAN, *Michelangelo Drawings: Closer to the Master* [exh. catalogue, Teyler Museum, Haarlem, 6 October 2005 - 8 January 2006 and the British Museum, London, 23 March - 25 June 2006], London, The British Museum, 2005, pp. 198-200 and 289 (cat. 62), with a full bibliography, and figs. 197 (recto) and 198 (verso). I thank Hugo for discussing this drawing with me.

<sup>29</sup> Chapman characterises the handwriting on the verso of the drawing as a << neat copy >> in Michelangelo's own hand and states that the drawings << certainly overlay the text >>. See CHAPMAN, cit., p. 198. Girardi, however, says the poem: << È un brutta copia in grafia corsiva >>; while Frey suggests that the poem has been written over the drawings (<< ... und über die Skizzen mit hellbrauner Farbe hinweggeschrieben, die Canzone.>>). See *Michelangelo Buonarroti Rime*, ed. Enzo Noè Girardi, Bari, G. Laterza, 1960, pp. 203-04 (no. 51) and *Die Dichtungen des Michelangelo Buonarroti*, ed. Karl Frey, Berlin, G. Grote, 1897, pp. 37-38 and 332-33 (no. XLIX), with the quote cited from p. 332.

<sup>30</sup> Quote taken from CHAPMAN, cit., p. 198.

<sup>31</sup> See DAVID EKSERDJIAN, *Swan-like ease: the British Museum's exhibition of Michelangelo's drawings...*, << Apollo >>, CLXIII, no. 531, May 2006, pp. 79-80. For reproductions of three versions of the statuette, see LEO PLANISCIG, *Andrea Riccio*, Vienna, A. Scroll & Co, 1927, pp. 180-81, figs. 200, 202 and 203.

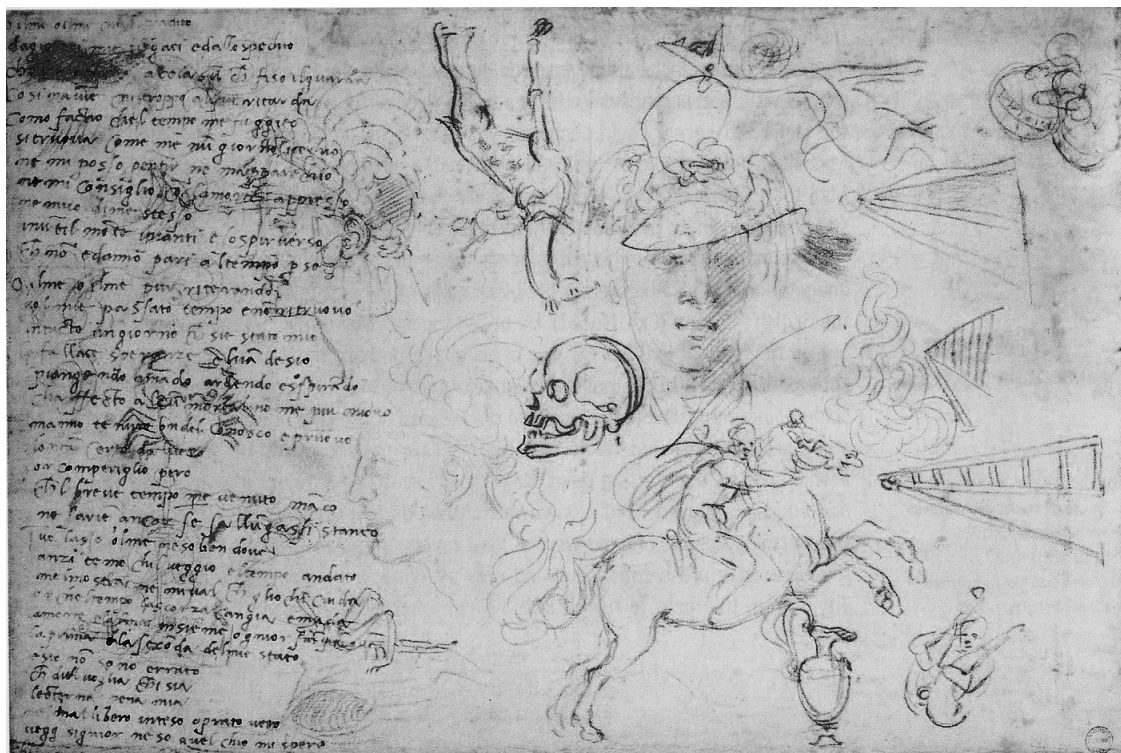


FIG. 9. Sketches by Michelangelo Buonarroti and pupils, red chalk on paper, 1520s/1530s  
 (© Oxford, The Ashmolean Museum, WA. 1846.63 v).

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There are a number of similarities between the hastily drawn crouching figure and the Farnese *Atlas*. The first is the position of the Titan's head, which is turned slightly towards his right shoulder. If one compares the sketch with the two versions of the statue recorded in the *Codex Pighianus* and the *Codex Coburgensis*, one can see that, even in its original, damaged state, the head of the titan is clearly turned towards his right shoulder. The second similarity is the position of the ecliptic and southern celestial pole. In the statue, the southern celestial pole rests on the point at which the lower part of Atlas's head meets his neck so that the curve of the ecliptic is at its highest more-or-less directly above the Titan's right ear. This orientation of the globe is reproduced in the sketch. In Michelangelo's version, two roughly drawn arms have been added to the figure.

Third, Michelangelo scholars have differed in their opinions as to the date of Oxford drawing and about the authorship of the various sketches on its recto and verso, but most have placed it during his third stay in Florence or to between 1516 to 1533, with some suggesting that the recto can be more directly connected with the hand of Michelangelo and the commission for the uncompleted statue of *Hercules and Antaeus* (c. 1524-25), while the verso could be slightly later or show a number of later, less skilled additions by his pupil, Antonio Mini, who died in 1533.<sup>32</sup> Michelangelo had stayed away from Rome until his two visits in August 1532 and November 1533 and his final return to the city in August or

<sup>32</sup> Chapman seems to suggest a date of 1524-25 for both sides of the paper. See CHAPMAN, cit., p. 289 (no. 62). Earlier scholars tend to offer later dates for the verso of the sheet, such as Dussler (who suggests a date of 1530-33 for both sides), de Tolnay (who dates both sides to between 1525 and 1528) and Hartt (who dates the recto 1524-25, but argues that the drawings on the verso are predominantly by Mini and date to 1525-31(?)). See LUITPOLD DUSSLER, *Die Zeichnungen des Michelangelo*, Berlin, Gebr. Mann, 1959, no. 196 and 622; CHARLES DE TOLNAY, *Corpus dei disegni di Michelangelo*, Novara, Istituto geografico De Agostini, 1975-80, II (1976), p. 56 (no. 237) and FREDERICK HARTT, *The Drawings of Michelangelo*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1971, nos. 302 and 312. Editors of the poems of Michelangelo usually date the lines that have been copied on to the verso of the sheet late, as well. For example, Frey dates it 1532-33; Girardi to c. 1530; Saslow to c. 1528-30 and Ryan to c. 1530. See FREY, cit.; *Michelangelo Buonarroti Rime*, cit.; JAMES M. SASLOW, *The Poetry of Michelangelo*, New Haven CT-London, Yale University Press, 1991, pp. 135-37; and *Michelangelo. The Poems*, ed. and English transl. Christopher Ryan, London, Dent, 1996, pp. 38-41.

September 1534. It is possible, then, that the small sketch of the globe-carrying figure could have been added to the sheet by Michelangelo himself after having seen the *Farnese Atlas* in the del Bufalo *vigna* either during one of the short trips to Rome or shortly after his return in 1534. In any case, it seems most likely that he would have seen the *Atlas* prior to its restoration and, therefore, without a forehead, arms or legs.

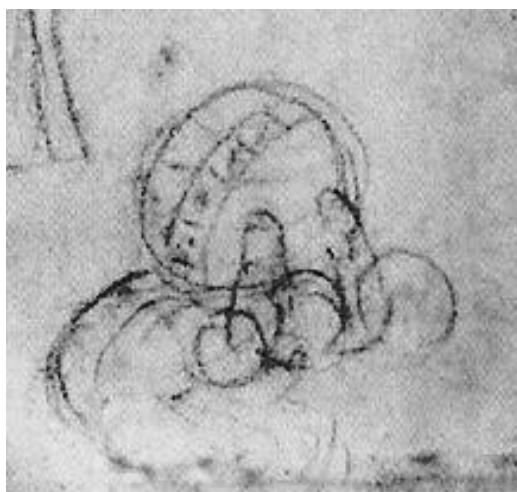


FIG. 10. Sketches by Michelangelo Buonarroti and pupils,  
Detail of a globe-carrying figure (*Atlas*?)  
red chalk on paper, 1520s/1530s  
(© Oxford, The Ashmolean Museum, WA. 1846.63 v).

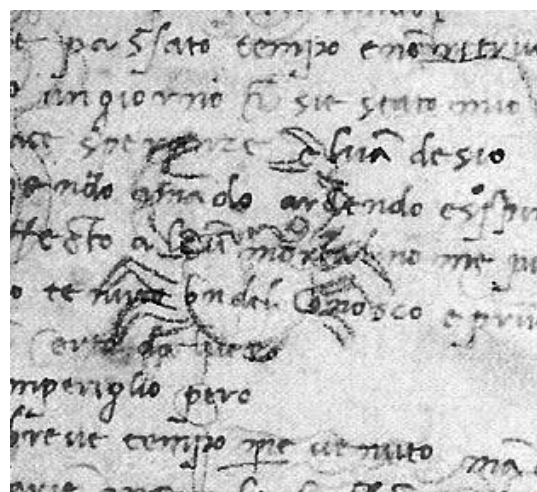


FIG. 11. Sketches by Michelangelo Buonarroti and pupils,  
Detail of a crab  
red chalk on paper, 1520s/1530s  
(© Oxford, The Ashmolean Museum, WA. 1846.63 v).

The Oxford sketch clearly shows the two forearms of the figure, reaching upwards to hold the globe; but if one examines the drawing more closely, it is apparent that there is a circular shape that has been added to the drawing immediately to the left of the head. In position and shape, the circle matches the impression created by the break in the right shoulder of the *Atlas* when it is viewed from the right side of the figure – as seems to have been the orientation of the view recorded in the sketch. The addition of arms in the sketch, then, can be interpreted as reflecting an inventive afterthought by Michelangelo himself, whereby he – like Peruzzi in his drawing after the *Farnese Atlas* – simply added a reasonable extension between the breaks in both shoulders and the positions of the existing hands, which were still visible resting on the surface of the globe above.

One final feature of the drawing that suggests that it might be related to the *Farnese Atlas* concerns the orientation of the globe [figure 10]. In the statue, the globe is held so that the curve of the ecliptic places the constellation of Cancer near the ‘top’ of the sphere. In the *Codex Coburgensis*, the drawing of the *Atlas* includes not only the remnant of the figure’s cape falling down his left side, but depicts a number of the constellations and a fairly accurate rendering of the celestial circles.<sup>33</sup> In the *Codex*, Pighianus, the drawing is less subtle and less detailed. As a result, the only constellation preserved on the surface of the globe is Cancer, which is duly placed at the ‘top’ of the globe, directly above the head of *Atlas*.

In Michelangelo’s sketch, the individual shapes of the zodiacal constellations have not been recorded, so it is impossible to ascertain whether or not the highest point in the band of the ecliptic depicted Cancer. There is, however, a small illustration of a crab that has been drawn over the text of the poem that appears on the left side of the folio [figure 11]. Though this small sketch may have nothing to do with the crouching, globe-carrying male figure depicted elsewhere on the sheet and, despite the fact that many

<sup>33</sup> The constellations that are visible include (from the left) Lepus, Canis Maior (with the right thumb of *Atlas*’s right hand also visible), Argo, Hydra, Crater, Corvus Centaurus and Leo. The lumpy profile of the globe’s left side in the *Codex Coburgensis* records the remnants of the left hand of *Atlas*.

depictions of crabs tend to resemble one another, there is sufficient similarity between the shape of the crab sketched on Michelangelo's sheet and the depiction of Cancer on the globe itself (as well as in the two Pighianus drawings), to suggest that it might serve as another reason to connect Michelangelo's drawing with the Farnese *Atlas*.

#### Postscript

Intriguingly, the Farnese use of a globe-bearing Atlas in their familial iconography seems to pre-date Alessandro's acquisition of the statue. Achille Bocchi, for example, published an emblem in 1555 dedicated to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, which showed Hercules and Atlas discussing astronomy, accompanied by the motto: *pro maximo Farnesio*.<sup>34</sup> Post-dating 1562, there are two particularly notable images from Farnese commissions that appear to be based on the *Farnese Atlas*. The first is the depiction of the globe-carrying *Atlas* painted by Taddeo Zuccaro in 1562-63 in the *Sala dell' Aurora* in The Villa Farnese in Caprarola.<sup>35</sup> The second is the fresco of *Hercules bearing the globe of Atlas* by Annibale Carracci in the *Camerino Farnese* of the Palazzo Farnese (1585-97).<sup>36</sup> According to Bellori, Annibale made repeated studies of the Farnese Atlas << in order to find the perfect pose ... [and] of which we have seen upwards of twenty [drawings] >>.<sup>37</sup> At least seven drawings by Annibale of the *Atlas* have survived and all show the figure with its right knee forward, as against the *Farnese Atlas*, which has the left knee forward.<sup>38</sup>

Other important appearances of the *Atlas* in non-Farnese commissions during this later period include the depiction of the statue in the vaulting of the southwest corner of the *Sala di Ercole* in the Villa d'Este at Tivoli by Girolamo Muziano and his workshop, dated to c. 1565 (with his left leg forward);<sup>39</sup> and the figure of *Atlas* in Jacopo Zucchi's vast allegorical ceiling in the Palazzo Rucclai in Rome (1586-90).<sup>40</sup> The *Farnese Atlas* also appears to have been one of the 'must sees' for antiquarian travellers on the Grand Tour, but these examples fall outside the scope of this paper.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> ACHILLE BOCCHI, *Symbolicarum questionum de universo genere quas serio ludebat libri quinque ...*, Bologna, In Aedib. Novae Academiae Bocchianae, 1555. Robertson and Whistler draw attention to the Bellori's interpretation of the myth of Hercules and Atlas as a symbol evoking the contemplative life. See CLARE ROBERTSON, CATHERINE WHISTLER, *Drawings by the Carracci from British Collections* [exh. catalogue, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 10 December 1996 - 31 March 1997 and Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox, London, 9 April 1997 - 9 May 1997], Oxford, Ashmolean Museum - Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox, 1996, pp. 122-23, no. 74

<sup>35</sup> The figure is submerged into the landscape up to his waist. For a slightly murky reproduction, see I. Faldi, *Il Palazzo Farnese di Caprarola*, Turin 1981, fig. 229. For a discussion of the programme by Annibale Caro, written in November 1562, see CLARE ROBERTSON, *Annibale Caro as Iconographer. Sources and Method*, << *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* >>, XLV, 1982, pp. 160-81, pp. 162 (plan) and 169. Robertson mentions that the this section of the room has figures related to personifications of 'Night' and to *Quiete*, but feels that the figures of *Atlas* and *Oceanus* seem not to fit in with the overall scheme and are probably included just to balance the room. Though it might be incidental, one might point out that both *Atlas* and *Oceanus* were associated with the 'West' and the place where the Sun sets, thus bringing on the night and sleep.

<sup>36</sup> See JOHN RUPERT MARTIN, *The Farnese Gallery (with plates, including reproductions, and a catalogue of drawings, mostly by Annibale Carracci)*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1965 (Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology, 36), pp. 178 and 180-83.

<sup>37</sup> GIOVANNI PIETRO BELLORI, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori e architetti moderni*, Rome, Il Success. al Mascardi, 1672, p. 81. English transl. taken from MARTIN, cit., p. 180. See also, ROBERTSON, WHISTLER, cit., p. 122.

<sup>38</sup> See MARTIN, cit., pp. 240, 242-43 and 248 and figs. 100, 101 and 113-117. For the Oxford drawing see also, ROBERTSON, WHISTLER, cit., p. 122. In the discussion of Turin drawing, Carel van Tuyl van Serooskerken convincingly argues that, owing to Annibale's desire to increase the size and apparent weight of the globe held by his *Atlas*, he turned away from direct study of the *Farnese Atlas* and used a human model for some of these sketches. See the entry by 'CVT' in *The Drawings of Annibale Carracci* [exh. catalogue, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 26 September - 9 January 2000], Washington DC, National Gallery of Art, 1999, pp. 134-35 (no. 33).

<sup>39</sup> For a reproduction, see DAVID R. COFFIN, *The Villa d'Este at Tivoli*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1960 (<< Princeton Monographs in Art and Archaeology >>, 24), p. 56, fig. 65.

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion, see FRITZ SAXL, *Antike Götter in der Spätrenaissance. Ein Freskenzyklus und ein Discorso des Jacopo Zucchi*, Leipzig-Berlin, B. G. Teubner, 1927 (<< Studien der Bibliothek Warburg >>, 8). The essay has been translated into Italian by F. Cuniberto in FRITZ SAXL, *La fede negli astri. Dall'antichità al Rinascimento*, ed. S. Settis, Turin, Boringhieri, 1985, pp. 421-47 and 485-97.

<sup>41</sup> For a further discussion, see KRISTEN LIPPINCOTT, *A Chapter in the Nachleben of the Farnese Atlas: Martin Foulkes's globe*, << *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* >>, LXXIV, 2011, pp. 281-299.