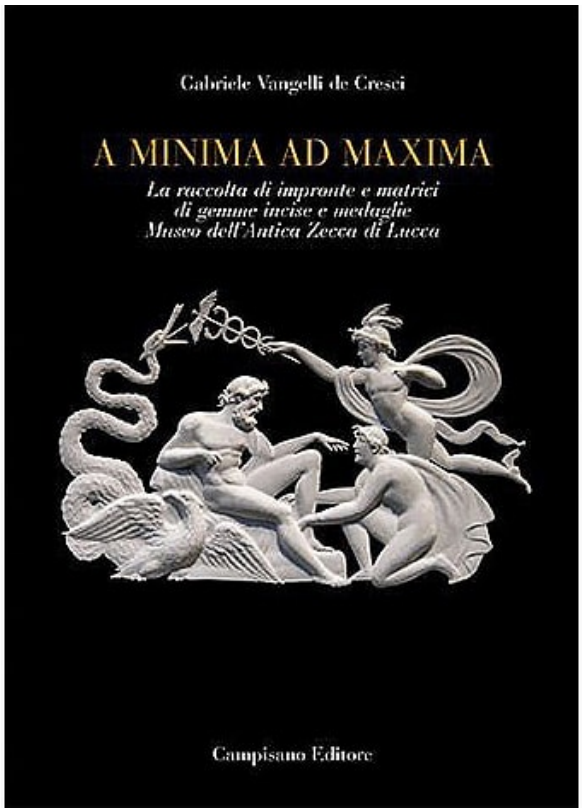
A MINIMA AD MAXIMA THE COLLECTION OF IMPRESSIONS AND MATRIX OF ENGRAVED GEMS AND MEDALS MUSEUM OF THE ANCIENT MINT OF LUCCA

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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of the Grand Tour and was still in vogue during the Napoleonic era, following the story of a recently discovered and unpublished Lucca factory, specialized in the refined art of making impressions taken from engraved gems, cameos, medals and small bas-reliefs.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.

19. Venere ed Eros, intaglio in ametista, 2,7 x 3,2 cm (impronta: cat. 114). Parigi, Cabinet des médailles, Bibliothèque nationale de France. (a: in trasparenza –b)
20. Venere ed Eros, impronta in gesso, cat. 114
21. Venere e cupido, intaglio in ametista, 2,8 x 3 cm (impronta: cat. 121). Parigi, Cabinet des médailles, Bibliothèque nationale de France
22. Latona fugge da Pitone, intaglio in corniola, 2,8 x 3,8 cm (impronta: cat. 152). Parigi, Cabinet des médailles, Bibliothèque nationale de France









